University of Reading

LEADERSHIP AS PRACTICE: UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGENCE OF CONSCIOUS COALESCENCE THROUGH VIDEO ETHNOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT

Rather than impose a normative view of what leadership should look like, new emancipatory ideas using process and practice encourage researchers to consider what is happening when people come together to create leadership. I am generally interested in the activity and agency from which leadership emerges and I locate this interest in the literature of Leadership-as-Practice (LAP).

LAP considers that collaborative agency is inseparable from leadership. However collaborative agency relies on multiple individuals transcending their embeddedness, and yet this process is not well articulated, nor has it been studied in a manner that is congruent with the underpinning assumptions of LAP. In this thesis, my specific purpose is to uncover the processes by which individuals transcend their embeddedness, a process I call *'Conscious Coalescence'*. My guiding research questions are: <u>*What is the lived experience of participants when* Conscious Coalescence *emerges?*</u> And: <u>*How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?*</u>

My research demonstrates that *Conscious Coalescence* is a vibrant state that people recognise even if they cannot name it. Participants reported "all pinging off each other" and moments that were "kinda magical". These exuberant expressions leave me in little doubt that they felt a shift, like a gear change, signalling an unspoken understanding of ''an I that is we and a we that is I'' (Hegel, 1977, sec.177). This powerful existential shift is more possible and more prevalent than might be imagined.

It seems that *Conscious Coalescence* is not a once-in-a-meeting experience but might fleetingly arise and fade in micro segments.

As a qualitative study, my aim is theory elaboration, drawing on and extending important ideas from research on LAP. In total, I seek to put forward eight contributions to the field of LAP along with a further contribution to Method based on my novel research approach.

Keywords:

Leadership-as-Practice (LAP), Collective Mindfulness, Heedful Inter-relating, Ba, Elicitation Interviews.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This quote bridges nicely from those early origins at Oxford to the thesis you are about to read:

"If we see ourselves as small and separate individuals trying to take on the world as our responsibility, we set ourselves up for delusion and failure. Rather, our aspiration to be of benefit arises from the radical realisation that we all belong to the web of life, and that everything that happens within it affects everything else…An aboriginal from Australia speaks from this sense of relatedness in a powerful way: 'If you have come to help me, then you are wasting your time. But if you come because your destiny is bound up with mine, then let us work together'."

Brach, T (2012, p.242). *Radical acceptance.*Random House.

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2 INTRODUCTION

At the grand age of 33 I was promoted to Managing Director of a medium-sized enterprise. Within six months I was deflated and defeated, despite having doubled the size and profits of the business. The problem is that one brain is no match for the interactive complexity of a business, yet I thought that being a leader meant I had to solve everything, be involved in all major projects and generally 'run the ship'. This thesis is about a different model of leadership – one I wish I had known about all those years ago.

This introduction is a birds-eye view of the main logic of the thesis: each point, including full definitions, will be thoroughly expanded in later chapters.

Collective, pluralised, distributed, shared, collaborative, ensemble and flock forms of leadership theorise that individuals coalesce to form a single unit that then initiates or manages transformation or change (Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012; Hosking, 1988; Will, 2016). The single bright shining star that I was striving to become is replaced by a constellation of stars that do not rely on title or hierarchy or power (Rosile, Boje and Claw, 2018).

These types of leadership configurations are currently under-theorised and under-studied.

2.1 THE PHENOMENON OF INTEREST

Whereas there is a full corpus of research on groups and teams, and there is an equal body of work on leaders, what is missing is an account of the messy, micro and mundane activities of leadership that transcends an individual perspective and that sits

within a group. Hitherto, studies have considered the nature of leading from **within** the leader: *'intra*-facets' such as personality traits, skills or knowledge. Other studies have considered the nature of leading **between** people, most often, leaders and followers: '*inter*-relating' or relational forms of leadership. Here, I specifically consider ideas that are **across** people: '*trans*-subjective'. That is, leadership that transcends an entitative perspective and moves to a non-entitative, non-substantive and non-compositional view. Consequently, I have chosen to study leadership as a trans-subjective phenomenon.

My intention is to carefully look for leadership in places where individuals as entities are backgrounded because what is foregrounded is their ability to exceed their usual limits and become a unified whole. Specifically, my interest lies in the processes of becoming unified. I have chosen to call these processes *'Conscious Coalescence'* and described them as the moments when people cease individualising, allowing ever-changing intimacies and a trans-subjective experience. The term *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* is defined and fully explored as a central part of this thesis. When conducting my pilot studies, Tree (one of the participants) said "I think I was like, ahh, good idea. I think that's what came to mind and I think that's what I actually felt as well. But it was like an a-ha moment when I heard his words I was like oh, this is brilliant. And then I think he started explaining the mood as well and I was like, oh, I can see it. So it was like a mind opening moment." It was comments like this that told me the group had an experience that shifted and that was important to them.

Although *Conscious Coalescence* is the term that I have created and used throughout this thesis, the ideas it encapsulates have a venerable history drawn from terms that other researchers have used. However, I find these other terms unsatisfactory which is why I have created my own. Within the literature of leadership, there are three other terms that are used: 'inter-subjectivity' used by Raelin (Raelin, 2011, 2017); 'trans-action' is the term coined by Carroll and Simpson (2012), Simpson (2016) and relationality is the alternative by Crevani and Endrissat (2016), Shotter (2016). These three terms broadly have the same definitions but convey different nuances. I give a fuller explanation of this naming of my phenomenon of interest on page 94 but in sum, this thesis is focused on the processes of becoming unified when working collectively at leadership. It has been described as that moment when everything clicks, and unspoken and anticipatory understanding arises (Shotter, 2008).

2.2 THE LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

Although the processes of becoming unified are referred to both generally and within management and organisational scholarship, there is however only one set of leadership literature – and only one known author within that literature – that makes mention of this – Raelin, 2016a; it is extending from the work of Raelin where I specifically locate this study.

Leadership-as-Practice (LAP) is the scholarly narrative where I make a theoretical contribution. LAP is a subset of the literature that is adjacent to, and extends from, collective leadership theory. In common with some authors in the

collective leadership field, LAP considers that collaborative agents produce leadership when they "transcend their own immediate embeddedness" (Raelin, 2016b, p.138). As LAP remains a nascent field, it is often conflated with other adjacent concepts of leadership such as relational and collective leadership. Table 1 below locates LAP through a comparison with these other leadership approaches to show ways in which it is distinctive.

Table 1 – Comparison of three leadership constructs extending Rosile et al (2018)

	Relational Leadership	Collective Leadership	Leadership-as-Practice
Nature of leadership	Interpersonally co-negotiated	Collectively co-created	Collaborative agency
Locus of leadership	Within the relationship	Within multiple relationships	Across and around the group
Unit of analysis	Multiple entities	Multiple entities and multiple relationships	The group
Level of analysis	Intra/Inter-subjective	Inter-subjective	Trans-subjective

Despite the centrality of collaborative agency to LAP, the literature is empirically silent on how this coalescence is itself constructed (Kempster and Gregory, 2017; Raelin et al, 2018). Because collaborative agency is an emergent property where the whole is irreducible to its parts, "meaning that the higher-level entity is not merely aggregated, it is holistic" (Uhl-Bien and Marion, 2009, p.637), it is reasonable to expect that binding or coalescence occurs when individuals move from units of one to one

unit. My aim is to extend our understanding of this process through two guiding research questions:

What is the lived experience of participants when Conscious Coalescence emerges?

How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?

2.3 METATHEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

In this thesis these questions are approached via different – but nevertheless compatible – ontological, philosophical, and epistemological lenses, each informing the other, demonstrated in Figure 1. The ideas of a strong process ontology; practice as an epistemic lens; and pragmatism infuse the entire thesis. Also, I have sought to show how Buddhist philosophy, which pre-dates these modern conceptualisations, is also aligned and also weaves through the literature and theorising contained herein.
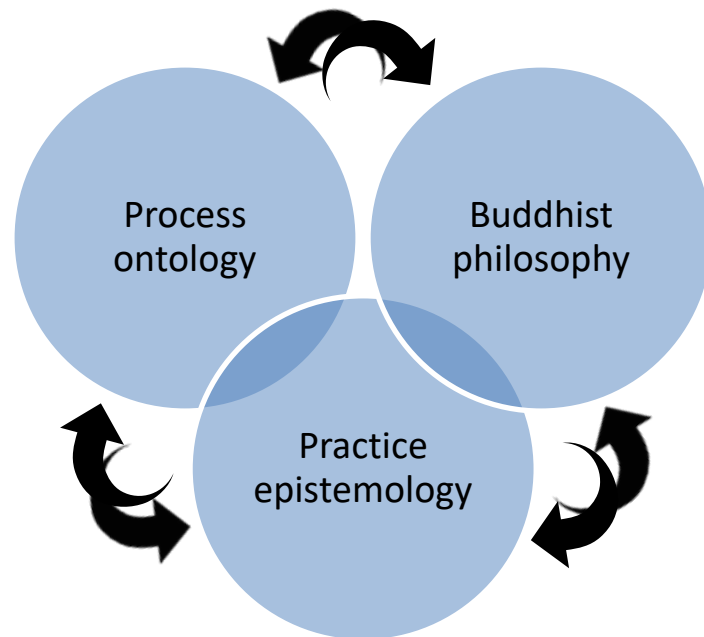
Figure 1 – Philosophical underpinnings of the thesis

Process ontology is a way of seeing the world where phenomena do not stay fixed. This philosophical perspective pre-dates management and organisational studies and can be found in the writing of philosophers such as Heidegger, Wittgenstein and Hegel (Rorty, 1979). Later philosophers in the pragmatist tradition such as Dewey, James and Pierce have been instrumental in the translation to modern management thinking (Morgan, 2014). The coming and going, to-ing and fro-ing of process is often referred to as 'dynamic' but additionally, adjusting our sensitivities to the processes of becoming and decaying brings into sharp relief the impermanent nature of things. Impermanence is a central theme of Buddhist philosophy. Process ontology provides a radical reappraisal of how the world works and, when applied to disciplines like leadership, seriously calls into question theories where individuals, their traits and characteristics are viewed as fixed and the relating between individuals is

seen as predictable. When all things are conceived of as emergent and fluid, ebbing

and flowing, then similarly all aspects of leadership must be considered in this way too.

Process quite simply brings attention to the means by which things come about.

Buddhist philosophy aims to support the development of wisdom, or prajñā,

which brings about a fundamental ontological shift in being and a radical

transformation of the self. Through Buddhist practices it is possible to achieve a

radical transformation in one's vision of reality that aligns very directly with the

process view of self as a changing, conditioned, centre-less phenomenon (anattå).

Thus, Buddhist philosophy can be said to include a process ontology (Purser, 2014).

For the purposes of this thesis, three tenets from Buddhism are important: mutual

dependence, impermanence, and non-separation (Hanks et al, 2019).

In Buddhist philosophy all thoughts are mere representations of reality,

thoughts are not themselves reality, even the thoughts that tell you they are facts.

Furthermore, language is a representation of those representations making language

twice removed from reality (Barad, 2003). Rouse (2001) advocates the study of

practice as a way of offsetting the problem of representation. This allows us to

simultaneously acknowledge that language is an inadequate representation of

phenomena while continuing to study the phenomena that are to be represented

through language (Barad, 2003). Thus, the practice-turn provides a suitable approach

that embeds process ontology and considers what happens within the messy and

mundane doings of life. Authors in the practice narrative rarely use 'theories' of

practice because they are keen to embrace non-normative and emancipatory ideas

(Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008; Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff, 2010). Instead, practice approaches can be conceived of as an instrument for asking questions or a device for guiding inquiry (Nicolini, 2020). Here, I consider that practice provides an epistemic lens on activity.

Within this framing, the axiological stance is that research is an interpretive act, and therefore the researcher co-produces rather than describes knowledge (Deane, 2018). Consequently, it is logical to acknowledge this stance and to write this dissertation in the first person. In adopting a first-person stance, I seek to recognise that I am entangled in the subjects that I study, and the reflexivity this provokes is explored fully in both the chapters on Methodology and Reflections (Chapters Four and Nine).

Throughout this study, my perspective is the construction of the world in activity and interaction, and I seek insights born out of everyday activity of meetings and interactions that take place therein (Fachin and Langley, 2018; Jarzabkowski and Seidl, 2008). Specifically, I lean on a sociological view, which includes "embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding" (Schatzki, 2001, p.11).

2.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Crucially, clarity has been missing in the LAP literature, with many authors veering across, and conflating, the three concepts – relational, collective and practice view of leadership - illustrated in Table 1. Believing that the alignment of the levels and units of analysis is important (following Gronn, 2009, 2015), I committed to

honouring the emergent nature of LAP and to ontological consistency, thereby avoiding an atomising lens on individuals. This commitment resulted in a unique research design.

Before commencing my field study, I undertook a number of trial runs and a pilot study. The trial runs were helpful in answering a methodological question concerning the coding of three-dimensional video activity onto two-dimensional paper. Building on dance notation and starling murmurations, through these trials I assembled descriptive vectors that formed the basis of my analysis. Alongside these trial runs, I also conducted a pilot study to understand the technical details of video recording a group and running group interviews. It was during the pilot study that the group told me that 'there' that's where the shift happened, and it was that shift I specifically chose to study and named '*Conscious Coalescence*'.

2.5 DATA AND FINDINGS

The field study tells the story of three leadership groups: Jet Flyer A; and Jet Flyer G; and Fire & Water, which I call 'Cases' to indicate that each forms the basis of a case study. The groups are in the upper echelons of their respective organisations and have responsibility for initiating and managing change and transformation. The participants all bear the title 'leader' but, as I embarked on the study, I did not assume that they would always produce 'leadership'. That was part of the fascination.

Each group was video recorded during extended strategic meetings. Following the meetings, all individuals were interviewed and invited to select salient moments from the meeting that they would like to discuss as a group. I returned to the groups

with those selected excerpts from the meeting on video and replayed the segments to the group for them to review. The ensuing discussion was also video and audio recorded.

This approach provided three data sources that form the basis of my findings. The first source of data comes from the video segments from the original meeting, which the group reviews and talks to. The participants' verbatim comments on their leadership practices are the starting point for my analysis and wherever possible, I try to foreground their lived experience. Second, using the schema specifically developed for this study in the trial runs, the group codes the video segments and this builds on their lived experience of the meeting to help understand the leadership practices that they see being engaged in within the meeting. The verbatim comments from the participants themselves help answer the guiding question: _What is the lived experience of participants when_ Conscious Coalescence _emerges?_

Next, I code all the video segments, using the same schema that the participants used. As a result, I am able to investigate segments of video from within, between and across data sets. Not surprisingly, the multiplicity of voices across the three Cases requires careful parsing. I achieve this by relying on data that I coded because it is consistent across all segments of video across all Cases. These data are taken through a final analytical process: secondary coding. Secondary coding has the effect of sorting, collating and consolidating the leadership practices into four strands. These strands bear the labels: Flow, Reveal, Rupture and Renew. It is these four

strands that I use to answer the guiding research question: *How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?*

2.6 CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEORY AND PRAXIS

As an emergent process, leadership is constantly being made and re-made in practice. What I demonstrate are the micro-moments when leadership emerges but also, when it *declines* and also when leadership fails to materialise and leaders continue to work as units of one, not one unit. I propose that the production of leadership is constantly developing and diminishing, and this is demonstrated as periods when the strand of Flow is either continuing in a forward direction unabated or is re-oriented by the introduction of Reveal, Rupture or Renew. Too much Flow might indicate the group is on automatic and leadership is not emerging. In the Discussion, these findings lead me to the following[1]:

CONTRIBUTION 1: Flow that is too strong in a forward direction, and which is uninterrupted, suggests that the groups are not working as collaborative agents producing leadership.

CONTRIBUTION 2: The production of leadership by collaborative agents is fleeting and fragile. Leadership intensifies and ebbs suggesting leadership is not binary but instead sits on a spectrum.

I argue that Ruptures are helpful corrective forces that occur orthogonally to the prevailing forward movement of Flow. Ideas of returning to homeostasis and

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[1] In summarising the contributions, I use terms, such as Flow and 'heedful inter-relating', which are fully explained later in the text. Here, I have chosen not to pause to fully define terms.

equilibrium suggest that the group is constantly adjusting and reasserting its collaborative agency. These adjustments are never ending and are always needed as the group works as a living system repeatedly adapting to new situations. Ruptures are withstood because the group has mechanisms of Renew in place. The Renew strand is not always adjacent to Ruptures and is therefore proposed to be similar to a bank of socioemotional capital that is built up and then used when needed. These ideas lead me to propose:

CONTRIBUTION 3: Cycles of Rupture and Renew are two important ways in which Flow is re-oriented. Rupture is conceived of as a corrective force.

CONTRIBUTION 4: Renewal is undertaken by the group of collaborative agents as a way to restore temporary equilibrium. Renewal is a ceaseless process.

Another way that Flow is re-oriented is through Reveal, which the groups deploy to aid understanding of each other's underpinning logics. When the Reveal strand is operational the group is benignly vigilant and they remain attentive to the coherence of the group, taking care as to how they articulate their questions. Whereas the practices of *checking, challenging* and *exchanging* (NB italics denote practices identified by my research) have the potential to be experienced as monitoring or surveillance by others, the care that the group pays to its own group cohesion might be sufficiently strong that it inoculates the group from those interpretations (Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). This care, or heedfulness, might invite a more welcoming relationship to the practices of Reveal. In the Discussion, these findings lead me to the following:

CONTRIBUTION 5: Groups of collaborative agents seem to interrupt the Flow of the group's work, using practices of *checking*, *challenging*, and *exchanging* to Reveal each other's thinking.

CONTRIBUTION 6: Groups of collaborative agents that heedfully inter-relate do not seem to interpret the practices of Reveal to be monitoring or surveillance, but instead welcome the opportunity to think together and improve the quality of debate.

In the later stages of the Discussion, I return to Buddhist philosophy and concepts of Ba (from the Japanese word for 'place'). I propose that Ba is a way to understand *CC* and concurs with ideas of trans-subjectivity. In Ba there is co-emergence of self and other (Von Krogh et al, 2013); that is, multiple participants mutually forge each other, everyone is bound together, and hence individual self is sublimated to the collective self. It is possible – and natural in Ba – to transcend ideas of subject and object to become pure unselfconscious experiencing (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010). This leads to:

CONTRIBUTION 7: Groups of collaborative agents may transcend their own embeddedness to practise *Conscious Coalescence* when the strands of Flow, Reveal, Renew and Rupture are intertwined in such a way that a place of Ba is brought into being.

To seal my discussion of the research questions, I draw attention to *CC* as a powerful existential shift that is more possible and more prevalent than might be imagined as it was coded 27 times across ten video segments. My proposition is that it is not rare although the experience may fleetingly arise and fade in microsegments.

In addition to the main theoretical contributions described above, I also make a further – and more speculative contribution – concerning the use of sociomaterial artefacts such as computers, flip charts and sticky notes. I found three instances of individuals using these artefacts to overthrow the Flow of the meeting. These moments are more violent than Ruptures, and may temporarily shatter the group. I have labelled the following a Supposition to indicate that it is evidentially thin, but the evidence despite being sparse, is worthy of note.

SUPPOSITION: By mobilising artefacts, participants may be able to conduct *insurrection-by-stealth* temporarily risking the coherence of the group.

Finally, I draw attention to the unique research approach that I have developed including the use of video, group reviews of their video and the group coding of their video. I differentiate this contribution to those above, by suggesting that it has practical real-world application and is thus labelled as a Contribution to Praxis:

CONTRIBUTION TO PRAXIS: Vectors and Elicitation interviews focused on group-level analysis by participants as they watch themselves have the potential to be a valuable leadership development toolset.

Throughout the findings and discussion there is a plurality of voices, recognising the plurality of experiences and participants' unique representation of reality. I have not sought to suppress this multiplicity. Where my views are foregrounded –for example, in secondary coding – I have acknowledged where I think there is a commonality between my representation and those of the participants. Equally, where my views and those of the participants do not concur that too is noted. While

all Contributions derive directly from my findings, I also consider them to be provisional and contestable.

The last sections of this thesis are two reflections and a conclusion. The first reflections are the structural limitations of the study. I review some of the key decisions that were made and how they restrict the application of the findings more broadly. Particularly, I consider the use of case studies as exploratory research methods, the richness of data that these studies provide, but the boundaries that must be drawn around them. The second reflection concerns my own involvement in the research and how I found myself responding to different aspects of the study. This section is a meditation on the researcher-as-subjective-observer, never fully dispassionate, never fully a tabula rasa. In the Conclusion, within the acknowledged limitations, I show how the difficulties and challenges faced by the groups in this study are relevant to other groups seeking to create leadership through their collaborative agency.

3 LOCATING THIS STUDY IN THE LITERATURE

This study is located within literature that sits nested within other broader literature on leadership. Leadership has been the subject of study in management and organisational fields for over a century, (see Stambler (2006) for a review of Carlyle dating back to 1840) and the corpus of work is vast. It is within the leadership domain that I aspire to make my contribution. Thus, the first section of this chapter is the sorting and analysing of leadership literature to understand collective leadership specifically and then, even more specifically within that field, focusing in to consider Leadership-as-Practice (LAP) and collaborative leadership. This represents approximately four or five subsets of literature just to get to the core set of papers that frame my study.

In addition, there are other literatures that need to be introduced and explored. These are not domains where my thesis will make a direct contribution, but they are adjacent to, and inform my thinking on, the processes of interest to such an extent that they need to be reviewed, albeit with a lighter touch. These literatures are mindfulness and collective mindfulness; the former includes a little on the Buddhist philosophy on which mindfulness relies and the latter includes 'heedful inter-relating'.

In total that presents me with the problem of explaining, reviewing and critiquing up to nine literatures, any one of which would be beyond the limits of a PhD. Nevertheless, I hope to provide sufficient background to orientate the reader to the main characteristics of the literature that informs my study. And, as it is within the leadership narrative that I am locating my study, this is where the emphasis will lie.

The relationships between these scholarly conversations are illustrated in Figure 2. To help with navigation, I have partitioned this chapter into three sections that follow the logic of Figure 2. Part one is focused on the related narratives of distributed, shared, shared and distributed and emergent leadership; part two on the collaborative leadership literature within which I place LAP; part three introduces very briefly some of the other literatures that are also of interest to me for this thesis.
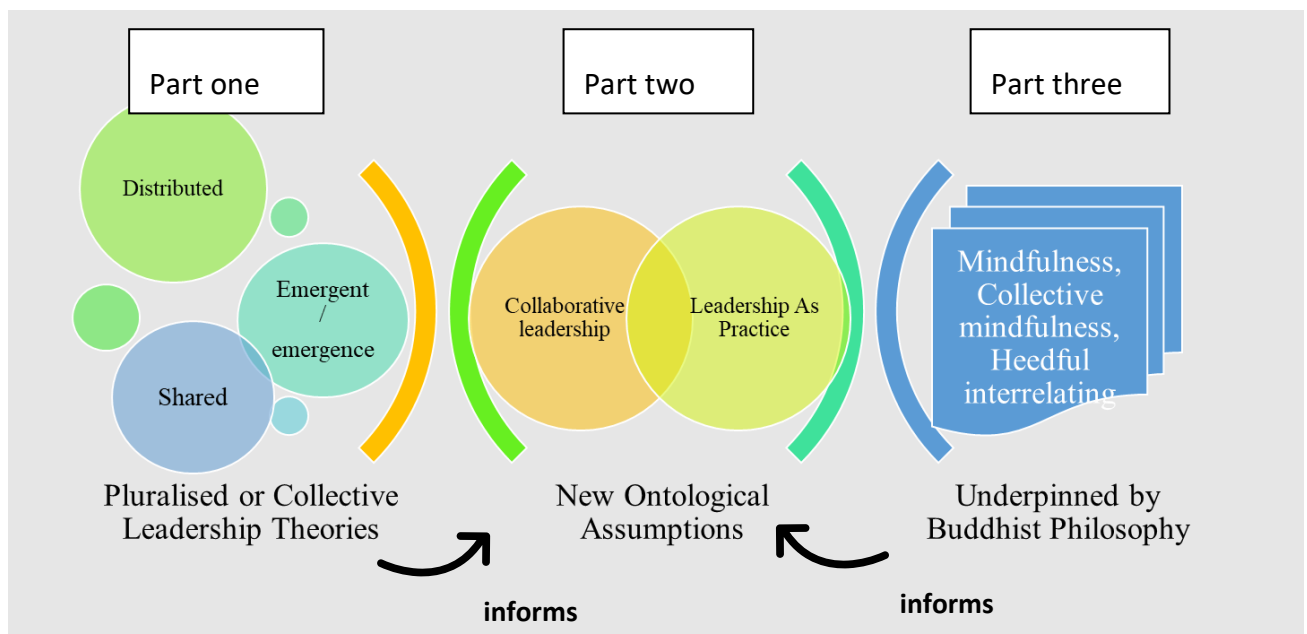
Figure 2 – Locating this thesis in the literature and navigating this chapter

3.1 PART ONE

3.1.1 Pluralised or Collective Leadership Theories

3.1.1.1 Introduction

The first ontological upheaval that is relevant for this discussion is the shift in focus from 'who' to 'what'. Scholars who approach leadership from this perspective have urged

us to stop being complicit in the romance of leaders (Collinson, Smolović Jones and Grint, 2017; Jackson, B., and Parry, 2018; Meindl, Ehrlich and Dukerich, 1985). Namely, they urge us to look beyond *the* 'great man' who might be leading and turn to consider 'what' is actually achieved. This wave of theorising is epitomised by Grint (2007) who points out that the etymological roots of the Norse word 'laed', from which 'leadership' is derived, refers to the navigation and way finding of a ship. Leading is therefore *not* about *a* person but the actions and outcomes that delineate leadership. Other proponents of this approach, Drath et al (2008), untangled the prevailing assumptions of leadership scholarship that has continued to invoke a tripod of leader : follower : shared purpose. The authors convincingly argued that these assumptions: disempower people into a category called follower; hide power relationships under the banner of shared purpose: and subscribe to the fallacy of a single leader. Drath and colleagues provide an alternative functionalist ontology: Direction, Alignment and Commitment (DAC).

For both Grint and Drath et al, the focus of leadership is not who did it, but what was achieved. The achievement of Direction, Alignment and Commitment is the hallmark of whether leadership is present, irrespective of whether it is via a formal hierarchical leader or not (Drath et al, 2008). This thesis does not assume a functionalist ontology because my inclinations are more to 'how' questions (considered as praxeology). However, this very brief introduction to this paradigmatic shift is important for two reasons. First, because *direction* and *forward momentum* are a theme made extant in my findings. Second, this radical shift in appreciation of leadership and the underpinning assumptions scholars made

split open the theorising of leadership into multiple threads. The thread that I will follow next is the ontological shift from single leader to pluralised leadership.

Pluralised leadership responds to the top-down imposition of will, vertical authority by person/people, to a more peer-to-peer, horizontal view of negotiated settlements i.e., what happens. The pluralised literature includes multiple theories of distributed, shared, shared and distributed and emergent leadership. While it can be argued that this is a break from great (wo)man or heroic leadership theory, many authors continue to be concerned with who is leading; in contrast, I consider that LAP sits within the collaborative leadership domain that grows out of the theories of emergence and questions of how. Recent special issues in The Leadership Quarterly (2016) (see Cullen-Lester, K. L., and Yammarino, F. J. (2016)) and in Human Relations (2020) (see Ospina, S. M., Foldy, E. G., Fairhurst, G. T., and Jackson, B. (2020)) provide in-depth and comprehensive reviews of the terrain.

In an unpublished review of collective leadership, Alexy (2020) notes that the 'what' of collective leadership is a shape-shifting and slippery concept exemplified by the 121 different definitions under 28 different labels that she ascribes. My review is not as extensive but covers the same terrain.

I provide a route map of this terrain in Figure 3 and it is this schema that will guide my review of this body of work, in part one of this chapter. Other maps of subsets of this domain are available, for example in Currie and Lockett (2011) and Ospina et al (2020) – both employing a two-by-two matrix to categorise the boundaries of the literature. But my diagram and the subsequent review seeks to include a wider span of literature and to show the concepts developmentally.

Includes a **_double_** ontological shift.

First shift: responds to top-down imposition of will (who) to a more peer-to-peer (what) view of negotiated settlements.

DISTRIBUTED	SHARED	SHARED AND DISTRIBUTED	EMERGENT/EMERGENCE
Roles are divided up among many. E.g. one person leads on task and one person leads on socioemotional process	All people do all aspects. E.g. everyone leads a session on the agenda	Depending on the situation and composition of the group, more towards shared or more towards distributed. Shared and distributed are two dimensions of a leadership matrix.	Nonlinear Multilevel Multi-agency Never twice the same
Inspired by delegation principles	Inspired by democratic principles	Inspired by network analysis	Inspired by complexity, heterarchies, holacracies, nature, physics, indigenous studies
Intra (best person for best bit)	Intra and Inter	Inter (intersectionality of the grid)	Across and around
Enable existing authority systems		Augment existing authority systems	Overthrow or replace existing authority systems
Membership is pre-determined and stable			Membership is not assumed

→

More fluid, more dynamic, more unplanned

Figure 3 – Navigating the multiple pluralised leadership literature

Double ontological shift. Second shift: processual, emancipatory, and non-normative.

Each column of Figure 3 represents a section of literature that I will review using a small selection of papers. I have chosen these papers informed by two special editions on collective leadership – The Leadership Quarterly (2016) and Human Relations (2020) – plus an admirable and fulsome review by Alexy (2020*)*. In addition, in selecting these papers, I have taken account of the journal quality in which they are published, favouring peer reviewed journals. Through this selection, I am seeking to illustrate the main debates as well as find papers that challenge prevalent views.

According to a comprehensive literature review by Sweeney et al (2019), the dominant term for a pluralised approach to leadership used by researchers looking at commercial organisations is 'shared leadership'. On the other hand, the term 'distributed leadership' appears to dominate in the educational sector. Fitzsimons et al (2011), propose that the origins of shared leadership spring from the team-based literature, and the scholarship of distributed leadership to developments in the education literature. These logics persuade me that the two literatures, at least initially, need to be reviewed separately. However, as we proceed through from distributed and shared to emergent leadership my categorisation is more tentative (as illustrated above by the unsteady green line in Figure 3).

3.1.1.2 Distributed Leadership (DL)

I am going to propose and offer evidence that DL is best understood as the division of the roles of leadership among a group of people such that each takes one or some task(s) of leading according to their personal strengths or experience. Put in this

manner, DL might be considered as similar to authority that is delegated or tasks that

are split among a team. To understand the main debates and the contributions this

part of the narrative makes, I have chosen just six papers to review below. Table 2

summarises the selected material.

Table 2 – Selection of distributed leadership (DL) literature to illustrate main debates and contributions

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13(May), 423–451.	Conceptual analysis	Seminal paper that argues for a new unit of analysis where n=1 representing the configurational entity not the individual.
Hiller, N. J., Day, D. V., and Vance, R. J. (2006). Collective enactment of leadership roles and team effectiveness: A field study. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17, 387–397.	Empirical	Distributed leadership is gauged by supervisors to make teams more effective. People with a collectivist trait tend to engage in more collective leadership.
Friedrich, T. L., Vessey, W. B., Schuelke, M. J., Ruark, G. A., and Mumford, M. D. (2009). A framework for understanding collective leadership: The selective utilization of leader and team expertise within networks. *Leadership Quarterly*, 20(6), 933–958.	Conceptual	Distribution of leadership responsibilities is a "whack-a-mole" process where individuals at multiple levels pop up as needed. Individual differences matter because that is the basis of distribution.
Currie, G., and Lockett, A. (2011). Distributing Leadership in Health and Social Care: Concertive, Conjoint or	Conceptual analysis, applied to	Extends the definition of DL provided by Gronn (2002). Looks at a sector of

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
Collective? *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 13(3), 286–300.	health and social care	government to consider how the context may impact implementation of DL.
Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J. B. (2004). Toward a theory of Leadership Practice: A Distributed Perspective. In *Educational Researcher* (Vol. 30, Issue 3, 3–34).	Conceptual analysis, applied to leadership in a school	Introduces leadership as distributed activity. Might be considered an early example of LAP. Makes the point that leadership is not additive.
Chreim, S. (2015). The (non)distribution of leadership roles: Considering leadership practices and configurations. *Human Relations*, 68(4), 517–543.	Empirical	Leadership is placed on a continuum running from vacant space (deficit of leadership) to an overcrowded space (surplus of leadership). The midpoint is leadership practices coupled with complementary roles.

In the chapter that follows, Research Approach, I will continually refer to the seminal work of Gronn (2002) because it is this paper that demonstrates how units of analysis and levels of analysis have been inconsistently mobilised and, he argues, that having consistency is essential for improved research in this domain. Units refer to the idea of a bounded set of elements comprising the entity that is the focus of research (p.444) whereas levels specify target applications of theory (p.443). For example, if a researcher is interested in a level of analysis that is micro (targeting their research there), then it is appropriate to use n=1=individual (selecting individuals as the unit).

Equally if the focus of the analysis (i.e. the level) is the group, then the appropriate level of analysis is n=1=group, not individual + individual + individual + individual. In establishing a unit of analysis, the key question becomes who "is the agent of influence"? (Gronn, 2002, p.443) and it is this unit that becomes 'n'.

This simple point that Gronn raises in the DL literature has echoes and consequences throughout collective leadership, and consequently throughout the remainder of this chapter and beyond. It is a key signifier and helps to distinguish between authors who work with ideas of emergence: Sandelands expresses it well: "Groups include individuals, to be sure, but they are not constituted by individuals. Instead we see that the group is a life, a being unto itself with dynamisms of its own." (Sandelands, 1998, p.19).

Thus, the Gronn paper is radical and helpful for many reasons (Gronn, 2002). As mentioned above, the clarity of thinking concerning units and levels of analysis means that it is possible to read prior and subsequent authors' work and immediately discern whether they have used research methods and data analysis that is congruent with their espoused metatheoretical assumptions. Many times, the answer is: they have not; and this is a theme that I pursue through the remainder of this literature review and into my research methods too.

The Gronn paper is also helpful because it meticulously describes concertive action as a range. The terms Gronn uses need to be differentiated for this thesis. *Coordination* means ''managing dependencies between activities'' (2002, p.433) and it

can be achieved through a bureaucratic set of practices, simply by allocating activity. However, concerted action can also mean that individuals *coalesce* and Gronn develops a typology of three different types of coalescence: 1) Co-performance that involves intuitive working relations; 2) Co-performance that is rooted in institutionalised practices; 3) Collective performance that relies on intuitive working relations. This taxonomy distinguishes work that is jointly brought about in face-to-face situations from work that is jointly brought about through tech-mediated situations where bodies are dispersed across multiple sites. The former is called co-performed work and the latter is collectively performed. But, while in 2002 the possibility of working across sites of action was a new contribution to the narrative, I think that there is another part of the taxonomy that bears comment. That is, that work is not always ordered through institutionalised practices but can be a negotiated division of leadership labour between participating agents, as per definitions 1) and 3) above. This informal and undocumented accommodation of each other is beyond the usual definitions of DL but is a touchstone of my study.

The third aspect of the Gronn paper that is directly relevant to my studies is the description of conjoint agency. Within LAP, the term collaborative agency is used, and I believe that both conjoint and collaborative agency need to be fully disaggregated and fully understood as they form a central tenet of this thesis. I will do this in the LAP section of the literature that is described in detail within the category of emergent leadership.

The next paper, Hiller et al (2006), demonstrates well my rationale for placing DL as a category within pluralised leadership, and separate from other categories such as shared or emergent leadership.

In the Hiller paper, the authors use the same language and framing that a reader might expect in the emergent collective leadership literature. For example, they say: "Collective leadership is _more than the sum_ of individual role taking; it is the _holistic_ concertive action of a group (Gronn, 2002) and needs to be assessed accordingly." (emphasis added) (Hiller, Day and Vance, 2006, p.388). Note that the authors even cite Gronn. The paper sets out to examine the extent to which collective leadership makes a difference to team effectiveness in road maintenance teams. But it then goes on to conceptualise the factors to be measured as individual traits. This is the very misalignment that Gronn had previously railed against, yet even in citing Gronn they have ignored him.

For example, one of the dimensions used in the survey instrument that the paper develops is individualism/collectivism. The rationale is that people who have personalities tending towards individualist or collectivist will relate to groups in different ways and value dependence and interdependence differently such that they will differentially engage in collective leadership tasks. The rationale is sound and based on compositional assumptions that a group comprises 1+1+1 (Klein et al, 2001), but this is not an assumption that is congruent with the ontology of emergence, which cannot be measured by aggregating individual phenomena (see also the criticism of

this in D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, and Kukenberger (2016) in the next section on shared leadership).

Against the rationale of Gronn, which I am following here, this squarely places the work of Hiller et al (2006) in the category of DL rather than emergent leadership.

Putting aside my zealous concerns about emergent phenomena being measured compositionally, two key findings of this paper are interesting. The study took care to ask about supervisors' perceptions of teams where there was high collective leadership, finding a positive relationship between effectiveness and collective leadership. This correlation was particularly apparent where the teams rated themselves as effective at support & consideration and development & mentoring. This helps answer the question concerning whether collective leadership makes a difference: yes, supervisors of such teams rate them more highly. Also, the authors find that their conjecture that individuals who have more collectivist traits are more likely to report the presence of and contribution to collective leadership. Where the team has a higher compositional mean towards collectivist so too are the perceived levels of collective leadership higher. This suggests that the composition of the team – in this model of leadership – does impact on the willingness of people to participate in leadership.

One result mystifies the authors. Even in those teams where there is acceptance of an unequal distribution of power, individual team members still answered the questionnaire items as positively measuring collective leadership. But

here is another concern that I have with this paper: the operationalisation of collective leadership. The items used in the questionnaire are more indicative of teamwork questions, so I believe the construct validity is doubtful. When construct validity can be questioned, it reinforces the need to be clear about what type of pluralised leadership we are studying but also what is it that makes it uniquely leadership.

The role-based view of DL is also prominent in the conceptual paper by Friedrich et al (2009). Following Hiller (2006), these authors also consider that individual differences matter because everyone is not equally talented at taking on different aspects of the role. Consequently, they argue that DL cannot rely entirely on spontaneity because teams need to have the best person take the most appropriate role for their talents and experience. Friedrich et al (2009) also propose that DL is a multilevel construct, not just limited to the lateral flow of role apportionment. Thus, their conceptualisation relies on a centralised someone who must create the team or network, and clarify its objectives as well as continuing to broker information to the individuals with the needed expertise. I worry that the authors have lost something of the 'laed'ership qualities in their theorising, and that they are possibly describing great teamwork. The paper pays no regard to whether they have transgressed into another domain.

Whereas the study by Hiller et al (2006) was structured to consider how DL impacts the perceived effectiveness of the work teams, the study by Currie and Lockett (2011) investigates how the situation impacts on distributed leadership. They argue

that we have not paid sufficient attention to how the situation within which DL is

deployed influences what actually happens within leadership configurations.

The definitional wrangles continue in this paper because the authors have

decided that DL is the category definition within which shared, collective and

collaborative leadership sit whereas in this thesis I have reversed this order and

decided that pluralised leadership is the supraordinate construct within which others

sit. I am not arguing that they are wrong, simply pointing out that this is the case with

nearly every paper in this field; how distinctions, similarities and developments are

related to each other is a minefield. Ignoring for a minute our nomological differences,

Currie and Lockett (2011) offer some interesting views. As with Hiller (2006), the

paper relies to a large extent on Gronn (2002) but their reading of that paper is not

mine. For example, Currie and Lockett (2011) suggest that:

> "First, concertive action relates to the spontaneous collaboration within an
>
> organization, where leadership actors with different skills, expertise and
>
> different occupations or organizations 'coalesce' to pool expertise, work jointly
>
> on a task and regularize conduct for the duration of the task. Second,
>
> concertive action involves a shared role, which emerges from two or more
>
> people who intuitively develop close working in an emergent fashion, within an
>
> implicit framework of mutual understanding. Third, working together becomes
>
> institutionalized over time into concertive mechanisms or structures, which
>
> may be grafted onto existing governance arrangements." (p.289)

In writing this way, the authors are proposing that DL has an order or that it is developmental. In other words that DL is only achieved if all three conditions are met. I think this is a very interesting idea, but it is not my interpretation of the original Gronn (2002) paper, nor do I find it reflected elsewhere in the literature.

At other points in the paper the ideas of DL are more akin to what I am calling the 'emergent' form of leadership. Once again, Currie and Lockett (2011) rely on Gronn (2002), describing leadership practice that is stretched over the practice of two or more people who work separately and the zigzagging spiral that occurs, with each person in the configuration bearing the accumulated effects of successive phases of influence "as they begin to influence one another again" (Currie and Lockett, 2011, p.289).

But the point of the paper is to examine the situational effect on the leadership construct and to do this the authors refer to Health and Social Care Organisations (HSCOs) in the United Kingdom. The UK Government has been keen to promote DL, believing it to help with the complexities and vastness of the decisions that are often required in these contexts. However, the paper demonstrates how other systemic tides are against it, for example, the continuing move to individual accountability as exemplified by the dismissal the Director of Children's Services at Haringey Local Safeguarding Children's Board, following the death of 'Baby P' (Currie and Lockett, 2011, p.294). The paper concludes that DL is not making the hoped-for inroads into

HSCOs because the continuing reliance on hierarchy to have named public accountabilities and jurisdiction over expertise makes it difficult to implement.

Table 2 above includes two papers that are within a shaded section. This denotes a step-change in the development of the DL theorising so far, and it might be questionable against my conceptualisation in Figure 3 above whether these papers belong in the DL category. Nevertheless, the authors identify Distributed/Distribution Leadership in the titles of the papers, so this is where I have located them.

What sets these two papers apart is that they suggest that roles of leaders can be disassembled and distributed but that this is not an "additive" function but becomes "multiplicative" (Chreim, 2015, p.522; Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004, p.16).

Spillane et al (2004) are contributing to the DL narrative from an educational perspective and they use cases from schools that are known to them to illustrate and expand their conceptual points. As many papers in this genre do, they start by making the case that leading a school is highly complex and that a focus on a single individual is misplaced. As an early forerunner of LAP, the authors suggest that we can build our understanding of what really happens by considering the activity that senior school administrators embark on. The spotlight is therefore on *what* gets done and *how* not on *who*.

Broadly the authors identify five processes that are central to the success of a school:

"… constructing and selling an instructional vision; developing and managing a school culture conducive to conversations about the core technology of instruction by building norms of trust, collaboration, and academic press among staff; procuring and distributing resources, including materials, time, support and compensation; supporting teacher growth and development, both individually and collectively; providing both summative and formative monitoring of instruction and innovation; and establishing a school climate in which disciplinary issues do not dominate instructional issues" (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004, p.13).

Taking the first of these, they drill down to consider how acts of leadership are entwined.

By way of example, one assistant principal is convening a meeting to discuss introducing multiplication into the syllabus at an earlier point in the semester. Others express a different view and rally evidence to support their perspective. However, the conversation does not result in deadlock because the group demonstrate reciprocal interdependencies, so all parties contribute to a solution that is not a compromise, but a radical re-imagining. "From a distributed perspective, a multiplicative rather than additive model is most appropriate because the interactions among [the participants] in carrying out a particular task may amount to more than the sum of those leaders' practice." (Spillane, Halverson and Diamond, 2004, p.16).

This is the principle of emergence – that a phenomenon cannot be understood as the sum of parts – and it is because of this perspective that Spillane et al (2004) express that I would usually place them in the emergent category in Figure 3. But, as already mentioned, the authors use 'distributed leadership', and it was an early and influential paper in this narrative, so they remain in this category.

The last paper I have chosen to review in the DL category is included because it is an empirical study, and it follows an emergent conceptualisation of distributed leadership such as described by Spillane et al (2004). Chreim (2015) compares four acquisitions by an architecture and engineering firm. When acquiring another firm, the senior leaders set about the process of distributing leadership roles. But the paper shows how the implementation of that distribution is not uniform and is largely structured by circumstance and the agency of the acquired senior people.

The study shows that the resulting configurations are the outcomes of people's attribution of leadership and this in turn informs relating practices that are patterned within the leadership space. This leadership space and the relating practices become recursive and reinforcing. For example, those who were attributed with having the requisite skills and knowledge to successfully complete a merger were thrust into different fora and had relational opportunities that others did not. The interaction of these two factors allowed different forms of leadership to occur. In the case entitled Beta 1, the acquiring firm framed the acquired leaders as competent and engaged in

highly positive interactions during the process of integration. DL in this context is described as conjoint agency with space for complementary leadership roles.

The polar opposite is illustrated by the Omega case where the acquired leaders are portrayed as unskilful, and the acquirers concluded that they needed to take control. Unsurprisingly, the interaction between the acquired and acquiring leadership is characterised as highly negative and the resulting integration model is one of centralised control. In the case study of Gamma, the distribution of leadership roles is subject to resistance and influencing practices, which ultimately limit the authority of those in superior positions.

Besides being important for the empirics the study adds to the field of DL, this paper also contributes the idea of a spectrum of leadership spaces, allowing for leadership to be contested and wrangled over; for the space to be deserted and unattended; for the space to be collaborative and distributed or centralised and controlled.

3.1.1.3 Shared Leadership (SL)

DL and SL are important because they contain some of the themes that become central to the LAP literature, but they are nonetheless only a small part of the narrative thread. Consequently, I continue in this section to review just a selection of papers to demonstrate key ideas and debates. For SL, I have selected five papers, listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3 – Selection of shared leadership (SL) literature to illustrate main debates and contributions

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
D'Innocenzo, L., Mathieu, J. E., and Kukenberger, M. R. (2016). A Meta-Analysis of Different Forms of Shared Leadership-Team Performance Relations. *Journal of Management*, 42(7), 1964-1991.	Meta-analysis of previous empirical studies	Thorough explanation and use of different ways that definitions have been operationalised. Effect size is stronger on performance when the methods align with definitions.
Serban, A., and Roberts, A. J. B. (2016). Exploring antecedents and outcomes of shared leadership in a creative context: A mixed-methods approach. *Leadership Quarterly*, 27(2), 181–199.	Empirical	SL is not a mediator of task and team-level consequences. Ambiguity affects how readily SL is engaged in.
Sweeney, A., Clarke, N., and Higgs, M. (2019). Shared Leadership in Commercial Organizations: A Systematic Review of Definitions, Theoretical Frameworks and Organizational Outcomes. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 21(1), 115–136.	Conceptual analysis of previous studies	Uses a literature review to examine empirical research on SL in commercial organisational contexts, comparing the evidence with findings from non-commercial contexts.
Van De Mieroop, D., Clifton, J., and Verhelst, A. (2020). Investigating the interplay between formal and informal leaders in a shared leadership configuration: A multimodal conversation analytical study. *Human Relations*, 73(4), 490–515.	Empirical	The interplay of formal and informal leadership. Formal leaders can leave absences that informal leadership fills through collaborative endeavours.
Wellman, Ned. (2017) Authority or community? A relational	Conceptual	Identifies factors and processes that are

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
models theory of group-level leadership emergence. *Academy of Management Review* 42, no. 4, 596-617.		expected to frame a group's chosen model of collective leadership. Also, the jolts that might cause that chosen model to shift.

My mental heuristic of SL is that all participants pass around all the leadership tasks. This view is aligned to the illustrative Figure 4 provided by Sweeney et al (2019, p.122):
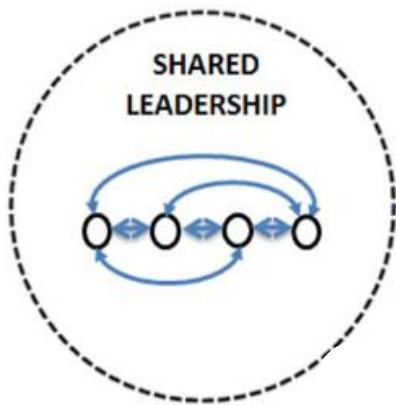
Figure 4 – Shared leadership (SL) illustration from Sweeney et al (2019)

This section of the review begins with a meta-analysis by D'Innocenzo et al (2016). All metastudies use previously published (and in this case unpublished too) studies and discern common factors that can be statistically tested against desired outcomes. This meta-analysis uses 50 effect sizes from 43 studies to show a positive

relationship between SL and team performance. The authors are aware of the

inconsistencies of definition across the pluralised leadership literature and take

account of different conceptualisations as they seek to test the positive benefits of SL,

the magnitudes of any effects and whether they are consistent across studies.

Table 1 (renamed Table 4 below) is extracted from this paper and illustrates

how these different conceptualisations require different analytical techniques. Within

a positivist paradigm this is expressed as the translation from the concept to its

operationalisation; within a constructionist paradigm we are concerned with the

alignment of ontology and issues of epistemology. This paper sets out to achieve what

Gronn (2002) has advocated.

Table 4 – Table 1 extracted from D'Innocenzo et al (2014)

Date	Authors	Definition Used	Theoretical Distinction
2002	Sivasubramanium, Murry, Avolio, & Jung	Collective influence of members in a team on each other; how members of a group evaluate the influence of the group as opposed to one individual within or external to the group	Aggregation
2006	Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce	Team process where leadership is carried out by the team as a whole rather than solely by a single designated individual	Aggregation
2011	Gupta, Huang, & Yayla	Team's capability for collectively engaging in transformational leadership behaviors; leadership as a collective process, such that the team influences, inspires, and motivates team members	Aggregation
2002	Erez, LePine, & Elms	Leadership can be shared over time whereby team members share (albeit not at once) in responsibilities involved in the leadership role . . . by clarifying who is to perform specific role behaviors (i.e., leader and member)	Centralization
2006	Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson	Shared, distributed phenomenon in which there can be several (formally appointed and/or emergent) leaders	Centralization
2009	Mendez	A dynamic property that is not owned by any particular team member but flows among multiple people and adapts to the characteristics of the situation	Centralization
1998	Gerstner	Viewed as a network of dyadic working relationships between work group members	Density
2007	Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone	"An emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members"	Density
2012	Zhou	The distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members	Density

The paper neatly separates different definitions of SL, noting that there might be up to five different conceptualisations under the overarching category. To summarise they offer the following definition: " … shared leadership is an emergent and dynamic team phenomenon whereby leadership roles and influence are [undertaken by] team members" (D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2016, p.1968). This definition calls attention to the phenomenon as a "team-as-a-whole"

(D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2016, p.1967) but given these authors have been so scrupulous in aligning definitions to units of analysis, I assume that the use of the word "emergent" is not equivalent to "emergence" but instead aims to communicate the idea that SL arises as a dynamic process in a way that is not pre-planned (Sweeney, Clarke and Higgs, 2019). Otherwise, they have broken their own guidelines.

The basic proposition of the paper is that when team members participate in leadership with others, they are likely to better function as a team and thereby achieve higher performance (supported in testing: Z = 6.94, p < .001). They also predict that those studies that have more closely aligned data analytic techniques to the definition of leadership will show more significant effects. To consider this latter issue the authors undertook three subsample meta-analyses separately by type of SL: for those studies using aggregation Z = 4.04, p < .001 but there was significant heterogeneity across the effect sizes; whereas for studies using sociometric analysis there was no significant variability (Z = 6.69, p < .001 for density approaches; Z = 5.01, p < .001 for centralisation approaches). In other words, network conceptions of SL matched to analysis using sociometric approaches, yielded better results with stronger effects.

In closing, the authors point again to the limitations of aggregating the mean scores of teams when asking them to apportion leadership effects to others and the "mental arithmetic" (D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2016, p.1972) involved in answering such questions. But before rushing to the conclusion that SL is best

measured through centralisation network indices, they point to other limitations suggesting that the sharing of leadership within a network says little about network patterns of influences. Although we inhabit different paradigms, I welcome this paper for its precision and clarity and for demonstrating that it matters.

Serban and Roberts (2016) also offer an empirical paper looking at the antecedents and outcomes of SL but this time taking account of the context in which leadership occurs. They rely on the definition of SL provided by Pearce and Conger (2003) "a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both" (Serban and Roberts, 2016, p.1). The paper uses their theoretical model (their Figure 1, but renamed Figure 5 below) as the basis for a mixed-methods study:
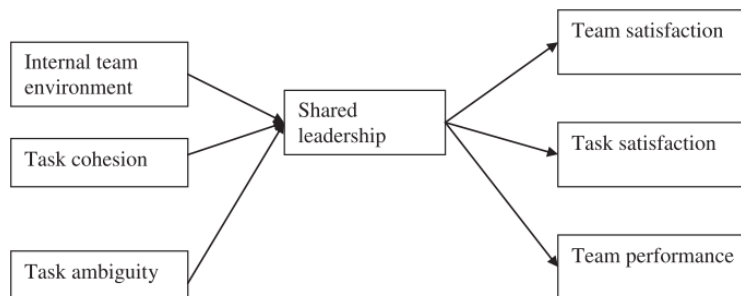
Fig. 1. Hypothesized team-level model of shared leadership.

Figure 5 – Figure 1 extracted from Serban and Roberts (2016)

This theoretical model places SL as a mediator between task and team-level outcomes. Their logic for this model is based on previous studies and reasoning such as:

"Based on a review of prior research on shared leadership, Carson et al (2007) have proposed, tested and revealed that shared leadership is enabled by an overall team environment comprising shared purpose, social support and voice. This internal team environment fosters team members' willingness to offer leadership influence as well as to rely on the leadership of other team members." (Serban and Roberts, 2016, p.184).

But any practitioner will reflect that this is a two-way relationship, and that the nature of any collective endeavour will also have an impact on the internal team environment. My concern is that the model is too simplistic, too linear and too unidirectional.

So, while I do not doubt the rigour of the logic that the authors use, I do doubt the completeness of their theoretical model. Consequently, in the statistical results of the paper, the findings demonstrate that the model is too simplistic with some variables directly affecting the outcome variables and others having a mediating effect. Overall, the authors failed to find support for the mediating effects of SL.

In addition to collecting data from the 120 students participating in a simulated creative task, the authors invited written responses to a number of questions focused on participants' perceptions of leadership and the exercise. These responses provide

the data for the qualitative part of the study. The nature of the task seems to affect the relationship to SL. Participants indicated, and the quantitative data confirmed, that where the task is not ambiguous, they had a higher propensity to share leadership. This is an interesting finding that largely goes uncommented on, but a key driver of pluralised leadership is the increasingly ambiguous context of organisations, so this study seems to suggest that sharing leadership in these circumstances could reduce the group's ability to complete the task.

Sensitive to criticisms that they were examining "just effective teamwork" the authors provide rejoinders specifically describing initiating behaviours exercised by multiple members of the team and decision-making distributed among the team (Serban and Roberts 2016, p.192). Another finding, and one that ties to earlier themes in this review, is that task cohesion was high partly due to the competitive nature of the simulation, and this led to an increased propensity to share leadership within teams. I spotlight this finding to draw attention to the contested nature of these types of study: from the point of view of the functionalist ontology, task commitment may be a proxy for more general commitment, which is considered an *outcome* of leadership (Drath et al, 2008) rarely an antecedent. Finally, however, as this is a laboratory exercise, it calls into question the extent to which these results can be generalised (D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2016).

Embarking on a review of 40 papers, Sweeney et al (2019) use "leadership accomplished through the interactions of multiple individuals" (p.126) as their

definition of SL, but they explain that different parts of the collective leadership narrative adopt alternative constructs and diverse language. The review addresses a previously unacknowledged gap in our understanding where commercial and noncommercial organisations are clustered together. Sweeney and her co-authors argue that public and private organisations are nonequivalent, and studies from these two contexts are unlikely to provide a homogenous data set. The organisations differ in terms of goals and funding and the degree of external influence on them, so rightfully the settings and studies that ensue should recognise these differences. Nevertheless, the research literature has blended definitions of shared leadership across commercial and noncommercial settings and has also failed to take account of the different way in which SL has been defined and operationalised in these different contexts.

Table 4 within the paper by Sweeney et al provides a comprehensive summary of how these differences can be traced through the literature (2019, p.127). For example, research carried out in both contexts – commercial and noncommercial – finds that internal team environment is an important antecedent for SL, particularly a climate that values shared purpose, social support and voice. By contrast, research in noncommercial organisations only has not yet considered how issues such as levels of autonomy or task complexity might moderate the use of SL. Both segments of the literature are most comprehensive in identifying the antecedents of SL: shared purpose, social support, voice, trust, team potency and task cohesion are all

mentioned. Although there is alignment in the beneficial outcomes that result from SL

in both commercial and noncommercial organisations, they likely differ in precise

terms. For example, commercial firms may benefit from a performance uplift;

whereas noncommercial firms may benefit from an increase in organisational

commitment (Sweeney, Clarke and Higgs, 2019, p.129).

The paper concludes as it starts by pointing to the misalignment of concepts

with research approaches and, importantly, notes that: "future research should seek

to build on more appropriate theoretical foundations that accommodate the relational

and interactive nature of SL" (Sweeney, Clarke and Higgs, 2019, p.129).

Addressing the theory–method link of leadership, the paper by Van De Mieroop

et al (2020) provides an empirical analysis of shared leadership-in-action using video

recordings of group meetings and Conversational Analysis (CA). CA, however, is more

than talk and includes many modalities such as talk, gaze, use of space, silence,

absences and artefacts, all of which are used in the doing of leadership. The authors

are concerned to look at the formal and informal activities of leadership and to

discover whether SL is willingly embarked on by those who have hierarchical authority.

The paper explains a concept called proximal deontic authority, which is a

participant's right to initiate, maintain or close down conversations (Van De Mieroop,

Clifton and Verhelst, 2020, p.496). Logically a formal leader has these rights and SL

requires an extension of these rights as an interactional achievement, "rather than as

an a priori established entity" (Van De Mieroop, Clifton and Verhelst, 2020, p.499).

Using 50 video segments where groups embarked on presentation rounds, that is, each member introduced themselves to the group in a manner shaped by a leader/ship invitation to do so, the authors present four extracts using CA. In extract 1 everything accords to the frame provided by the formal leader: she invites everyone to introduce themselves and say something about what they enjoy doing in the weekend. The round is completed, and SL is absent.

In extracts 2a,b,c another group is at the start of a meeting. However, the leader does not initiate a round of introductions, but another participant makes this suggestion. This is considered a leadership activity because it initiates engagement of others in a joint activity with a particular goal. The formal leader (Ellen), whether consciously or unconsciously, leaves spaces and absences where this other person steps in (Jeremy). Ellen absents herself in a number of ways such as focusing her eye-gaze on her tablet or leaving the table. On her return mentally or physically, she takes back the right to allocate turns. This is taken as collaboration with Jeremy because jointly they are moving the activity forward.

Because Ellen sometimes ignores what Jeremy has initiated, and the group re-orients to her framing, the authors state that her leadership is that of formal authority. However, they also conclude that: "Significantly, the other participants orient to the informal leader's … rights to do this, and so we argue that informal leadership is a collective achievement. But not without contestation" (Van De Mieroop, Clifton and Verhelst, 2020, p.508). Thus, formal leadership based on hierarchy remains

throughout shared configurations but it is intertwined with other sources of authority that emerge from the interaction.

Following the order provided in Table 3, I am interested in the parallel logics of this next study by Wellman (2017) and the study of Chreim (2015) on acquisitions. The latter study used data from four acquisitions to suggest that early framing of leadership ability subsequently circumvented or extended opportunities that individuals had to participate in relational leadership. Wellman (2017) working conceptually and without reference to Chreim (2015), suggests that early contextual features in a group's life can cause members to rapidly converge on one of two heuristics for leadership. Some groups converge on an authority model, in which leadership influence is concentrated within a small subset of members who are perceived to possess individual leadership capabilities; think for example, the pyramid of organograms (Wellman, 2017). Other groups converge on a communal relational model, in which leadership is viewed as a shared responsibility. In this relational model, participants in leadership are undifferentiated and equal (Wellman, 2017).

Arguably this paper could be in the emergent category identified previously in Figure 3 because Wellman relies on an emergent definition of leadership and expressly quotes Sandelands (1998). However, the author also says: "I view leadership as a specific type of influence – one that is focused on accomplishing shared goals." (Wellman 2017, p.599) and for me this fails the paradigmatic shift to an emancipatory ontology. I would also go so far as to suggest that "influence" may be a hangover from

the old considerations of leadership as involving a leader and follower(s), with the former inducing others to pursue certain objectives (Drath et al, 2008, p.637). Also, later in the paper, the author considers the appearance of certain individuals based on their behaviour. Four forms of leadership behaviour – initiating structure, vision communication, consideration and intellectual stimulation – are considered to be important in the enactment of leadership in both consensual shared and authority models. Again, the author's rationale for alighting on these behaviours is sound, but we have ended up back at individual behaviour, which is only one remove from traits and characteristics. Hence, this paper remains for now in the SL narrative.

Other important contributions from the Wellman paper are similar to those provided by Chreim, showing with meticulous logic how groups make sense of each other and how they use exogenous cues to make sense of the type of group they are going to form. These authors converge on an implicit leadership model that shapes relational undertakings (see Figure 2, p.604, for the two leadership models overlaid against four exogenous factors) (Wellman, 2017).

However, the author does not see these factors as fixed forever and defines two 'jolts' that can cause a group to reappraise their leadership model. One jolt is when there is a radical change in self-perception caused by some new occurrence – an identity jolt. The other type of jolt is technical, where the manner or mode of working together is radically altered (Wellman, 2017, p.610/11). This extends the insights of Chreim by suggesting that adjustments to the chosen leadership model are not just

possible but also necessary. However, I note that the jolts are illustrated with external

factors coming to bear on the group. In the Cases that I report on later in this thesis

other forms of jolts (called Ruptures) arise from within the groups. There is no

conjecture by Wellman as to whether the source of the jolts is relevant, but it is an

important distinction and worthy of further enquiry.

The next section is headed Distributed and Shared Leadership in Figure 3, here

authors have combined or straddled the two previous narrative threads. I have

selected two papers for this part of the review, shown in Table 5.

Table 5 – Selection of papers in DL and SL to demonstrate main contributions

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
Contractor, N. S., DeChurch, L. A., Carson, J., Carter, D. R., and Keegan, B. (2012). The topology of collective leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 23(6), 994–1011.	Conceptual	A three-dimensional typology that can be used to guide new research using network analysis methods. Four specific propositions for leadership configurations that can be tested.
Mendez, M. J., Howell, J. P., and Bishop, J. W. (2015). Beyond the unidimensional collective leadership model. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 36(6), 675–696.	Empirical	A two-dimensional typology that is tested in public sector committees to discover what configurations have the most beneficial effect on performance.

Contractor et al (2012) use a network methodology to help explore new domains of leadership that are informal and dynamic and brought about by the members of the collective itself. Viewing leadership as enacted through a network brings to the fore an issue that is embedded in many definitions but largely obscured. That idea is that working in a leadership constellation requires multiple participants to mutually influence and be influenced. The extension of this rationale, according to these authors, is that the most appropriate expert occupies the 'task leader' role, and the most liked member occupies the role of 'social leader'. This role differentiation occurs as a natural outflow of interaction intensity and multiplicity. However, the authors also acknowledge that multiple individuals may enact multiple roles, and this topological multiplexity (i.e., forms and role structure) can change over time. Against my crude definitions of DL and SL, I consider that this paper is focused on the intersection of both ideas: roles that can be divided and parsed out; and roles that are passed around.

The topology of these ideas and choices is represented through a cube where each team member is on the vertical; roles are on the horizontal (e.g. navigator, engineer, social integrator); and time is the third dimension. Each sector of the cube can then be populated. The topology makes four propositions: all the members play all the roles all the time; one member plays all the roles all the time; each member plays a role all the time; different members play different roles at different times. The

paper then describes the methodology and statistical analysis that can be used to populate the cube, based on network analysis.

In commending their typology to the reader, the authors point to the need to continue strengthening the translation of conceptual advances in understanding leadership as complex and dynamic with corresponding advances in analytic methodology.

Network analysis is also a feature of the paper by Mendez, Howell, and Bishop (2015). The model that these authors use is simpler than Contractor et al (2012) – in this case it is two-dimensional: on one axis leadership sharedness (the extent to which leadership roles are shared by group members), and on the other axis leadership distribution (the extent to which different leadership roles are permanently assigned to group members). Following a similar logic to earlier, I see this as the intersection between DL and SL. The theoretical framing of the paper makes the point that while in other studies the distinction between DL and SL is often hazy, by placing them on different axes they are not interchangeable. By extension, it also means – although this is unstated – that both have to be present.

The study applies this model to look at 28 committees from higher education, local administration, health and not-for-profit organisations to consider how different aspects of collective leadership patterns affect group performance. The researchers administered self-report questionnaires to committee members to assess each other's and their own performance. The authors report that: "Significant correlations were

observed between committee performance and the eight measures of sharedness in the team … but no correlation was significant between committee performance and leadership distribution" (Mendez, Howell and Bishop, 2015, p.389).

This suggests that a degree of inclusivity is important for these committees to perform well and that the distribution of leadership does not benefit from becoming more formalised. However, unlike the Contractor et al (2012) model, there is no temporal axis on this model so how the committees allow for changes in their dynamics is not accounted for.

3.1.1.4 Distributed, shared, shared & distributed leadership summary

"Over the years, the literature has become quite disjointed with a proliferation of nomenclature and conceptualizations. For example, shared leadership (Avolio et al, 1996; Boies, Lvina, and Martens, 2010; Carson et al, 2007), distributed leadership (Bolden, 2011; Gibb, 1954; Mehra, Smith, Dixon, and Robertson, 2006), collective leadership (Friedrich, Vessey, Schulke, Ruark, and Mumford, 2011; Hiller, Day, and Vance, 2006), team leadership (Chen and Lee, 2007; Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam, 2010; Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, and Jung, 2002), informal leadership (Neubert, 1999), and peer leadership (Bowers and Seashore, 1966; Gerstner, 1998) have all been advanced as ways to conceptualize and understand how leadership may emanate from, and be shared by, team members" (D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger, 2016, p.1965).

I hope that I have demonstrated that the literature under the banner headings of distributed, shared and shared & distributed leadership is abundant and disorganised. To help myself get to grips with the main issues, I have imposed an organisation on the literature (Figure 3) that I recognise is itself disputable. To organise the literature, I had to decide on a system of categorisation and have used distributed, shared, shared & distributed as sub-categories. At the supraordinate level, I have called this pluralised or collective leadership. Having organised the literature and reviewed it, I now draw together some of the enduring themes that have appeared.

3.1.1.4.1 What leadership is

The definition and conceptualisation of all these terms is still unresolved. Although I have sought to categorise and organise, it has proved impossible as the papers are often contradictory or diffuse or pick-and-mix between ideas that do not sit well together. For example, there are papers that claim to be working with definitions of spontaneous collaboration but continue to refer to followers.

3.1.1.4.2 How leadership is operationalised

For empirical or review papers, the next confusion arises with the translation of a definition into variables or ideas that merit attention. Often, the epistemological approaches do not match the ontological presumptions. For example, there are papers that claim to consider the phenomenon of interest to be a group property but insist on measuring individuals and aggregating the results.

With regard to items one and two above, I draw on both D'Innocenzo, Mathieu, and Kukenberger (2016); and Sweeney, Clarke, and Higgs (2019) who admonish the misalignment of ontology and epistemology. Sweeney et al (2019) specifically point out that in their paper, "[t]he majority of studies in this review (73%) rely on quantitative research designs, suggesting that the dominant epistemological position within this field to date has been positivist…this paper concurs with the view that leadership is primarily a social phenomenon that relies on the subjective interpretations of followers, and thus an interpretive epistemological position is needed to complement the quantitative work in the field." (p.121)

3.1.1.4.3 Binary or a range

Some studies are writing of leadership as present or absent, for example Chreim (2015) and Van De Mieroop, Clifton, and Verhelst (2020) represent instances where there is a gap or space in leadership. Others present leadership on a spectrum with variations or differences apparent at different points, e.g. Gronn (2002) and Currie and Lockett (2016).

3.1.1.4.4 Does distributed or shared leadership matter?

Here there is consensus. All the authors represented in this body of work argue that pluralising leadership does matter. For those working qualitatively, the argument is that the contexts in which leadership is required are too complex and difficult for one brain to manage. For those working quantitatively the dependent variables are some version of effectiveness or performance.

3.1.1.4.5 Is it leadership?

"The dilemma remains that leadership disintegrates as a separate construct when considering collaborative settings…easily shading into decision making, collaboration or simply work. When 'leadership' can no longer be attached to individuals there is a danger it may become a chimera" (Fairhurst et al, 2020, p.606). A functionalist perspective resolves this question by relying on the outcomes of leadership, which are said to be qualitatively different from those that a team would produce. Foremost among these outcomes is the production of Direction. As we move into the next realm of leadership literature this line of discussion amplifies because the definition of leadership becomes more emancipatory and more inclusive.

3.1.1.4.6 Siloed or integrated

From time to time, I have mentioned that papers have been constructing similar arguments in similar ways but not referencing each other, nor even referencing similar source material. It is this, above most of the other concerns, that leads me to conclude that the categories I've assembled are representative of distinct narratives with only a few authors straddling categories.

The review continues into the next section and considers a more tight-knit set of contributions that often cross refer and draw from shared sources. I have loosely termed this the emergent or emergence forms of leadership and in Figure 3 this grouping is placed to the right green line.

3.1.2 Emergent/Emergence Leadership

In introducing The Leadership Quarterly (2016) special issue, Cullen-Lester and

Yammarino (2016) refer directly to the change in foundational assumptions that are

rooted in this body of literature. The first ontological shift has been discussed at

length in the foregoing discussion, but the move across the unsteady line in Figure 3

introduces complexity as a basis for theorising. Complexity theory offers that the

interactive and interdependent collections of relationships are dynamic and evolving

such that they are never twice the same. Ideas of emergence embrace the same

concepts as process ontology and "as such, complexity theory stands in contrast to

leadership theories, which assume that parts of the system can be isolated and studied

independently and that the future can be predicted with certainty" (Cullen-Lester and

Yammarino, 2016, p.175). I have selected eight papers in this domain simply on the

basis of ideas and writers who have inspired my thinking; once again, I acknowledge

this is just the tip of the iceberg but remind the reader that we are still on literature

appetisers! Table 6 shows the included papers:

Table 6 – Literature reviewed for emergent/emergence leadership

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
Denis, J., Lamothe, L., and Langley, A. (2001). The Dynamics of Collective Leadership and Strategic Change in Pluralistic Organizations. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 44(4), 809–837.	Empirical	Using five cases, the authors propose three types of coupling that need to be in place to permit change. But coupling is fragile and difficult to maintain so change is fitful.

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
Denis, J. L., Langley, A., and Rouleau, L. (2010). The practice of leadership in the messy world of organizations. *Leadership*, 6(1), 67–88.	Empirical	Uses three cases, following three leaders to show leadership as dynamic, collective, situated and dialectic.
Quick, K.S. (2017) 'Locating and building collective leadership and impact', *Leadership*, 13(4), pp. 445–471.	Empirical	A case study of a city that has no option but to invert the power structure and pass ownership of urban regeneration to its citizens. From the space left by the city, leadership coalesces and mobilises action.
Empson, L. (2020). Ambiguous authority and hidden hierarchy: Collective leadership in an elite professional service firm. *Leadership*, 16(1), 62–86.	Empirical	A case study of a professional firm that needs to restructure to save costs. But the firm is a partnership with a hidden authority structure that becomes apparent only during the crises.
Sklaveniti, C. (2020). Moments that connect: Turning points and the becoming of leadership. *Human Relations*, 73(4), 544–571.	Empirical	Identifies three processes that help the collective cohere around matters of importance. Shows how a widening circle becomes engaged and committed to the same matters.

Paper	Type	Contribution in brief
Marion, R., and Uhl-Bien, M. (2003). Complexity theory and Al-Qaeda: Examining complex leadership. *Emergence*, 5(1), 54–76.	Empirical	Groups of terrorists self-organise into a coherent group without the benefit of the usual organising processes. The case study shows how this is achieved.
Sveiby, K.-E. (2011). Collective leadership with power symmetry: Lessons from Aboriginal prehistory. *Leadership*, 7(4), 385–414.	Empirical	Anthropological approach to considering leadership in societies where leaders are not recognised, yet tribes remain coherent using stories to create lore.
Spiller, C., Maunganui Wolfgramm, R., Henry, E., and Pouwhare, R. (2020). Paradigm warriors: Advancing a radical ecosystems view of collective leadership from an Indigenous Māori perspective. *Human Relations,* 73(4), 516–543.	Empirical	Demonstrates processes of cohesion that transcend the inter-relating of humans and calls on ancestors past and generations future; and natural phenomenon too.

In Denis et al (2001) the authors articulate the notion of pluralistic power structures and bring these to life in five cases based in the Canadian Health Sector. In all the cases, multiple reporting lines ensure that power is never concentrated in any single person, for example the Medical Council Executive reports to the Board, bypassing the CEO. The various leadership constellations are set up with the types of checks and balances such as we would find familiar in local government and the NHS in the UK. The authors are using a process theory of strategic change in pluralistic

settings where power is diffused, and different groupings hold divergent objectives. Against this context, leadership is a form of "negotiated order" achieved through ongoing interactions (Denis, Lamothe and Langley, 2001, p.828).

The study identifies three levels of "coupling" between leaders, organisation and environment that need to be mobilised to permit change. Meaning that the job of leadership is coalition building and maintaining, with multiple groupings at multiple levels.

This is the first study considered so far where leadership is also supra-organisational, extending beyond the focal organisational boundaries to take account of other public bodies and constituencies as part of the wider health ecosystem. Through an abductive study, the authors alight on three levels of coupling: 1) strategic – among the leadership team; 2) organisational – between leadership and internal stakeholders; 3) environmental – between a team and external stakeholders. In simple terms, 'across' leadership groupings; 'down' through the entire organisational structure; and 'out' beyond the walls of the organisation.

They suggest that for change to occur, all three couplings need to be in place simultaneously, and because this is effortful and difficult to achieve, change is episodic occurring in "fits and starts" (Denis, Lamothe and Langley, 2001, p.810). Coupling and uncoupling become a feature of the change endeavour.

In the second part of the paper, the theoretical framework of coupling is tested against further cases during two merger situations. In "this see-saw theory of

collective leadership and strategic change" (Denis, Lamothe and Langley, 2001, p.826), stability is obtained but then forces build up that create a tip. Social embeddedness – described as a high number of ties between leaders – is a source of stability in constellations but it can also be used to protect against change or protect the change initiatives. In other words, embeddedness can either push against or pull through new ideas.

The authors conclude the paper with a compelling argument that these findings are generalisable to other firms, most particularly, for example, professional firms where power structures are diffuse and pluralised leadership is likely to become increasingly important.

Nine years later, using a subset of the 2001 data and with different authorship, Denis, Langley, and Rouleau (2010) approach three cases through a practice lens. This is the research approach that I will adopt and explain in detail in the chapter on Methods, but for now it is broadly defined as a focus on "human action and praxis in order to understand how people participate in the production and reproduction of organization and society, and, in this case, of leadership." (p.68)   The practices of leadership are characterised as dynamic, collective, situated and dialectical and they are brought to life through the individual case studies of leaders: John, Ivor and Martin, who enter different health care settings with a mandate for change with various results, not all of which are unequivocally successful.

Denis and colleagues do not try to aggregate from individuals to group, so mercifully we are spared the compositional approaches of earlier papers. Alternatively, the paper uses the three individuals to zoom in and out (Nicolini, 2009) on the detailed entanglements that occur through the doings of leadership. In exploring the dynamics of leadership, the authors note that there is a recursive relationship between leadership practices and their consequences. Activity undertaken now inevitably has varying potential for effectiveness later – for example the rise and eventual withdrawal of John.

To illustrate the collective nature of leadership, Denis et al (2010) illustrate how each of the three leaders depends critically on a constellation of co-leaders who need to play complementary roles in initiating and embedding change. It is at this point that I have some small concerns because this framing leads me to question whether they have reverted to looking at who is a leader. For example, John is reported to have effectively negotiated an alliance with Chris and Mitch who hold more senior positions. This seems to me to be more akin to a networked view of leadership such as we saw in the DL literature.

The situatedness of leadership is achieved in the paper by considering the micro inter-relating of leaders in specific contexts. This translates to a view of leadership that sits between the participants and is illustrated by the different types of interactions that the three key players had with other publics.

Leadership as dialectic is described as practices that have both an upside and a downside: strengths that can become weaknesses. Here again I am concerned that the paper has wavered from its earlier definitions and is using personal characteristics to illustrate a group-level idea.

The theorising that comes from Denis et al (2010) is seminal and cannot be dismissed, and it is relied on by many authors that follow. The authors conclude with the idea that constellations of leaders will be more effective when participants embody specialisation, differentiation and complementarity (Denis, Langley and Rouleau 2010). This is akin to the rationale that supports team-based models such as Belbin (Aritzeta, Swailes and Senior, 2007). It says, in other words, that there needs to be a reason for everyone to participate – enough difference and enough alikeness.

The list of papers now jumps to Quick (2017) and Empson (2020), which are chronologically out of order so that other papers can be clustered together.

The paper by Quick (2017) is located in Grand Rapids and considers leadership within a programme of urban environmental stewardship. In brief, the city has three concerns: it recognises that urban decline is leading to an exodus of people and talent; it recognises that one facet of urban decline is a poor environment that is both polluted and suffering from infrastructure decay; AND the city has run out of money.

Initially, the greening of Grand Rapids is simply a series of isolated initiatives undertaken by community groups and some of the companies in the area, for example, Herman Miller. But slowly momentum builds. At a public meeting where the city

admits they cannot provide any funding, they put the onus back on local organisations and "the room erupted in enthusiastic applause" (Quick, 2017, p.458). Quick, in a theme reminiscent of Chreim (2015) begins to explore how absences allow and encourage leadership. There is now space for others to step up.

The author's findings demonstrate her earlier proposition that leadership is a process ''that can 'stretch over' many actors'' (citing Raelin 2016, p.3). In the ''mutuality'' form investigated in the paper, leaders and followers are considered the same people, and there is dynamic movement in who is leading at any given time. "In these conceptualizations, leadership action continues to be enacted by individuals, but rather than a singular leader, there are multiple people exercising leadership, simultaneously or sequentially" (Quick, 2017, p.447).

A very recent investigation by Empson (2020) follows a professional services firm that is forced to undertake restructuring following the collapse of Lehman Brothers during the 2008 financial crisis. The case begins with the leadership operating in business-as-usual mode with the Managing Partner, the Board and other senior partners managing the business in a way that obscures hierarchy and clouds decision-making processes. It might be described as 'chummy', relying on social embeddedness such as career-long tenure, close personal relationships, mutual trust and shared values. But it is also a fudge because how leadership exercises authority at this point is not entirely clear. Actually, Empson points out that there is an underbelly to this fudge because what might be happening is that key actors are subsuming their

contested power relations and uniting to exert influence over colleagues. She suggests that this might be best characterised as 'collaborative interdependence'.

What comes to the fore in the midst of an urgent need to reduce headcount is that a formal hierarchy that was previously hidden rears up and asserts itself; executive oversight is reasserted. At first, the Managing Partner and Finance Director work with an inner circle of partners who reject the initial proposals. Later, as the need for change becomes increasingly urgent, the inner circle broadens to include more partners. This is important as partners in a partnership expect to have a say in how affairs are managed, but, of course, they are inclined to argue to preserve their own empires. After a while a consensus is reached, and this implicates a wider group in the collective decisions about where to make headcount reductions. After many rounds of engagement 50 partners, around 10% of the total, are co-opted into the decision.

Empson (2020) contributes to our understanding of emergent leadership by analysing a very large group of participants and considering multiple relationships among individuals with overlapping roles. This exposes complex power relations that were hidden during business as usual. I am particularly interested in the finding from this paper that shows the leadership group avoiding unhelpful power struggles and creating a degree of cohesion that is remarkable when everyone's jobs are on the line. This cohesion helps the partners to maintain, in the long term, the social

embeddedness on which their collective leadership is built, but in the short term take decisions that threaten that embeddedness.

In keeping with other papers in this section of emergent/emergence the next paper commits to a "more dynamic, processual and relational social constructionist view" of the phenomenon we come to signify as leadership (Sklaveniti, 2020, p.545). This paper draws on themes previously developed in this literature review. Foremost among them is the view that leadership represents the co-production of direction. Leaning on Gergen's work on responsive interplay, the author introduces turning points that are fleeting moments of change to provide better understanding of moments when co-action unfolds to create direction.

Set in a third sector organisation in the UK, Sklaveniti (2020) observes meetings and online exchanges using the in-house IT platform: here is the mundane and unspectacular practice of leadership. The narrative arc shows how, through inter-relating, participants achieve co-action as they seek direction. Three contributions from the paper are of note for my research: by zooming in (Nicolini, 2009) on specific moments the author untangles how leadership relationships develop so that matters of concern are socialised to the collective; second, by looking more broadly and connecting leadership moments, a process view is introduced; third, the theorising is vociferously not individual. "Because the space for co-action is irreducible to specific individuals, relationality comes to the forefront and the methodological concern is to observe co-action as it appears in fleeting moments" (Sklaveniti, 2020, p.549).

The findings of the research identify three flows called invitation, exploration and affirmation. In brief, these are largely sequential, with the invitational flow being the expression of some concern. This then needs to become a point of collective engagement and thus become substantial for the organisation because, without a build-up of momentum, there would be no matter to act on. The collective dynamic is key to understanding how co-action is mobilised. Exploration is the flow that develops this widening circle of engagement. Affirmation is the flow whereby the group alights on a common understanding of what needs to be achieved and resources will be allocated accordingly. These ideas of flow are echoed later in my Cases.

Marion and Uhl-Bien (2003), Sveiby (2011) and Spiller et al (2020) are considered together because they present very interesting and unusual cases in this body of literature. They are all naturalistic studies of one sort or another that broaden our horizons a little further and lead us down new pathways. The study of Al-Qaeda by Marion and Uhl-Bien (2003) juxtaposes the usual Westernised views. The paper charts how Al-Qaeda leadership achieves coordination in the absence of the usual organising structures by relying on a form of cohering without which the movement would fall into disarray. Al-Qaeda leans on family, history, ideology and loyalty, to provide ties that bind. The authors coin the term 'tags' to explore the unifying forces that bond constituent parts. A tag can be (among other things) an idea, a physical symbol of a system such as a flag, a common enemy or a belief. Tags owe their

existence to, and emerge from, interactive dynamics and they are not restricted to intersubjective relating.

Similarly, the work of Sveiby (2011) considering aboriginal tribes in Australia and Africa considers issues of leadership in societies where power is flat and leaders are not recognised. Yet, inevitably, tribes need to manage themselves in a way that allows experts to take prominence without dominating, and they need a multiplicity of people to take part in decision-making while avoiding stalemate. Coherent collective action avoids these pitfalls. In the case presented by Sveiby, story and folklore are used to weave together behavioural charters, routines and agreed practices that are developed to prevent controversy destroying the cohesion of the group. This type of study draws attention to phenomena and processes beyond the immediate tribe.

In the Māori culture of New Zealand, Land or Ground provides we-ness. A tribe is of a place and of a time. Ancestors are called into meetings: past and future generations are woven into the present. Land and rivers are considered as Beings. Song and dance are used to weave spaces in which conflict can subsist without resolution but also without rancour (Spiller et al, 2020).

These studies that I touch on lightly here are _more than_ an afterthought. All three studies are looking across and around the group and this looking in new places brings new processes and practice to the fore: Land, Ancestry, Stories do not simply lie within the group but beyond the group. The Buddhist philosophy that I will introduce

in section three of this chapter urges us to work trans-subjectively to look at transcending processes that are beyond the intersubjective.

3.1.2.1 Emergent/emergence leadership summary

This concludes a review of the foundational literature of pluralised leadership. When summarising DL/SL conceptualisations I bemoaned the resistance to leaving behind 'who' is leading. In the most recent special issue on collective leadership in Human Relations, Ospina et al (2020) write: "the field has seen important theoretical and empirical developments, but researchers operating under the broad theoretical umbrella of CL [collective leadership] continue to work on different paths and with different theoretical frameworks" (p.444). Similarly, in reviewing collective leadership, Alexy (2020) says that a final account of collective leadership is not possible because the metatheoretic assumptions are not grounded in fact but in social construction. Thus, the very assumption that is baked into the concept prevents any agreement as to what it is that we are agreeing upon (Alexy, 2020, p.3). To attempt a way of combining uniform sets of concepts, I chose to label the last set of papers under the heading of emergent and emergence literature. Here, the change of focus from 'who' has been firmly achieved alongside the shift to emergence, which rejects compositional forms of measurement.

Relieved of the 'who', many of the studies reviewed turn to look at 'what' is done. They discover that coalitions are built and fade, and that coalitions that rise to prominence can create momentum or, in waning, lose that momentum (Denis, Langley

and Rouleau 2010; Empson 2020; Sklaveniti 2020). In other cases, relationships are not directly mobilised through intersubjectivity, but 'we-ness' is shaped by calling on ancestors past or generations future or symbolic means such as flags, Land, natural features (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2003; Spiller et al, 2020; Sveiby, 2011). Stepping into the emergent leadership literature demonstrates how entangled people are with each other and how issues and actions ebb and flow in patterns that reinforce or challenge those entanglements. Despite not being the exact literature in which I place my thesis, emergent/emergence leadership is a very important influence on my thinking. In particular, this collection of papers begins to point to processes that are not simple 'groupwork' but which begin to describe a more sophisticated understanding of groups producing leadership.

Part two that now follows investigates Leadership-as-Practice (LAP) and collaborative leadership, which is the focus of my study. Figure 6 is repeated as a reminder.
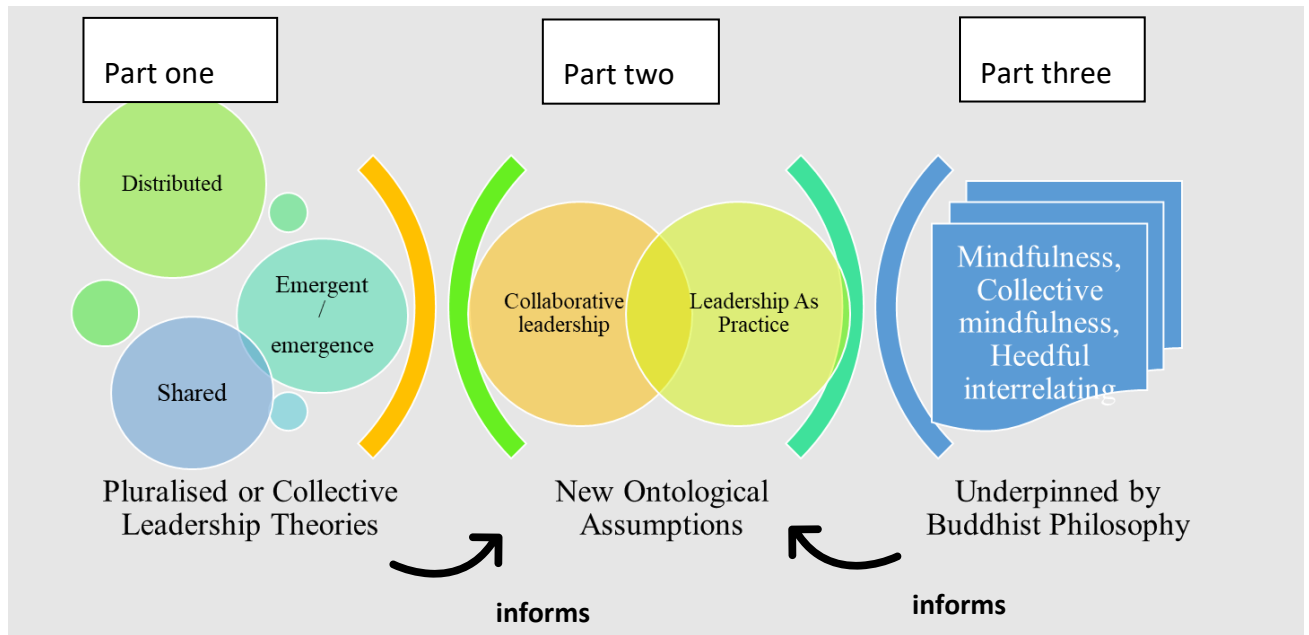
Figure 6 – Locating this thesis in the literature and navigating this chapter

3.2 PART TWO

As we cross into this new realm of literature and theorising, the practice lens pervades the narrative and this needs to be foregrounded. Collaborative leadership is said to be enacted through practice and thus it is not a matter of edict or administration. The process by which human collective capacity emerges is nonlinear and agentic and only within the purview of those who take part (Will, 2016). Neither agency nor collaboration is by command of the organisation but is made-unmade-and-remade in a perpetual practice of intertwining people, material, spaces and more (Crevani and Endrissat, 2016).

3.2.1 Leadership-as-Practice and Collaborative Leadership

The earliest glimmers of LAP only date back to 2006 so this is a reasonably new narrative with scattered literature (Simpson, Buchan and Sillince, 2018). Raelin (2006; 2016b; 2016c) lays down many of the conceptual ideas that shape this field. Early in the movement, so-called because the ideas are argued to be radical and in criticism of traditional leadership (Raelin, 2017), LAP sets out to understand "leadership activity wherever and however it appears" (2017, p.216). Activity and agency are recurring ideas in this field.

To provide a thorough review, I have divided up the source material into two sections and will review them concurrently. The main spine of this section will focus on the empirical work of LAP described in seven papers. These are shown in the top half of Table 7 below. Interwoven around these studies, I will refer to the conceptual developments in the field – 12 further sources – as shown in the bottom half of Table 7.

Table 7 – Literature reviewed in the domain of LAP

Source	Type	Contribution in brief
Carroll, B., Levy, L., and Richmond, D. (2008). Leadership as practice: Challenging the competency paradigm. *Leadership*, 4(4), 363–379.	Empirical	Among the first to claim the territory of LAP, laying out the main ontological assumptions of the field evidenced by a case study of leader development.

Source	Type	Contribution in brief
Carroll, B., and Simpson, B. (2012). Capturing sociality in the movement between frames: An illustration from leadership development. *Human Relations*, 65(10), 1283–1309.	Empirical	Discussions are framed by participants and then the frames are moved or bridged. Through the movement of frames, relationality is built so that the group coheres while retaining emergent and dynamic properties. Frames do not fix the discussion or the group.
Kempster, S., and Gregory, S. H. (2017). 'Should I Stay or Should I go?' Exploring Leadership-as-Practice in the Middle Management Role. *Leadership*, 13(4), 496–515.	Empirical	Connects contextually situated microflows of activity with emergent outcomes. These outcomes then go on to impact the context for successive activity, etc. Thus, the authors show the ongoing flow of activity that is constantly adjusting and re-adjusting.
Simpson, B., Buchan, L., and Sillince, J. (2018). The performativity of leadership talk. *Leadership*, 14(6), 644–661.	Empirical	Without resorting to a development model, the authors show the temporality of leadership being talked into being. The group needs to cohere to tackle a major restructuring that is achieved over six months of the study.

Source	Type	Contribution in brief
Vuojärvi, H., and Korva, S. (2020). An ethnographic study on leadership-as-practice in trauma simulation training. *Leadership in Health Services*, 1751-1879.	Empirical	Shows how inter-actional agency plays out across participants and the resulting action is emergent and co-constructed towards a specific aim.
Case, P., and Śliwa, M. (2020). Leadership learning, power and practice in Laos: A leadership-as-practice perspective. *Management Learning*, 1–22.	Empirical	Sociomaterial practice is revealed in the context of Laos where leaders are appointed, and strict hierarchy prevails. The lead author commandeers his new understanding of sociomaterial practice to further his aims.
Wilkinson, J. (2020). Educational Leadership as Practice. Encyclopaedia of Educational Theories and Philosophies, *Educational Administration and Leadership*, February, 654–659.	Empirical	The adoption of school-wide processes is used to account for relationality with the wider community.
Raelin, J. A. (2006). Does Action Learning Promote Collaborative Leadership? *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 5(2), 152–168.	Conceptual	Organisational members exhibit collaborative leadership because they are agentic, not because they have the mantle of authority. Consequently, leadership development needs to radically change.

Source	Type	Contribution in brief
Raelin, J. A. (2007). Toward an Epistemology of Practice. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 6(4), 495–519.	Conceptual	Applies the ideas of collaborative leadership to the tutoring of students with the aim of changing the pedagogical approach, adding an emphasis on reflection and endorsing uncertainty.
Raelin, J. A. (2011). From Leadership-as-Practice to Leaderful Practice. *Leadership*, 7(2), 195–211.	Conceptual	Separates relational approaches from the dominant view of the relation (aka influence from leader to follower). A practice perspective sees the social interaction as a contestation among mutual inquirers sharing their intersubjective meanings.
Raelin, J. A. (2016). It's not about the leaders: It's about the practice of leadership. *Organizational Dynamics*, 45(2), 124–131.	Conceptual	Working collaboratively can be joyful: "In exhibiting a necessary level of autonomy, they become collectively engaged, not because of the benefits extrinsic to the work, but because of the sheer enjoyment of accomplishment."
Raelin, J. A. (2016). Imagine there are no leaders: Reframing leadership as collaborative agency. *Leadership*, 12(2), 131–158.	Conceptual	Introduces the pragmatic tradition and the phrase 'collaborative agency' is more fully explored and explained.

Source	Type	Contribution in brief
Raelin, J. A. (2016). Leadership-as-practice: Theory and application. In J. A. Raelin (Ed.), *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application* (1st ed.). Routledge.	Conceptual	13 collected essays edited by Raelin: Background; Embodied nature; Social interactions; Application.
Crevani, L., and Endrissat, N. (2016). Mapping the leadership-as-practice terrain: Comparative elements. In *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application* (1st ed.). Routledge.	Conceptual with some illustrative secondary data	Offers ideas for methodological approaches to studying LAP. Encourages researchers to pay attention to the lived experience and to study people in their natural context. Also, to look for recurring patterns of action.
Simpson, B. (2016). Where's the agency in leadership-as-practice? In *Leadership-as-Practice: Theory and Application* (1st ed.). Routledge.	Conceptual	Argues that LAP needs to adopt a trans-actional view of leadership where trans-action is performativity that is above and around the group.
Raelin, J. A. (2017). Leadership-as-practice: Theory and application— An editor's reflection. *Leadership*, 13(2), 215–221.	Conceptual	Uses the form 'intersubjective' to describe leadership as interwoven *within* the dynamic unfolding of participants' becoming. Also expresses the emancipatory ideals of LAP.
Collinson, M. (2018). What's new about Leadership-as-Practice? *Leadership*, 14(3), 363–370.	Conceptual	Challenges the 'movement' of LAP, saying it is naïve and blind to issues of power and subjugation.

Source	Type	Contribution in brief
Raelin, J. A., Kempster, S., Youngs, H., Carroll, B., and Jackson, B. (2018). Practicing leadership-as-practice in content and manner. *Leadership*, 14(3), 371-383.	Conceptual	Multiple authors respond to Collinson's criticism. Acknowledging work to be done around power issues but continuing to justify emancipatory ideas and critical approach to normative ideas.
Collinson, M. (2018). So what IS new about Leadership-as-Practice? *Leadership*, 14(3), 384–390.	Conceptual	Response to the response. Collinson says she is largely unconvinced.

I note that in this body of literature, activity and practice are used interchangeably. The "practice-turn" (Chia and MacKay 2007; Feldman and Worline 2016) posits that human behaviour can only be fully understood by examining human actions as people relate to each other through practice. In reviewing different approaches to practice, Feldman and Orlikowski propose: "Although various practice theorists emphasize different aspects of these relationships and elaborate distinct logics, all generally subscribe to a key set of theorizing moves: (1) that situated actions are consequential in the production of social life, (2) that dualisms are rejected as a way of theorizing, and (3) that relations are mutually constitutive. These principles cannot be taken singly, but implicate one another" (Feldman and Orlikowski, 2011, p.1241). Therefore, practice is here defined to mean the improvised, in situ coping and evolving patterns of behaviour and activity through which new meanings emerge and

unfold (Raelin, 2016a). Agency is said to give rise to and arise from activity: agency

springs from engaged social interaction (Raelin, 2016b, 2016a) and therefore activity

and agency are mutually constituted (Feldman 2015).

When used as a verb, 'practice' (US spelling) includes all social features of

relevance to the process of interest and the continuously flowing agencies and

activities (Buchan and Simpson, 2020) that are recursively produced and emergent

(Kempster and Gregory, 2017). Practice therefore encodes: beliefs; history; roles;

power relationships; mental heuristics; personal values; agency in a continual flow of

activity (Chia, 2004; Feldman and Worline, 2016; Kempster and Gregory, 2017; Nicolini

and Monteiro, 2017). It is important to note too that through a practice lens, it is not

just the mind, but the body also that is implicated. Thus, collaborative leadership is

made-and-unmade-and-remade perpetually when people transform their flow of

practice towards new meanings and directions (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010; Von Krogh

et al, 2013). Leadership in this form, as a sequence of patterns, in flow, is never static

but is always emergent and across multiple participants.

From agency and activity spring another term: 'collaborative agency', which

Raelin states has an "inseparable connection" to leadership (Raelin, 2016b, p.1742).

Following this, I use the compounded phrase 'collaborative leadership' to encapsulate

these ideas. Ideas of collaborative leadership depend on a shift from: "self to

relational to collective orientation" (Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008, p.368);

"transformed by the relation between them – which is not just the sum of their

qualities" (Raelin, 2016a, p.135). Or, more prosaically, "think of a time when a team was humming along almost like a single unit. Working together was a joy … Everyone is participating in the leadership … both collectively and concurrently" (Raelin, 2011, p.16). Quoting from Hegel (1807/1977 in Raelin, 2016), this is represented by "an I that is we and a we that is I".

Without some form of connecting around and across agents, we are inevitably left with individuals. Following this logic, and as demonstrated in Part One of this chapter, pluralised forms of leadership rely on the cooperation, coalescence and/or collaboration of individuals in some way or another. The scholars within the field of LAP partially address the way that individuals "transcend their own immediate embeddedness" to achieve this coalescence, (Raelin, 2016a, p.138) but only partially. Whereas coordination can be achieved administratively through role descriptions for example, coalescence or – as Raelin suggests – transcending oneself, cannot be mandated. The conundrum is that all theories of pluralised leadership embed an assumption about we-ness, yet few actually focus their research efforts directly on the dynamics of coalescence from which leadership continuously arises. So it is specifically the emergence of collaborative leadership as a process of self-transcending that I seek to understand in this thesis. Thanks to Raelin (2016), I alight on LAP and the inseparable connection to collaborative agency as the theorising in which to locate my study, and this also provides my thesis title: 'Leadership-as-Practice: Understanding the emergence of *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* through video ethnography.' I now

review the LAP literature with a specific focus on the question of how inter-relating

becomes 'we-ness' (Gronn, 2015, p.556).

The paper by Carroll, Levy and Richmond (2008) helpfully includes the

distinctions on which the LAP movement builds. These core constructs are provided in

their Table 1 (renamed Table 8) below:

Table 8 – Table 1 extracted from Carroll, Levy and Richmond (2008, p.366)

Practice
Explicitly constructionist
Inherently relational and collective
Discourse, narrative and rhetoric
Situated and socially defined
Privileges lived or day-to-day experience
Incorporates embodiment and emotion

The authors then use qualitative data collected following an 18-month

leadership development programme to illustrate how a relational shift in perspective is

achieved. The authors explore how the participants did not seem to value the

acquisition of new knowledge, but instead offered interview comments that caught

the researchers' attention because they did not conform to usual post-programme

feedback. In this sense, the data was problematic (Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008,

p.369). But the adoption of a practice lens helped the authors to categorise the data

into seven leadership practices: habits, process, consciousness, awareness, control,

everydayness, identity.

Habits, consciousness and awareness were subsequently clustered as 'dwelling in', which they characterise as bringing awareness to the tacit, automatic and hidden parts of the participants' modus operandi. The data suggest that the leadership that arises from this awareness is transformed to be more intentional, with more depth and willingness to enquire (Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008). The authors propose that this ability to dwell is a shift of consciousness that has the potential to remove "any distinction between subject, object and reliance on mental models and cognitive frameworks" (Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008, p.375).

Against their own Table 1 (Table 8 above), the authors have not satisfactorily shown a collective and socially constructed view of leadership because they have relied on individualistic perspectives. The data are evidently not inherently relational nor collective. Nevertheless, this paper is a first step to considering the relational processes by which people coalesce to enact collaborative leadership.

In the next paper, Carroll writes alongside Simpson to use another subset of data from the leadership programmes reviewed above (Carroll and Simpson 2012). The context this time is an online forum called 'the swamp' where the participants spontaneously set up a discussion board to share and explore issues of leadership as lived experience. At first the discussions are driven by the assignments and reading requirements of the course, but after some months, other executives who are not on the development programme join the swamp discussion. Eventually, the CEO steps in and insinuates that the group is privileging these online conversations at the expense

of usual vertical communication. The swamp discussion reacts vigorously to the CEO's suggestion.

The authors use ideas drawn from the pragmatist George Herbert Mead (Simpson, 2009) to consider how the group achieves sociality. Sociality is a relational way of understanding how leadership arises continuously and is then modified through social and online interactions. But relationality is not simply about exchange of views, which is often construed as influence that is passed between participants: relationality in this form is close to the sense of we-ness or coalescence that I am concerned with. This distinction concerning the word 'relationality' is important because most authors usually use 'relational' to revert to entitative views of leadership (see for example, Crevani and Endrissat (2016, p.36)), but relationality is not used in this usual way in this paper by Carroll and Simpson. Here, the theorising suggests that actors "both construct and are constructed by their social interactions" (Carroll and Simpson, 2012, p.1287). Relationality means that there is an effect on selves, that is, that people's selves are changed by being in process with each other: it is a mutually recursive and emergent process. People do not remain intellectually or emotionally static and others have the capacity to move them and make new (Shotter, 2016).

Carroll and Simpson (2012) use two episodes in the discussion forum to explore sociality: how it is constructed and how it evolves. They apply the idea of frames, which are ways that participants in the conversation place an idea within a context or metaphor or shape. An example of a frame is 'school' where some participants are

clearly framing the CEO's intervention as reducing them again to schoolchildren. The frame fixes the referent landscape, but only temporarily. The authors then track to see how frames are moved. Initially frames are used to kindle movements; then frames are stretched to open up existing frames or to elaborate new frames. These so-called 'moves' can be made by participants to span from one frame to another.

So, kindling, stretching or spanning describe the narrative flows that are mobilised as the group makes and develops sociality. The ideas of frame and move bring to life the complex ebb and flow of relating between and across the group and do not reduce the ideas to behaviouralism or textual analysis. It is a commendable piece of research with internal consistency between conceptualisation and realisation, and does not fall foul of the pitfalls that I have noted (ad nauseum) previously.

The paper "Should I Stay or Should I Go?" (Kempster and Gregory, 2017) also contributes to my background understanding of processes of collaborative leadership. It is framed as a contribution to LAP and reports on an executive (Samuel) who is new in a role in a sales team where power is centralising and concentrating into a few large buying groups. Under pressure to win new business, Samuel and his colleagues are entertaining clients in an effort to forge better relationships with people who are felt to be critical to future sales success. The focal incident is in a nightclub where it becomes apparent the hostesses are to be paid for and the clients expect Samuel to foot the bill: "these girls want a drink Samuel" (p.506). But Samuel decides that the company's money should not be spent on this type of entertainment. Spontaneously

and in unison, Samuel and his peers run from the club effectively abandoning the clients. They "… all made a rush for the door" (p.506), which was an unplanned action arising from a mutual and reciprocal understanding amongst Samuel and his peers.

Naturally, Samuel recounts a restless, sleepless night where he fears ramifications. However, "no one ever, even to this day, has mentioned it" (p.507). The authors note that Samuel – although the narrator of the incident – is not a heroic leader: running from the club was a collective but tacit decision and their actions happened to be spontaneous and coordinated. The case demonstrates the strong connections between collaborative agency, activity and context. The context has set Samuel and his peers on the back foot, keen to wine and dine powerful clients. Collectively Samuel and his colleagues exercise agency in leaving the nightclub with the clients left high and dry. Later, without benefit of a de-brief or further discussion, everyone moved on, client relationships developed and no business was lost. The authors call attention to this tight coupling of agency, activity and context for future research.

The performativity of leadership talk (Simpson, Buchan and Sillince, 2018) traces the ebb and flow of talk through different phases to demonstrate the emergence of leadership. In keeping with the foundational theorising of Raelin (Raelin, 2016b), the authors consider that leadership comes out of social, and material, discursivity. Participants' interaction with each other, with their matters of interest and with material objects all contribute to when and how leadership arises (Raelin et

al, 2018). Thus, talk is performative and it has a function in "bringing the world and its actors into being" (Simpson, Buchan and Sillince, 2018, p.648). Through this perspective, collaborative leadership can be talked into being.

The case is set in a small arts sector company that needs to restructure. The seven-strong senior management team meets every week to discuss business matters requiring their attention. Over the six months of the study, the researchers see how an issue is put before the group by one member in a way that needs a coherent response from the group. There are similarities with the earlier paper by Empson (2020) where the group is discussing radical changes that will affect people with whom they have a close attachment. As a result, the decision to restructure is not taken lightly.

The analysis uses conversational turning points: that is, moments when the talk encapsulates both remembered pasts and anticipated futures and when these two facets are adjacent to each other. The authors reject the normative idea that this type of discussion has a developmental form from problematisation to decision and execution. Instead, they find more nuanced sequences: problematisation – recognising what needs to be resolved; committing – agreeing action that is required; justification – checking that the proposed action is the right or best thing; imagining – looking to the future; recalling – past histories that inform present actions. These five types of turning points are then imagined as notes on a music stave to show sequential order and reveal patterns. "This musical metaphor emphasises the continuity of

performative actions in the temporal unfolding of practice" (Simpson, Buchan and Sillince, 2018, p.653).

The Simpson, Buchan and Sillince paper is highly relevant to my thesis. The use of metaphor and the use of data to derive patterns to gain new understanding of the process of collaborative leadership inspires my thinking. Across 12 meetings the patterns of the group clearly move: early meetings focus on problematising; later meetings on justifying; and then recalling. Committing, which I consider to be the near cousin of coalescence, comes to the fore after meeting three for example, and remains high through to meeting eight and never fully subsides thereafter. However, the authors only use talk and therefore omit other elements – bodies and materiality for example – that I consider important and other studies have shown to be so.

Peter Case, the lead author in the next empirical paper (Case and Śliwa, 2020) is embedded in a leadership team in Laos where the membership is heavily influenced by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP). Set within an International Agricultural Research assignment, Case is there from Australia to assist the Government of Laos to meet development goals with respect to food security and poverty reduction. He thus has to learn, within an entirely alien culture, how to contribute to the achievement of collective sociomaterial practice. Within Lao culture, a leader is appointed and they have '*phu nam*', and Case has to learn what this means in terms of his own agency and ability to participate (Case and Śliwa, 2020, p.2).

Only members of the LPRP can officially be called leaders; others, such as the author, can only participate in collective leadership by learning other ways to engender new directions in the flows of the group. "In that respect, his initial lack of linguistic proficiency sensitised Peter to the various aspects of the sociomateriality of leadership practice. As he could not understand the meaning of what was being said, he had the opportunity to build his interpretation of leadership in Laos through observing the spatial arrangements, artefacts, people's dress, turn-taking in conventions, body language, tone of voice and so on" (Case and Śliwa, 2020, p.8).

As the case unfolds, Case takes deliberate steps to be seen and heard as a leader, despite not being appointed as such. For example: "Peter was aware of how exercising power by individuals was enabled by the materiality of the leadership practice, in particular the meeting room layout and the positioning of the chairs at the discussion table. He knew that sitting on a chair situated at the head of the table would afford him the possibility to speak in meetings" (Case and Śliwa, 2020, p.13). Notwithstanding the framing of this paper as an example of collaborative agency, I remain unconvinced. It is a great example of learning how to have an authoritative voice in a new society: learning about the new norms and then wrestling them to your cause. But I conclude that the case study has little to contribute to my theorising of collaborative leadership. It does not seem to me to be interested in the coalescence or we-ness that is the focus of my study.

Hospital trauma teams rehearsing their responses to emergencies is the site of the next study, by Vuojärvi and Korva (2020). The emergencies are simulated and on paper are supposed to follow a protocol that dictates roles and particularly who takes the lead in which circumstances. Each team responding to a simulation is newly constituted. The purpose of the simulations is to train teams to work together effectively when under pressure. A simulation runs from a scenario that begins with notification of an incoming trauma patient and the team's arrival in the training room. There is a debriefing phase after completion of the simulation.

The research question asked how leadership emerges as a collective activity and how different elements of the system contribute to the emergence of leadership. The protocol provided a template, adopting a hierarchical approach to work division and a single appointed leader to make decisions and assign tasks. The authors note this protocol was of limited use. Difficult situations often arose that challenged the cooperation among team members and the protocol was overridden and over the period of the study it was modified along with the physical layout of the trauma room. Leadership that is not always accorded to the appointed leader, "seems to emerge during the care processes when any team member treating the patient leads by acting in that specific moment. The entire material environment of a trauma room is seamlessly part of the practice" (Vuojärvi and Korva, 2020, p.1879).

Perhaps more than any other, these groups have a unified goal and many of the participants will have signed up to professional codes of conduct that will be implicit in

any action they take. But the authors highlight agency and the fluidity of action

around the team as different participants are given the lead according to the needs of

the situation. Similarly, Aime et al (2014) also investigate how power can be

deliberately shifted around the team when the perception is that it is being exercised

legitimately. Vuojärvi and Korva (2020) and Aime et al (2014) show that agency cannot

be mandated.

In the last empirical study, the author sets her study within the field of

education in the metropolitan suburbs of Melbourne in Australia (Wilkinson, 2020).

The theorising and assumptions of the paper mirror all those that have gone before in

this part of the chapter: collective, emergent, dynamic. Leadership is framed as being

brought about in activity, or within the happenings of practices. What sets this paper

apart is that processes by which the Leafy Hills Primary School is made [financially]

viable are tracked over time. These are identified as: minimising class sizes; employing

a coach to work with teachers to enhance their English as an Additional

Language/Dialect (EALD) skills; and engaging with local refugee families, to build their

sense of engagement with the school. Wilkinson (2020) considers how these

foundational processes foster conditions that subsequently aim to enhance students'

learning practices.

The agency in this paper is largely traced back to the principal, and she is

credited with the key decisions with little attention given to the agency of others in the

teaching cohort. What the paper does offer by way of insight to coalescence is that

the local community was marked "by low levels of trust in authority" (Wilkinson, 2020, p.9), yet the school managed to achieve "solidarity, trusting, and caring between the families and the school" (Wilkinson, 2020, p.9). To avoid inferring causality, "orchestration" is the name chosen by Wilkinson to describe the linkage from process to practice, in order to change staff's sayings, doings and relatings with regard to students (Wilkinson, 2020, p.9).

I'm interested in this paper because it extends the relationality beyond the immediate system to look at the community. And, in that way, it does trace from macrolevel all the way down to microlevel, e.g. choices of class size and then the orchestration of parents' participation in school fund-raising activities (called Bees). This study is characterised as "not singular actions of one individual alone, but indicative of a deeper, whole-school leadership project for growing a collective sense of responsibility" (Wilkinson, 2020, p.10), but the orchestration rationale does not sufficiently convince me that we have found out anything more about the "trans-actional" (Simpson, 2016) or "intersubjective" (Raelin, 2017) nature of relationality. Other than the principal's adherence to some core principles, we are not told how the other teachers enact leadership.

3.2.1.1 Summary of Leadership-as-Practice, collaborative leadership

Collective Leadership (CL) is ravaged by contradictions and a plurality of definitions: 120 papers, 28 labels and 121 definitions (Alexy, 2020); alternatively, 935 articles spanning seven forms (Fairhurst et al., 2020). As D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and

Kukenberger (2016) remark 'the literature has become quite disjointed with a proliferation of nomenclature and conceptualizations' (p.1965). The field of LAP fares little better with different researchers adopting a range of philosophical perspectives (Simpson, 2009; Woods, 2016), strong or soft views of process (Crevani and Endrissat, 2016), and different understandings of practice (Cunliffe and Hibbert, 2016). This multiplicity of approaches makes it impossible to reliably disentangle the fields.

Ospina et al., (2020) have tried to provide conceptual clarity using a 2x2 matrix to overlay contrasting researchers' 'locus of leadership' with 'view[s] of collectivity' within the collective leadership field. The former axis locates leadership as either residing in the 'group' or in the 'system'. The latter axis is divided into those seeing collectivity as either a 'type' of leadership, or a 'lens' on leadership. Within this 2x2 matrix, Ospina et al situate LAP as a 'lens' on leadership within a 'group'.

My contention is that using the word 'lens' is entirely appropriate, but these authors fail to fully take account of the particular commitments associated with the adoption of a strong process ontology (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016). LAP, based on a process ontology, suggests no two moments can be the same because all the causes and conditions that create this moment are unrepeatable, ad infinitum (Langley and Tsoukas, 2016; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). Other leadership research might adopt a process approach and/or be situated within LAP but it is not always the case that researchers adhere to non-entitative, non-compositional, and non-substantive views.

The natural outflow of an ontology that foregrounds process and moves the lens to the social practice of agents is a non-entitative approach. Because '[t]his focus on process …undermines major assumptions…. entities disappear … the traditional scientific commitment to illuminating a systematic and predictable world of cause and effect falls moribund.' (Gergen and Hersted, 2016, p.179).

In common with some other forms of CL, leadership within LAP is not simply additive (Kozlowski and Klein, 2000). 'Collaborative agency transcends individual agencies….It is not a collection of individual agencies' (Alexy, 2020, p.25). This principle of holism whereby the sum is *different* from its parts (Koffka, 1935) is shared with, for example, complexity leadership (Marion and Uhl-Bien, 2003) and is the backbone of emergence.

In both CL and LAP the granular linkages between research philosophy and subsequent choices are sometimes obscured. By way of illustration, Hiller et al. (2006) acknowledge that CL is more than the sum of individual role taking and this is the point of their enquiry. As such the study provides an almost perfect predecessor to our work framed within LAP. But in the paper there are compositional assumptions that a group comprises 1+1+1 (Klein et al., 2001). My contention is that using an ontology of emergence is not congruent with measures of individuals being aggregated in this way. LAP is non-compositional.

There is a further distinction amongst process researchers whereby substantive ontologies assume that changes happen 'to things which retain their identity as they

change' (Fachin and Langley, 2018, p.3) whereas in non-substantive ontologies the entanglement of agents leaves no one or thing unchanged. It is from the constitutive entwining and continuous refiguration of each other that leadership emerges (Shotter, 2006; Simpson, 2016). Sometimes this distinction is not clear as researchers use the same terms differently (Simpson, 2016).

LAP can only track back to around 2006 and as a mere teenager in the field of leadership, it is not surprising that LAP does not have many empirical studies to its name. Even less surprisingly is the point I have made through this literature review, that authors are variously applying different definitions of LAP within their studies. There are papers in the collective leadership field, that I would consider LAP because they adopt a process ontology and continue to be non-entitative, non-compositional and non-substantive. Conversely there are studies in LAP that claim the moniker but do not use consistent ontologies and epistemologies.

What is clear through the theorising and empirical studies is that many questions of relationality – how agents who in activity change each other – remain unanswered. Even though a number of authors have relied on this key idea – for example, the process of becoming "we" (Gronn, 2015) or becoming "intersubjective" (Raelin, 2011, 2017); or the process of "trans-acting" (Carroll and Simpson, 2012; Simpson, 2016) – there is still a gap in the empirical work reviewed above. No one has turned directly to explore this process nor how participants experience it. Denis et al (2010) point to this omission and suggest that it is time to study *how* agents coalesce

dynamically in the context of practical activity. This understudied process is where I

will focus. Table 9 shows a comparison of current theorising across the included

authors and their different terms:

Table 9 – Processes and different terms by different authors

Process in the LAP literature	*Inter-Subjectivity*	*Trans-Action*	*Relationality*
Author	Raelin (2011), (2017)	Carroll and Simpson (2012), Simpson (2016)	Crevani and Endrissat (2016), Shotter (2016)
Main ideas	Individuals transcend their embeddedness. People can be transformed by the relationship between them. Quoting from Hegel "an I that is we and a we that is I".	See also relationality. Agents both construct and are constructed by their social interaction. Mutual constitution of meanings.	There is an effect on selves. People's selves are changed by being in process with each other. People do not remain static when in connection – others have the capacity to move them and make new.

The very best of these studies Simpson, Buchan, and Sillince (2018) provides

much inspiration: turning points as critical junctures where collaborative leadership

emerges, the use of metaphor and temporal mapping. Yet, brilliant as the study may

be, it only identifies **_talk_** as a contributor to the ideas of relationality and leadership (see Simpson's own work that points out that practice is the study of more than just talk (Simpson, 2018, p.3)). I am expressly setting out to address this omission to consider the lived experience of collaborative leadership including the bodily sense. In addition, I seek to further understand the processes involved in the emergence of collaborative leadership as a form of *Conscious Coalescence*.

Readers may question why I have deemed it necessary to coin my own language when three perfectly adequate terms already exist. My rationale hinges on the view that this is a trans-subjective phenomenon which is across and around the group. This renders the term used by Raelin 'inter-subjectivity' as inappropriate because 'inter' is usually taken to mean just 'between' subjects, ignoring other places of interaction. Whilst trans-action is 'trans' having the Latin etymology of across or over in other leadership literature transaction (without the hyphen) is too closely association with transactional and transformational leadership. I want to avoid being misplaced in that literature. Similarly, relational leadership, was extensively written about by Uhl-Bien (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and reviewed in the previous section (see page 57) it does not have a non-substantive ontology which is important for this theorising.

Conscious Coalescence is specifically called out as a phenomenon to make it more amendable to analysis and further specification. I choose 'conscious' to signify that participants are agentic and mindful of their choice to participate in leadership. I choose 'coalescence' to point to the need to cohere in order for we-ness to arise.

Currie and Lockett (2011, p.289) say "… concertive action relates to the spontaneous collaboration within an organization, where leadership actors …. 'coalesce'." I propose that coalescence embraces all the ideas of relationality, inter-subjectivity and trans-action.

Thus, my guiding questions for my research are:

Question 1: _What is the lived experience of participants when_ Conscious Coalescence _emerges?_
Question 2: _How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?_

Because I have chosen _'Conscious' Coalescence_ as the naming of the process of interest, there is a need to further clarify how this differs from 'mental models', which are so ubiquitous in teamwork. To consider the first part – conscious – as an embodied experience, I now introduce new theory drawn from mindfulness. To consider the second part – coalescence – I later introduce collective mindfulness, and heedful inter-relating. Figure 7 is repeated to aid navigation:
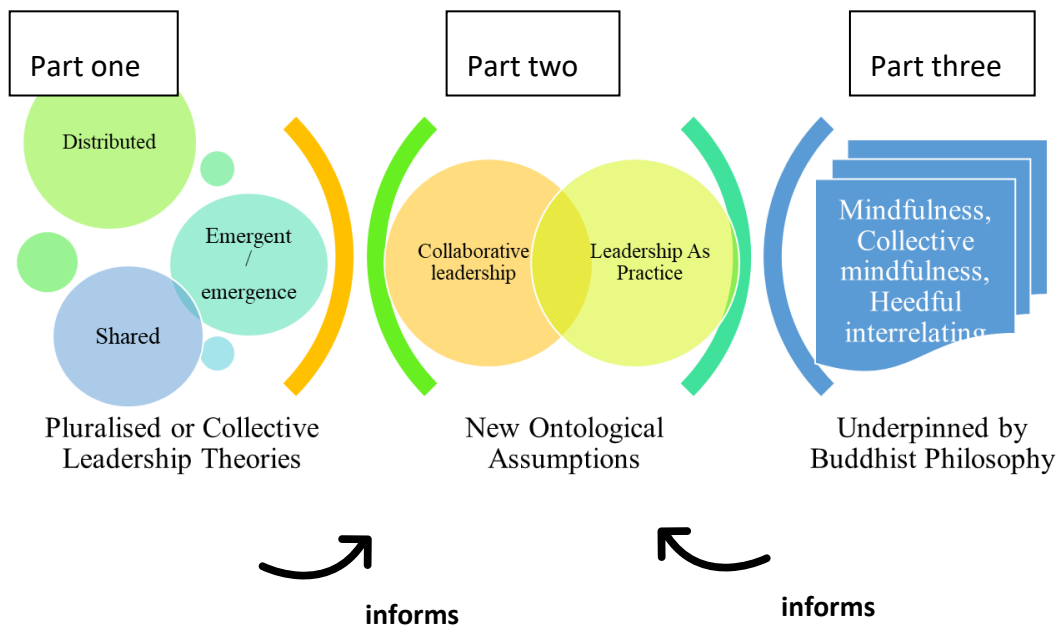
Figure 7 – Placing the literatures against different ontologies

3.3 PART THREE

Because the theorising of LAP is so new, and there are only a small number of empirical studies, I am reaching into three adjacent literatures to help to understand the process by which human collective capacity emerges in nonlinear and agentic ways to produce leadership. Briefly, I will describe mindfulness, collective mindfulness and heedful inter-relating and what these theories offer back into LAP. These three literatures all share common metatheoretical assumptions which align with Buddhist philosophies as well as contemporary process ontology and practice epistemologies.

However, just as we have seen in the foregoing literature review of LAP, these are

inconsistently applied.

3.3.1 Buddhist Philosophy and Mindfulness

Secular mindfulness has recently entered the field of Organization and

Management Studies (Khoury et al, 2015). In the simplest terms, mindfulness can be

considered an expanded state of mind (Glomb et al, 2011) that can be developed in a

nonlinear but nevertheless systematic way (Carmody and Baer, 2009). Mindfulness is

not about 'more thinking' or 'better thinking' (Glomb et al, 2011). Mindfulness is not

concerned with developing better mental capacities or cleverer people (Sinclair, 2016).

The wisdom that is said to be a feature of mindfulness is not mind-centred but includes

whole-person domains and is experienced as a fluid state of integration including

thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations (Brendel and Bennett, 2016) where minute

changes in context can be consciously foregrounded (Demick, 2000). From this state

of integration, clear seeing arises along with the generation of fresh insights unclouded

by habitual thinking (Beck and Plowman, 2009; Sauer and Kohls, 2011): awareness is

expanded and multiple perspectives can be held (Glomb et al, 2011).

Weick and Sutcliffe (2006) draw on the work of Ellen Langer (Langer 1989;

Langer and Moldoveanu 2000) to understand mindfulness in a Western way as a deep

connectivity that discerns subtle cues previously unnoticed. "When these cues are

noticed, routines that had been unfolding mindlessly are interrupted, and when

routines are disrupted, the resulting void is similar to the void induced by

meditation…past experience no longer serves as a firm guide, and the disruption stirs

the cognitive pot. Because the void is momentarily tough to categorize and label, it

serves as a moment of nonconceptual mindfulness. This means that during this

moment more is seen, and more is seen about seeing" (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006,

p.516).

Thus mindfulness rests on Buddhist principles, even when defined in

contemporary Western views, recognising that individuals have the capacity to move

beyond Cartesian separation of mind and body (Brendel and Bennett, 2016; Uhl-Bien,

2006). Rather than this integrative state being some supernatural event, mindful

virtuosos transcend ideas of subject and object to become pure unselfconscious

experiencing (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010). In the Buddhist philosophy, this breakdown

of subject and object is referred to as 'non-duality' (Davis, 2010; Stanley, 2012) and it is

one of the key reasons that I introduce mindfulness into this thesis.

Both the Eastern philosophies of Buddhism and the modern contemporary

writing on mindfulness rest on the same metatheoretical assumptions. These

assumptions are fundamental too to academic thinking concerning the earlier

pluralised and emergent views of leadership (Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012; Will,

2016), strong-process theories, e.g. Hernes and Weik (2007) and Tsoukas and Chia

(2002), and the 'practice-turn', e.g. Gronn (2015); Crevani (2018) and Jarzabkowski and

Spee (2009). Although these Buddhist foundations are often only implicit in modern

secular mindfulness the training provides individuals with practices that directly

investigate non-separation and the impermanent nature of our experience. Further, although most often this level of mindful mastery is associated with many hours of meditation practice, scholars do acknowledge that individuals can stumble on this state change and spontaneously have the experience of impermanence, non-separation and non-duality (Good et al, 2016; Langer, Russel and Eisenkraft 2009; Weick and Putnam 2006; Weick and Sutcliffe 2006).

What does this contribute to this thesis? Mindfulness reasserts the importance of the body and the whole person and that brain anatomy may be only part of the creation of mind (Haidt, 2001). Although named 'mindfulness' it is more akin to mind emptiness (although this too is not entirely true). Better to use the original Buddhist term '*sati*', which means attending equally to all phenomena: mind, body and experience (Bodhi, 2011; Chiesa, 2013; Dunne, 2011). Also, it offers the possibility of new understandings of non-duality where the self is seen as delusional, and connectivity is the default more than is usually the case (Dunne, 2011; Hanks et al., 2019).

In the Pilot Study I measured individual levels of mindfulness to see whether I could discern any difference between the behaviour and contributions of individuals based on their different mindfulness scores. However, ultimately this was a dead-end and I did not pursue these ideas directly into my Field Study but other scholars may continue this line of enquiry.

3.3.2 Buddhist Philosophy and Collective Mindfulness

The social and collective form of mindfulness is a natural extension to individual mindfulness because of the meta-theoretical underpinning of non-separation. Collective mindfulness is a social phenomenon and refers to "a state of shared awareness and attention that emerges from interactions between multiple actors" (Oliver et al, 2017, p.5); this intricate set of connections creates mindfulness that is "at the system level" (Carlo, Lyytinen and Boland, 2012, p.1102).

Hence, collective mindfulness may be defined as "a means of engaging in the everyday social processes of organizing that sustains attention on detailed comprehension of one's context and on factors that interfere with such comprehension" (Sutcliffe, Vogus and Dane, 2016, p.61). As before, it is likely that the phenomenon of collective mindfulness will have additional facets that are not simply aggregated from the individual i.e. it is non-compositional.

Researchers in this field have largely adopted the input-mechanism-output (IMO) approach to their studies, where collective mindfulness is implicitly the mechanism having an effect on outcomes. Within an IMO model, collective mindfulness has been shown to: produce better results (Oliver et al, 2017); result in better decision-making without false consensus (Selart et al, 2020); inoculate teams against relationship conflict (Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018); and provide unique problem-solving abilities (Carlo, Lyytinen and Boland, 2012). Mindfulness has also been shown to improve patient safety when the ward rounds are conducted

collectively and using mindful protocols (Leykum et al, 2015; Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2007); and collective forms of mindfulness are said to contribute to the effectiveness of US Navy SEALS (Fraher, Branicki and Grint, 2017).

Mostly these studies simply state that collective mindfulness is the explanatory mechanism that is needed to achieve all the above results, or they demonstrate how mindfulness acts on other processes such as conflict management. What is missing is a thorough description and investigation of *how* collective mindfulness emerges in a group given that the process is not an aggregate of individual mindfulness (Sutcliffe, Vogus and Dane, 2016). This gap in the literature echoes the gap I am pointing to within LAP.

Expanding beyond the IMO approach to collective mindfulness, there is a very small study in the literature of Ba, a Japanese concept of place that again rests on Buddhist philosophy. Ba draws attention to the importance of looking not just at the activity between participants, but also across and around them. A study by Fujii (2012) concerned with different aspects of problem solving begins to shine a light on *how* Ba is constructed. Fujii suggests that Ba is constructed when the Japanese students working together resonate off each other. He explains " … while they are working together, they do not simply act as separated actors but rather _resonate each other by_ _entraining themselves in the given place or Ba_ (emphasis added). In other words, their places or Ba merge into one and create a stage where each self interacts" (Fujii, 2012, p.657, illustrated in Figure 8). Ba is talked and enacted into being (Choo and de

Alvarenga Neto, 2010; Nonaka and Toyama, 2002; Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005),

and from this talk and action, much like in any living system, a new being emerges. It is

Ba that provides this fertile breeding ground (Fayard, 2003; Senoo, Magnier-Watanabe

and Salmador, 2007).

Fujii (2012) suggests that in Ba the outer regions of individualism can dissolve

to allow the remaking of a fresh entity (see Figure 8 taken from page 657/8).
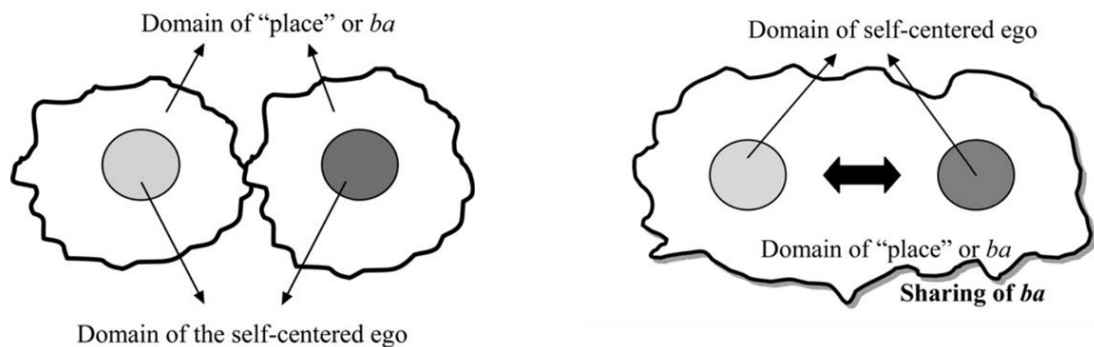
Figure 8 – Resonance is established in Ba

Hence, when in Ba, a person does not continue individualising, but experiences

ever-changing intimacies. In the group they "can all be different but still build and

reinforce each other" (participant comment, see Figure 38).

What does this contribute to my thesis? Without getting into other

psychological constructs such as ego or personality, the Buddhist roots of Ba alongside

the idea of resonance begin to suggest that people can coalesce in ways that have

hitherto been unexplored. This moves our theorising away from minds, keeps whole

embodied people part of the process and suggests how they can become unified when

the outer edges diminish. Bodies in a vibrational field that can entrain each other is

not a proposition that I will test, but it is an idea that I will hold.

3.3.3 Buddhist Philosophy and Heedful Inter-relating

Heedful inter-relating (HI) is a stream of theorising that came from inductive

studies asking why is it that some organisations do not have accidents. Particularly

organisations where the costs to life and community would be extremely high, e.g.,

nuclear power stations. With some exceptions, they are known as High Reliability

Organisations (HROs) because they are highly reliable in the face of contexts which

would normally be expected to provoke failures (Sutcliffe, 2011; Vogus and

Welbourne, 2003; Weick and Sutcliffe, 2001).

HI was strongly connected to 'collective mind' through a seminal study by

Weick and Roberts (1993), set on board the flight decks of warships. The underlying

mechanisms of HI are theorised as five mindful organising processes (full review by

Sutcliffe, Vogus and Dane (2016)). Within HROs the mindful organising processes are:

1) preoccupation with failure – small failures have to be noticed; 2) reluctance to

simplify – and their distinctiveness retained rather than lost in a category; 3) sensitivity

to operations – people need to remain aware of ongoing operations if they want to

notice nuances that portend failure; 4) commitment to resilience – attention is

therefore crucial for locating pathways to recovery; 5) deference to expertise – and

individuals must be prepared to use the expertise of others to implement those pathways (Weick and Sutcliffe, 2006).

Many studies have been spawned by this idea of HI. Studies often combine at macro and micro view of individual care and the system level of care and heed. Studies look at reducing death rates in a paediatric unit of a hospital (Roberts et al, 2005), collaboration during the building of the most complex building [in the world] where no single surface has a straight line (Carlo, Lyytinen and Boland, 2012), museums which have risen from the ashes with renewed purpose after having been burnt to the ground (Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2012), bush jumpers coordinating their efforts over vast stretches of terrain to quench forest fires (Vogus and Rerup, 2018). These studies are helpful in tying together the individual to the system and vice versa but they miss the meso level group analysis.

A smaller set of studies has returned to the original text of Weick and Roberts (1993) and alighted on just three distinctive features that are said to describe collective mind: Contributing, Subordinating, and Representing (CSR). As a postscript no one seems to worry that on the one hand we have five mindful organising principles and on the other hand three characteristics of collective mind! As previously mentioned, the studies that I am familiar with on HI oscillate between micro and macro; whereas the CSR characteristics are only studied at the meso level, even though theoretically they are conceptualised at all three levels: macro, meso, micro.

The authors working with Heedful Interrelating conform more tightly to a cause-effect view of the world, so although working qualitatively and inductively authors such as Sutcliffe, Vogus, and Dane tend to make predictive claims. Because they see the world as cause and effect, whether it is the five mindful organising principles or the three characteristics of collective mind, this body of work strongly asserts beneficial outcomes for organisations. I am unwilling to make such claims. But it was this body of literature that first aroused my curiosity, and it was HI that led me to collective mindfulness. Unsurprisingly, Buddhist philosophy is not mentioned in this literature but it is unavoidably linked through Weick's understanding of these ideas (see Weick and Putnam, 2006) and also the reliance on collective mindfulness to provide theoretical standing.

As I will describe in the Methodology chapter, a study from the collective mindfulness line of literature inspired my pilot study, which subsequently provided some foundational thinking for my field study. I was interested in pursuing some of the thinking of Stephens and Lyddy (2016) because they used a creative group setting to operationalise the definitions of CSR and, in particular, a definition of Subordination that articulates the way that people seek to collaborate.

What does this contribute to my thesis? Ideas of collaborative leadership depend on a shift from: "self to relational to collective orientation" (Carroll, Levy and Richmond, 2008, p.368) and at face value the notion of the facet, subordination, from Stephens and Lyddy (2016), might have something to contribute to this theorising.

3.3.4 Summary of Mindfulness, Collective Mindfulness, Heedful Inter-relating and Buddhist Philosophical Perspectives

Again these are three vast literatures and I have not sought to do them justice, rather simply to pick out some key ideas that have influenced my thinking. Mindfulness is a thread of continuity throughout and I am personally deeply steeped in its philosophical underpinnings without claiming to be a Buddhist scholar. However, it is the influence of three ontologies from Buddhism that provide coherence to this thesis: non-duality, non-separation and impermanence (Hanks et al, 2019).

In modern Western philosophies, writers such as Heidegger, Wittengstein and James have similarly repudiated the Cartesian separation of subject and object (Morgan, 2014; Rorty, 1979). Nicolini (2013a) suggests that many of the recent ideas of practice build in some way or another on the legacy of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, or a combination of the two. Although there is no unified Heideggerian and Wittgensteinian practice-based approach they have contributed to a common project according to which practices represent the basic component of social affairs, and as such they constitute the basic epistemology of social theory.

Pragmatism is the rich philosophy that embraces several processual ontological assumptions that are important for this research, earlier I articulated: non-entitative, non-compositional and non-substantive. Despite my initial investigations being rooted in HI, it was clear that pragmatism sits less readily with heedful inter-relating. For example, authors in HI will see relationships as linear and sometimes causal (Stephens and Lyddy, 2016; Werr and Runsten, 2013), whereas in Leadership-as-Practice (LAP)

this is not usual. This may be one of the reasons that in the end I found heedful inter-relating unsatisfactory as the site of my research.

3.4 LOCATING THIS STUDY IN THE LITERATURE: CONCLUSION

I have traced the development of thinking from leader (hero) to leaders (people) to leader*ship* (multiple practices and non-entitative). Further, beyond just introducing more people to the concept of leadership, I have shown how the focus has changed to what they do, how they interact and the process of unifying. Within LAP, how people act relationally to create collaborative leadership is a central question and it is under-researched. Where it has been researched, the emphasis has been on conversation/talk as the key process of collaboration but this is insufficient to account for the full range of practices that people might engage in: including bodies, activity and sociomateriality. So far, other authors have coined terms to describe the process of coherence: inter-subjectivity; trans-action; relationality. I have used a new term – *Conscious Coalescence* – because I want to introduce the idea that people are agentic in their collaboration. Following Raelin's idea that individuals "transcend their own immediate embeddedness" to achieve this coalescence (Raelin, 2016a, p.138), my guiding questions for the research are: *What is the lived experience of participants when* Conscious Coalescence *emerges?* And: *How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?*

At some length throughout this chapter, I have shown how the ontological assumptions that underpin leadership have changed. Additionally, I have also found

studies where ontology and epistemology align and fail to align. This is important because if we are looking for a process through the wrong lens, we will not find it, or we will find something wrongly.

The lens of practice is embedded within LAP. It urges scholars to look at the doings of leadership. This thesis answers the call by Denis et al (2010) to study how participants coalesce dynamically in the context of practical activity to create leadership and in the next chapter I lay out how I do this.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I explain the research choices I have made and my rationale. There are six parts to the chapter: first I give a quick narrative overview, so that all the other subsequent parts can be fitted together and provide an illustration to show those parts in overview (Figure 9 below). In part two, I explain my philosophical perspective, which provides justification for many of the research choices that I made with respect to methods. Two important methods are then explained in depth, then in part four, the pilot study is summarised as it provides context for the field study. Building on the pilot study, in the penultimate section, I set out the full research strategy; and then finally in part six, the development of the coding structures.

4.1 PART ONE: OVERVIEW

Initially, I did a great deal of reading and thinking in the domain of heedful inter-relating (HI) (Weick and Roberts, 1993) and thought I would pursue the understanding of *Conscious Coalescence* through that prism. I was attracted by the three processes of Contributing, Subordinating and Representing, and my pilot study was set up to help me formulate my precise methods and to experiment with some innovative ideas. The pilot study is described in section 4.4 below. It was successful in clarifying two things, my methods were innovative and helpful, but the HI literature was unsatisfying at a group-level (the five hallmarks of HI are all at the micro and macro level) in developing my ideas, explaining what I was seeing and ultimately making it relevant to organisations that I wanted to approach as participants.

By chance, at the Academy of Management in 2019 I was reacquainted with the literature of LAP and the philosophical underpinnings of the authors within this field wrote in ways that aligned to my personal philosophy. In sum, LAP appeared to be a more congruent foundation from which to work. I took the methods from the pilot study and repurposed them but now within a leadership frame, adopting a process and practice ontology to the phenomenon of interest. Further it allowed me to work at the meso level, where previously HI was more macrolevel/systemic and in the pilot study was unilluminating. Consequently, the explanations that follow begin within the frame of HI but, following the pilot study and before the field study, swap to LAP.
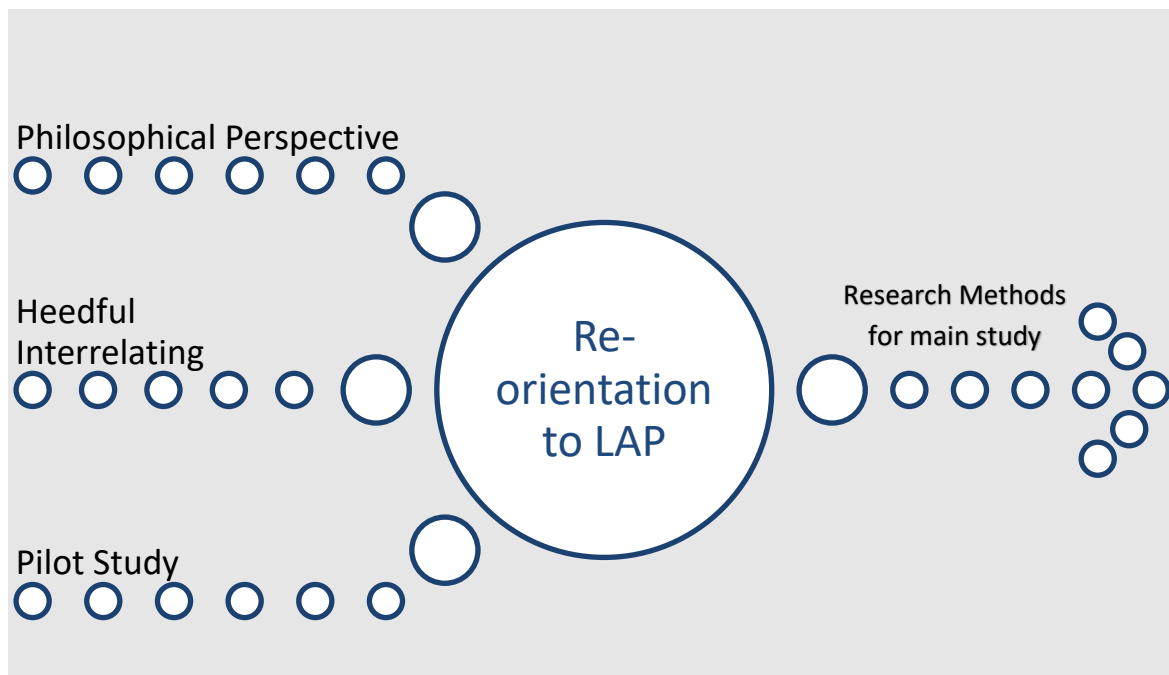
Figure 9 Overview of the Methodology chapter

4.2 PART TWO: PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

The research process and methods sit within a wider concern, that of my philosophical perspective. This section is structured using the Research 'Onion' from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, p.102) shown in Figure 10 :
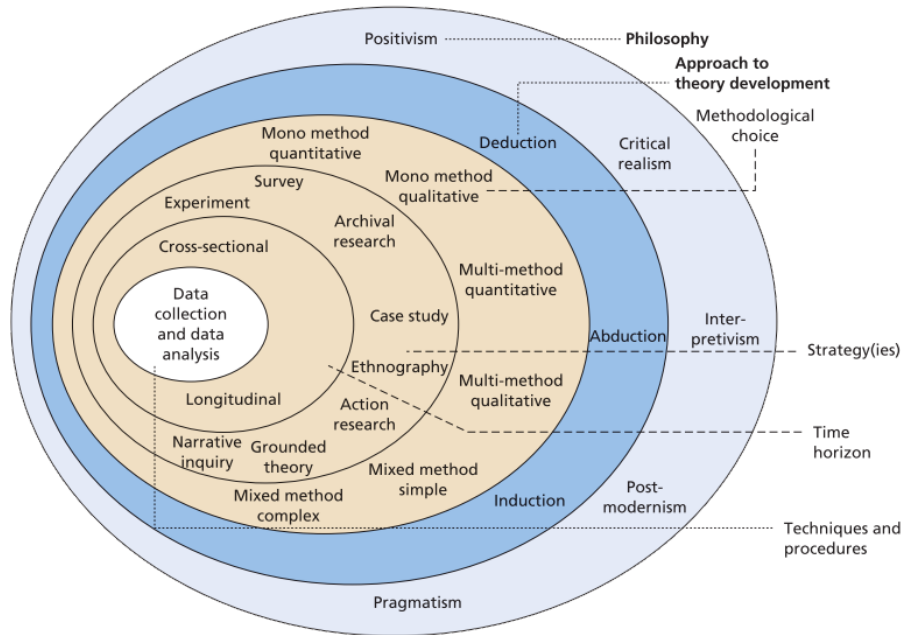
Figure 10 – Research 'Onion' from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2008, p.102)

The 'Onion' demonstrates that choices made on the outside layer have a consequential – but not deterministic – effect on choices at each successive layer. Hence, the choice of research philosophy frames my subsequent choices.

4.2.1 Research Philosophy

Researchers all have "pre-existing commitments to systems of beliefs and practices" (Morgan, 2007, p.49). When constructing a research project, we act from a

mindset that determines the choices we make and the assumptions that will prevail, while others are ignored (Morgan, 2014). Using the Heightened Awareness of Research Philosophy (HARP) model (Saunders, 2017), I have come to see that my worldview is that of Pragmatism.

4.2.2 Pragmatism

I choose Pragmatism as a natural fit to my way of seeing and the guiding research questions. It is easy to summarise Pragmatism as whatever works or as "somehow uniquely related to mixed-methods research (MMR)" (Morgan, 2014, p.1045), but this is too simplistic and masks a more nuanced understanding of the philosophy. It is a philosophy rooted in seeing what matters and seeing what makes a difference (Dewey, 1930) and as such it does not ask whether theories are true, but considers whether they are useful. Also, completely aligning with a process ontology and the Buddhist philosophy introduced on page 107 of this thesis, pragmatism "concerns the structure of the universe itself " … " The essential contrast [to rationalism] is that reality . . . for pragmatism is still in the making" (Dewey, 1908, p.86).

John Dewey (1859–1952) and William James (1842–1910) are best known as the founding fathers of the philosophy known as Pragmatism but the roots of this philosophy are often traced to the authors Heidegger and Wittgenstein. Foundational to this approach is the belief that people do (and say) whatever it makes sense for

them to do (and say) and that their sense of what is needed always manifests itself as part of an ongoing practical endeavour (Nicolini, 2013a).

Pragmatism is a non-dualistic, non-representational view of mind (Johnson and Rohrer, 2007, p.20) where an individual's understanding of the world is not simply gained through thought but also through their experience of the world. The word 'Pragmatism' originated from πράγμα (James, 1928, p.46), the Greek work for practice. As babies, we experience the world through our bodies, pre-conceptually because when very young we do not have schema to explain the world. Thus, in Pragmatism, practice is more akin to this bare attention to what is happening between us and the world. It is said to be non-representational because when we first practice it is with this bare attention, conceptualising comes later as we grow from birth through childhood.

Pragmatism builds from the pre-conceptual base to suggest that, even without understanding, we begin to appreciate our connection to the beings around us, " … our predispositions to act are both formed and exercised in situations that are always already social" (Simpson, 2018, p.16). Thus, practice is said to have a social ontology – how we are and how we fit into the larger current of community implies an understanding that life is enacted and embodied. Our bodies know the terror of being hungry and of being left before we even have the concept of this terror. Sociality is baked into us for survival, and embodied understanding is mobilised to solve problems and to serve the needs and interests of the organism (Johnson and Rohrer, 2007).

"Rather than a metaphysical discussion about the nature of reality or truth, Dewey and other pragmatists called for a starting point that was rooted in life itself – a life that was inherently contextual, emotional and social." (Morgan, 2014, p.1047)

Knowledge therefore cannot be abstract: it is the result of active and iterative inquiry between actions and consequences (Morgan, 2014). Action shapes mental phenomena, not vice versa as is commonly assumed (Testa, 2017).

Turning to the processual aspect of Pragmatism, an assumption is that life is a perpetually unfolding process: no two moments are ever the same, and even if we could magically re-enact a moment, it would be a different moment to the original enactment because all the causes and conditions would be altered because all the causes and conditions that create them would be different, ad infinitum. Thus, we can never step twice in the same stream.

Process ontology has the effect of changing how we see the world where phenomena do not stay fixed. The coming and going, to-ing and fro-ing of process is often referred to as 'dynamic' but, additionally, adjusting our sensitivities to the processes of becoming and decaying brings into sharp relief the impermanent nature of things: both material and immaterial (Hanks et al, 2019). The desk at which this writing occurs is constantly in the process of degeneration, the bodies we inhabit are likewise merely corpses in-waiting. In modern academic writing this is often called a strong-process ontology, which came to prominence in organisational studies with the

publication of the paper Tsoukas, H., and Chia, R. (2002) "On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change. Organization Science".

These three sets of ideas are all related and consistent: a strong process ontology aligns very well to the practice lens which is supported by a pragmatist philosophy. These Western concepts are found in Buddhist philosophy. Figure 1 on page 6 expresses this alignment and places the research within the venn diagram of these ideas.

4.2.3 Epistemological Choices

Philosophy constrains research because it limits what can be used and acknowledged as contributing to knowledge (Blaikie, 2007; Bryman and Bell, 2007). In the next layer of the Research Onion, I move to the next series of interlocking, but ever narrowing, choices concerning which methods to use for data collection (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008).

Pragmatism is epistemologically agnostic – either or both observable phenomena and subjective meanings can provide acceptable knowledge dependent on the research question (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p.419). For example, the search in Pragmatism is not for 'truth' but for useful knowledge. Questions are asked in research that are designed to make a difference in the world (Morgan, 2014). If understanding an experience is useful, then pragmatists embrace research questions that add to our understanding. Thus, one of my research questions is: *"What is the lived experience of participants when* Conscious Coalescence *emerges?"* This invites an

exploration of the subjective and lived experience of participants, currently an under-researched area.

Because my aim is to elaborate and extend current theory, I use abduction to test and develop the ideas of LAP and collaborative leadership iteratively (Blaikie, 2007). Abductive approaches refocus a researcher's attention from simple validation of theory to discovery and explication (Locke, Golden-Biddle and Feldman, 2008; Weick, 1989). The effect of moving back and forth between literature, theory and data allows the combination of both a priori and emergent ideas to unfold in the research process (Suddaby, 2006).

Lastly, the chosen research strategy acknowledges that quantitative methods are insufficient to illuminate socially constructed phenomena such as LAP (Parry et al, 2014), whereas qualitative methods have particular strengths for understanding processes because of their capacity to capture processes in rich detail (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). In particular, qualitative methods are considered relevant for research questions that are concerned with 'how' because the answer "requires insight into complex social processes that quantitative data cannot easily reveal" (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007, p.26). For example, "*How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?*". Thus, I lean to qualitative methods.

4.3 PART THREE: IMPORTANT METHODS CHOICES

The unfixed nature of collaborative leadership is aligned to the social and process ontology explained above. Langley et al (2013) suggest that there is a point at which 'process' meets 'practice' because all social practices unfold in sequences that are temporal and amount to processes. Finding a locus that exemplifies the organisations' social practices led me to consider meetings as a focus for my research. Jarzabkowski and Seidl (2008) state that meetings are typical of socially occurring practices and that they can be understood as focal points for organising.

4.3.1 Meetings as a Research Site

It is expected that for groups who are co-creating leadership, meetings will provide significant connection points allowing fragmented work patterns to be made visible to each participant, throwing up contradictions and mis-steps and providing an opportunity for the group adjust their trajectory (Asmuß and Svennevig, 2009; Lehmann-Willenbrock et al, 2015; Wodak, Kwon and Clarke, 2011). Meetings are expected to provide a crucible in which the processes of *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* can be seen and thus meetings of groups who are embarked on creating leadership present a convenient and relevant organisational context for studying how *CC* emerges from groups of collaborative agents.

Having decided to use meetings as a research site, two further decisions followed: the use of video ethnography and group Elicitation interviews.

4.3.2 Video Ethnography

Video ethnography of meetings affords the opportunity to capture the interactions that arise and thereafter to code what is recorded. It enables access to the details of conduct – people's talk, their bodily conduct, their use of tools, technologies and so forth (Hindmarsh and Heath, 2007).

Video ethnography provides a data capture technique that allows observation of the things that people take for granted, and therefore provides access to processes that might be outside of their awareness. *CC* is likely to be such a phenomenon. Video ethnography is also commendable because it provides a true record of what is said by whom within a group meeting: "One of its most outstanding properties [is the] access it provides to the minutiae of social interactions in real time" (Knoblauch and Schnettler, 2012, p.335). Video recordings provide a permanent and detailed record of events, which means that multiple individuals can view the same video (Christianson, 2018). As I am asking about subjective experience, and that experience will vary from participant to participant, I want to make sure that any variance is not because of different recall processes. By using video replay, I was able to keep the recall mechanism consistent for all participants.

I recognise that there are concerns about the use of video in observational studies. One concern is the ethical requirement to get consent from everyone in the video. Another is a sensitivity to participants' trying to give a good impression or to

provide the researcher with the looked-for phenomenon. These concerns are

mitigated through the details of the conduct of the research described below.

Following the research approaches of Gioia, Donnellon and Sims (1989) and

Rouleau (2005), I attended and recorded meetings across several groupings and at

several points in each group's life cycle. The frequency and the cumulative familiarity

of my presence was designed to allay fears of impression management, which is

difficult to maintain over protracted periods of time. Also, I requested that the

meetings I studied should concern matters considered to be of strategic importance.

Again, the rationale was that the subject matter would be of concern to those in the

room and likely to draw their full attention, meaning they could not divide their

attention between this and the camera.

4.3.3 Group Elicitation Interviews

To help ensure "trustworthiness" of data (Langley and Abdallah, 2011) other

sources in addition to video ethnography were used. Multiple sources of data help

give confidence that findings are not spurious (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Eisenhardt,

1989; Langley and Abdallah, 2011). In addition to the video recordings of the

meetings, I asked my participant groups to hold a final meeting where I replayed video

segments and asked them, as a group, to recall their subjective experience (details of

selection of segments are provided in the Research Methods section). This recall of a

subjective experience was undertaken using a process called Elicitation interviews

(Petitmengin, 2006; Petitmengin et al, 2009).

Interviews are often criticised as an imprecise way to understand a process, mostly because participants can post hoc rationalise or preserve ego through impression management (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). This also hinders triangulation because of humans' innate desire to embellish accounts with details that did not occur during the original experience (Hogan, Hinrichs and Hornecker, 2016).

The technique of Elicitation was specifically designed to capture rich accounts of experience while minimising biases introduced through any post-rationalisation (Petitmengin, 2006). Elicitation is a way of asking participants to relive the past in the here-and-now. These are not merely verbal descriptions of experience, but relived or re-enacted experience (Høffding and Martiny, 2016; Petitmengin, 2006). Elicitation is explicitly designed to help participants access the pre-cognitive processes that underlie their cognitive outputs (Petitmengin, 2006). Unlike other interview techniques the "[p]resent tense is used during the interview to help the participant 're-enact' the experience." (Hogan, Hinrichs and Hornecker, 2016, p.1)

These three key decisions – meetings, the use of video and Elicitation – began to shape the full research process; but first I tested these basic ideas in a pilot study. The pilot study research approach and key findings are now explained in brief, but the full write-up of the pilot study can be found in Appendix A.2.

4.4 PART FOUR: PILOT STUDY

4.4.1 Repeating and Extending a Previous Study

As a way of structuring the pilot study, I chose to repeat and extend a previous laboratory study by Stephens and Lyddy (2016), which considered how effective patterns of cooperation and coordination (which came to be known as *Conscious Coalescence*) emerged in teams as they set about writing jingles (lyrics to be set to music). The goal of the Stephens and Lyddy study was to examine the underlying mechanisms of HI starting with the theorised facets of Contributing, Subordinating, Representing (CSR). Their research model is shown in Figure 11 below:
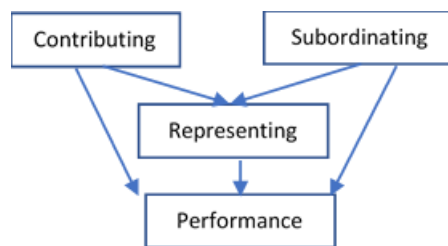
Figure 11 – Theorised relationships of three facets needed for the achievement of heedful inter-relating (HI) and performance (taken from Stephens and Lyddy, 2016)

Teams were randomly created from a mix of strangers and each team was given a task to write a jingle within a time limit. The group's interactions including their utterances were video recorded and template coded against the CSR categories.

The study had utility for me as a template to follow for a pilot study, because it allowed me to use the author's research approach but also to incorporate certain innovative research methods.

4.4.2 Modifications to the Original Study

4.4.2.1 An additional unit of analysis

The original study was based on a compositional view of groups: that one

individual added to another summed to make the group. I have always found that

unsatisfactory and, in relation to the accounts of HI provided by Weick and Roberts

(1993), it was implausible. In the pilot, I used both individual units and group units of

analysis to allow this part of the theorising to be examined.

4.4.2.2 Additional metatheoretical assumptions

In the original study, the authors independently coded behaviour and did not

ask participants about their experience. My axiological stance required me to ask

participants about their lived experience and to invite them to discuss their own

behaviour. I also argued that the use of Elicitation techniques in the group interview

would mitigate issues such as impression management. Mostly, because HI is

theorised as a felt sense, I wanted to ensure that this was not my inference but was a

reported facet by those taking part.

Interpersonal recall is a method whereby the group selects a critical moment in

their interaction and the video is replayed to the group as they narrate back their

experiences of that moment. This is a form of video ethnography but at a group level.

The important points about this process are that the group chooses what is most

salient to them; and that the group describes the experience. It is the group that

points to critical components and what helps or hinders the emergence of

heedfulness. This secondary discussion can also be videoed and coded.

4.4.2.3 Include mindfulness

As previously noted (see Literature section part three of this thesis), Weick's original definition of HI was referenced to the work of Ellen Langer on mindfulness (Langer, 1992). As collective mindfulness infused all the definitions of CSR, it seemed appropriate therefore to add the use of a scale of mindfulness/lessness. However, the most commonly used instrument to measure mindfulness is trait-based (Baer et al, 2008) and based on psychological metrics. I was interested in heedfulness as a socially emergent group-level state which cannot be measured through such an instrument. So in addition to the individual questionnaire, I used the HI questionnaire designed and tested by Daniel and Jordan (2015) which was more collectively oriented.

In summary, my proposal was to repeat the study of Stephens and Lyddy (2016) (on a smaller scale) and to extend the study by including measures of mindfulness at an individual trait level and a social state level. To do this, I added data collection methods not found in the original study: the individual trait mindfulness questionnaire (MAAS by Brown and Ryan, 2005); the HI questionnaire (Daniel and Jordan, 2015); the Elicitation interview and interpersonal recall process.

4.4.3 Pilot Study Methods

Permission to undertake the pilot study was granted by Henley Business School on 15th October 2018. The application, supporting documentation and participant consent forms are provided in Appendix A.1 along with the full write-up of findings in Appendix A.2.

A group of seven people (three men, four women) were recruited for the study on the 14th of February 2019. The group was a random cohort from the Henley Business School MBA students. When they arrived for the study, they entered the room and chose to sit at any place around the desk where forms were laid out for completion before participation. Attached to the forms were name badges that allocated each participant a code name: Sun, Moon, Fire, Water, Earth, Wind, Bird. Participants were asked to speak to each other using these names to ensure anonymity. They were provided with a 90-second section of prerecorded music on a playback device that they could replay any number of times and they were asked to write an advertising jingle within 20 minutes, working as a group. The group was filmed from two angles as they worked. At the end of the allotted time, I returned to the room and asked the group to complete the heedful inter-relating questionnaire.

After completing the questionnaire online, the group was invited to take part in an Elicitation interview including interpersonal recall of their experience of working together. This interview was audio recorded.

The two camera video recordings and the audio recording were transcribed. The results from the two sets of questionnaires were entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

To begin the analysis, I began working atheoretically to develop coding and categories grounded in the material available. This inductive coding provided categories substantially and qualitatively different to those provided by the literature.

I then began to work theoretically, using the operationalisation provided by the literature for HI. The results of this coding are provided in the Findings section in the full write-up.

As a final step, I looked back at the results of the two questionnaires to consider whether the findings were aligned to what the questionnaires might foretell.

4.4.4 Learning from the Pilot Study for the Field Study

In conducting this pilot study I noted in my research diary that I set out to learn, and there is much that became apparent through this trial run. I will briefly describe the key points and how they relate to the field study.

The exercise that sat at the heart of the pilot study was 20 minutes long and I was nervous whether a newly formed group would experience *Conscious Coalescence* in such a short time frame. They did, but of course they used their own language to describe it. Here is an excerpt to illustrate their lived experience: "Tree demonstrates how this collective consciousness flourishes even further: 'I think I was like, ahh, good idea. I think that's what came to mind and I think that's what I actually felt as well. But it was like an aha moment when I heard his words, I was like oh, this is brilliant. And then I think he started explaining the mood as well and I was like, oh, I can see it. So it was like a mind opening moment'"[2] It taught me how fleeting the experience could be, and that it was not a process that required teams to have been through the

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[2] Extracted from full write-up of Pilot Study available in Appendix 9.3.5A.2

usual team development or maturation stages. It showed me how helpful it was for the group to see themselves on video and narrate their experience.

My pilot study research questions relied on me coming to an understanding of individuals' lived experience and this required me to undertake first-person investigation using group Elicitation interviews. This is one of my main criticisms of other empirical work on HI where they fail to ask group participants about their experience. Given that the operationalisation of HI includes things such as "balance of attention on self and others" and "felt quality of unity" (Stephens and Lyddy, 2016), my argument is these are things that researchers cannot infer from observation. Although I felt clumsy using the Elicitation technique – and, tried to coach myself to do better in the field study – it did re-affirm to me the absolute necessity of asking people about their experience, rather than simply inferring their experience from behaviour that I observed. It also showed me that my reading of their experience was not reliable because I missed or downplayed what they later told me was important, and I took this into consideration when designing the field study, ensuring that I gave participants multiple ways to report on their views.

The Stephens and Lyddy (2016) paper provided me with an a priori coding structure for the pilot study analysis based on their operationalisation of the three facets of HI. In the end, I extended their coding structure by eight further categories because the data was insufficiently represented through their coding structure. This taught me that having a framework to start my coding was helpful, but Stephens and

Lyddy had been too narrow in their interpretation. It was at this point that I understood that my inclination is to work from the data to theory (inductively) but also that I don't believe we are a tabula rasa, so any inductive working is inevitably theory infused. Thus, I was convinced by the need to work abductively. I determined to make sure that my coding structure was inclusive of an extensive range of processes, even those outside my theorising. This radically informed the coding schema that I went on to develop and apply.

I also undertook the analysis of the videos and transcripts using Nvivo. It was the appropriate tool given the ideas I had at the time. But part of my dissatisfaction with the coding was that Nvivo has limited facilities for visualising the data. My ideas were developing to consider groups as flocks, inspired by Will (2016), who used 'murmuration' to describe a form of flock leadership. So, seeing patterns of movement within the group became important. My commitment to Nvivo as an analytical tool waned and I reverted to Excel which provided me with greater visualisation options.

I now leave the pilot study to describe the full approach for the field study, which began over the course of several months to relocate from HI to the literature of LAP. The experience of the pilot study led me to commit to three principles: I would not name the process of interest as I felt sure that it would shape the participants' descriptions; I would privilege their lived experience, which I consider to be missing from most of the studies in the LAP field; I would commit to working with a group unit

of analysis again because it is almost entirely missing from other studies in LAP and collaborative leadership. This requires – as much as possible – not atomising to an individual unit. However, having stated this ambition, I was to discover that it was impossible to work consistently at a group level, as will be explained.

4.5 PART FIVE: FIELD STUDY RESEARCH METHODS

4.5.1 Using Comparative Case Studies

Case studies typically focus on understanding the dynamics of one situation (Eisenhardt, 1989), but the narrow focus of case studies makes it difficult to justify broader applicability. By drawing cases from a number of entities, each case serves as a distinct experiment that stands on its own and also stands in conjunction with others. Thus, the use of multiple case studies allows for the possibility of creating more generalisable knowledge (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). As I am understanding and extending current theories, I chose to use multiple cases.

The use of multiple case studies means that different cases can be selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending theory by offering an understanding of relationships between constructs (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). Further, multiple case studies allow comparisons and elimination of alternative explanations (Yin, 1994).

I have chosen mostly to lean towards the Eisenhardt Method because it provides a framework for multiple case studies where each case is set within different contexts, allowing for cross-case comparison (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). In

particular, this answers Denis et al's call for more comparative case studies in the field of pluralised leadership studies (Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012, p.217). When approaching companies to participate in the study, I tried to pair-match so that I had direct comparisons and could be sure that organisational culture was not a major contributor to my results. I did not completely manage to achieve this but can demonstrate both similarities and differences between the Cases, which I believe makes them suitable comparators. This is evidenced in Table 10 below:

Table 10 – Cases compared using key features of organisation

Case	Case	Similarities	Differences
Jet Flyer A (JFA)	Fire & Water (F&W)	Strong links to military/navy, which means strong compliance cultures. Both headed by women.	Profit motive (A). Public service motive (F&W). UK:US participants (A).
Fire & Water	Jet Flyer G (JFG)	Deference to hierarchy, but G has more structural complexity whereas F&W has more stakeholder complexity.	Profit motive (G). Public service motive (F&W).
Jet Flyer A	Jet Flyer G	In the same global corporation. Matrixed structure. Technical areas of the business. UK:US participants.	Functional focus. Size.

Theory-building multiple case study research has the potential to make a strong contribution to knowledge if the resulting propositions extend and make a coherent theoretical story that 'reaches beyond' the case studies themselves.

4.5.2 Research Methods Adopting a Case Study Approach

The interactive and iterative nature of the research means that the work was not entirely linear but for clarity I explain my approach in a stepwise manner. Here are the procedural steps I undertook (Figure 12):
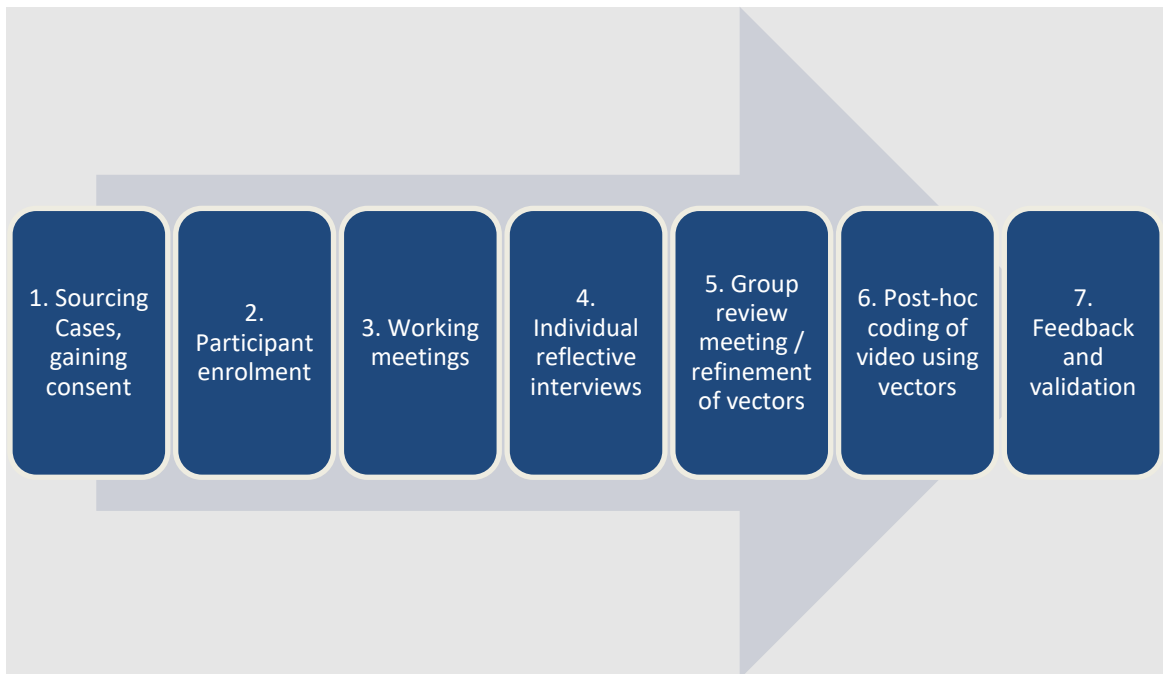
Figure 12 – Research steps for each case study

4.5.2.1 Sourcing Cases, gaining consent (Box 1, Figure 12)

The Ethics application was made to Henley Business School on 5th March 2019 (copy supplied in Appendix A.3, along with supporting documentation, but please note, as described earlier, this was framed within the context of HI).

The three Cases reported in this thesis were sourced through my personal professional network. Usually, a senior organisational leader would be known to me and I would approach them to act as a sponsor of the study. I would present to them on the theoretical background of the study and the logistical requirements and once they were sufficiently interested and committed, we would agree which meetings I could attend. In all three Cases, the sponsor went to the group to present my study and the requirements and to engender their agreement to participate. I would then draft an email for that senior leader to send to members of the team introducing me and re-iterating the study (sample provided in Appendix A.3.3). Once again, with a view to minimising impression management within the group, the email was deliberately open ended about the specific purpose of my study, mostly framing it as being about how the group worked together. I deliberated for some time about how to do this, treading a fine line between the ethical requirement to be transparent with participants while also preserving the integrity of my study. I made sure to describe enough detail so that people were fully informed about anything that might constitute a risk, in order to ensure that I fulfilled my primary duty as a researcher to keep them safe and allow them to make an informed consent.

4.5.2.2 Participant enrolment (Box 2, Figure 12)

Participants were brought into the study individually as this afforded them the ability to speak confidentially and to discuss any concerns they might have. The onboarding phone call took 30 to 45 minutes so that I could adequately explain: how the videoing would be set up; how their data would be treated and kept confidential; how their data would be stored and kept safe; how they could complain; and how they could withdraw from the study. These points were also made in the participant sheet that they were given (Appendix A.3.4).

On completion of the onboarding call, I invited questions and requested that participants sign the consent form and return it to me. Every participant received an onboarding call, every participant returned a signed consent form.

While acknowledging a potential inconsistency, I chose not to onboard the group as a group, to avoid any undue influence between participants that might inadvertently privilege the opinions of one party.

4.5.2.3 Working meetings (Box 3, Figure 12)

I joined each group for meetings that the participants identified as strategically important and sat as a non-participant observer taking notes, video- and audio-recording the session. As much as possible, I was trying to capture a natural meeting, with natural inter-relating. Photos of the room for F&W are provided (Figure 13 and Figure 14) to illustrate how the participants saw me observing them.

Figure 13 – Researcher as non-participant observer

Figure 14 – Photograph of 360-degree camera and audio recorder in situ

A summary of the sequencing of these meetings is in Table 11 below:

Table 11 – Summary of sequencing of meetings

Case	Working Meetings – videoed as they did the work	Group Review Meetings – videoed as they discussed the earlier videos
Jet Flyer A	2 x 2-day Strategic Board Meetings All participants in the room on day 1 One participant on telepresence on day 2	½ day with two members on telepresence
Fire & Water	2 x 2-day Strategic Leadership Meetings All participants in the room on both days	½ day All participants in the room
Jet Flyer G	1 x 1-day Strategic Board Meeting 50% of participants on telepresence	Cancelled because of Covid-19 outbreak

The advent of Covid-19 meant that the final meeting with Jet Flyer was cancelled. I have included the data from this group and in the Findings and Discussion chapters explain at length why I believe this is justified.

4.5.2.4 Individual reflective interviews (Box 4, Figure 12)

Each participant was interviewed shortly after the observed meetings. I first checked and received assurances that my presence and the presence of the camera did not distort the meeting. The second and core objective was to ask each person to identify any section of the meetings of salience for them. I deliberately used the word 'salient' considering it to be a value-neutral term and allowing enough freedom for participants to reflect on why it might be of interest to them. From these interviews,

the video segments of the selected moments were separated for later discussion collectively by the group. There was total agreement on which video segments to review (see my reflections on this at section 8.2).

While individual interviews may seem inconsistent with my commitment to the group level of analysis (Gronn, 2015), the alternative of asking the group to identify salient moments risked prioritising status, loudest voices or longest tenured. Furthermore, the intent was that the group would review all identified salient moments without being told who had identified them.

4.5.2.5 Group review meeting/refinement of vectors (Box 5, Figure 12)

To sensitise the group to issues such as a group unit of analysis and practice, without needing the group to learn an entire new academic vocabulary, I used videos of flocks of starlings (murmurations) and waves on a beach. This allowed me to move their attention away from themselves as self-conscious individuals to consider the movement of the group, and it also allowed a discussion about enactment, which included dialogue, bodies, materials and space.

In a dedicated half-day meeting, each selected video segment was viewed by the group and they recounted their lived experience as a group after each segment. The questions used in the discussion were based on Elicitation as previously described. I also showed them a schema based on vectors and asked them to watch the videos and use the vectors to notate the activity. These vectors formed the basis of the

coding structure that I applied to the video segments. The development of the vectors

is fully described in section 4.6.

After watching each video and having a group discussion, the participants

handed me their anonymous coding sheets that used vectors to describe what they

wanted to capture about the group at work. Figure 15, Figure 16, Figure 17, and Figure

18 show the vectors and how they were described to the participants.

Figure 15 – Vectors that were provided to participants to inspire them in completing their coding sheets

Figure 16 – Explanation of vectors that was provided to participants

Figure 17 – Participant's vectors on their coding sheet

Figure 18 – Another participant's vectors on their coding sheet

4.5.2.6 Post hoc coding of videos (Box 6, Figure 12)

4.5.2.6.1 Primary data coding

Following the discussion with the group, I analysed each segment that they had reviewed. After iterating between the group's descriptions of movement (vectors) and my understanding of practice I eventually had a set of discernible patterns using tools, discourses, and bodies (Nicolini, 2013b). I chose 'Pulses' as the descriptive noun for these processes, which includes talk and physical movements such as nodding heads, making notes on flipcharts, handing items to each other, using slides and handing out confectionary.

Coding was conducted in a stepwise manner. First, my focus was to find practices and underlying structures that might be revealed, so initially coding was solely aimed at describing the categories of activity. During the secondary coding, I reorganised and analysed the data and advanced my understanding of the patterns that appeared initially.

4.5.2.6.2 Secondary coding

The secondary coding aimed to fit categories together to develop a coherent synthesis of the corpus (Saldaña, 2010). In a reorganisation of all data, I returned to the pulses for each group and the group commentary and began to discern discrete orientations. While in my primary coding schema I did not ascribe a purpose to the activity, it became apparent that there might be a consistent set of logics between certain patterns. For example, the practice of *adding* and the practice of *aggregating* might have the common logic of moving the group forward. This iterative moving

between the data and the group interviews helped me to see that the patterns could

be further organised via a secondary coding schema that clustered similar logics.

4.5.2.7 Feedback and validation (Box 7, Figure 12)

Over the course of three months, I reconnected three times with each group

via video conference, in different configurations, to share the coding structure, as well

as developing ideas on the process of becoming unified. They offered some strong

correction to a few of my interpretations, e.g., one segment I read as conflictual, they

reported as helpful. These small but important corrections assured me that I was

honouring their experience of collaborative leadership.

This concludes the description of my research approach. One key aspect of the

research was the development and use of vectors and a specific coding schema to

capture practices at a group level. The next section details how I went about doing this

and why I made a choice to work in this way.

4.6 PART SIX: DEVELOPMENT FROM VECTORS TO CODING OF PRACTICES

In the pilot study, I was content to use standard analysis techniques for the

video and audio recordings, in that the recordings were converted to transcripts and

coded in Nvivo. As already mentioned, this concentrated solely on what participants

said and omitted what they did. What was the point of video recording them if I did

not use their actions as part of the analysis? My aim was to translate a three-

dimensional moving image onto a two-dimensional static page.

A second concern also urged me to find other tools. At Cranfield School of Management, I was simultaneously videoing groups working on 4-hour sprints (as per Agile methods) to produce a new phone app. It was part of their MBA programme (covered by separate ethics and no data included in this thesis) and I had the opportunity to debrief the groups on how they put into practice the Agile method they were being taught. Accepting it was not Elicitation, it was nevertheless a good proxy for the group interviews I was planning. What became abundantly clear was they reverted to nomenclature that is in the 'classic' teamwork manuals – body language, use of open questions, not interrupting etc., and, while these may be interesting and valuable, they all reduce the noticings to the individual, it became "he did xyz" or "she did abc". Coincidentally, I was just onboarding the individuals at Jet Flyer and had a very similar experience – they reduced everything down to an individual level. But I was resolute that I wanted to find out about their group-level practices, and I did not know how to do this without reverting to pre-existing schemas.

So it was my commitment to have the group participate in their own sensemaking of the group, combined with the lack of language to encourage them to do this at a meso level plus the need to capture activity and doings not just speaking, that prompted me to be more experimental in my data capture and analysis.

Concerned to teach the groups a new language of groups without relying on classic group work formulae, I started doodling to illustrate patterns of interaction (see Figure 19 for early development of vectors). In my mind, I wanted to teach the group

to look at how they danced together. This makes the units more encompassing; a

sequence becomes a unit because you can't tell if it is a Cha, Cha, Cha until you've seen

the 1,2,Cha,Cha,Cha – the 1,2 could be the beginnings of a waltz because they have

those steps in common. Thus, it is the whole pattern of steps that becomes

meaningful. I prepared an initial schema using shapes and representational objects in

the hope that this use of a visual schema would elevate the conversation, transcend

cultural differences and keep the discussion away from the personal.
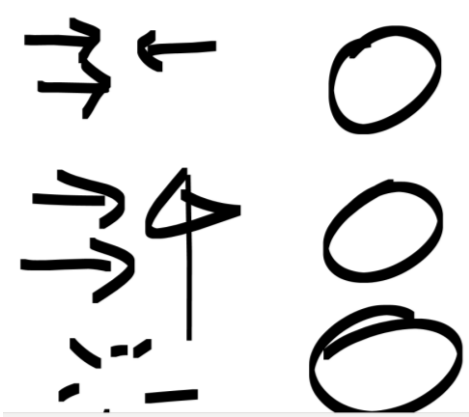
Figure 19 – Some original doodles, early development of vectors

Throughout August and September 2019, I continued to refine the doodles to

develop a comprehensive set of vectors that included all the group practice that I

could imagine. To test these vectors, I sourced publicly available YouTube videos of

focus groups, group workshops and MBA students in groups, and I sat watching these

videos and coding and then re-watching and re-coding until I could do so consistently.

Back at Cranfield, I had other researchers on the Agile project watch the videos of those groups and apply my schema again and again until we could all watch the same video sequence and apply the same vectors. I revised the schema eight times to make it consistent without overlaps and erasing any sense of judgement about any practices being good or not good. At my supervision meeting in September, I was provided feedback and challenge to some of the vectors. Particularly, in that discussion we added *Conscious Coalescence* as a vector to illustrate "self in group, group in self" per Nonaka and Konno (1998). Several further refinements were made including a simpler vector for a question, which became known as *checking* i.e. '?', as well as adding example utterances for people who may find visual prompts unhelpful. Samples of the vectors are illustrated in Figure 20 below:

Practices	Utterances	Meanings
Advance, advance ➝➝	And, and	This way Forward, additive How about… Suggestions
Checking ?	Why? What? How?	Pauses the advancing to ensure understanding Are we? Have you thought about?
Re-direct ➝↗	New direction	Diverts advancing Moves group but maintains forward momentum
Disagree/ de-rail ✳	No	Stops the advancing Throws the group off
Challenging ➝ ←	What about	Stops the advancing Does not throw the group off A form of building strength of idea
Laughter 🎆	Ha, ha, ha	Stops the advancing May be anxiety release May be bonding May be just funny

Figure 20 – Late September version of vectors and practices

On the 29th of September, I wrote in my researcher journal: "First full trial run of coding using the clip 'Day 2_Whole Team_Deciding the Objectives for the Day'. This is a 9-minute video clip. I choose to start with this clip because: 1) in the individual interviews a couple of people said it was a good example of the team being responsive to the specific circumstances; 2) being primarily a visual person, I wanted to start with video because it is likely to be the most dance-like".

All manner of learning became apparent as I began to apply these ideas of vectors. Most important for this discussion of methods was a key question of whether I was capturing truly group-level data. For example, the criticism might be that the

exchanging practice is often between just two individuals, so this might contravene the ethos of coding for the group. The same too with *adding* practices; one person is often doing the *adding*. My counter to this point of view is that nevertheless the group is involved in the *adding*; the group is involved in the *exchanging*. If they are not involved, i.e. these practices are not of interest to them or do not accord with their point of view, I would expect to see either: fragmenting of focus; or an alternative intervention. My assumption therefore is that people in a group who are paying attention to the group are getting enough of what they need until they say or show otherwise.

As a consequence of this rationale, I decided that I needed to also capture focus of attention and energy levels. I captured focus, to find out if all, most or some of the group were actually engaged in the group or whether some had become involved in conversations on the side or emails as I had seen in my other trial runs.

The final coding sheet that was used by the participants and by me is shown in

Figure 21 along with examples of the explanations for each vector are in Figure 22.

.... name of video file and where the mp4 can be found to match with this coding sheet

Time	Where is the focus? Where is attention? 1. Single 2. Scattered 3. Watching Energy of the group? 1,2,3,4,5	Practices > Advance as a group + Add something new >< Challenge directly } Aggregate ideas or actions ? Checking ⇄ Miss each other ↻ Exchange ↗ Redirect * Laugh 😊 Thank you / appreciation ! Diverge = Conscious concurrence O Silence X Not agreeing ✓Yes n/c no action as a group	Other notes
0-1			
1-2			
2-3			

Figure 21 – Final coding sheet

UNDERSTANDING GROUP PRACTICES –
USING VECTORS TO WATCH WHAT HAPPENS

1	**+**	Adding New ideas New meanings
2	**→**	Advancing Group keeps moving forward No obstacles to furthering the discussion
3	**}**	Aggregating Consolidate ideas or meanings
4	**✓**	Yessing Agreeing Nodding
5	**⟳**	Exchanging specifics with a colleague may be in the form of a question or fact giving

Figure 22 – Example of explanations of the vectors

To aid comprehension when looking at the data, all the practices and the full meanings of each practice are explained alongside the data in the Findings chapter, section 5.1.

4.7 PART SEVEN: CODING ANALYSIS AND CREATING CHARTS

As illustrated above (see Figure 17 and Figure 18), the coding sheets from the participants were a mix of vector diagrams and prose to explain other elements that they observed in themselves. This challenged me to find appropriate ways to make use of these data while staying faithful to the participants' views. Vectors became practices: for example, -> is the vector for the practice *advancing*, which I entered into an Excel spreadsheet as the abbreviation 'adv'.

On completing all the group meetings and all the group Elicitation interviews, I transferred all the data to Excel. I did not intend to do any 'adding up' as I was interested in patterns. But I was also aware that, with so much unique data, I needed a way to consolidate and report it and I needed to find a way to place some minimal order on it. To do this, I summed the number of times the 15 different practices were used overall. This gave me a frequency count and showed that *advancing* was the most frequent practice, and *diverging* was the least frequent.

Using 'frequency of practice' gave me a consistent vertical axis against which each participant's set of coding could be plotted, providing a quick comparison between two participants' views of the same segment. The first set of data charts are therefore simple scatters using this consistent vertical axis. At point zero on the vertical axis is *advancing* and at point 14 is *diverging.* I put *Conscious Coalescence* at point 15 to give it prominence. This means that *CC* is not in its rightful place on the frequency axis. If it was, it would sit between *challenging* and *laughing* (i.e. it would have the rightful coding of 10), but visually I wanted to quickly see where it was occurring according to the participants. Below is an example of a scatter chart, shown in Figure 23. The horizontal axis is simply the number of practices that are coded throughout the video segment. Usually, each participant will code at a different rate, e.g. P1 might code three practices in a minute, whereas P2 might code seven practices. The scatter arrays all the coding along a consistent horizontal, called 'number of practices'.
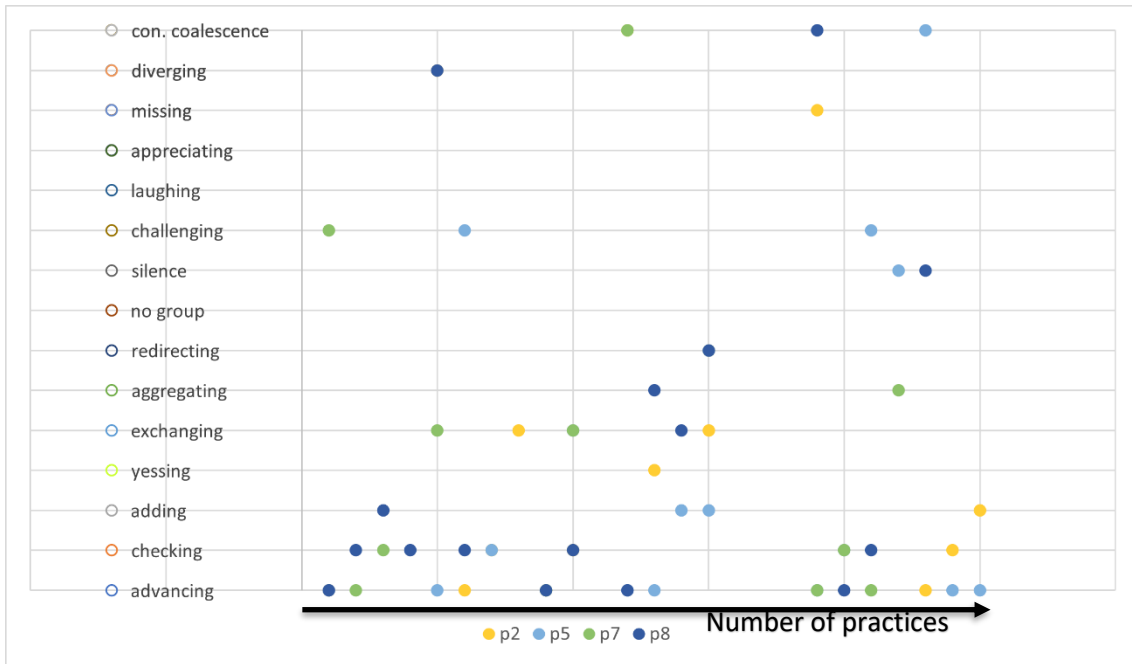
Figure 23 – Example scatter chart showing practices on the vertical axis arranged by frequency

The Pulse charts use the same principles but apply a different graphical format. Now the frequency axis runs horizontally across the top of the diagram with the number of practices arrayed vertically, and, rather than plot the points as a scatter, I have graphed these as a wave form. Creating the wave forms for these video segments felt like a congruent representation of the Cases and the Pulses are arrayed vertically to make sure that there is no implication that higher is 'better'. This diagrammatic form was the closest I came to being able to translate the three-dimensional dance of the group on video onto the two-dimensional realm of paper and I call these 'Pulse charts'. The example in Figure 24 below is P5 from the previous scatter chart but translated into a Pulse chart. This is an eight-minute segment of

video so P5 has coded 17 practices, this coding tempo will – as before – be different to

other participants, so the vertical axis remains 'number of practices'.
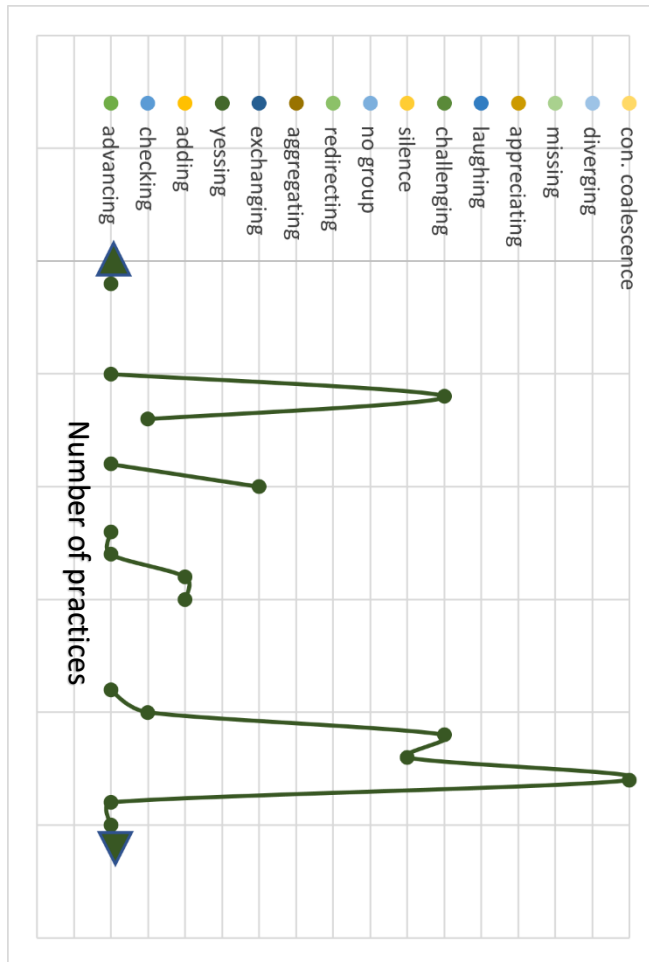
Figure 24 – Example of a Pulse chart using P5 coding

To create the charts that I call 'DNA strands', I simply laid practices side by side

in columns and added colour, then negated cells to avoid duplication. Figure 25 below

shows four columns side by side based on the primary coding of practices. For

example, if my sheet read "adv, adv, chall, miss, tu" (Table 12 gives all the codes and all the definitions of the codes), then that sequence was made into a vertical column in Excel and replicated four times. 'Add' received a green cell, 'chk' received a yellow cell, 'red' received a red cell and 'yes' received a purple cell.

Figure 25 – Secondary coding (step one, creating DNA strands), four columns before duplicates are removed

Having achieved four columns, I then simply deleted cells in each column that were not of the same colour to produce the strands, as illustrated in Figure 26.
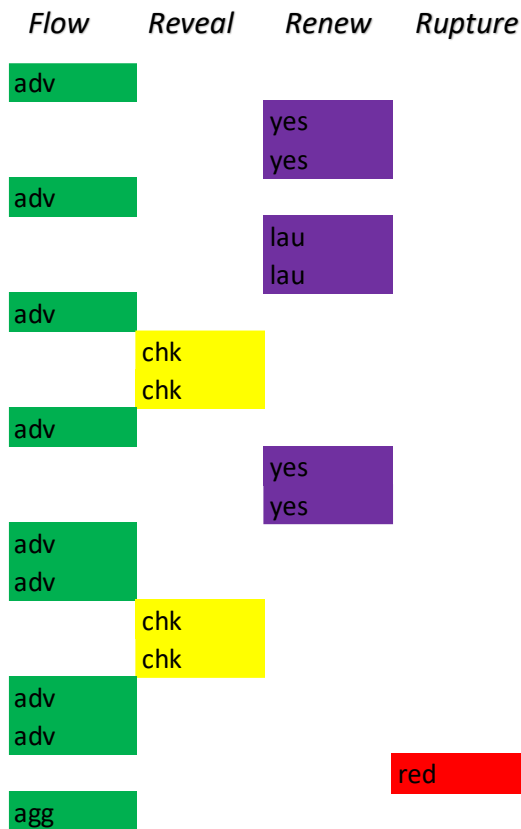
Figure 26 – Secondary coding (step two, creating DNA strands), four columns with duplicates removed

The Pulse charts help to see the Flow of practices, whereas the DNA strands help to show the switching between practices. These different approaches make it easier to see the frequency of practices, which practices follow other practices most often, and discontinuities of practice.

4.8 Summary of Methodology Chapter

Starting with my personal beliefs about the world, I have told the story in this chapter from, research philosophy, to key ontological commitments, to original research methods and onto data capture and analysis using vectors to express group practices. In keeping with the Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019), all these elements are aligned. I have sought to understand methodological weaknesses and to ensure that I have different methods of data collection and analysis to address most of these concerns. These shortfalls are recognised and discussed in Chapter 8, Limitations. In the next chapter, I describe my findings, which are derived from the strategy reported here.

5 FINDINGS

In this chapter I report on the study findings. The chapter has four sections: the vector and coding schema are explained in full; followed by an introduction to navigating the remainder of the chapter. I then present the results of the primary coding, and lastly the results of the secondary coding or thematic analysis.

The findings are related back to the guiding research questions: _What is the lived experience of participants when_ Conscious Coalescence _emerges?_ And: _How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?_

5.1 EXPLAINING THE VECTOR AND CODING SCHEMA

As described earlier (page 137), initially the participants were asked to view themselves on video and consider how they were inter-relating much like a flock of starlings in a murmuration. On the first viewing of the video segment, participants used vectors to draw – using arrows, circles, emojis and Webdings – what they saw, and then during the Elicitation interview I asked them to speak about what they had drawn. Each participant sheet for each video was numbered anonymously and handed in. Thus, I did not know the identity of Participant One and, for the next video segment, Participant One could be a different person. As a consequence, the quotes that are reported are not attributed to a specific participant because this could be misleading, suggesting that I know who Participant Six is and am amalgamating all comments made by Six. The vectors were translated into codes that I named as a 'practice'; so, a 'practice' is here defined to mean the improvised, in situ coping and evolving patterns of behaviour and activity through which new meanings emerge and unfold (Feldman and Worline, 2016; Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017; Raelin,

2016a). After several iterations (described in Methodology) the final coding sheet adopted

the definitions in Table 12.

Table 12 – Primary coding of practices

Practices (listed alphabetically) and abbreviations used	Meaning	Ranking frequency of each practice
Adding (add)	Contributing new ideas New meanings	2
Advancing (adv)	Process that keeps the group moving forward Furthering the discussion	0 (most frequent)
Aggregating (agg)	Consolidating ideas or meanings Inclusion of others' points or views	5
Appreciating (tu)	Thank you Acknowledgement of others contribution	11
Challenging (chall)	Directly confronting the prevailing momentum	9
Checking (chk)	Question to the whole group Confirming a general understanding	1
Conscious Coalescence (CC)	Altogether, people transcend their embeddedness Acting as more than the sum of the parts Self in group, group in self	14 (placed at 14 to give prominence)
Diverging (div)	Not agreeing Whole group fragmenting	13 (least frequent)
Exchanging (exc)	Requesting specific details	4
Laughing (lau)	Joking Releasing tension	10

Practices (listed alphabetically) and abbreviations used	Meaning	Ranking frequency of each practice
Missing (miss)	Misunderstanding the point of the other Speaking at odds with each other	12
No group (n/c)	No coding Individual work Interruptions	7
Redirecting (red)	Moving the group in a new direction	6
Silence (sil)	Stillness Group not communicating	8
Yessing (✓)	Agreeing Nodding	3

5.2 NAVIGATING THE FINDINGS

For primary coding, the data analysis proceeds in 22 steps. There are three groups of participants and each group is called a Case. The Cases are Jet Flyer A (JFA), Jet Flyer G (JFG) and Fire & Water (F&W). Cases JFA and F&W were invited to review up to four segments of video. Each segment of video was analysed by the group in three ways with the participants using the coding schema (previously described) to capture their impressions of their own group practices. The coding pages that they handed in also allowing them to each make confidential qualitative comments. Finally, as a group, they discussed the video, their coded practices and what they understood to be happening among themselves. This discussion was also recorded and forms part of the stage one analysis.

I analysed the data 'within' each video segment using all three sources. Next, I analysed 'between' all the video segments. Then, I set my coding and comments alongside the participants': first, on a segment-by-segment basis; then across the video segments; then across all the Cases. The steps are therefore recursive and iterative from step one to step two and back again.

After the 22 steps in primary coding there is one additional step in the data analysis that is secondary coding. Secondary coding is described in the next section in this chapter, on page 242. As previously described in the Methodology Chapter, JFG was not coded by the group because the last meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19. This means the data analysis misses the first step of within-segment group analysis. But the subsequent steps proceeded in line with the other Cases. This approach to data analysis is shown in Figure 27.
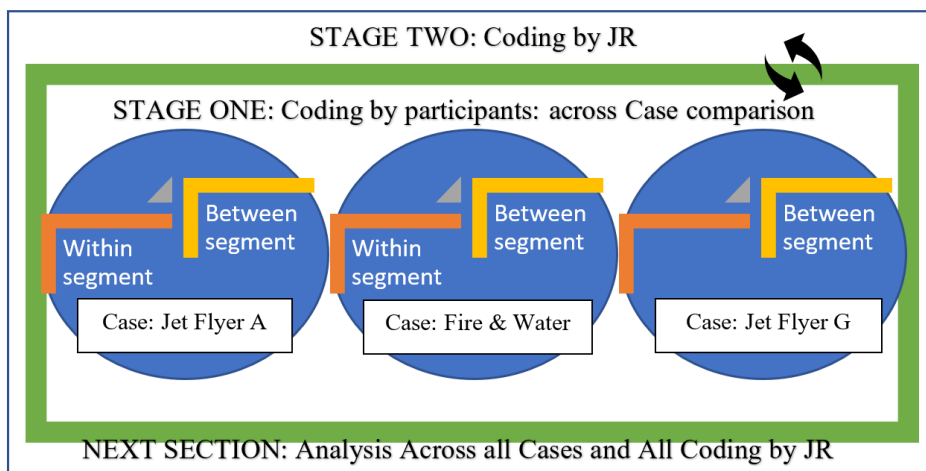
Figure 27 – The 22 iterative steps of coding analysis

As each Case includes multiple segments of video (up to four), and each segment is then subject to multiple analyses, first by the participants then by me, to help navigate this

chapter, I propose using an Indexer shown in Figure 28 which allows the reader to keep in mind which part of the analysis and whose analysis they are reading and how that analysis relates to the overall view.

In the example shown below, the tick alongside the index shows that the analysis is for the Case F&W and it relates to coding and comments by the participants and the analysis compares how different participants have seen the same segment.

JFA	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	
F&W	Pts Within	✔
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	
JFG	JR Coding	
All	Across (JR coding)	

Figure 28 – Indexer as an aid to navigating the data analysis

5.3 STAGE ONE: REPORTING FINDINGS FROM PARTICIPANT CODING AND GROUP DISCUSSION

In this section, I privilege the voice of the participants by considering their views of their meetings. The Cases are ordered: Jet Flyer A, Fire & Water, Jet Flyer G.

5.3.1 Jet Flyer A

This Case is located within Jet Flyer – one of the world's leading industrial technology companies. Because of its industrial heritage it remains somewhat hide-bound by old

working practices, legacy systems and a workforce with outmoded skills. During a reorganisation in 2018, the headcount was reduced by 4,600 with a view to making the organisation more agile and innovative.

The two groups that participated (A and G – G is in Section Jet Flyer G) are professional functional leaders who work globally but are based in offices solely in Britain and the US, meaning that, for example, Arabian clients are supported from the UK. The groups have worked together in this configuration for approximately six months, having previously known each other and collaborated more informally through the earlier federal structure where they held solid reporting lines to the businesses that they served. The 2018 company-wide reorganisation recentralised the functions and the individuals in these two groups have reapplied for jobs within this new structure with direct reporting to new Functional Heads.

Working through functional reporting lines is often used by organisations as a way of structuring for collaboration (Kornberger, 2017). Important individual considerations such as pay and promotion are determined via the solid reporting line with a large amount of input from the dotted business line. Conversely, it is the business line that largely decrees the type, scope and urgency of the work that an individual is engaged in. Each leader in these two Cases, was therefore answerable to two reporting lines and to some extent to multiple and conflicting objectives. This sense of duality is encapsulated in one leader telling me "I don't work for [name of Functional Head]", yet their reporting line in the structure is clearly through that Functional Head. Against this background, each of the groups' meetings are organised to pursue strategic functional objectives, but individuals are

carrying within them their strategic business objectives, and often strong counter loyalties. Thus, in these meetings, the stage is set for structural tensions, with any subject on the agenda likely to spark competing interests. The leadership challenge is to negotiate these interests in a way that does not discount either the needs of the business or the needs of the functions.

In each meeting, the participants repeatedly walk this tightrope with varying success. As each participant is a hierarchical leader in their own right, with one of them 'first among equals' their ability to get things done relies entirely on their ability to achieve collaborative agency; to reconcile two different reporting lines with different bosses and priorities; to set aside political agendas and find common cause; and to mutually agree strategies that provide direction, alignment and commitment to their functional teams. Making functional improvements relies on all parties moving together, despite different business imperatives. In this context, transcending individual embeddedness becomes critical to the success of both these groups. Before commencing the study, interviews revealed that both groups had a sporadic history of success in these endeavours.

5.3.1.1 Summary data:

An overview of the Case called Jet Flyer A (JFA) is provided in Table 13 – Summary data for Case: Jet Flyer A (JFA) below.

Table 13 – Summary data for Case: Jet Flyer A (JFA)

Research Timescale	July 2019 to January 2020
Composition	4 female; 4 male 2 US-based; 6 UK-based 1 male person of colour, newest to the group
Material collected	4 days of meetings 40 hours of video 12 hours of individual interviews 4 hours of group interview post video review

For the group interview at JFA – that is the interview with the group about the group – they asked to review three segments of video. In addition to their three selections, I added a further segment of video (Gallup) to both help them orient to the group-level of analysis; and to give an opportunity for them to try out the coding of practices. These segments are itemised and identified in Table 14 and discussed segment by segment below.

Table 14 – Video segments reviewed by Jet Flyer A and coded by the participants

Title	Details	Length
Gallup	The group is reviewing a slide deck giving results of a recent employee survey, before breaking into smaller groups to make sense of the results.	3½ mins
Objectives for the Day	The group is setting the agenda for the day, recognising that this is precious time with everyone in the same room and they want to use the time wisely.	9 mins
Slides for Tom	The group is reviewing a draft slide deck requested by a senior leader. The person leading the discussion is the newest and most inexperienced team member.	8 mins
Strategy Session	The group is thinking about the long-term strategy of the function. They have worked as two subgroups and this section is when they return together to share ideas.	14 mins

The comments and coding for each of these segments follows. At this point my intention is to understand their perspectives of themselves. Here is the indexer in Figure 29 to aid navigation.

JFA	Pts Within	✔
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	

Figure 29 – Indexer for navigation

5.3.1.2 Within four video segments

The coding and comments by each participant for each of the four sections of video are analysed in this section.

5.3.1.2.1 Video segment 'Gallup'

This segment of video was chosen by me, not the group, to help them to adjust to the coding schema. The coding sheets that were handed back have been translated into scatter graphs in Figure 30 It shows a sparsity of coding and disparity between the coding of each participant, which may be expected at this point in the discussion.
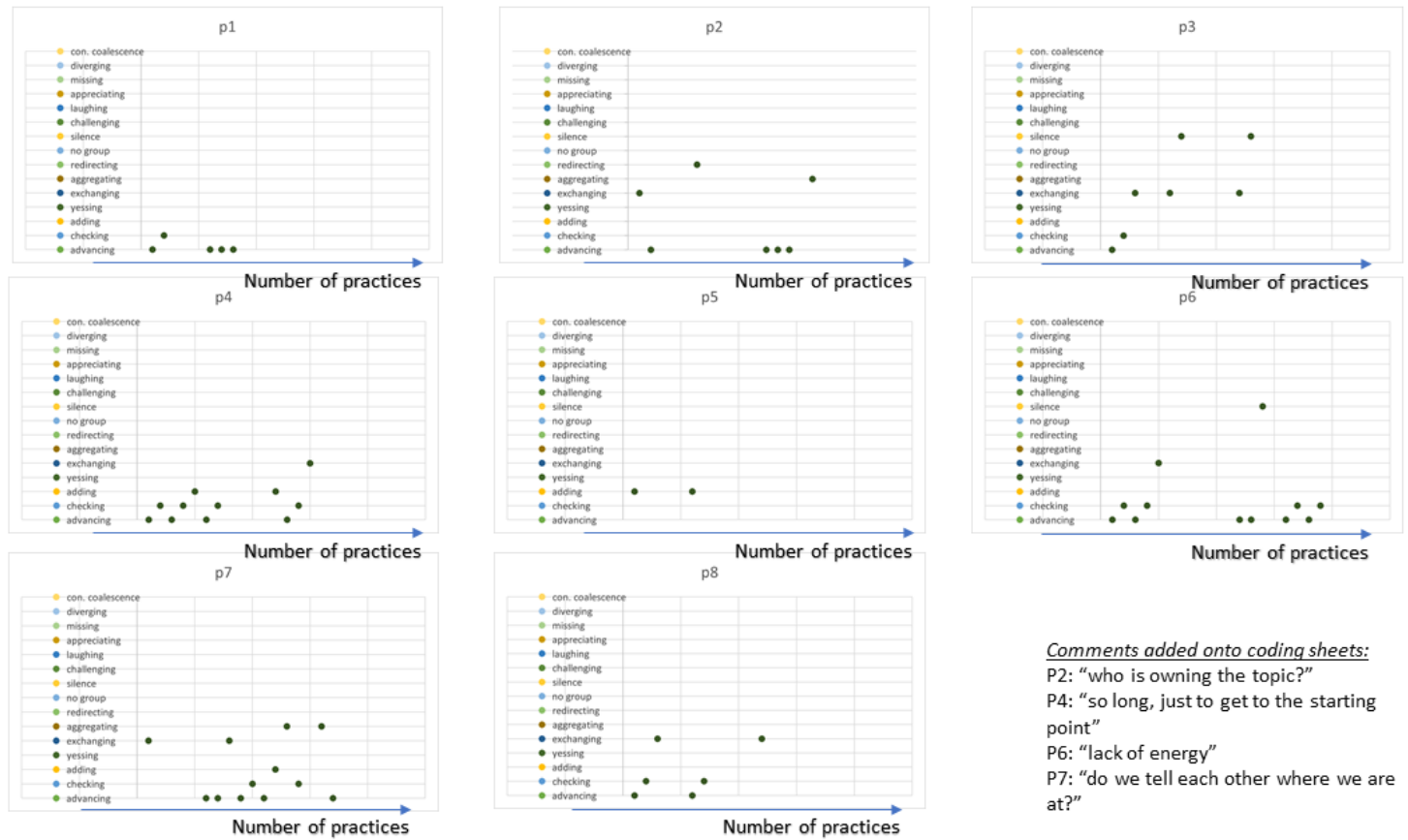
Figure 30 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Gallup'

On the sheets handed in, P6 (as a reminder, the identify of P6 is unknown to me) remarks on the lack of energy and P4 that it takes a long time for the conversation to get started. In keeping with these comments, the coding frequency is not high, demonstrating that the group sees themselves remaining in one practice for extended periods before switching to another practice.

There is a limited range of practices in use and the coding returned by all eight participants demonstrates that the group is not engaged in *challenging*, *diverging* nor *laughing*; there are no *missing*; no *yessing*; and no *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* emerges. All participants code *advancing* and *checking* as the prevalent practices.

In the group interview, quotes provided in Figure 31, the remarks were focused on two tendencies identified by the group. They felt that they demonstrated a pattern whereby someone would step forward and start a line of discussion and almost immediately others would step in requiring context, facts and explanations without sufficiently allowing the initiator to expand their thinking. Under this scrutiny they felt that this meant that a line of discussion was often forestalled and not allowed to fully come to fruition. Consequently, the second tendency they identified was that energy dissipated, and listening and observing became passive, with too much time spent on small details such as whether it was October when a certain event happened.

We spent a lot of time discussing whether it was actually October … [they are refreshing their memories of the timing of the redundancy programme]

… it takes quite a while to start the dance …

> … because you don't know if people are actually concentrating …
>
> We started building on some kind of thing in the 11th minute, but other than that, I just felt as if it was a lot of *listening* and observing … [note to Reviewers, the section the participants reviewed was 3½ minutes long, but it was extracted and timed as part of a longer section – hence the reference to 11th minute is correct, but misleading.]
>
> It wasn't clear to me where the ownership was. I could figure out whose topic it was because I know the slide deck, but from the interactions I couldn't figure out who was kind-of owning the conversation …
>
> There's definitely a pattern, isn't it? That start but then clarify, then …

Figure 31 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Gallup'

In reviewing the video sequence 'Gallup', the qualitative comments align with the coding. The group report that they experience the combination of *advancing* and *checking* as enervating. The discussion lacks any *challenging*, *diverging*, *laughing*, *yessing* and there are no *missings,* and these absences seem to impede the conversation becoming generative. At this point, the conversation is rather lifeless.

5.3.1.2.2 Video segment 'Objectives for the Day'

All the participants' coding charts are in Figure 32 below. Turning to the first video segment that was chosen by the participants. Overall, the coding by the participants is comprehensive, with only P1 denoting a single code (*laughing*). Within the sheets provided by P2–8, the codes for *diverging*, *missing*, *appreciating* and *no-coding* are absent. Two participants (P7,8) identify the emergence of *Conscious Coalescence*, but they identify this coalescence four minutes apart.
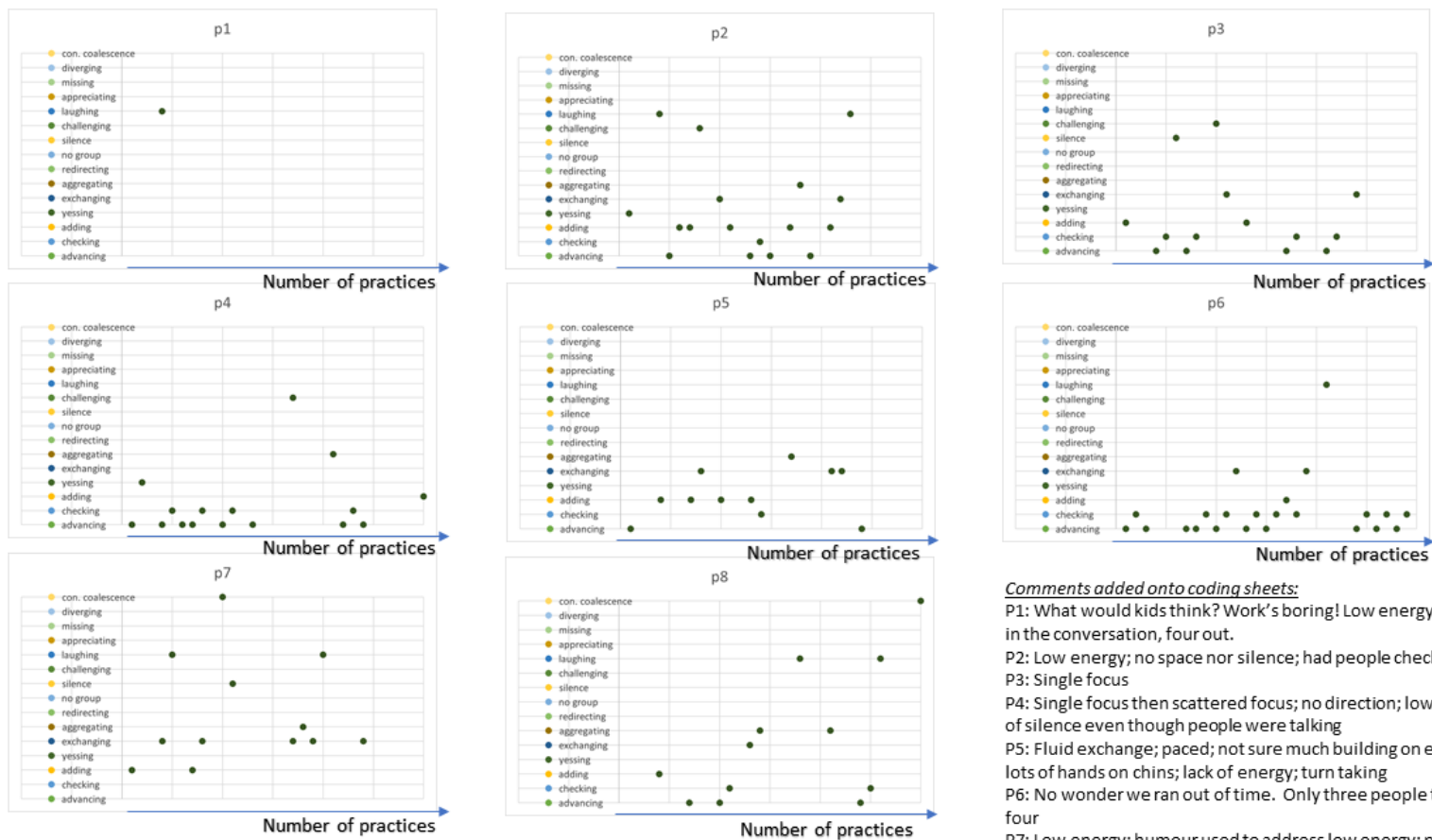
Comments added onto coding sheets:

P1: What would kids think? Work's boring! Low energy; three people in the conversation, four out.

P2: Low energy; no space nor silence; had people checked out?

P3: Single focus

P4: Single focus then scattered focus; no direction; low energy; lots of silence even though people were talking

P5: Fluid exchange; paced; not sure much building on each other; lots of hands on chins; lack of energy; turn taking

P6: No wonder we ran out of time. Only three people talking then four

P7: Low energy; humour used to address low energy; potentially passive aggressive and people checked out

P8: Low energy

Figure 32 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Objectives for the Day'

Watching the video in playback, this might seem a harmonious conversation but the qualitative comments on the sheets suggest that it was lacklustre. Six of the eight participants make mention of low energy, P6 remarks "no wonder we ran out of time" and P4 suggests "no direction" and P7 "people checked out". So, the pace of practice coding is not aligned to the energy levels the group report and, with energy low, it is likely that collaborative agency was also low.

In the group interview, the group members were taken aback at what they saw of themselves on the screen. Sample quotes are provided in Figure 33. Mostly, they notice that they squandered time setting their own 'Objectives for the Day' and that it was a tame conversation devoid of energy. At one point in the group discussion, they reflect on this issue and the following exchange ensues between four participants:

P1 Energy was low ... How could we avoid that in the future?
P2 We'd just come off the back of an energiser.
P1 Was the energiser before that?
P2 Yes.
P1 Wow.
P3 (joking/sarcasm) That worked then.
P4 There was a lot of laughing.
P2 We had a great energiser and then…

Ironically, the group seems to be suggesting that in pursuit of agility and flexibility, the conversation has become aimless and yet they were discussing their aims for the day. They consider the lack of animation is due to lack of energy and note that the prior energiser did not energise them for long. In the quotes, one participant is pointing to the

negotiated nature of these meetings and suggests that if they had a "leader" then it would

be possible to make a "call" on how the agenda gets allotted.

We each were able to make our own points.

I'm amazed that we spent 10 minutes talking about an agenda or what we wanted to achieve from the day!

… it's almost too flexible. I think we wanted to be really agile and let the conversation decide where we go, when actually we did have an objective for the day …

It felt like we were going round and round and round a few times.

I know that we should be able to self-regulate as a team, but this is where I think it gets really polite and the lack … no leader in the room means none of us really have the call on this. Like how are we gonna use our time? So it becomes a big discussion …

I don't think there was commitment in the room to kind-of get to an answer. Is how I felt …

… and it seemed a lot longer when you see it on the video … but it was like up to 3 minutes only three people had contributed anything, so four hadn't, and then by about 4 minutes one extra person had joined in but there's still three who hadn't, and it was just a really like slow, slow start. And, yeah, not how you'd want to do it. You'd never design it to go that way, would you?

Do we need to get better at calling that out? To actually imagine a mood monitor on the wall and just call out when it's just dipped below a line – we've got to do something, even if it's get up and walk round and come back and start again. But I don't know the answer, who's responsible for that, because in the end for me that was the bit that made that a bad start to that day was, to me seeing it now, was mood and energy and not dealing with that …

Figure 33 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Objectives for the Day'

The interview comments may be inconsistent with the coding results, which show a practice frequency that is quite high – especially P2,3,8. In later segments and other groups, high frequency of coding seems to be incommensurate with such low energy as low energy might be more usually associated with low practice frequency. However, the coding of two points of *CC* suggests that at least two participants experienced something where individuals were able to transcend their own embeddedness. This mismatch of interview comments and coding might have several explanations, which are explored in detail in the Discussion chapter.

5.3.1.2.3 Video segment 'Slides for Tom'

The coding and comments by the participants for this video segment are in Figure 34 below.
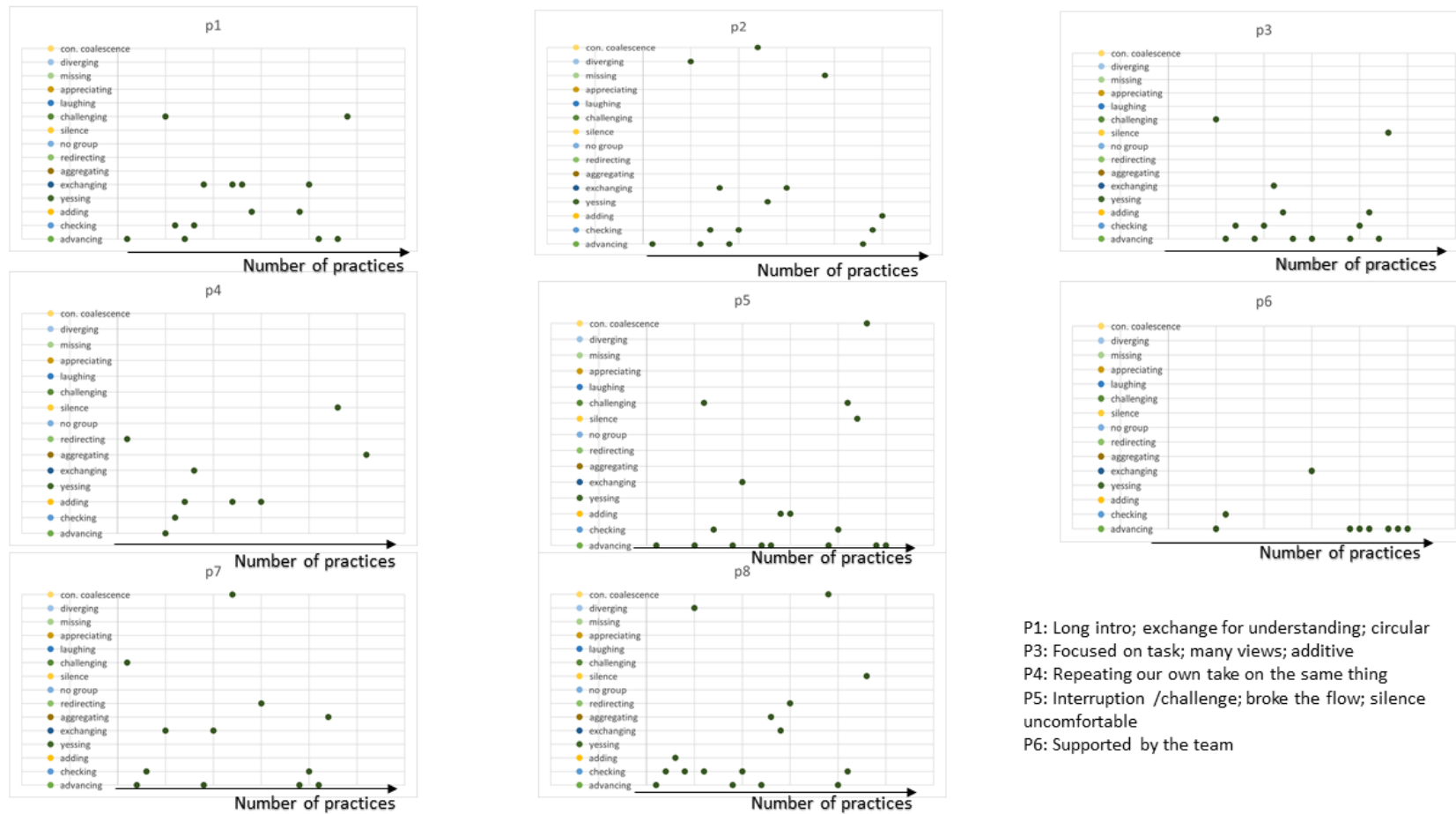
P1: Long intro; exchange for understanding; circular
P3: Focused on task; many views; additive
P4: Repeating our own take on the same thing
P5: Interruption /challenge; broke the flow; silence uncomfortable
P6: Supported by the team

Figure 34 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Slides for Tom'

Four participants code for *CC* emerging in this video segment. Every participant

provides a sheet that is abundantly coded, with P6 providing the sparsest. There are

sequences of practices that are repeated across P1–5,7,8 where they identify *advancing–*

checking, *advancing–checking*. P2,3,4,8 also use the sequence *advancing–checking–adding*.

The scatter chart produced by overlaying the four participant codings that identify

the emergence of *CC* is shown in Figure 35. P2 and P7 have both placed their markers for *CC*

at exactly the same place in this chart so one marker is imposed on the other. P5 and P8

have their *CC* coding at approximately 6 and 5 minutes, so all four participants are within 2

minutes of each other. For this reason, and for others that will be described later, in section

5.4.6.2 where I overlay my coding, the video segment: 'Slides for Tom' receives some

additional analysis and description.
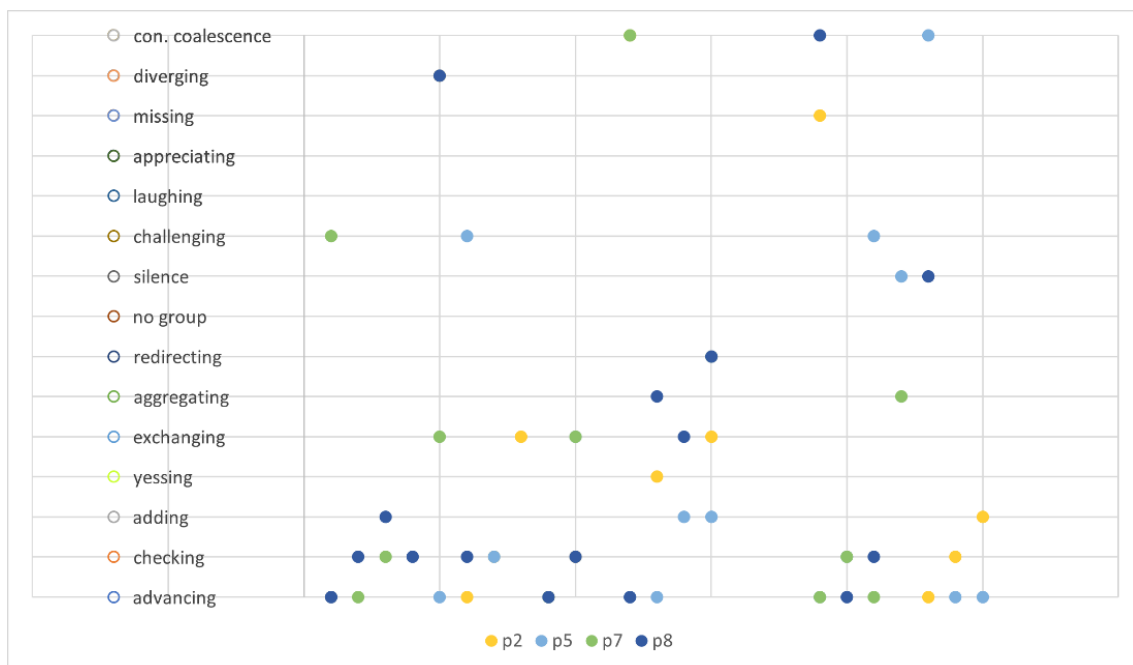
Figure 35 – Four participants code the emergence of *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* in 'Slides for Tom'

Turning to the qualitative comments provided by the participants on their sheets, they are unenthusiastic about this discussion. P1 and P4 say the discussion is "circular" and "repeating". On the other hand, P3 and P6 are more positive, commenting that the discussion was "additive" and the team was supportive. P2, P7 and P8 provide no commentary on their sheets.

In the group interview, the video is talked about as the group in coherence. They talk about adding to each other, supporting the person leading the session and completing a task. There are comments – see Figure 36 below – that align with the use of the *CC* coding such as "we hit a point", "it shifted forwards" and "felt confident to speak up". In the written comments, P5 notes that the "silence was uncomfortable"; but in the discussion, silence is described as "powerful" and someone else notes that there "wasn't much space". In this section of the meeting, individuals' experiences of space and silence seem to be mixed.

There was a lot of good checking and exchanging viewpoints. There's a little bit of misunderstanding, but it's positive for me … you've all got different lenses. So no, for me, I just thought it was positive that people were trying to … you know, felt confident enough to speak up and say this is my viewpoint on it and I think it enabled us to respond quite quickly to the viewpoints that people were giving.

… everyone adding a piece to the puzzle because clearly we all had little pieces …

There seemed to be a point where we did a line based on the stories we were all telling, which allowed you to then take it forward to the next …

We were building on each other's perspective …

I kind-of thought actually we're ready to actually dance now.

I drew a little spacious silence, but it was like only 2 seconds, but it was quite powerful. It was a sign because what we usually do is follow on very quickly from each other, the sign that we're still going with it, and then we hit a point where there was like 2 seconds of nobody talking and I think signposted we're nearly there.

…and then it kind-of felt like it shifted forwards.

Whereas I think what we were doing was going back to go forward. There was a lot of kind-of let's step back a minute …

Given we were in theory looking at a presentation and helping and giving feedback and so on, there wasn't much space because you would have thought we would have digested the presentation as in looked at it, read it, etc …

Figure 36 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Slides for Tom'

Looking at the combination of codings, qualitative written comments and the group discussion, it seems that, rather than there being a difference between codings and comments for example, here there seems to be a difference between subgroups. Some members of the group seem to be seeing something unifying in this creation of 'Slides for Tom', whereas others are possibly less sure, saying it was circular and repeating.

5.3.1.2.4 Video segment 'Strategy Session'

The coding structures provided by the participants for this segment are densely populated with many practices over the 14 minutes, for example P4 codes 66 practices and P8 codes 64 practices. This frequency of coding might indicate high energy, flexibility and responsiveness to each other. Further, two participants (P2,5) indicate that *CC* emerges around 6 and 4 minutes respectively. In addition to a high number of practices, the range is also extensive. However, *diverging* and *appreciating*, are not used nor are there any *no*

group. This is the video segment with the greatest number and widest range of practices.

The charts for this video segment are shown in Figure 37 below:

Figure 37 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Strategy Session'
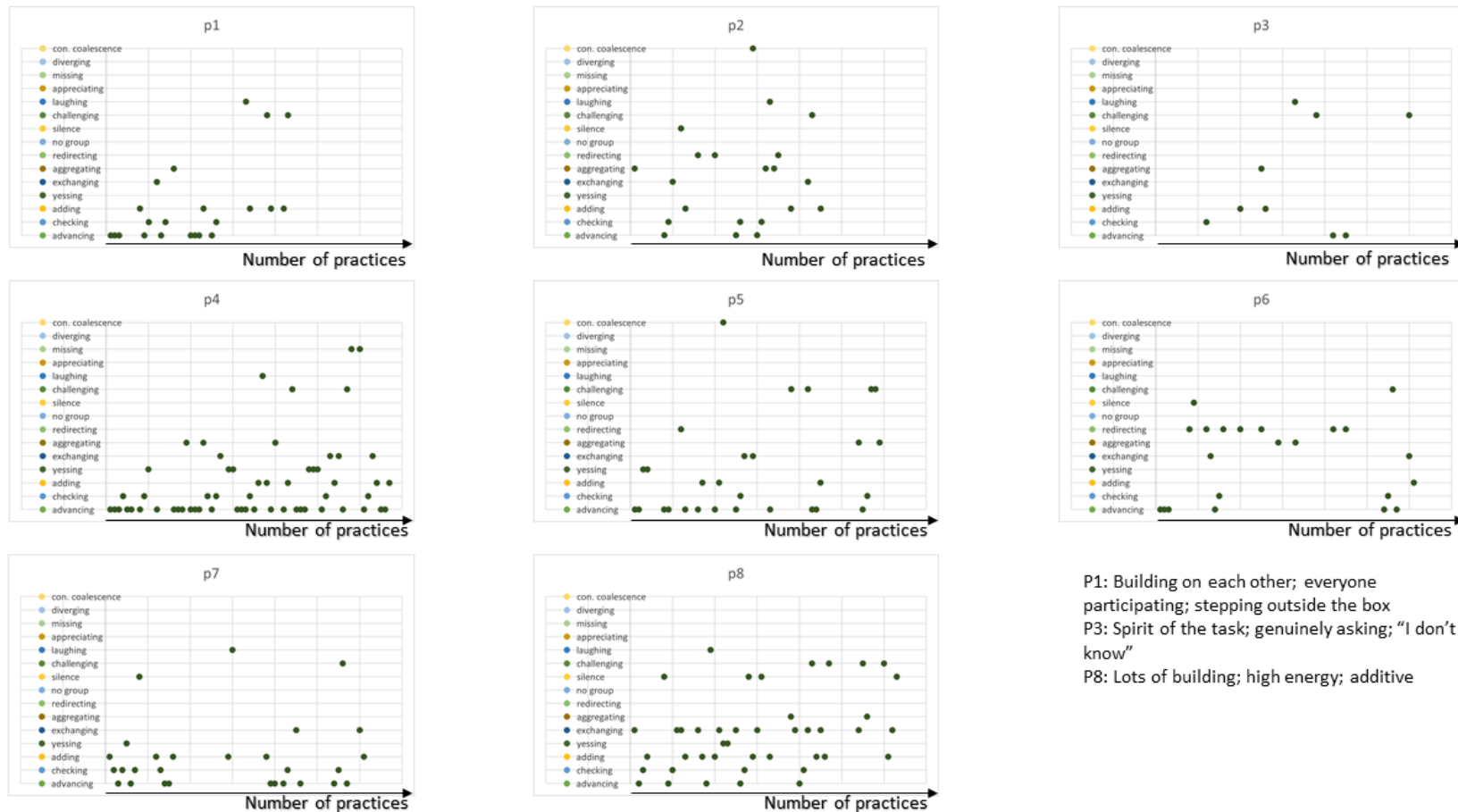
P1: Building on each other; everyone participating; stepping outside the box

P3: Spirit of the task; genuinely asking; "I don't know"

P8: Lots of building; high energy; additive

Only four participants provide comments on their coding sheets. They describe "high energy", a sense of adding and "challenging each other".

In the group interview, this was a video segment that received the most positive and spirited comments. The group was so enthusiastic about this segment of video they spent a considerable amount of time dissecting and talking about it. Their quotes are in Figure 38 below. People describe being "on it" and "everyone shows a willingness to be in it" and with this sense of being All In, comes other aspects such as "flow" and "uplift".

Openness to try something new.

All clicks.

Kinda magical: synergy: intimacy.

It's a beautiful thing. We can all be different but still build and reinforce each other. There is deep respect. Take each other and just run with it.

Energised and people got into it.

[We] jumped around and [found] a flow which caught the imagination.

We sparked off each other, didn't stick to the task. Collective responsibility was strong.

Up a level. Times of uplift.

An ah ha.

Really hit the spot.

People spoke freely without being judged. All collectively contributing. Fully there.

Everyone shows a willingness to be in it. All showing up. We focused on building on each other.

Some space to think. All pinging off each other 'I hadn't thought of that…' generating different insights.

All being collaborative.

Figure 38 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Strategy Session'

For the participants, the significant features of the discussion were the ability to talk honestly, to challenge each other without it being taken personally, to listen to understand – and all of this within a container of safety. The following are longer narrative extracts from the group interview because they elaborate on this point.

" … it was really additive … But also it challenged but it felt like the challenging was positive to move it forward … "

" … you could tell in the exchange the movement going forwards because nothing was off the table. You know, why do we have X? Why do we restrain ourselves in such a way? So that language then creates more opportunity for active listening and contributions… "

"The use of questions. There was a lot of questions being asked rather than statements …"

"It was far more honest, and the point was the questioning where, and we all do it, quite often you use questions, don't you, because you know the answer, so you sort of lead

in with a question as your way of getting in to then provide the answer. Whereas this was genuinely not that. People were questioning because they genuinely had a question and quite often said, I don't know the answer to this, or you could tell they really didn't… Whereas I just thought that's a quite honest kind of disclosure and vulnerability shown as well, which you feel, I think, comfortable doing when you're in that kind of flow…And that helps a lot because it rounds off the whole experience and you feel much more comfortable going to places you wouldn't normally go."

The participants' reports of this lived experience are manifestly different from their other conversations. However, the coding and the qualitative comments do not entirely match. For this reason and for others that will be discussed later, in the section where I set my coding alongside, the video segment 'Strategy Session' receives some additional analysis and description.

5.3.1.3 Between the four video segments

In this section, I look for trends, similarities and differences between the four video segments. A participant-to-participant comparison is not possible i.e. P1 in 'Gallup' is not P1 in 'Slides for Tom'.

The Indexer is provided (Figure 39) to orient the reader.

JFA	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	✔
	JR Coding	

Figure 39 – Indexer for navigation

5.3.1.3.1 Trends (findings that develop or change between the video segments)

The frequency and range of coding increases across the four segments, with 'Gallup' having the least and 'Strategy Session' having the most types of practice. This might be a function of their familiarity with the coding – at the beginning they were unsure how to use the practices on the sheet they were completing but became more fluent after reviewing four segments. But it may also truly reflect the tempo, pace, timing and levels of engagement in each of the four video segments. If the video segment 'Gallup' and 'Objectives for the Day' are the lowest ebb, then the video segments 'Slides for Tom' and 'Strategy Session' are the highest. The latter two instances contain the widest range and the greatest number of practices as well as six codings of *CC*.

5.3.1.3.2 Similarities (findings that are repeated)

Across all four videos, all the participants use *advancing* as the most frequently coded practice and *advancing* is most often followed by *checking*. In 'Slides for Tom' the practices extend beyond these two basics to include, *adding* and *exchanging*. The coding in 'Strategy Session' fills in with *yessing* and *aggregating*. Thus, the nature of the practices across the four video segments are additive and increasingly collaborative with more dots coded at the upper end of the vertical axis. The dance gets more complicated and more intertwined so that complexity arises with the use of the more novel practices. Novelty of practice seems to indicate increased engagement among the group, less embeddedness and greater coherence.

5.3.1.3.3 Differences (findings that seem unique and worth spotlighting)

A key difference comes in the explanation during the group discussion of the use of practices *checking*, *exchanging and challenging*. Only *checking* is used in 'Gallup' and 'Objectives for the Day', but the group report it has the effect of stopping the conversation from developing. The same practice of *checking*, with the addition of *challenging* and *exchanging,* has a different effect in 'Strategy Session'. Now the group experiences these practices as helpful and part of the code of honesty among them. So, the same practice appears to flip, depending on the social-emotional tone of the group, from *checking* as inhibiting to *checking* as promoting Flow.

5.3.1.4 Summary of findings from participant coding and group discussion

The four video segments begin to tease out a series of dimensions showing the rise and fall of individual embeddedness as the group works through its meetings. The first dimension is one of energy: low to high. Two of the videos were noted to be low energy and lifeless and two others were high energy and vibrant. The frequency of participant coding often reflects energy levels, but energy levels are also remarked on in written comments and in the group discussion.

The second dimension that is revealed is the amount of inter-relating the group engages in across the four different video segments. The video segments 'Gallup' and 'Objectives for the Day' rely on the simplest of practices *advancing* and *checking* and occasionally include *adding* but do not use practices that are rarer than that. On the other hand, 'Slides for Tom' and 'Strategy Session' use a vast array of practices, ostensibly making

the conversations more entwined, more collaborative and perhaps indicative of less

individual embeddedness.

The next section uses the same research approach to a different Case, the indexer is

provided – Figure 40 – to orient the reader.

F&W	Pts Within	✔
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	

Figure 40 – Indexer for navigation

5.3.2 Fire & Water

Modern day fire services are stretched across multiple situations, many of which

would be unrecognisable to the Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) of past generations. Two

concerns dominate the strategic agenda of this FRS. Although not in their geographical

location, the Grenfell Tower fire is catalysing strategic reviews of all fire services. Grenfell

Tower fire was a large apartment building fire that shocked the UK, as it is recorded as the

deadliest blaze since the Blitz. Sparked by a simple fault in a fridge freezer on the fourth

floor of the Kensington tower block, the blaze rapidly spread through the 24-floor building,

leaving 71 dead.

The second concern that is woven into the strategic review is that the range of

incidents these services are called to attend means that rescue is now a very technical

endeavour. Super-high-pressure hoses for example, can cut through a building to deliver

water or fire suppressants without the need for humans to enter a very dangerous

environment. Large-scale cutting equipment combined with medical expertise is needed to extract people from car crashes. Cladding and other substances with chemical compositions mean that water may be irrelevant or insufficient to extinguish flames; more often in these situations, other chemical compounds are needed. Every technical innovation for fire and rescue requires a commensurate spend on training, specialist equipment, servicing and future upgrades. As with other organisations in the public and private sector, the leaders within F&W are grappling with large, complex, fast-changing and entangled decisions. In the Case of F&W, lives hinge on the decisions they take.

While I was there, the senior leadership team (SLT) was embroiled in a strategic review of services. But since closing this study with F&W, events have moved on and they have had a role to play in the Covid-19 pandemic, transporting bodies to the morgue to free up ambulances to cope with the very ill, training drivers, delivering Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (Anon, 2020).

I gained access to F&W due to a personal connection with the Fire Chief. She is now one of only two (previously three) women Chief Fire Officers (CFO) and has been in place for around 18 months, ushering in a culture change to this FRS. In particular, she has replaced an authoritarian leadership style with a more inclusive and collaborative style of leading. Some are still adjusting to this new approach. However, unlike the Jet Flyer Cases, there is a necessary command hierarchy, so it is completely clear to everyone who is more senior to whom. Formally, the group under consideration in this Case have structure and power relationships, and within this hierarchy they are trying to work in a collegial and collaborative manner.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services concluded in their 2018 review of F&W that "there are several areas where the service needs to make improvements" (HMICFRS 2018/19[3]). This alongside the change of CFO, caused the SLT to initiate a review and update of the service's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP), commencing with a full risk assessment.

The SLT meetings I attended in January and February 2020 were the culmination of this detailed work on the IRMP and the likely restructuring of people, plant, premises and services required to deliver on the plan. Everyone I interviewed for this study told me that this series of meetings and the attendant decisions were of the utmost importance to the fire service and the local community it served. One officer said to me that: "these decisions are the biggest we have faced in 10 years and it is the first time this service has done it [IRMP review] in 30 years. The nature of the material [in the meeting] was the most difficult and contentious that this group will ever deal with" (F&WRF). As is usual in public service, the meetings that the SLT invited me to attend were presaged by a number of reports with detailed analyses, impact statements and recommendations. The week before the first of these strategic meetings, the service had buried two young fire fighters, the mood was solemn and there was no doubt about the seriousness of this undertaking.

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[3] https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/fire-and-rescue-services/how-we-inspect-fire-and-rescue-services/2018-19-frs-assessment/ (accessed September 2020)

5.3.2.1 Summary data

An overview of the Case called Fire & Water is provided in Table 15 below.

Table 15 – Summary data for Case: Fire & Water (F&W)

Research Timescale	December 2019 to April 2020
Composition	5 female; 5 male All UK-based no non-British nationals 6 uniformed and 4 non-uniformed
Material collected	4 days of meetings 20 hours of video 8 hours of individual interviews 4 hours of group interview post video review

At F&W, the group identified one segment from the January meeting and one segment from the February meeting to review as a group. As the January segment was very long, I decided to split it into two segments, having the effect of providing three segments chosen by the group, these are called '18 Appliances' and 'Technical Rescue'.

In addition, I chose a segment from the January meeting to augment these three segments, as a way of inducting the group to the vectors and coding. The segment that I chose was an early discussion in the section of the agenda where the discussion was broad and involved many contributing to the discussion. These four segments are itemised and identified in Table 16 and discussed segment by segment below. In revealing the nature of these video segments, I have taken care to avoid divulging information still embargoed.

Table 16 – Video segments reviewed by Fire & Water (F&W) and coded by the participants

Title	Details	Length
Example to Introduce Vector Coding	The Deputy CFO is introducing the Confidential Agenda to the group. This is the culmination of nearly a year of work and requires many decisions, many of which are interconnected, deeply technical and have long-term strategic effects.	3 mins
18 Appliances	The first and most fundamental decision the group faces about the number of appliances (fire trucks) they will deploy. All other decisions will be consequential to this one. It is a financial decision, a political decision and a human-impact decision. Much rests on this.	8 mins
Funding a New Post (February meeting)	An Assistant CFO is asking to create a new post in his section of the service. This materially changes the cost base of the service, and risks taking the FRS outside of their legal funding envelope, now and in the future, which is not permitted.	16 mins
Technical Rescue	There are contradictory guidelines from different bodies concerning the FRS's duty with respect to water rescue. It is unclear when it is the Coastguard's responsibility or whether the FRS needs to add/develop/train for this type of rescue.	18 mins

The coding sheets handed in by the participants have been made into charts and are included in each relevant section. Below, I consider each segment in sequence, following the Indexer in Figure 41.

F&W	Participants (Pts) Within	✔
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	

Figure 41 – Indexer for navigation

5.3.2.2 Within the four video segments

The four video segments are qualitatively different, '18 Appliances' and 'Technical Rescue' are items from the Confidential Agenda and there are six guests plus me in the room; 'Funding a New Post' is from the February meeting and there are two guests plus me in the room. Throughout both the meetings in January and February the group membership remained intact for the duration, with no arrivals or departures, with the exception of a fire alarm in the January meeting (there were shouts of laughter at the irony at the time), but this is not included in any of the video segments reviewed. Therefore, *no group*, which is used to indicate the momentary cessation of the group, is absent from all four segments.

5.3.2.2.1 Video segment: 'Example to Introduce Vector Coding'

One participant was late arriving for the group discussion, so there are seven coding sheets provided by the others, see Figure 42 below. This late participant was brought up to speed quickly in advance of the discussion that they joined, so that they too understood the

nature of the group-level inquiry and they could participate in the other reviews of video

segments.
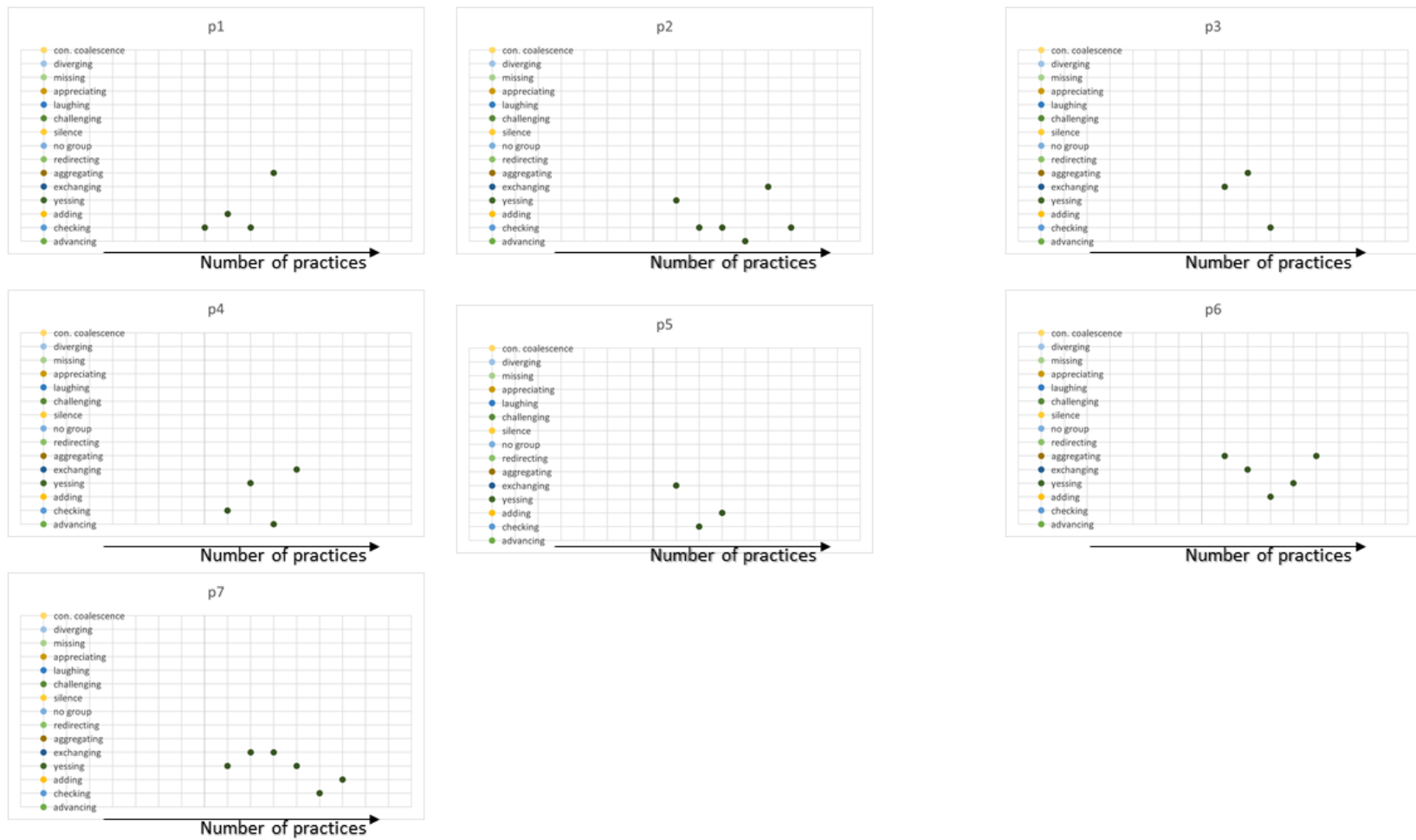
Figure 42 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Example to Introduce Vector Coding'

The rate of coding is sparse and the range of coding is limited, with only codes *advancing* to *aggregating* are being used, the rarer codes are unused. The limited range of coding is congruent with the choice of video segment, which was of my choosing. I deliberately chose a meeting section that was noncontentious (to my mind) and in keeping with this view that it was noncontentious, the participants have not used any coding of *redirecting*, *silence*, *challenging*, *laughing*, *appreciating*, *missing*, *diverging* or *CC*. *Advancing* is only coded twice, which is a low occurrence, as it is the most frequent practice in other instances. Individuals did not provide comments on their coding sheets.

In the group discussion, the emphasis was on the new orientation they were being asked to take and they remarked that working with practices was like "another lens". Many of the uniformed SLT are used to being videoed, for example when giving official evidence or when being reviewed for Command-level assessments. But this type of video review is always individual. The new group orientation was "[taking] some time to step back and look at the group and not specifics". Encouraging them to "look at the 'what' and not the 'who'". More fulsome comments are provided in Figure 43.

Another lens.

Takes some time to step back and look at the group and not specifics.

Yeah, you're looking at the 'what', not the 'who'. Get used to the idea of looking in this way.

Different way of looking at it.

Have to listen and watch to be able to see the visual clues and see if that is a [practice].

Just a different way of thinking

All those interactions that happen in a meeting, that you're perhaps just not as conscious of …

Like seeing it in the third person.

You have to be aware of people's roles as well … some members in the room are not all members of SLT … They're going to have different parts [five] visitors who are always watching but then they step in and they change the meeting in some ways, and then step out

Figure 43 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Example to Introduce Vector Coding'

The comments suggest the group was coming to terms with this new perspective and beginning to see itself as research subjects. The coding does not directly verify this, but the consolidation by all the participants around just five codes might suggest that they were largely seeing themselves engage in practices in approximately the same way. Appropriately, as this is the first segment they viewed, this restricted coding range may be the early stages of data triangulation for this group.

5.3.2.2.2 Video Segment: '18 Appliances'

The charts and comments for the video segment '18 Appliances' are below in Figure 44.
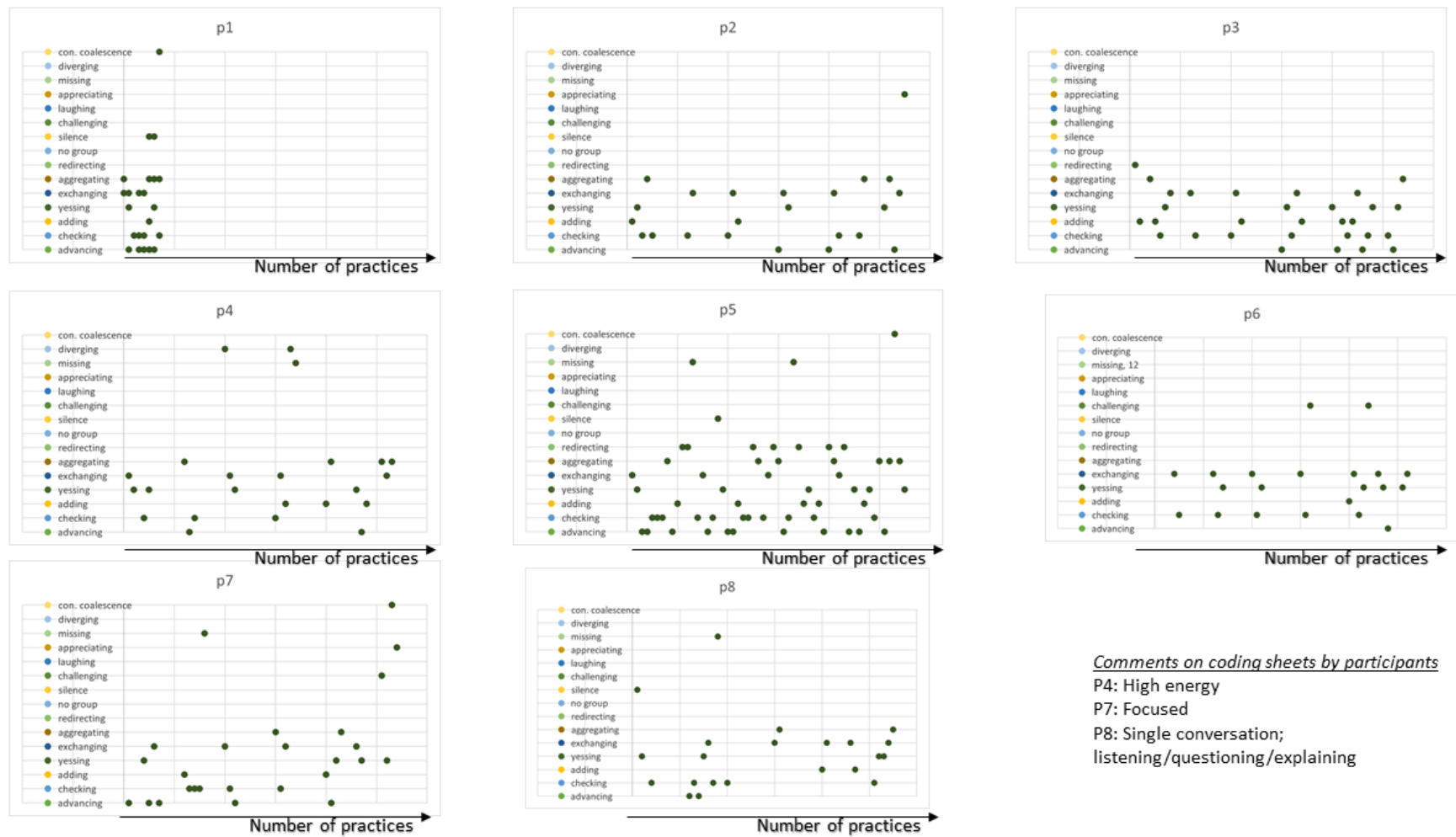
Figure 44 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: '18 Appliances'

All the participants code patterns of *exchanging* to *yessing* or *yessing* to *exchanging*. This back and forth is present in all eight charts in one way or the other. In this segment, *advancing* has become the most frequently coded practice. P3,5 have the sequence *advancing* to *checking*. P1,5,7 code for *CC* at some point in the segment; but P1 seems to have adopted a different scale to other participants, so it is unclear how their emergence of *CC* relates to that coded by P5 and P7. There is no *laughter* coded by anyone, which is unsurprising given the comments prior to the meeting concerning the levels of seriousness surrounding the subject matter. Also, only P6 sees two direct *challenges* whereas others code the same instances as *exchanging* or *checking.* Accordingly, P1,5,7 demonstrate through their coding that the practices of *exchanging* or *checking* or *missing* are no impediment to *CC*. P4 codes twice for *diverging*, but no one else reports that experience, including the three participants who code for *CC*. P4,7,8 provide written comments that the group was focused, exhibited high energy and was engaged in a single conversation that involved listening, questioning and explaining. The comment about high energy seems to tally with the participants' coding, which frequently switches from practice to practice, the chart provided by P5 shows this throughout, whereas the charts provided by P2,3,4,6,7,8 show this energy more sporadically but still continuing throughout. The comment about a conversation characterised by listening, questioning and explaining accords with the earlier note about coding, which represents this as a pattern of back and forth.

To consider the three times that *CC* is coded, the charts from the three participants are combined in Figure 45 below. P1,5,7 have all coded this point of *CC*; two points are coincidental. Thus, they seem to indicate that as the discussion draws to a close,

participants feel that they let go of some sense of separateness to allow a greater sense of collaboration.
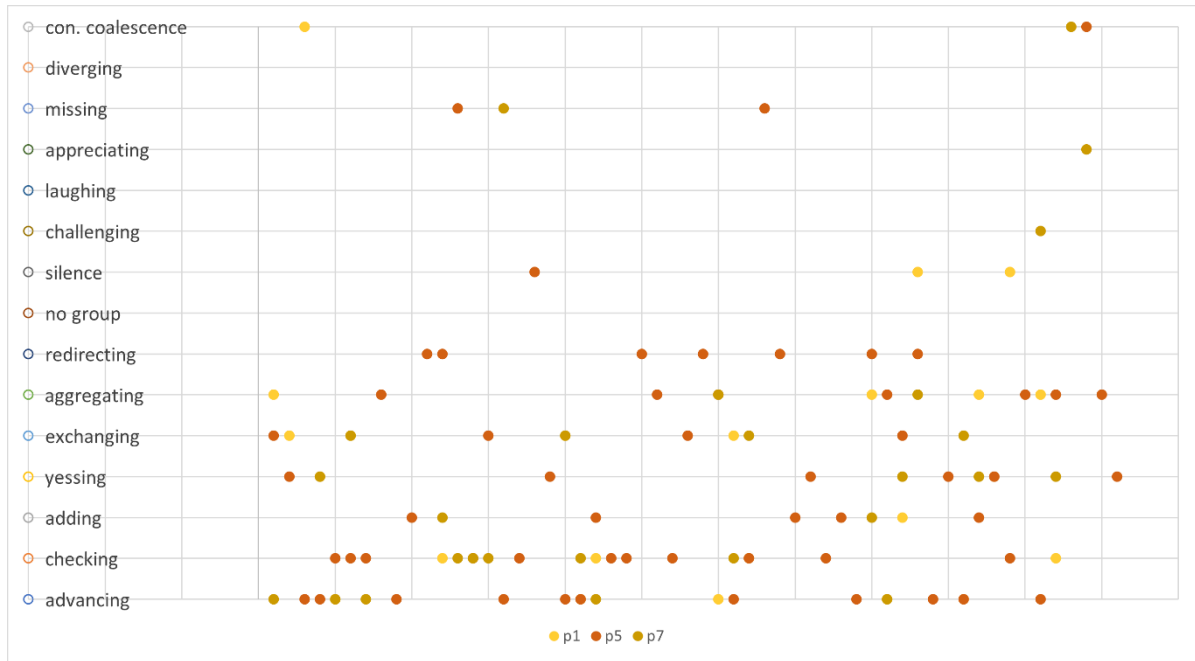
Figure 45 – Participants code for the emergence of *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* in '18 Appliances'

Some of these ideas are elaborated in the group discussion (see Figure 46 for relevant extracts). In particular, the group reflects on the nature of its decision-making and the Flow of the practices being used. Participants recognise that decisions rely on having a common understanding of what is at stake without always actually agreeing: "we got to the end result, but we didn't all necessarily have the same answer… or even end up with the same answer." That this relies on them "checking that we're all understanding the same thing" and being able to challenge and sometimes use "clarification… as a way of subtly challenging" so they can push back on each other. The group also appreciates that the discussions are often long, complex, technical and the train of thought gets lost, but there

are people in the group who "check where we are" as the discussion goes "out again and then back in again". With this type of sprawling, wide-ranging discussion, keeping the thread coherent relies on everyone staying in the discussion and this is pertinent because everyone was "focused" and "weren't off doing stuff".

> And I think about that [xxxx] discussion. So whilst we were all … or [xxxxx] are we all in agreement? We got to the end result, but we didn't all necessarily have the same answer straight away. Or even end up with the same answer. But we shared our views and understood then what the end decision was.
>
> Yeah, checking that we're all understanding the same thing … And try and keep it moving forward to the end decision. There were layers of challenge, weren't there? You know, you could easily miss some, I think. There were areas where, hold on … the clarification's used as a way of subtly challenging the odd point.
>
> …but you do need a sense of checking and getting back to what it is we were trying to answer in the first place? Or at least the main point because otherwise you can lose your thought and then it ends up not particularly answering the question you've asked at the beginning. But I think the group did that. So [name] used to, every now and again, just check where we are and then it would go out again and then come back in again, which I think was quite helpful.
>
> I felt it was focused because when I was looking at it, so whilst everybody was not always looking at the person who was speaking, they were referring to notes, but they weren't off doing stuff on their laptops or, you know, I felt it was a focused room.
>
> … trying to evolve the conversation …
>
> When we aggregated things. It felt like we were starting to consolidate and bring it together as the different views were built upon.
>
> Yeah, around decisions I don't think there's ever a time that you go, didn't really understand that decision we've just made and I'm not sure would have … So we might not all agree, but we understand how we got to the final decision, don't we? And we've discussed it.

I thought everyone was just very polite and very … Respectful … Because there's only one conversation going on, wasn't there? And people aren't talking over each other …

… because everyone in the room knew that that particular area of debate and discussion was some of the most important conversations that we'd had as an SLT for some time.

I started to see appreciation for others and just in terms of some of the responses and some of the… whilst it could be yes and agree and nodding, it was a different type of… It was… it's really hard to say, because it suggests that I'm being subjective, but at one point I saw so it was more than a yessing nod, like yes, that's right. It was a supporting like, yes, you know, we're supporting this.

Figure 46 – Extracts from the group interview on '18 Appliances'

5.3.2.2.3 Video segment: 'Funding a New Post'

This is a conversation taken from the February meeting. All eight participants have provided coding sheets (shown in Figure 47) that demonstrate a high frequency of practices continuing over the full extent of the discussion. Seven of the participants code for *CC* at different places with P2,3,4,6,8 coding it more than once and P5,7 coding it once. The basic pattern of *advancing, checking* and then *checking, advancing* is shown in every chart. The less frequently used codings, beyond *aggregating*, are present in all the charts but P1,2,3,4,7 remain bottom heavy representing a greater emphasis on codes *advancing* to *aggregating*. P5,6,8 use more evenly coded with less prominence given to codes up to *aggregating*. Even among such an active discussion as represented here, there are still practices of *silence*. *Laughter* too, although sparse, is present. In combination, all codes are used with the exception of *no-coding*.

Turning to the written comments, these are provided by P1,4,5,7. Their notes indicate there was high energy, everyone was engaged and this provided for much interaction. The interaction is characterised by many questions and clarifications, which moves the agenda forward and people were able to contribute. The point about using questions and clarification to move the discussion forward chimes with the coding pattern of *advancing, checking* and then *checking, advancing* described earlier.

P4 says there was collaboration and is one of the coders with two instances of *CC*. P1, who did not code for *CC*, does, however, say that people were able to contribute. P3,6 who code for four and five instances of *CC* respectively offer no written comments. P2,8 offer no written comments and code for two instances of *CC*.

Figure 47 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Funding a New Post'
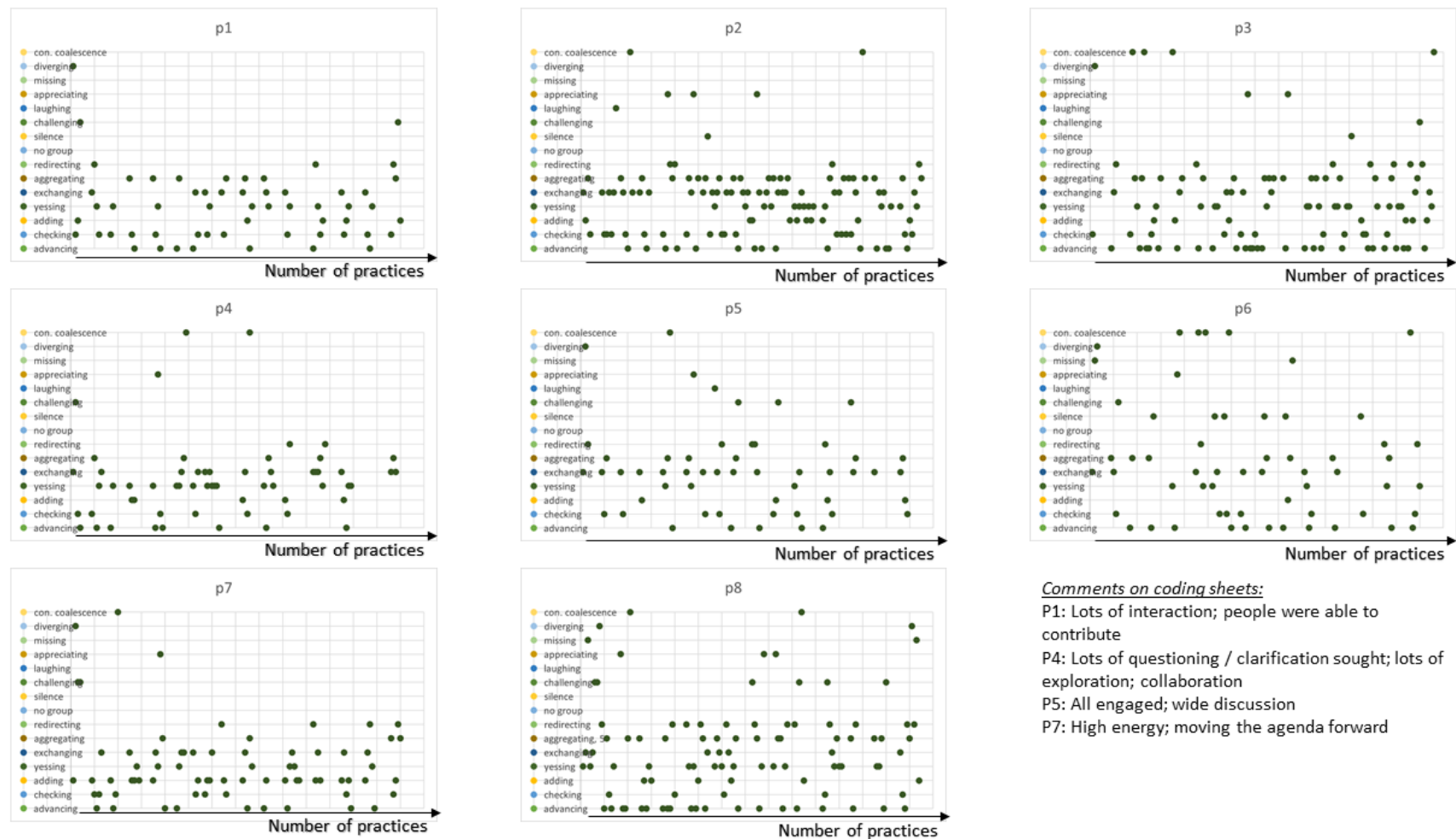
Comments on coding sheets:

P1: Lots of interaction; people were able to contribute

P4: Lots of questioning / clarification sought; lots of exploration; collaboration

P5: All engaged; wide discussion

P7: High energy; moving the agenda forward

Focusing solely on the charts where *CC* is coded helps to show the similarities and differences that the participants may be pointing to. This comparison of coding is provided in Figure 48 below. Seventeen *CC*s are coded with some so tightly coded that they overlap for example, P2,7,8 – 20 practices in – and P2,6 – around 50 practices in – provide coterminal *CC* coding, this means only one dot prevails.
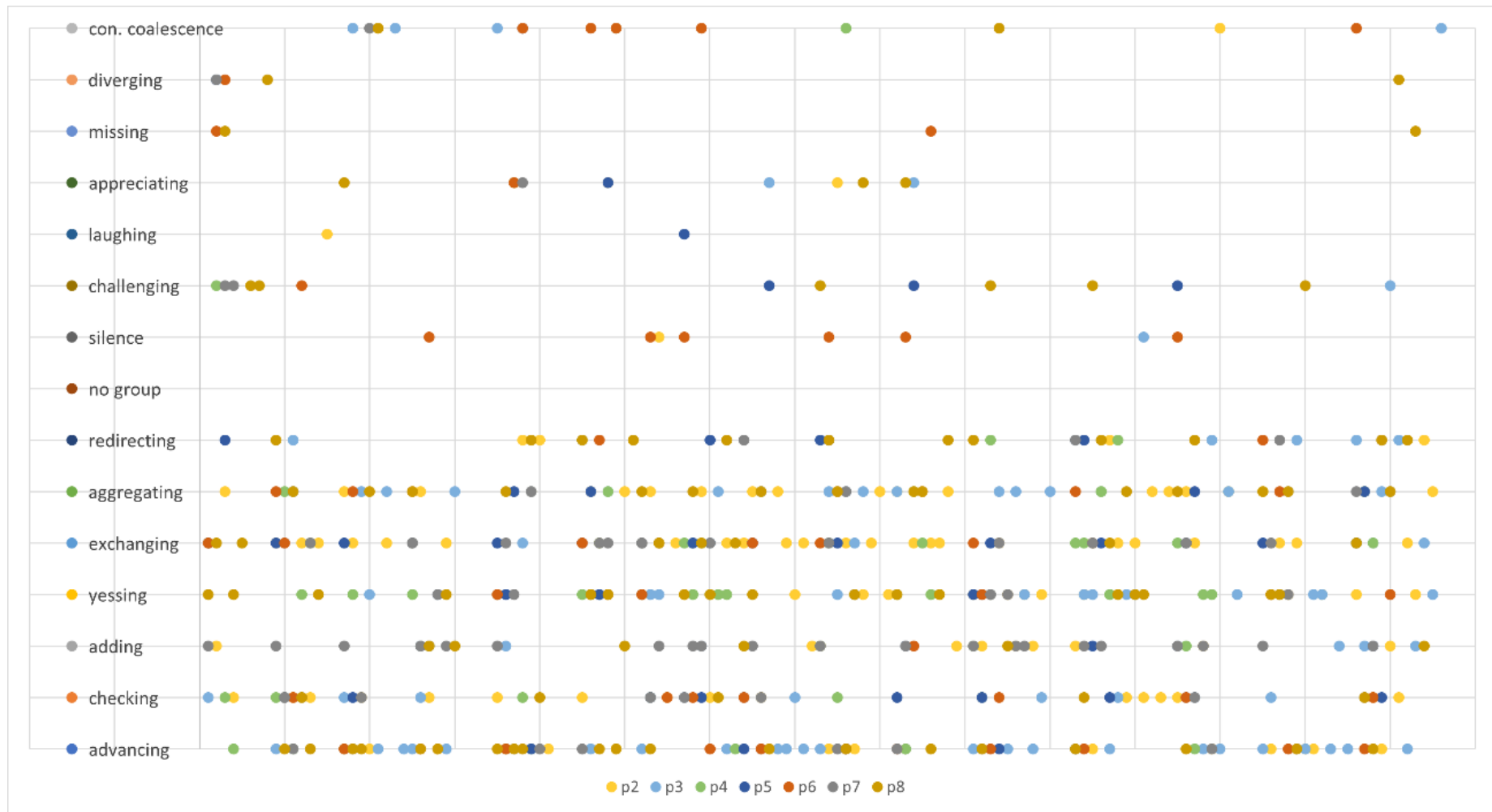
Figure 48 – Participants code for the emergence of *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* in 'Funding a New Post'

Figure 48 illustrates that codes *advancing* through to *no group* are densely used throughout the entire conversation. These codes are the basic and non-novel codes of *advancing, checking, exchanging, adding, laughing, aggregating, challenging*. However, unlike Figure 44 for the video segment '18 Appliances' the novel and less frequently used codes from *silence* to *divergence* and *CC* are more frequent and equally distributed. In this example, the high number of codings for *CC* are associated with the use of more novel codings. In the section 5.5.2.1, I choose this segment of video to consider in finer detail because of this idiosyncrasy.

In the group discussion about the group, the participants take the opportunity to reflect on a dynamic that seems to have evolved naturally but that they are only just making extant to each other. The conversation elevates up a level to a meta reflection on how they deal with contentious issues in a way that avoids them "kneecapping" each other. They reflect on how they use the pre-meeting reading as a mechanism to uncover disagreement before having to disagree: "If you read a paper in advance and you've got a real issue, you go and see the person anyway, don't you? You don't wait 'til the meeting to throw it back in their face." And: "Generally people do make an effort to try and say: 'I've got this issue with this report' and try and have that conversation beforehand."

But these pre-meeting challenges that are focused on reports that are to be tabled at the meeting, do not mean that the conversation at the meeting is sterile; the decision is not pre-agreed. Instead, the group reflects on and appreciates the richness of the conversations that they are able to have, saying "[it's a] complex area and there's a lot of unknowns there, a lot of uncertainty … it was about exploration … checking that we'd

considered all the other options". Through these multiple perspectives they "managed to

get it to a point where we could move forward and there's some things which we couldn't

resolve …[needing] more thought … but we didn't stop, didn't come to a blinding halt with

people not being happy with each other. We progressed it through."

People don't use opportunities like that generally either to showboat or to … kneecap…

Because everybody's very busy and sometimes you do reports last minute and don't suddenly clock that there might be a conflict with something else. But generally people do make an effort to try and say: 'I've got this issue with this report' and try and have that conversation beforehand. Which is good really, in terms of how the route works.

… there's not a lot of that going on at all, where all of us are going, no, I don't agree with that. That's not happening.

… actually, through people's input, we've managed to get it to a point where we could move forward and there's some things which we couldn't resolve there that needed taking and given some more thought to, but we didn't stop, didn't come to a blinding halt with people not being happy with each other. We progressed it through.

It's fine tuning ... Because if you read a paper in advance and you've got a real issue, you go and see the person anyway, don't you? You don't wait till the meeting to throw it back in their face.

… it's a complex area and there's a lot of unknowns there, a lot of uncertainty about central funding … So, for me, it was about exploration in that conversation, checking that we'd considered all the other options …

Yeah, and we pull papers … When we've had those initial conversations and it's not ready. That's alright … Absolutely.

But that's not unhelpful as well, is it, because then that challenges back, in your head you think you're clear and then you get that challenge with those questions back and you go … d'you know what, I'm not happy with this, as an author …

… for me, it was about exploration about what options had been considered, because it's a tricky one, because I was also conscious before we go into that meeting, and I think it probably happened just after that point or maybe just before, where [name] reminded us, as he would do because he's the treasurer, you can't just add numbers in.

We're able to navigate some of that uncertainty, some of that change that's needed, and it felt like it [got] a good airing.

It was picking up more on [name's] approach where she was making sure that she's just explaining it. That we were looking at all sorts of angles.

Because [name] used to run it and it was when you said about, 'I know how much work they've got to do and I don't think anybody's job is redundant' and I thought, ooh, okay … There was no slacking then, yeah … But completely correct …Yeah. Nobody was hurt by that.

… we were justifying our thought processes as a point of checking ourselves and that's what it felt. So not justifying and keep going till everybody gets the same answer, but it was we were almost those questions were about testing ourselves, our decision-making to make sure that we were …

Figure 49 – Extracts from the Group Interview on 'Funding a New Post'

The participants report that these discussions are rich in operational detail and historic nuances that need to be fully understood among them. They appreciate that they need to pool their knowledge to seriously consider decisions before taking them. The richness of the discussion is reflected in the richness of the practices that are coded, ranging from simple to novel throughout.

5.3.2.2.4 Video segment: 'Technical Rescue'

As an active service, it is rare to have all senior leaders in one room for non-mandated meetings. Consequently, four officers left at this point, leaving four participants to continue the group discussion. The fourth video segment reviewed was a discussion from the Confidential Agenda in January entitled 'Technical Rescue'. Four coding sheets were handed in and these are reproduced in Figure 50 below. In general, P2,3 code at a lower rate than P1,4.

Notably, both P1,4 have a prominent line of *challenging* across the length of the conversation whereas P2,3 don't, and this difference is striking. Another notable feature is the absence of *advancing* in the chart by P3 and the highest number of practices being denoted as *checking.* P1,4 abundantly use all the codes *advancing* through to *redirecting*, whereas P2,3 see less *adding*, *yessing*, *redirecting*. P2 is generous in codes 8–15 which are the more novel codes, spanning from *silence* to *CC.* The P2 chart is possibly the only chart in all Cases and all segments that is nearly balanced across the horizontal line at *no group,* suggesting that these upper codes cannot be considered novel in this instance. P3 twice codes *laughing* but is the only one to do so. *Laughing* is one of the least ambiguous of the vectors, so uncorroborated coding of this group practice is a mystery unless this participant saw an individual laughing and coded this individual practice.

Another explanation of the variations between P1,4 and P2,3 is the single written comment provided by P4 saying that there were two conversations going on, and this was a source of frustration.
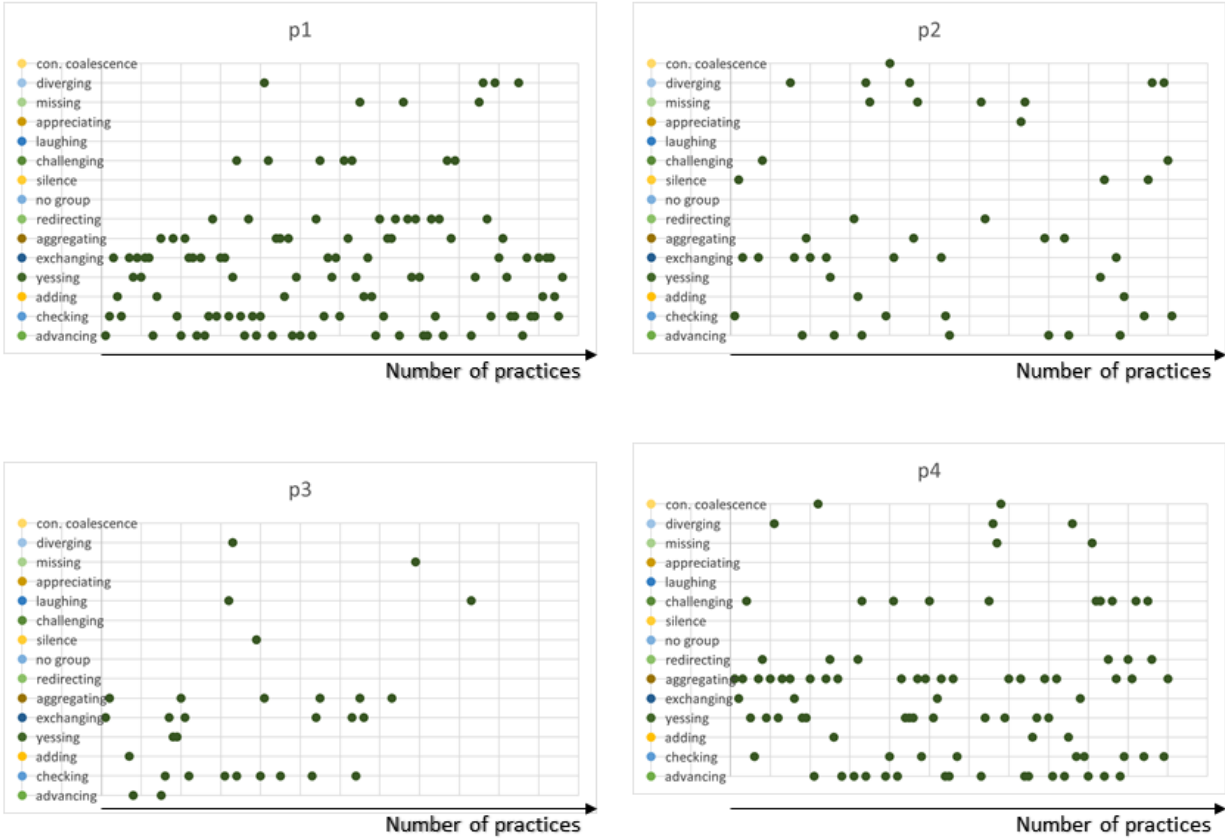
Comment on coding sheet:
P4: Two conversations; frustration

Figure 50 – Participants' coding and comments for video segment: 'Technical Rescue'

When reflecting as a group on this video segment (comments are captured in Figure 51 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Technical Rescue' below), the main theme was "it's a bit ouchy" but on the other hand the level of challenge and "check in" is "not personal". The group is characterising the type of conversation as "robust" and "necessary" because of the "bucket-load of risk". There is some pride in the conversation remaining "comfortable" and they note that the team is now "resilient" enough to face into such strong and seemingly oppositional conversations. But even as they are pleased to see the quality and depth of the conversation that they are able to embark on as an SLT, they are also prepared to acknowledge that, during the discussion, a Subject Matter Expert (SME) was present and didn't speak up.

This latter point is partially reflected in the code *silence*, which is a proxy, sometimes, for stillness and the ability of a group to pause. There is little pausing in this conversation according to charts produced by P1,3,4 and P2 only codes three episodes of *silence*. Anyone hierarchically reporting to the SLT, as was the case with the SME, could have a problem getting a word in edge ways unless someone thought to invite their comments, which on this occasion they failed to do.

> [There were] a few silences where people were, you know, sitting back not agreeing or taking it all in … Bit ouchy at times.
>
> I think you're right though, there was a whole load of things that were making that discussion really important, and we did need to get underneath it because if we'd have left that room without doing that there'd have been a load of risk …
>
> Because it didn't feel from that as if we knew the answer before we'd had that discussion …

… watching that, I had the concern where I was sitting here thinking, this has a fundamental impact on our ability to crew at the other end of all of this when we implement. And without those being answered I think all of us, we just know we had to get to the end of it and so it was always going to be a bit of a bumpy ride, but a ride we were willing to have.

I think it made me realise how we adapt. So when it's an easier conversation it's very nice and comfortable and we pretty much know where we're going. But if there is something to be discussed we will challenge and get underneath it because there is a risk, I think, that if you don't you end up just going along with the loudest voice and then you end up with a whole bucket-load of risk at the other end. And it turns out, I think, that if there is something to get underneath of, we're able to shift and then there's those debates that we just had there. Because it was two different types of scenario, wasn't it?

There's no conflict though. There really isn't any dissent or … it's all technical, which is all helpful because you have to explore the technical until you've got enough of an understanding to make a decision.

And I think that demonstrates a bit of resilience within the team, is that we can have those quite robust check-ins … But then if you're that person who's being checked-in on, it's that resilience that actually it's not a personal thing, but we're doing this because it's [the nature of the issue] …

[About the SME] Yeah. If there's something in the paper you think it's in there, but we've missed it or we're not giving it the right attention or proportionality then don't be frightened to shout out. And I think there's something there, just about making sure that when we've got those people in the room that we do try and, you know, we do try and make an effort to make sure we draw them in a bit more.

It was difficult, wasn't it, because just looking at that conversation. Everybody spoke apart from the person who wrote the report [SME] and nobody brought him in for his view.

Even in the areas where things feel a little bit antsy, none of its personalised and on balance most of it is really good-natured in that sense. It's probably of all the management teams I've sat on, it's the only one where there just seems to be no game-playing at all and people don't use, with exceptions, people don't use sort of powerplays. There's very little showboating ...

I think one of my reflections continually is, and you sort of know that where you've got a technical thing like that and you've got six people in uniform round the table, it's like getting six lawyers in the room. They've all got different [views] …

… constant checking in on ourselves. And bringing us back at times as well, saying what is it?

… it's interesting that we've had that debate at SLT to that level [of detail]. Because obviously something wasn't quite working for us.

[Re SME] Well, he did come in but late … He does come in a bit later as well.

Figure 51 – Extracts from the group interview on 'Technical Rescue'

During this segment, two participants (P2,4) code a total of three instances of *CC*. These are overlaid in Figure 52 to show that the codings are not coincidental. As this is a discussion described by participants as "ouchy", despite this ouchy nature it seems remarkable that two participants continue to experience the give and take that underpins ideas of *CC*.
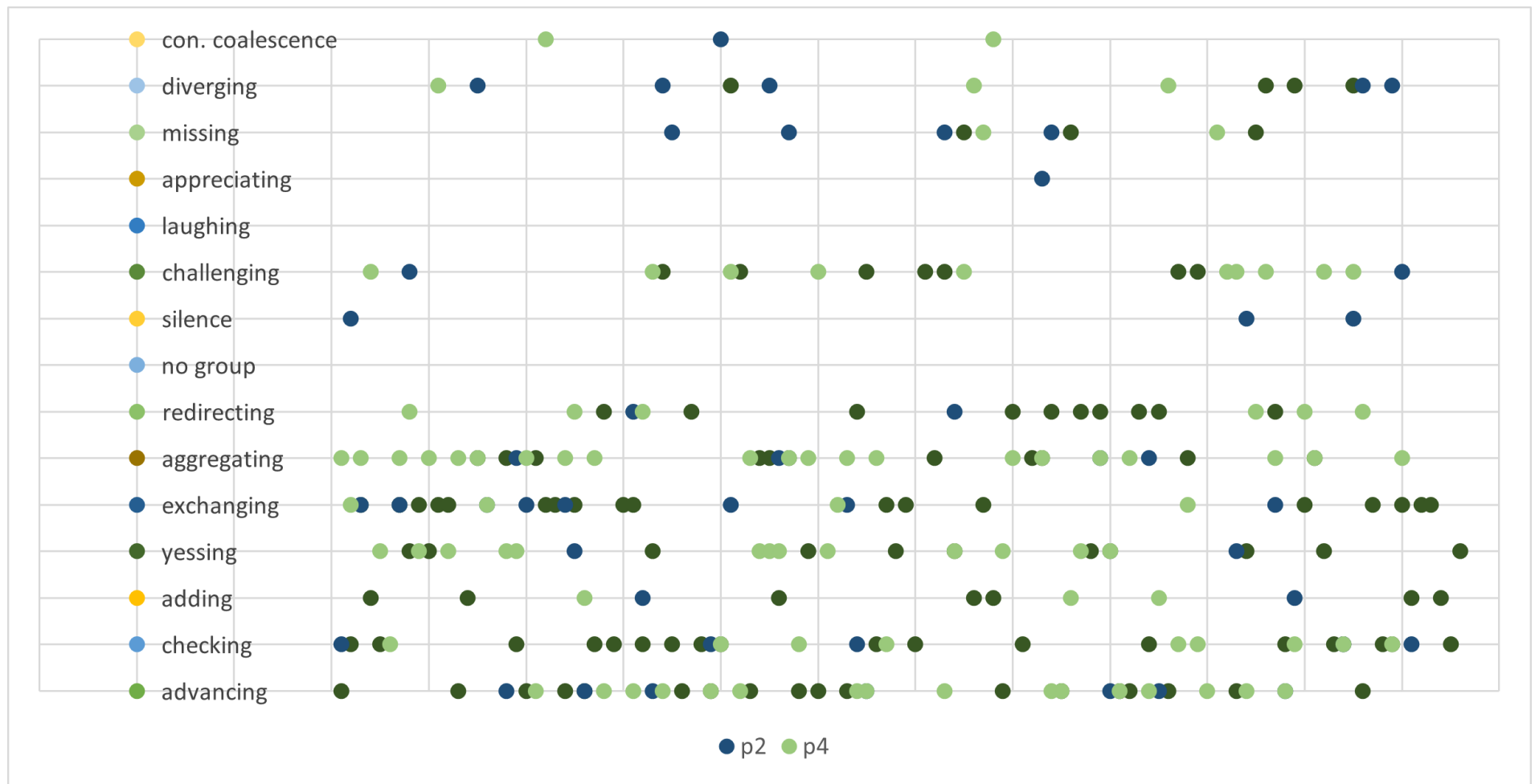
Figure 52 – Participants code the emergence of *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* in 'Technical Rescue'

The next section makes comparisons between the three group-selected video segments. The video segment 'Example to Introduce Vector Coding' has been excluded on grounds of parsimony and because it was chosen by me as a teaching aid, not by the group.

5.3.2.3 Between the three video segments

In this section, I look for similarities, differences and trends between the three video segments.

The Indexer – Figure 53 – is provided to orient the reader.

F&W	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	✔
	JR Coding	

Figure 53 – Indexer for navigation

5.3.2.3.1 Similarities (findings that are repeated)

The back-and-forth sequence of practices is widespread in all three segments. This is a rapid and repeated switching between two practices. The practices that are switched do vary (see differences section) but the common principle seems to be that the switch is between practices that have different intentions or different effects. I discuss this idea more fully in later sections. The frequency of switching is also aligned to the high energy of the group in all segments.

Energy for, and attention to, the subject at hand is apparent in all video segments. This may be a feature of this SLT, or their practices, or the seriousness of the decisions, or

the disciplined nature of the FRS. But the participants note that this is unwavering in both

observed meetings in January and February.

The three practices *checking, challenging, exchanging,* are abundant between the

three segments. The lived experience of the participants is that these practices are taken in

good spirit and challenge is not personalised.

Despite the equivocal nature of *yessing*, I tentatively suggest that, in F&W, yes really

means yes; it is agreement and not concession or mindless signalling to colleagues to hurry

up. The coding of *yessing* aligns with the tenor of the group discussion and the coding of *CC*.

5.3.2.3.2 Differences (findings that seem unique and worth spotlighting)

The back-and-forth patterns are a consistent feature, but they are inconsistent in the

specifics of the coding sequences. In the segment '18 Appliances' the coding oscillates from

yessing to *exchanging* and vice versa. Whereas in 'Funding a New Post' and 'Technical

Rescue' the sequence is *advancing* to *checking* or *checking* to *advancing*.

Another unique finding worthy of attention is the comment made in 'Technical

Rescue'. Here the group continues to have focus and energy for the conversation, but an

SME who is in the room is relegated to being a bystander without an invitation to

contribute. So, while in the discussion energy and focus are associated with coherence and

remaining fully present, it is to the exclusion of a helpful source of data. The group may

have been too focused in a narrow sense.

5.3.2.3.3 Trends (findings that develop or change between the video segments)

The three segments can be viewed developmentally using the idea of basic and novel use of practices. Overlaying the use of codings *advancing, checking, adding, yessing, exchanging, aggregating and redirecting* versus codings *silence, challenging, laughing, appreciating, missing and diverging* the video segments are ordered as '18 Appliances', 'Funding a New Post' and 'Technical Rescue' with '18 Appliances' incorporating fewer novel codings and 'Technical Rescue' incorporating the most. However, an alternative developmental overlay might be the coding of *CC;* using this logic, the order changes to 'Technical Rescue' (3 codes, 2 people), '18 Appliances' (3 codes, 3 people), 'Funding a New Post' (17 codes, 7 people).

Looking exclusively at the controversial discussions of 'Technical Rescue' and 'Funding a New Post' and the way that practices trend, the coding shows that 'Funding a New Post' has more *silence*, more *appreciating* and more *CC*. Whereas 'Technical Rescue' has more *diverging*, more *missing* and less *CC*. So although 'Technical Rescue' and 'Funding a New Post' are both contested subjects with differences of opinions being expressed, the way that these differences are brought to bear on the subject seems to change. 'Funding a New Post' demonstrates that contested ideas can still be processed by the group in a way that allows individuals to transcend their own embeddedness. The practice of *challenging* appears multiple times in both segments and throughout.

5.3.2.4 Summary of Findings from Participant Coding and Group Discussion

The participants reflect on the authenticity of their decision-making process, while recognising that written reports are used to set out the issues for any major topic. These

reports sometimes catalyse side conversations before a meeting. The group nevertheless

speaks about the authenticity of their engagement in the meeting to deepen their

understanding of the issues, the interconnection between issues and how they collectively

drive towards a decision. F&W has a distinctive pattern of alternation between practices

that move them forward and practices that help them pause and interrogate data or check

understanding. Detailed *challenging* is respected for its illuminating quality: SLT members

don't take challenge personally but instead recognise that they need to reveal facts and

hidden assumptions to each other because no one person has perfect information.

Two video segments – Technical Rescue and Funding a New Post – dealing with two

difficult topics show greater depth and range of practices. *CC* is still coded by the

participants despite the levels of contention in the discussion, so in this case *missing* when

embedded in some select practices is no impediment to group collaboration. The video

segment with the most *CC* also has more *silence* and more *appreciation* among the group.

In the next section, I code the same video segments as F&W and then compare my

findings to those of the participants.

The Indexer – Figure 54 – is provided to orient the reader.

F&W	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	✔

Figure 54 – Indexer for navigation

5.4 STAGE TWO: REPORTING FINDINGS FROM JR PRIMARY CODING

5.4.1 Jet Flyer A

During the group review of the four video segments, I watched and coded the video contemporaneously with the participants. The participants did not see my coding sheets, nor did I refer to my observations during the subsequent discussion. My primary coding for the four segments, using the same method as the participants, is in Appendix A.4. This section refers to those charts.

I note that in all segments my coding is more extensive than the participants'. This is probably because I am more familiar with the vectors and the ideas underpinning the schema. However, the variability noted in the participant findings continue in my coding too. For example, the frequency of coding also increases from 'Gallup' (lowest) to 'Strategy Session' (highest); and the range of practices increases too, from 'Gallup' (smallest, 4) to 'Strategy Session' (highest, 7). This suggests that the participant coding and mine are aligned. In my coding, 'Strategy Session' is the only segment of video where the group uses the practice *redirection*, showing that the conversation is re-oriented by the participants as the practices are in flow. This happens three times. In the participant coding *redirection* is also shown in 'Slides for Tom'.

The most notable exception is that I did not observe anything in the four videos that I coded as CC. At face value, this finding is anomalous with the findings drawn from the group. Alternatively, this finding might be in keeping with the conceptualisation of CC as a lived experience. This is a key theme that is picked up in the Discussion (Chapter 6).

Drilling down for more specificity on the segments, I also use a different method of visualisation, based on the same data set, called 'Pulses'. Pulse charts move attention from the instantiation of practices to the sequencing and temporality of practices. The horizontal axis is now the practices which are still ordered 0-14 based on frequency, where advancing is the most frequent practice. The vertical is scaled to number of practices, at the top of the chart is earlier in the video segment and the bottom of the chart is later. The Pulse charts for 'Gallup', 'Slides for Tom', 'Objectives for the Day' and 'Strategy Session' are in Figure 55 below.
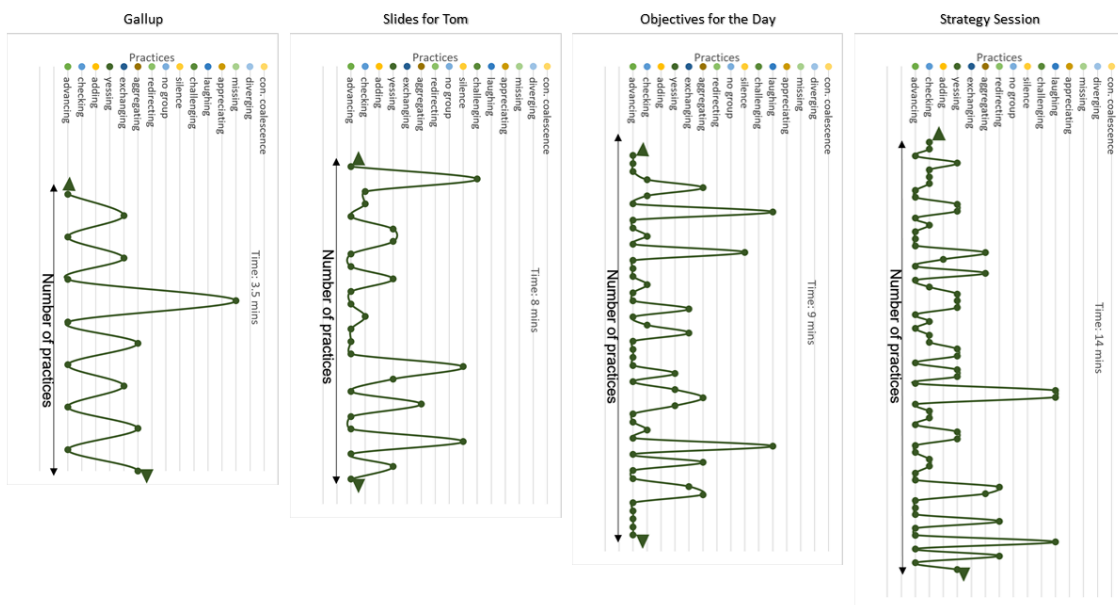
Figure 55 – Pulse charts for four video segments, coded by JR

These Pulse charts more eloquently show how the practices segue one to the other. In 'Gallup', the yoyoing between advancing and exchanging or advancing and aggregating is

very apparent with the only code for missing standing out. In 'Slides for Tom', there is a slightly lower use of the practice advancing, offset by yessing, which might be a substitute practice for advancing used to help with group coherence when there is insufficient progress.

'Objectives for the Day' shows an uneven yoyoing between *advancing* and *checking* and *exchanging*. 'Strategy Session' is the only segment in which there is sequential repeating. For example, both the practices of *yessing* and *checking* occur twice in sequence five times. Both 'Objectives for the Day' and 'Strategy Session' have *laughing*. In 'Strategy Session', in the bottom half of the chart, there is a marked increase in the range of practices, such that practices in the first half of the segment are mostly in the high frequency group, but latterly move towards the less frequent range of practices.

5.4.2 Summary of Findings from JR Coding and Pulse Charts

Simple and frequent practices of *advancing* and *checking* or *advancing* and *exchanging* characterise the conversations that require or evoke lower collaborative agency, such as 'Gallup' and 'Objectives for the Day', where it is possible to work collaboratively but without losing individual embeddedness. But other conversations, where the group is more energetic or has stronger motivations or some other reason to be engaged more fully, show a wider range of practices and more practices that are more novel such as *redirecting* the Flow of practice. *Laughing* also appears as the group advances along this spectrum of novelty.

5.4.3 Fire & Water

In this section, I repeat the same method for the Case F&W. The Indexer – Figure 56 – is provided to orient the reader through the data analysis:

F&W	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	✔

Figure 56 – Indexer for navigation

As previously, I use the same coding schema as the participants but choose to use a Pulse chart to display the results, so that the temporal and related nature of the practices is highlighted. The Pulse charts for '18 Appliances', 'Funding a New Post', and 'Technical Rescue' are provided in Figure 57 below, plus there are large A3 versions of these charts provided in Appendix at A.49.3.5A.4. One feature that continues in these results is the increasing range of practices in use through the three videos. '18 Appliances' has the narrowest and 'Technical Rescue' the most diverse range of practices, and therefore the charts are arrayed in this sequence. Both the contentious discussions 'Funding a New Post' and 'Technical Rescue' have a spiky profile with fluctuations from advancing to diverging alongside advancing to CC. This spikiness is widely distributed for 'Technical Rescue' and is more concentrated towards the mid-section for 'Funding a New Post'.

Re-watching the video segment 'Technical Rescue', my felt sense of the group is one of high contention, with the CFO saying at one point "I haven't a scoobies what we're doing!". Moreover, there are three practices of diverging, where subsets of the group

actively disagree with each other. This is the segment with a broader range of practices, suggesting that more complexity of subject might require more novelty and diversity in practices.

In the video segment for 'Funding a New Post', notably, CC is in process. In this respect, my coding does not match the coding by participants who suggest that it is present in three instances (see Figure 47 for comparison) whereas I only code for CC in 'Funding a New Post'. Parenthetically, the discrepancy between my coding and the participant coding continues throughout this study and is discussed at length in both Limitations and my Reflections chapter. The Pulse chart for 'Funding a New Post', while including CC, is not as complex or varied as 'Technical Rescue', which is also the longest video clip. The clip for 'Technical Rescue' shows that the frequent and dispersed use of practices continues throughout.
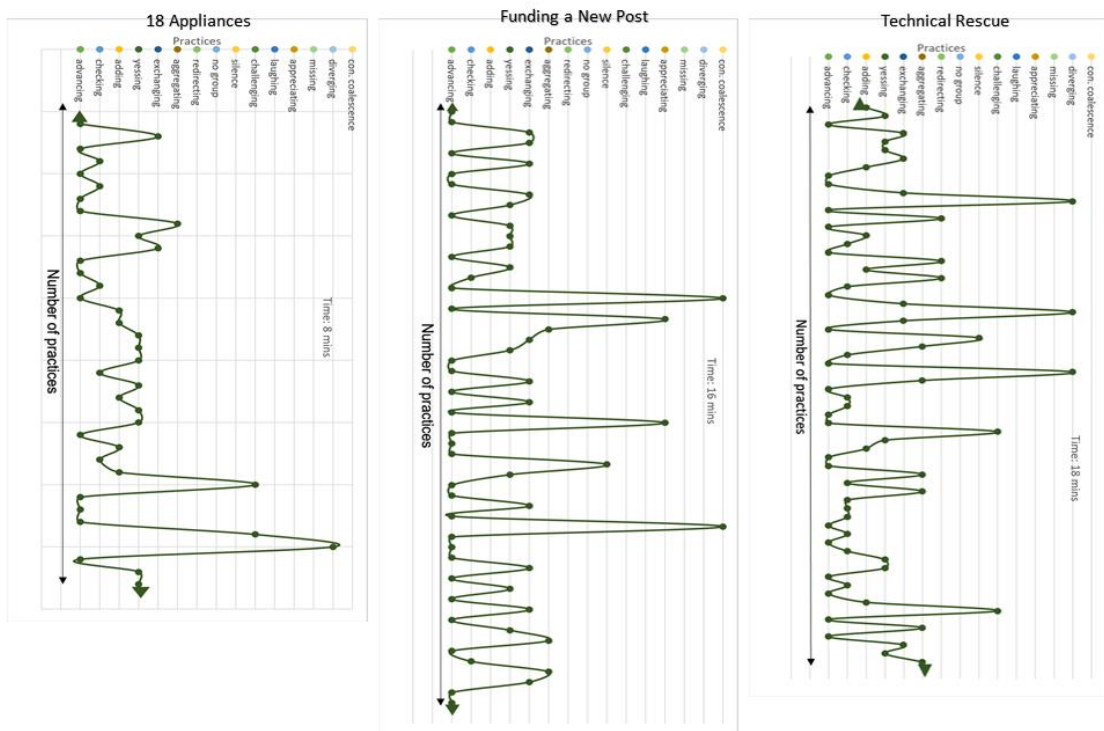
Figure 57 – F&W Pulse charts, coded by JR

'Funding a New Post' shows an interesting variation on the fluctuations that have

been noted earlier. Whereas others have coded this as *advancing-checking-advancing-*

checking, in my coding it appears as *advancing-exchanging-advancing-exchanging*. Thus,

exchanging becomes the turn-point before the practices revert to advancing. Both the

practices of *checking* and *exchanging* are a form of group inquiry: *checking* is broadly spread

around the group; *exchanging* is narrow between, for example, subject experts. So this

sequence of *advancing/checking* or *exchanging/advancing* is the equivalent of the group

forging ahead and then pausing to go deeper, before forging ahead again. For the video

segment, 'Technical Rescue', my coding is more aligned to that of the participants in the

advancing-checking-advancing-checking sequencing, making *checking* the practice that becomes the pivot point before returning to *advancing*.

In all three segments, a further notable feature of the charts is the sparse use of codes in the mid-range from around *no group* to *CC*. In this section, although the codes are used, the practices of *silence, challenging, laughing, appreciation and missing* are used only infrequently.

5.4.4 Summary of Findings from JR Coding and Pulse Charts

In combining the insights from the participants' coding alongside my coding, there are three observations that remain consistent between the participants and me as well as being consistent across each of the three segments. The consistencies are: as the complexity and contentiousness of issues increases the novelty and diversity of practices also appear to increase; while practices of *challenging*, *missing* and *diverging* might carry the flavour of negativity, nevertheless these practices seem to be no impediment to the practice of CC; and the basic practice of advancing is often intertwined with either *checking* or *exchanging*.

The main divergence between my coding and that of the participants is the number of codes for CC. I code it rarely, but they experience it more frequently. *Silence* is another practice which the participants code more frequently than I do across all three segments. Intuitively this seems an anomaly because silence is assumed to be a practice that cannot be miscoded; a *silence* is a silence and is difficult to misconstrue or miss when coding.

However, in keeping with the earlier finding for CC, the lived experience of the participants may be obscured to the observer. This point is expanded on in the Discussion (Chapter 6).

In the next section I turn to the Case Jet Flyer G.

5.4.5 Jet Flyer G

The Case Jet Flyer G (JFG) comes from the same stable as Jet Flyer A (JFA) in that this is a senior leadership team (SLT) operating in another arm of the organisation's matrix. The context in which it works is largely similar, with the same competing objectives and structural tensions as each participant reports along dual lines. JFA and JFG diverge in as much as the content of their discussions are directed towards different technical areas.

Unlike JFA, JFG was not fully concluded due to the outbreak of Covid-19. I have taken the decision to include JFG in the data set because I had the opportunity to video a full SLT meeting, and I had completed individual interviews.

Even without the benefit of the group reviewing itself or providing coding for video segments, this is a large and important data set that I seek to utilise in furthering the development of ideas and understanding in relation to the research questions.

I am aware that this approach to a Case is a deviation from the proposed methods and I reflect in depth in the chapter 8 on the implications of this decision. Overall, the most compelling argument for including these data is that they are rich with new nuances, new people and new settings. Also, the individual interviews had been completed so I have those quotes available to set alongside my coding. Importantly, the video that was recorded was of a meeting conducted – as are most of the meetings for this particular SLT –

using telepresence. Telepresence is a sophisticated form of video conferencing. All the images of each room or participants are arrayed on a high-definition screen. This has the effect of suggesting you are sitting across a room from people in another location. Including this material is of considerable benefit to the thesis as a whole and allows for a greater set of comparisons to be made. Naturally, I acknowledge that I am unable to privilege the voices of my participants in this section and thus the following findings are provided even more tentatively.

A summary of the group and the Case are provided in Table 17 below:

Table 17 – Summary data for Case: Jet Flyer G (JFG)

Research timescale	January to March 2020
Composition of the SLT and variations in the recorded meeting	3 female; 15 male (1 female was absent with 1 male substitute present; 1 male was absent with 0 substitutes) 8 US-based; 10 UK-based (substitute was US-based)
Material collected	1 day of meetings 4 hours of video (not all of meeting was videoed) 9 hours of individual interviews

In addition to being the largest group and working remotely using the technology of telepresence, the agenda was the most disparate, ranging from relational issues such as the Employee Survey results to very technical engineering subjects.

5.4.5.1 General qualitative insights from participants as individuals

During the one-to-one interviews, participants were uncomplimentary about the meeting in general. They said it was "too long", people were "not engaged" and that it was

a "largely unsatisfactory forum" in which to "get decisions made" or get "work accomplished". As was usual for this team, the format was online using a telepresence room, with one third of the group in the US and two thirds in the UK. Despite high levels of dissatisfaction with this meeting, and historic dissatisfaction with this group's meetings in general, the participants chose freely to attend – their presence was not mandated.

Against this background, when asked, the interviewees could not point to any "salient moments". In these circumstances, my previously adopted form of interview was inadequate to get them to identify parts of the meeting that they wanted to review as a group. Unaware that the next meeting would be cancelled, I persevered for fear of not having video segments to provoke the group's Elicitation interview. As discussed in the Methodology section, the study necessitated an identification of a section of the meeting to achieve this and I subsequently adjusted the question to "the best bit" or "the most satisfying". Consequently, unlike the other groups, this had the effect of injecting an evaluative element into the selection of video.

However, the addition of a judgement term, asking them to reflect on the 'best' part of the discussion, did bring about uniformity of selection: everyone agreed that they were most engaged when talking about the Employee Survey results. It was this video segment that was selected and ready for use in the group discussion before it was cancelled. In the absence of the group's coding, I proceeded solo.

With one video segment selected by the group, I chose to balance this against another video segment as a comparator and to follow as closely as possible the approach

that had been adopted for the other Cases. But making such a selection risked me

privileging certain segments and not others. Instead, I chose to include the entire meeting

from end to end and show 'Employee Survey Results' alongside the remainder of the day's

events. Also, where I made notes on observations contemporaneously, these are included.

A summary of this material is provided in Table 18.

Table 18 – Video segments for Jet Flyer G, coded by JR

Title	Details	Length
Employee Survey Results	The group is discussing the results of the recent staff survey conducted by Gallup (in Jet Flyer A, a similar discussion was used and entitled 'Gallup'). The point of the discussion is to agree a uniform approach to communicating and responding to the feedback. The discussion begins with some 'visioning' based on a reflection question: what is your 'best day at work'?	28 mins
General Business	The remainder of the agenda encompasses a diverse set of subjects ranging from performance improvement to cyber/digital impacts. The facilitation of each agenda item falls to a different person, with the subject matter determining who is structuring the discussion. The agenda set up two UK- and two US- led topics.	212 mins (excluding Employee Survey Results as above)

5.4.5.1.1 Video segment: 'Employee Survey Results'

The facilitator of this section of the agenda began by asking the group to take some

time to do some personal reflection on their 'best day at work' as a prompt for the wider

discussion on the survey results. My notes say that as the group talks about the results of

this reflection, the mood of the room seems to lift. They mostly agree that the hallmark of a

best day is when "the team pulls together" and the team "demonstrates their excellent

engineering skills". There are no divergent views during this section of the meeting. But I also note in my journal that the *yessing* does not seem to be agreeing. As the group breaks following the discussion of 'Employee Survey Results' the energy in the room in the UK is high. The facilitator sums up by saying "the more joined up we are the better off we will be".

The transatlantic nature of this discussion has two effects. The first is that three times someone in the UK begins to talk but, because of the lag in transmission, a colleague in the US begins talking synchronously. My notes state that every time this happens the UK – the dominant (in numbers) – gives way to the US. UK colleagues seem to deliberately make space to give airtime to US colleagues. This may be an artefact of the technology – there is a small time-lag in the signal – but it might also be a mindful response to the sensitivities of the US team as they are not close to the seat of power. The other effect is that the meeting breaks are variously Breakfast (US):Lunch (UK) through to Lunch (US):Tea (UK) meaning that the groups faced different work schedule pressures.

The coding for the segment 'Employee Survey Results' is provided in Figure 58 and, following the previously established convention, because this is my coding, these data are presented in a Pulse chart.
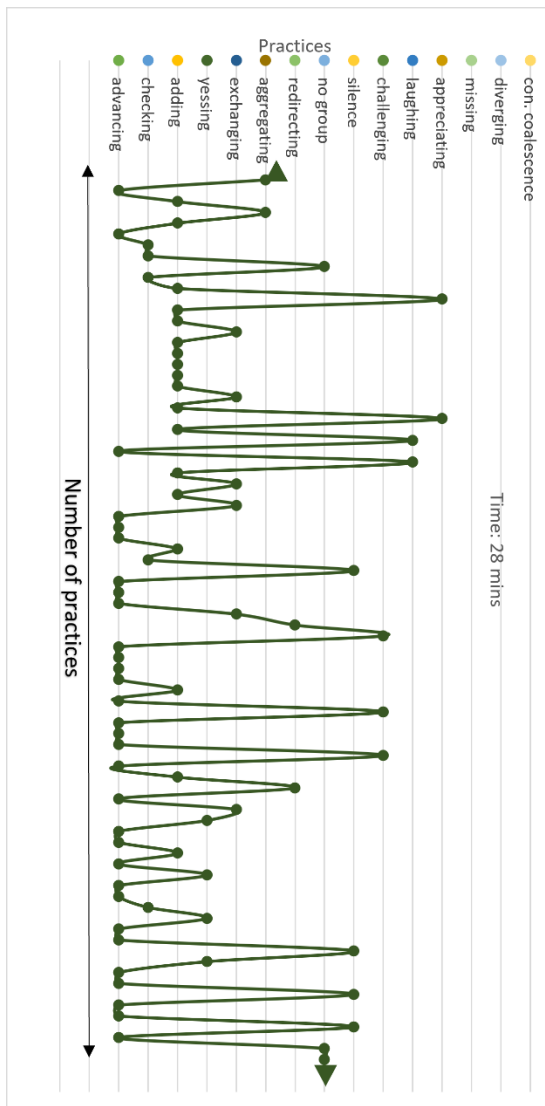
Figure 58 – Jet Flyer G (JFG): 'Employee Survey Results', JR Coding

The first notable feature of the coding for this group is the step-by-step nature of the dialogue. The group appears to be turn-taking, with each speaker providing their view shown in the coding of *advancing* or *adding*. Coding for *checking* or *exchanging* is represented but not in a ratio proportionate to *advancing/adding*. Since in previous

examples these have been liberally interspersed with *advancing* or *adding,* these omissions seem to be congruent with the turn-taking nature of the dialogue.

There is little engagement between the contributors, with few references back to what a previous participant said, and only two practices of *aggregation* (bringing other contributions together). The mood is not miserable, they *laugh* together twice. But the conversation appears to be linear, characterised by chronological turns. This turn-taking seems to accentuate the individualised nature of the group. But, as previously noted, due to the nature of the telepresence technology, which causes over-speaking because of the latency of the system, turn-taking may be a way of avoiding what can appear as rude. The turn-taking of the group is interesting given I made notes about the increasing levels of energy during this conversation. So I consider the technology to be a part of the reason that this might be happening. However, technology does not prevent *aggregation* or other practices that have an inter-relating essence. Following this line of thinking, the chart shows that *missing, diverging* and *CC* are not apparent.

There are oscillations between *adding* and *exchanging* occurring in the earlier parts of the discussion. In addition, *adding* rebounds twice to *appreciating* and *laughing*. The simple and most dominant feature of this segment of conversation is *advancing*. As *advancing* is coded at the base of the chart any deviation appears to be more pronounced, giving a sawtooth appearance.

I do not have the benefit of the group interview, but, turning to the individual interviews, the comments concerning this segment of video are in Figure 59. The discussion

is characterised as being "constructive" and "good" and people speak up and build on each other's points. This was a section of the agenda where everyone "needed to be in the conversation" and this inclusivity would help to ensure that the outcome would be "valued" by the group.

> Good constructive discussion.
>
> Outcomes will be valued by the group, not [name] but the group's answer.
>
> Got to a good place. Supporting behaviours were apparent. All of us needed to be in the conversation.
>
> People didn't agree but it felt like they were.
>
> Felt constructive.
>
> Circled around a few times, but that was good for us.
>
> Built off each other. People did speak up.

Figure 59 – Individual interview comments, 'Employee Survey Results'

The participants are reporting a felt sense of this segment of the meeting as positive and I ascribe some of this to the prevalence of the coding, which is generally classed as going forwards; for example, *advancing* and *adding* with some, but relatively few, interruptions from *checking*, *challenging* or *exchanging*. As already noted, I did not code any *CC* and the interview comments seem to concur with that observation. Although it is construed as a positive section of the meeting, the participants are not using language or descriptions that align to *CC*. They appear to be lacking inter-relating but feel that it is positive because they are making so much progress.

By way of comparison, I now turn to the remainder of the meeting, entitled 'General Business'.

5.4.5.1.2 Video segment: 'General Business'

In this first section, I consider the notes that I made while observing the meeting (provided in Figure 60) and the overall comments that I captured when interviewing individual participants (provided in Figure 61).

There does not appear to be consensus about how to understand the socio-relational aspects of the meeting. One participant says that it was one of their "better" meetings but concedes that "we lost energy"; meanwhile from my journal I note that someone is "snoozing" (i.e. they are sleeping). Another UK participant experiences the set up as "talking to the fish counter", which may be a comment on his US counterparts who are visible in a line in front of him on the screen. On the other hand, I note that "everyone in the US is focused" and "the US are all in", that is, although they are not speaking, they are following the discussion apparently with some intent. Other participants comment on the uneven levels of attentiveness, saying that they "checked out" or that they notice others "just show up". In this Case, being physically present is not being fully present.

Discussion is all sequential, there is no stepping on the end of a sentence.

Everyone is behind a laptop, I can't tell how focused they are because they are interacting with their computers.

[name] tried to get into the conversation twice and gave way to the US.

[name] starts and US cuts over.

Everyone in the US is focused, but they are not in the conversation.

[Name] is presenting and the US are all in.

[Name] is snoozing.

[US colleague name who is presenter] listens to the UK discuss his proposals.

Figure 60 – Observational notes by JR, 'General Business'

One of our better meetings but we lost energy.

To be honest, we weren't coherent as a group. That was information transfer.

We've known each other for years, there are no awkward moments.

Not sure that people share how they truly feel.

It feels like 'talking to the fish counter', 'am I on mute?'

Not everyone engaged in the discussion.

Really disappointing.

I tutted and checked out a bit.

People de-prioritise our meetings, people just show up.

Figure 61 – Individual interview comments, 'General Business'

The coding for the 'General Business' meeting is represented in the Pulse chart

(Figure 62) below. An A3-sized version of this chart is available in 9.3.5A.4
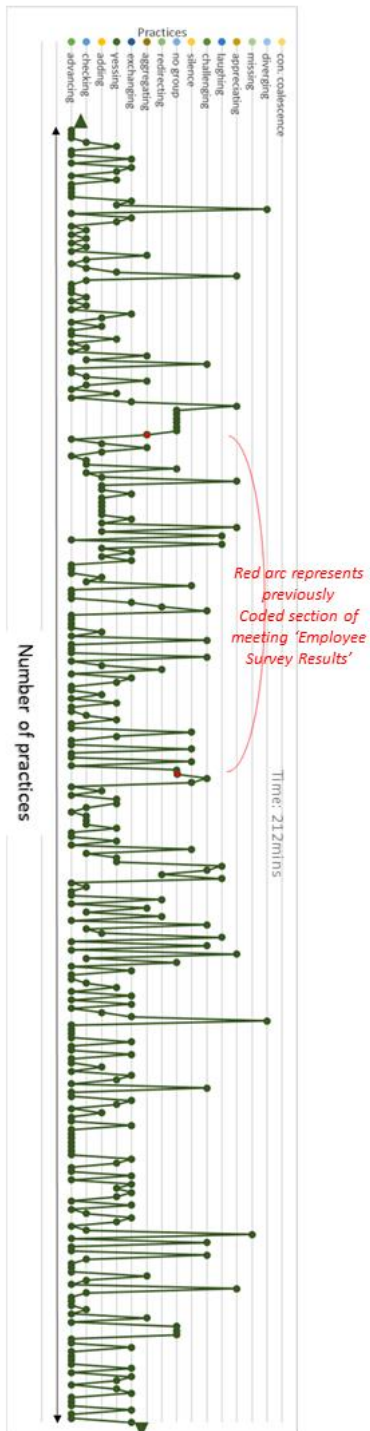
Figure 62 – Pulse chart of coding by JR for 'General Business'

In Figure 62, the segment previously analysed is marked with red to demonstrate how much of the coding sequence it occupies. By inserting 'Employee Survey Results' into the entire meeting coding, it demonstrates that the meeting lacks energy. The segment devoted to 'Employee Survey Results' is 28 mins out of 212 mins, approximately 13% of the time the group spends together, yet it accounts for a disproportionate number of practices. This differential in coding frequency concurs with participants saying that they felt engaged during 'Employee Survey Results' (which has a higher coding frequency) and also helps to provide context for why others remark on the meeting as lacklustre, "talking to the fish counter" (which has a lower coding frequency).

5.4.5.2 Summary of Findings from JR Coding and Pulse Charts

Overall, excluding 'Employee Survey Results', the coding of the meeting shows a sawtooth pattern of practices that turn on *advancing* and *checking* or *advancing* and *exchanging*. The *advancing-exchanging-advancing-exchange* sequence is more prevalent than the *advancing-checking-advancing-checking* sequence. I consider the former to be a more forensic set of enquiry practices because it specifically requires one person to answer whereas *checking* practices are more general enquiries of the group. This observation aligns with the nature and structure of the group, which is very technical.

Nor does the group use many novel or diverse practices, such as those coded as *silence* through to *CC*. Where they do use the novel practices, it is *challenging* that is embedded in the sequence. Towards the end of the meeting there are three *redirecting* practices that pivot back to *advancing*. In all three instances, they are preceded by either *exchanging* or *checking*, suggesting that revealing more data or providing more

understanding resulting from an inquiry leads the group to change its direction. A

discussion on the interplay between practices that reveal new knowledge and other

practices that are moving the group forward is a topic explored at length in Chapter 6.

In the next section, I move to Stage Three of the data analysis and look across all the

Cases and all the coding that I have undertaken.

The indexer – Figure 63 – is provided to help the reader orient to the bigger picture.

JFA	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	
F&W	Pts Within	
	Pts Between	
	JR Coding	
JFG	JR Coding	
All	Across (JR coding)	✔

Figure 63 – Indexer for navigation

5.4.6 Comparing All Cases

In this section I explore ideas and issues across all three Cases. To do this, I have

worked with the data in two ways. Stage three of the analysis is divided into two sub-

sections. The first uses a simple collation of the findings from each Case, organised

thematically. In the second, I apply the secondary coding schema to the original data. The

use of a secondary coding schema allows for higher-order constructs to emerge (Creswell,

2013), because it allows codes to be clustered that appear to be related, allowing themes to emerge, which enriches and enlivens the Discussion.

Throughout this section (comprising the two sub-sections) I apply my coding of all Cases and revert to the participants' contributions where there are anomalies or areas of particular interest. The choice to use my coding for this section is driven by the need for consistency. The participant coding is only relevant to specific Cases and cannot transfer from Case to Case. On the other hand, my coding provides comparison across all Cases. In the last part of this chapter, the findings are related back to the guiding research questions: What is the lived experience of participants when Conscious Coalescence emerges? And: How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?

Comparator Pulse charts are provided for all ten video segments in Appendix A.4, which is formatted as the larger A3 size to improve legibility. In general, the frequency table demonstrates, and the Pulse charts confirm, that the fundamental practice shared by all groups in all segments, is *advancing*. Only occasionally do the groups interrupt the flow of *advancing* for any extended period. For example, in the segment 'Employee Survey Results', there is a sequence of 18 practices between *advancing* and *advancing*. The other notable example is in the segment '18 Appliances', where the group has a sequence of ten practices between *advancing* and *advancing*. Otherwise, the other segments are reliably anchored to *advancing* with only a handful of practices in between.

Advancing most frequently pivots on either *checking* or *exchanging*. The impact of an *advancing-checking-advancing-checking* sequence is a small sawtooth patterning. This can be seen in '18 Appliances', 'Objectives for the Day', 'Strategy Session' and 'General Business'. By contrast, *advancing-exchanging-advancing-exchanging* produces a larger sawtooth patterning that is apparent in 'Gallup', 'Funding a New Post' and 'General Business'. Mostly the segments are exclusively small or large sawtooth patterning; they are not usually mixed. The one exception is the segment 'General Business', which does mix the patterning between *advancing-challenging* and *advancing-exchanging* but the use of a single whole segment might be important in explaining this distinction. In the Discussion, I speculate that groups default to advancing because it is 'progress' against the agenda. Challenging and *exchanging* are practices that pause that progress. Either of the two practices have the same effect except that exchanging can be more narrowly focused among a few participants. In the segment 'Technical Rescue' the pattern is indistinct, with parts of both types of pattern showing.

In addition to placing the charts so that they can be compared, I have reordered them. In the earlier findings section, all the video segments were reported in the order they were shown to and discussed with the participants. However, it appears that there might be a more helpful way to order the charts to show comparisons using complexity as the method of sorting the charts: least complex on the left and most complex to the right.

5.4.6.1 Summary across all Cases

A cursory review of all the video segments seems to show that practices do not evolve temporally: the groups are not showing practices that grow in frequency over time.

So, for example, *missing* is as likely to occur early in the segment as later. Across whatever

period of time the group is meeting, there appears to be no trend from early in the

discussion to late in the discussion; in other words, the discussions do not seem to adhere to

a developmental model. For example, if practices were developmentally inclined, then

during a sequence, I would expect to see more of the rarer practices being added later in

the segment. Instead, the rare practices are simply interspersed.

However, there does appear to be a development of practices as the type of

discussion changes from segment to segment. This might be related to the level of

complexity that the group is grappling with, or, relatedly, it might be the level of

engagement of the participants. What does seem apparent is that simple discussions use

simple practices. The rarer practices appear to be used more regularly where there are

subjects with many dependencies and many points of view.

To pursue this line of thinking, I returned to the participants' explanations of each

segment and used their qualitative descriptions to consider a new ordering of the segments.

For the Case JFA, I decided to swap between 'Objectives for the Day' and 'Slides for Tom'.

'Slides for Tom' was described by the group as being "positive" and "helping each other"

and "shifting forwards" and according to participants did not involve the same level of

complexity or contention as 'Objectives for the Day'. When reviewing the comments on

'Objectives for the Day', the description was more diverse: "whose topic [was] it", "who was

owning the conversation" and "it takes quite a while to start". I have chosen to swap these

two segments because they more closely compare in an interesting way using the idea that

different subject matter involves different amounts of interdependency and contention as previously described in the Case F&W. The order for JFG remains as previously discussed.

Considering the segments by using the ideas of interdependency and complexity, and then laying JFA alongside F&W, the previously observed trends seem to prevail: there are more practices that are rarer in use in the segments where the subject is more contentious. Thus, CC seems to be part of processes arising from novel practices. Novel practices seem to be activated when subjects are complex and rely on dependencies. There is no one-to-one relationship apparent: a certain practice does not seem to be an antecedent to another in a regular way. But more generally, the groups seem to require a more diverse set of practices when they are grappling with non-simple issues.

Narrowing the focus of comparison to just three segments, those identified by the groups as illustrating CC, the observation that the novel practices are more widely used continues. Particularly, for 'Technical Rescue' and 'Employee Survey Results' early in the sequence and throughout, the coding moves beyond the simple and fundamental. Here we see *diverging*, *challenging*, *appreciating* and *laughing*. These are less apparent in the 'Strategy Session', which is interesting because in the Elicitation interviews the participants were incandescent with the thrill of that conversation. They pointed out that it was a qualitatively different kind of conversation to the usual. Their language includes words such as "kinda magical" and "intimacy" and a "beautiful thing". Yet, my coding fails to capture any CC, nor is the profile of the practices particularly exceptional.

An interesting feature of 'Strategy Session' and 'General Business' when compared with both 'Technical Rescue' and 'Employee Survey Results' is the frequent use of *yessing*. In the former two segments, a common sequence is *advancing-yessing-advancing-yessing*. 'Funding a New Post' and '18 Appliances' also have prevalent *yessing* but not in the foregoing combination. This observation is one that provides impetus to the secondary coding, suggesting that yessing has some kind of repair apparatus within it. I explore this idea further in the next section on secondary coding.

Before turning to the secondary coding, the overview of all the Pulse charts makes it easier to see outliers and I pause here to spotlight three irregularities.

5.4.6.2 Three irregularities

Irregularity one: 'Slides for Tom' is quite frankly an anomaly. When I was in the room taking notes and coding contemporaneously to the activity, the practices seemed to me to hold some aggression. At one point the participant facilitating the meeting is usurped by another participant who takes over the laptop and takes over leading the discussion. This is a physical takeover of the sociomaterial objects that are central to the meeting at the time. This is embedded in the chart as *challenging*, but it did not lead to *diverging*, nor a counter challenge. The chart is unremarkable given the abruptness/rudeness/disrespect I thought I was witnessing. Yet the participant who was the subject of this overthrow says in the qualitative comments: "[I] felt supported by the team" and when considering the participant coding of CC it appears four times, placing it high in the ranking of all the segments (see Table 20). I decided to put aside my views of what I had seen (as much as possible) to try to represent their views of this video segment.

Irregularity two: The disconnect that I note in 'Slides for Tom' when combined with the earlier comments concerning my lack of coding of CC is a substantial insight that I take forward into the Discussion. In this study, what is apparent to me may bear little or no relationship to what is experienced by the participants. This can have wide-ranging consequences for research past and present and deserves careful consideration, and I discuss this in detail in subsequent chapters.

Irregularity three: 'Objectives for the Day', 'Employee Survey Results' and 'General Business' also share a feature in common. These three segments of coding show advancing or advancing and adding in uninterrupted tracts. Unusually, *advancing* is often followed by *advancing* or *adding* is often followed by *adding*. This suggests periods where the forward Flow of the group is unmediated. This theme is expanded on as we move to the secondary coding.

The secondary coding aims to fit categories together to develop a coherent synthesis of the corpus (Saldaña, 2010). In a reorganisation of the data, I returned to the practices for each group and the group commentary and began to discern a number of orientations. While in my primary coding schema I did not ascribe a purpose, it became apparent that there might be a consistent set of logics between certain patterns. For example, the pattern of adding and the pattern of aggregating might have the common logic of moving the group forward. This iterative moving between the data and the group interviews helped me to see that the patterns could be further organised via a secondary coding schema that clustered similar logics.

5.5 STAGE THREE: APPLYING THE SECONDARY CODING

While the Pulse charts help show temporality, the DNA charts that I now introduce begin to cluster the shared logics or similar intentions. These new secondary codes are shown in Table 19.

Table 19 – Secondary coding of DNA of groups

Secondary coding – DNA	Primary coding – Practices	Description Consistent logics:
Flow (green)	Adding, advancing, aggregating	Continue or create directionality
Reveal (yellow)	Challenging, checking, exchanging	Explain, expose or share rationales
Rupture (red)	Missing, diverging, redirecting	Fracture or rip cohesion
Renew (purple)	Yessing, laughing, silence, appreciating	Assert, reconfirm or repair cohesion

Three insights have been central to developing this schema, which produces what I call strands of DNA. One is that *yessing* is used in a variety of ways and I have noted that, in a number of the Pulse charts, it seemed to be interjected at times when the group was in danger of fragmenting or losing cohesion. My instinct was that it could be used by the group to 'Renew' cohesion, ameliorating bad feeling, too much *challenge*, discomfort or uncertainty. This led to further conjecture about other practices having a similar intention, I therefore clustered *appreciating*, *laughing* and *silence* in this category too.

The second insight concerned the prevalence of *advancing* and *adding* and the general momentum of all the groups to move forward and get through the agenda by the

end of the meeting. Inspired by authors in the strong-process ontology from whence practice theory branches (for example, Hernes (2007); Tsoukas and Chia (2002)), I decided to consider the practices that move the group forward as 'Flow' and within this categorisation other practices seemed to make sense as well. Consequently, I clustered *adding, advancing and aggregating* as having similar shared intentions of continuing or reinforcing the Flow.

As reported earlier, a saw-tooth pattern became apparent in the Pulse charts. A back and forth from advancing (henceforth categorised as part of Flow) primarily with two other practices of checking and exchanging. Both these latter practices share similar characteristics, they can be used as a proxy for a *challenge* – and this is mentioned by one of the participants. Alternatively, these practices can be used as an invitation to the group to go deeper – again, also commented on by participants. This led me to add *challenging* to this category of practices and to consider how the three practices are variously used. My choice is to call this set 'Reveal' because, almost regardless of intention, the effect of *checking, challenging* or *exchanging* is to encourage others to say more, share data or investigate assumptions. The notions of Reveal accord to some extent with those provided by Simpson, Buchan and Sillince (2018) who name practice that is focused on ensuring the chosen action is the right or best thing to do in the circumstances, which they call 'justifying'. In addition to finding some alignment with their ideas, I add a further nuance, because it seems that Reveal has no intention to stop Flow.

There were three practices remaining, *missing, diverging,* and *redirecting* and it was natural to conceive these as being practices that in some way disturb the group or, indeed, halt the Flow. I call this type of disturbance 'Rupture'.

I redacted the coding no group because this represents times where technology failure (forced) or the facilitator (offered) a break from the discussion. No group offers a window into the discontinuities of group and the interrupting effect that this can have, which I will explore in further research, post thesis, because it is more in evidence in other sections of the videos not selected by the groups for inclusion here.

5.5.1 Patterns Like DNA

Recoding the groups using this schema led to a system of charting that looks like DNA. Strands of meta-practices were woven together to create a system where Flow is constantly interrupted but then renewed. Each strand works in a binary manner making them discontinuous. It is not possible to be in two strands simultaneously but instead this way of exploring the data demonstrates how the logics of the group change moment to moment. I next explore these new DNA structures.

Considering all ten segments as being equally relevant to the research questions became inconsistent because two segments were chosen by me and used for 'training' participants in the use of the vectors and ideas of group-level analysis. Accordingly, these segments fail to meet the 'saliency' test and I decided for secondary coding purposes to remove these two segments. By similar logic, 'General Business' did not fit either, because I

was using a whole meeting for comparison, it was not participant-chosen so I removed that segment too.

For secondary coding, this therefore left seven DNA charts. Again, for legibility, they are provided in Appendix A.4 on A3-sized paper. I used the prevalence of red (Rupture) strands to sort the segments into a rough scale, with 'Funding a New Post' at one end (no reds) and 'Technical Rescue' at the other end (6 reds). Within this span are 'Objectives for the Day' (no reds); 'Slides for Tom' (no reds); '18 Appliances' (1 red); 'Employee Survey Results' (2 reds); and 'Strategy Session' (3 reds). I chose to use Rupture as the method to sorting because it is the strand that is most different across the DNA charts, also, it represents the polar opposite of CC. Importantly, I am not jumping to the conclusion that the appearance of red, which represents 'Rupture', is a bad or difficult or hindering effect – it was simply I could count the number of reds and thus create a logical ordering. The meaning and nuances concerning Rupture are investigated further in the following analysis.

The benefit of the DNA strands is that they both consolidate and exaggerate previous coding helping to make findings clearer but also more subtle: these are explored below.

To aid comprehension Figure 64 below is an A4-sized reproduction of the seven DNA charts.
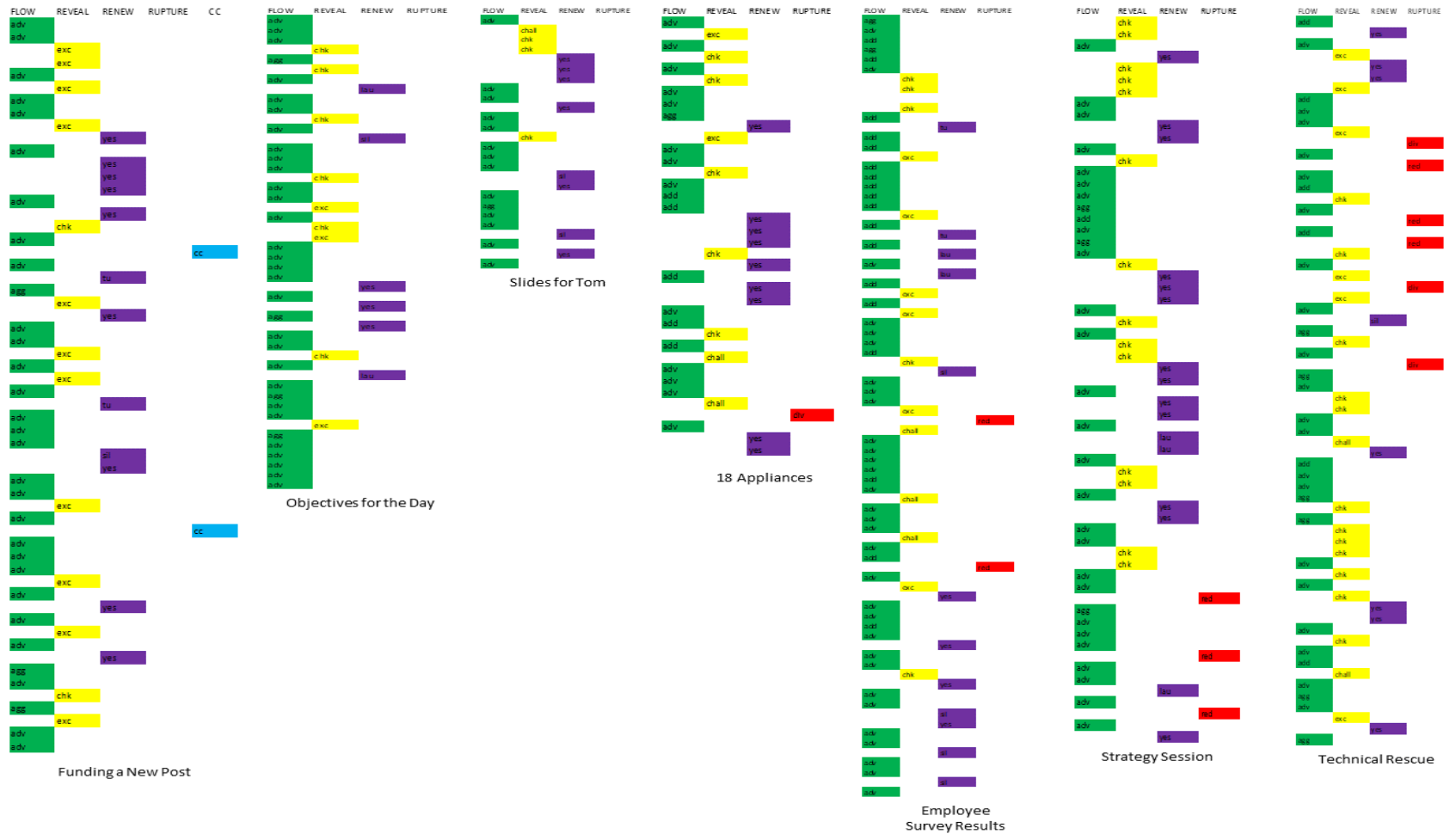
Figure 64 – DNA charts for seven video segments

5.5.2 Using DNA Strands to Compare Segments

'Funding a New Post' stands out from the other segments because it has no instances of Rupture and it has two instances of CC. Superficially, this might suggest that the absence of Rupture is helpful in the promotion of CC. Counter to this suggestion, however, 'Objectives for the Day' is also without Rupture but does not have any instances of CC suggesting that the two ideas could be working independently of each other.

In total, four segments of DNA include instances of Rupture, yet, despite this, they have continued as intact groups throughout all the meetings. I suggest that the secondary coding has amplified practices that are minuscule and fleeting. The group may be unaware of these tiny instances between them. Additionally, all three Cases demonstrate that, despite Ruptures, they are able to recover the general Flow of the meeting, which suggests that instances of Renew might be important when Rupture occurs, or even more generally.

The purple strand, which represents Renew, is in every segment of every meeting and is generously visible throughout. Instances of Renew seem to have no temporal relationship to Rupture. Recalling that some of these were stormy discussions, after all, that is why there are reds (Ruptures) in the DNA, I suggest that Renew might be a taken-for-granted set of ameliorations that intact groups make to repair any fallout from difficult inter-relating. Also, that they are taken for granted might be important. As I have noted, yessing is a practice within the Renew strand and yet it seems that "yes" gets used both to signify acceptance and to mindlessly indicate "hurry up" or "get back to Flow". Rather than separate out these differences of yessing, I have chosen to cluster yessing with other

practices such as silence and laughing. They too can be used to allow the group to steady itself before returning to Flow.

Next, the eye falls on the green strands, which represents Flow and the most dominant set of instances across all segments. Mostly Flow is laddered, that is, it is interrupted by other practices. However, as noted in the Pulse charts, there are times when the Flow is uninterrupted, for example in 'Employee Survey Results', 'Objectives for the Day' and 'Strategy Session'. These stretches of Flow are indicating that the group is going forward and onwards. This relentless forward motion might not indicate agreement within the group, instead they may be on 'automatic', with the group disengaged and simply allowing the meeting to move forward without anyone stepping in to re-orientate the Flow.

The quality of stepping into the Flow, the ability and willingness to interrupt the forwards momentum, most often falls to the practices that make up Reveal. The Reveal strand of DNA, in yellow, is present and liberally used across all segments by all groups. The exceptions are the places where Flow continues unabated.

Having looked down each single strand of DNA: red, purple, green and yellow, I turn now to look across the strands. There are moments in 'Technical Rescue', 'Funding a New Post', 'Strategy Session' and 'Employee Survey Results' when the group is moving across four strands. This lateral movement from green to yellow to purple to red and back again creates a weaving effect. My suggestion is that counting the number of blocks in a vertical strand of DNA may be less informative than considering both the horizontal (forward movement) and lateral (pausing, stopping) movements around the DNA.

5.5.2.1 Re-integrating the participants' coding

To explore and expand on this idea, I return to the participant's coding remembering that out of the total of 59 coding charts provided by them, 27 contained at least one practice of CC. Hence, I must acknowledge that I woefully under-represented CC in my coding. The participant CC coding is summarised in Table 20 below:

Table 20 – *Conscious Coalescence* **(***CC***) coding by participants**

Segment	No. of *CC* codes/ No. of participants	Ranking by *CC*
Objectives for the Day	2/8	6
Strategy Session	2/8	5
18 Appliances	3/8	4
Slides for Tom	4/8	3
Technical Rescue	3/4	2
Funding a New Post	17/8	1
Employee Survey Results	No pts coding	7

Considering 'Employee Survey Results', without recourse to participant coding of CC it is hard to say whether I was accurately recording the felt sense of the meeting. However, in the participant interviews their language, while enthusiastic, was not pointing to a transformation of separate units of individuals into a coalesced whole. I feel somewhat confident therefore that my coding is accurate, and that the absence of CC is representative of how they might have experienced the meeting. The other DNA feature that reinforces this confidence is the tracts of unmediated Flow, which also cross-checks with my notes about the conversation being stepwise and linear. I would conclude that CC was not

present in this meeting segment. I also wonder if the forward Flow of the meeting held the flavour of feeling good, without a certain depth. This might account for the disparity in participant comments, which were the most dissimilar of any Case.

'Funding a New Post' provides evidence from all sources that CC emerged in the meeting. The eight participants code it 17 times. I coded it twice. In the DNA charts the group is seen to be constantly re-orienting the Flow of practice to Reveal or to Renew. There are no long unmediated tracts of green. Red Ruptures are also missing. In the group discussion about this segment their emphasis is on the complexity of the decision and thinking it through from all angles. They also comment on the report that was provided in advance of the meeting and how the report flushes out disagreement so that the meeting has a more constructive tone. I conclude that in this segment any outright dissent at the proposal has been dealt with in advance, which paves the way for multiple parties to see multiple points of view, each adjusting in infinitesimally small ways to make accommodations and drop their own individual embeddedness. Maybe the emergence of CC was seeded prior to the meeting, not exclusively within the meeting, as importantly the group has a laddered pattern of DNA in Flow, Reveal and Renew.

The laddering of DNA instances is also visible in 'Technical Rescue' – another contended subject and possibly the most uncomfortable. Three participants award the code of CC. The coding from the participants also includes a large number of practices that are coded in the Rupture strand. In the group interview, this is described as a bit "ouchy", or the conversation is called "robust" and, as with 'Funding a New Post', the felt sense is not about dissent but is about getting "underneath". This suggests that they too are

experiencing the difficulties faced in the discussion and signalling that nevertheless CC emerges. Importantly, this counter-intuitive finding suggests that the participants do not need to experience harmony or unruffled conversation for them to also experience CC. In the participants self-reporting the two concepts are entirely compatible and it appears that CC was most needed in the most controversial discussion.

The segment 'Slides for Tom' is unexceptional when viewed using the secondary coding. The DNA strands are neither tightly woven nor captivated in Flow. So this video segment is not at either of the edges of the charts but squarely in the middle. This coding aligns with the comments provided by the participants who refer to it as: everyone having a piece of the puzzle; and, shifting forward; and I felt supported by the team. Also, I note that I have not coded any Ruptures, despite my grave misgivings about this segment and whether I was accurately coding it. The sociomaterial practices that I will later describe (see The Paradox of Rebelling and Belonging, p.306) as shattering the group does not appear in this method of coding.

There do not seem to be any remarkable features in the DNA stranding of '18 Appliances'. It is variously described as "high energy" and "a listening conversation" and that there was "focus" and people "weren't off doing stuff". My coding creates horizontal movement from green (Flow) to red (Rupture), which is limited to just one movement. Looking back at the participants' coding, they had more practices in the Rupture strand than I have. So, overall, they would be charting DNA with more dynamism than my coding provides, including three instances of CC. This again builds on the previous comment that

harmony does not seem to be a pre-condition, whereas a struggle for meaning or collective sensemaking may be a contributor, even a positive contributor, to the emergence of *CC*.

'Strategy Session' has a low frequency of codes for *CC* from both the participants (2 counts) and me (zero counts), but this does not triangulate with the glowing terms with which they describe the segment. The laddering pattern is particularly noted at the end of the segment, and the horizontal movement from green (Flow) to red *(*Rupture) is apparent. However, the earlier part of the segment has unmediated green, so laddering is not uniform throughout. 'Objectives for the Day' looks very similar to these earlier parts of 'Strategy Session' and I wonder if this explains something in the disconnect between codes and interview. The Elicitation interview could be benefitting from the recency effect where the felt sense of excitement is what lingers following the viewing of the video. Yet what the codes reflect is the unremarkable practices that were in evidence.

5.5.3 Findings and the Guiding Research Questions

To summarise these findings, I return to the guiding research questions.

1) *What is the lived experience of participants when* Conscious Coalescence *emerges?*

It seems that *CC* is not a banal felt sense but a vibrant state that people recognise even if they cannot name it. I heard that it is an "openness to try something new", that it "all clicks" and it is "magical; synergy; intimacy". *CC* is "a beautiful thing", a "coming alive" and "we were on it". People said that they "felt comfortable and cohesive as a group" and that although "[we] jumped around [we] found a flow which caught the imagination" and "[we were] all pinging off each other".

The best summary is provided by two participants who said "[we] see the totality of us", the "very best of us". These exuberant expressions leave me in little doubt that the participants felt a shift, like a gear change, signalling an unspoken understanding of '…an I that is we and a we that is I' (Hegel, 1977, sec. 177). This powerful existential shift is more possible and more prevalent than might be imagined – it was coded 27 times across ten segments. It seems that it is not a once-in-a-meeting experience but might fleetingly arise and fade in microsegments.

2) *How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?*

In this study, the runway to *CC* is not described through a series of causal links but instead as a messier set of emergent practices. The findings have noted that in, the most consistent example, 'Funding a New Post', the practices that enable *CC* may begin pre-meeting through the use of a shared report, which flushes out dissent and ensures the meeting is constructive. Across all the Cases, the use of the practices *checking, challenging, exchanging* (Reveal) are used in an interspersed way with the practices of *adding, advancing, aggregating* (Flow) to get underneath the surface level issues. When Flow is allowed by the group to continue in an unmediated way, there are some indicators suggesting that the group is not engaged or is inhibited from interrupting. When the group is in this state, it is unlikely to experience *CC*. I have noted in the secondary coding that counting practices does not provide a useful lens to this research question, and the data point me to look at horizontal movement across the strands of DNA, from green (Flow) to red *(*Rupture).

The presence of red instances seems to be no impediment to the practice of *CC*.

Harmony and smooth conversation do not seem to be a prerequisite. One conjecture is that

multiple movements horizontally represent engagement of the group and that this might be

important to the practice of *CC*. The coding by participants seems to show that

conversations that invoke practices where there is a re-orientation of the Flow of practice

are the most likely to invoke *CC*.

In the Discussion, I take these nascent findings and relate them back to the earlier

literature and, through the combination of findings and theory, build our knowledge of *CC*.

6 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I have three objectives. Firstly, to place the main findings within the body of literature that was reviewed at the outset of this thesis and to explore how the findings inform or are informed by that literature. Secondly, to explore other findings and other literature that might extend our knowledge of collaborative agents and their *CC*. Lastly, to return to the research questions and to contextualise them against the previous narrative and put forward eight propositions that might form the basis of future research.

6.1 RETURNING TO THE LITERATURE

My research enquiry has been located within a body of leadership literature that is sensitive to new metatheoretical assumptions of strong process.

> *"More radically, this focus on process subtly undermines major assumptions of the positivist orientation to social science. Because entities disappear into co-constitution, and stabilities give way to process, the traditional scientific commitment to illuminating a systematic and predictable world of cause and effect falls moribund." (Gergen and Hersted, 2016, p.179)*

As the quote above eloquently sets out, scholarship that considers leadership as collective, emergent and socially constructed does not look to individuals for the achievement of organising because "entities disappear into co-constitution". Following this logic, I have taken a non-entitive approach to my research, considering that leadership is not embodied in a person, but is an emergent property and not fixed to individuals. Further, I have considered that the phenomenon of interest, *Conscious Coalescence* is non-compositional and not subject to additive assumptions about individuals adding up to the

composite of a group. Lastly, I have adhered to the understanding of such phenomenon

provided by others in other traditions such as Heedful Interrelating and Ba, that *CC* is non-

substantive, and thus those agents embedded in the experience are changed by the

experience and, also, change the experience: they are said to be mutually constitutive. The

concepts of non-entitative, non-compositional and non-substantive have been

operationalised through the methods whereby the unit of analysis is the group and the

phenomenon of interest – *CC* – is trans-subjective.

In this section, the findings are placed back into the literature that aligns to these

constructs.

6.2 LEADERSHIP-AS-PRACTICE (LAP)

At approximately 12 years old, LAP is still a nascent theory. Yet many scholars in the

field would object to LAP even being labelled a 'theory', considering it more of a sensitising

and epistemic lens for research. This is because it does not seek to be predictive and,

specifically, the practice lens ensures the locus of enquiry is on the everyday, mundane

occurrences that make up the process of organising (Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff,

2010). But the combination of a non-entitive approach and a focus on the mundane also

gives rise to a concern. LAP deliberately emancipates the activities of leadership beyond

those who bear the title leader, and instead considers that leadership can arise from any

collective action (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012; Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012). How then do

we know it is leadership we are studying?

6.2.1 Was __THAT__ Leadership?

When leadership might be accomplished by anyone, anywhere, how do I empirically separate leadership activities from non-leadership activities? Kempster and Gregory (2017, p.499) directly challenge researchers in the LAP field to take care to differentiate the socially entangled creation of leadership from other interactions. To identify whether leadership has emerged, I consider it is situated, moment by moment, in the construction of direction and redirection (Carroll and Simpson, 2012; Crevani, 2018; Crevani et al, 2010) and that creation of direction can be seen in the 'turning points' where the flow of practice is re-oriented (Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff, 2010; Simpson, 2016). Conversely, this suggests that where leadership is absent "the flow of practice would continue unchanged" (Simpson, 2016). In this study, the raw vectors used to capture the groups' practices were particularly sensitive to movement and, as these vectors were transcribed to codes and thereafter into secondary coding, the turning points of the groups were revealed even more clearly. For example, in Figure 65 below, the green strands of Flow are regularly re-oriented across to the other strands of yellow, purple, red and blue. Flow is the dominant orientation of the group throughout, but leadership seems to be exercised when there are diversions from the ceaseless forward momentum.
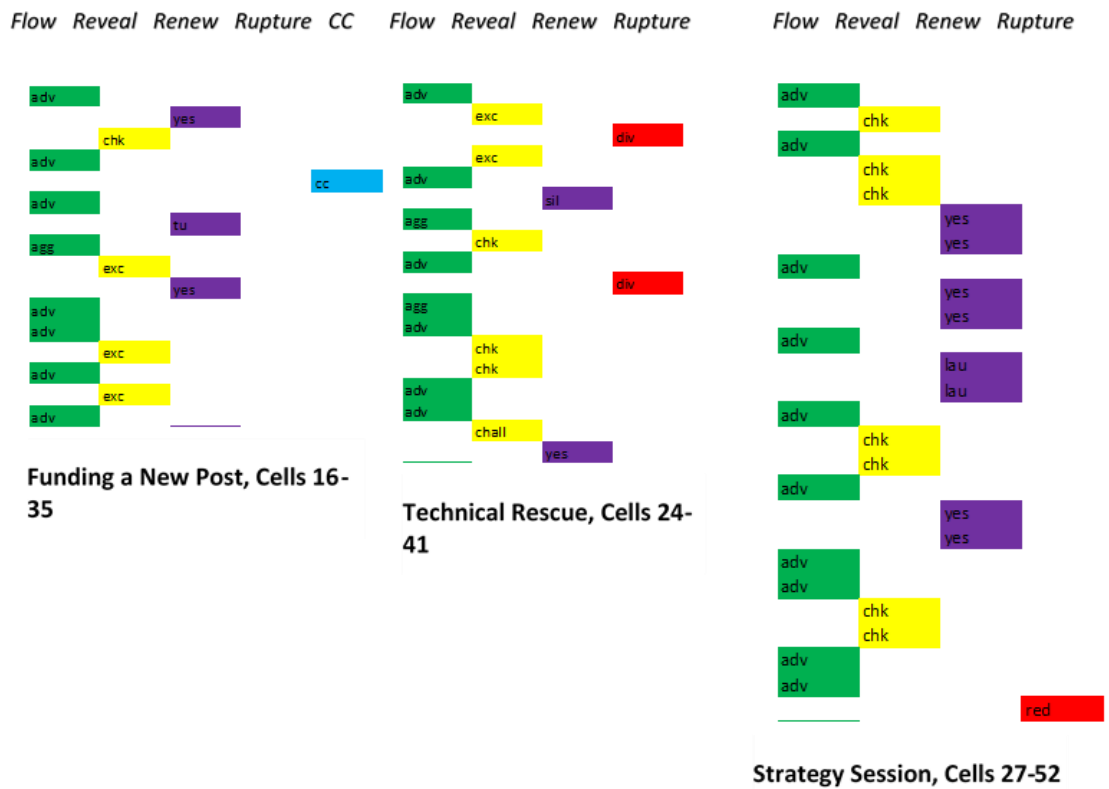
Figure 65 – Three video segments show how the Flow of practice is re-oriented with horizontal movement of practices

By contrast, there are segments of the Cases where I contend that leadership is not present. For example, in the unmediated tracts of green that occur in 'Strategy Session', 'Objectives for the Day' and 'Employee Survey Results'. These are shown in Figure 66.

Flow

Strategy Session, Cells 15-22	Objectives for the Day, Cells 44-49	Employee Survey Results, Cells 2-7
adv	agg	agg
adv	adv	adv
adv	adv	add
agg	adv	agg
add	adv	add
adv	adv	adv
agg		
adv		
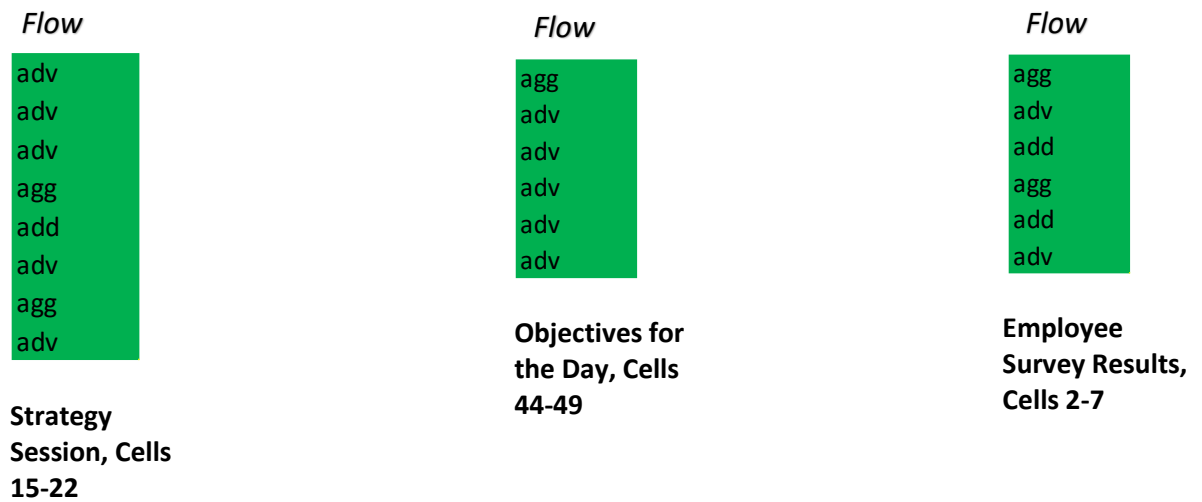
Figure 66 – Three segments show how the Flow of practice is not re-oriented

So, despite having a group of leaders present in the room, through the LAP lens it is possible to suggest that leader***ship*** is not always present. Distinguishing between leaders and leadership was not a central goal of this thesis, but for me it is important to honour this finding, which points to a marked difference between the two constructs. It would be easy to assume that the leaders who agreed to participate in this study automatically met the criteria for a study of leadership. Within the LAP paradigm this is not a taken-for-granted assumption because leadership does not rely exclusively on leaders. Given my prior criticism of other studies that fail to make this distinction, I am keen to avoid falling foul of my own thresholds.

Responding, therefore, directly to the question posed at the beginning – was *that* leadership? – and, by extension, am I convinced that this is truly a leadership study? My suggestion is that the leaders' practices demonstrate a spectrum of leadership. At the one

end, there are segments where the groups are constantly re-orienting the Flow of practice and at the other end there are times when the groups are leaving the Flow unmediated. In this respect, the three segments from the Case F&W are consistently re-orienting Flow. In contrast, another two segments have both phenomena in different temporal sequences; for example, in 'Strategy Session' and 'Employee Survey Results' the groups demonstrate both less and more leadership.

However, 'Strategy Session' is an outlier in two ways. It is the segment with the most pronounced variation – unmediated Flow with punctuated Flow – and I am inclined to conclude that in the first half leaders met whereas, in the second half leadership emerged. This split between no re-orientation and constant re-orientation through the segment is surprising when set alongside the Elicitation interview findings. Context is likely to hold a clue to this split because it was <u>the</u> conversation – across all Cases – that was most open ended. Framed as genuine out-of-the-box thinking, looking to the future and considering a "doomsday scenario", it challenged the leaders to step into a realm of 'not knowing'.

6.2.2 Not Knowing

One of the key rationales for post-heroic leadership is the belief that no single leader can ever know enough and that, as our organisations and the contexts within which they operate become more complex, wisdom is needed from many (Grint, 2010, 2014). Another tangent on this theme is the idea that there are times when it is a strong act of leading to admit 'not knowing"'. As Bennis says: "[a] leader is neither all-knowing nor all-powerful but needs all the help he or she can get" (Bennis, 2003, p.2). The positioning of 'Strategy Session' certainly matched this idea, with one of the leaders bringing to colleagues the

challenge of not knowing how the future would unfold and asking for help to conceive of a strategy that would meet that uncertain world. Against the frame of 'not knowing', I re-watched the video. Across the 14-minute discussion she used the phrase "don't know" six times.

'Employee Survey Results' cannot be described as an outlier in the same way because it lacks the final triangulation step of the Elicitation interview. However, it too was a conversation framed by the leader facilitating the session as a brainstorm, and it started with individual brainstorming to consider a provocative question.

Whereas 'Strategy Session' was facilitated by the most senior leader in the room, 'Employee Survey Results' was not. Yet both segments have resulted in charts that are characterised by: unmediated Flow at the beginning, which is posited to be a return to heroic leading; and switching to flows that are constantly re-orienting, which is posited to be representative of leader*ship*.

My conjecture is that the coding has captured the heroic/post-heroic and leader/ship divide, and that the groups flipped from looking to an individual for direction, and the answer, to groups of collaborative agents working to create solutions together. Thus, we see unmediated Flow flipped to Flow that is more consistently re-oriented. This finding contributes to the refinement and definition of leadership within the LAP narrative. It suggests that groups can switch between different modes of operating where one minute they are working as leaders and the next they can be generating leadership, and that 'not knowing' invites a move towards more collaborative agency. This accords with Gronn

(2015) who notes that in the rush to become post-heroic we should nevertheless continue to consider how individuals exercise leadership within an emergent and pluralised paradigm. I wonder if, even within a paradigm that is committed to group-level analysis and a non-entitive approach, wise action by one leader may be seminal in supporting collaboration. Given the apparent importance of the Reveal practices in the DNA strands, this might suggest that some individuals engender leadership across the group by setting questions versus offering solutions. This accords with the broader social psychology of Hosking and Morley (1991, p.27) who, quoting Asch (1952), say: "we must see group phenomena as both *the product and condition* of actions of individuals" (emphasis in original). They contend that it is possible to hold <u>both</u> without committing the "individualistic" fallacy (p.28) because the inter-relating is the means by which a social system is created.

6.2.3 Collaborative Agency

I turn now to consider collaborative agency, which is considered as the coordination of intention and action expressed as 'we', "but with 'we' understood 'as a single, unified centre of attitude and action', as distinct from a distributed or aggregated sense of 'we'-ness" (Gronn, 2015, p.557, quoting List and Pettit, 2011). Despite all the Cases residing within a formal hierarchical structure, as described in the introduction to each Case, we-ness cannot be mandated by any of the three senior leaders. Both Cases set within Jet Flyer exemplify the dual reporting lines that are so prevalent in major organisations today. This duality imposes a set of competing objectives, which can cause stalemate at any time within any group. F&W has a simpler hierarchical structure, with no competing objectives, due to

the nature of the service and the legal requirements to have a Chief and a publicly declared Table of Authorities. However, even in this Case, among the leaders there are competing views on how best to achieve the agreed objectives and, with complex, interactive and dynamic operating conditions, no single person has the privilege of perfect information across the system. I am convinced that all three Cases rely on the leaders sharing information and perspectives, negotiating between different world views, and compromising on wise and pragmatic actions. To this extent the activities recorded in this study satisfy understandings of collaboration (Bruns, 2013; Hindmarsh and Pilnick, 2007).

The negotiated settlements required by competing objectives might be conceived of through the interplay of the Rupture (red) and Renew (purple) strands where the give and take of collaborative agency is demonstrated. Where goals or ideas or understandings are at odds, inevitably, to achieve direction, something must shift. In this study, Ruptures are the place where different objectives are seen to come into opposition, through the practice of *diverging* or *redirecting*. These are threatening moments in the relational life of the group and although Ruptures may not be fatal to the group's cohesion, they are likely to tear the fabric of collaboration. Thus, the antidote to Rupture is Renew (Brodt and Neville, 2013; Kim et al, 2013).

This line of thinking suggests that when Ruptures pose a threat to group cohesion, the Renew practices must be mobilised by the group as a form of relational repair. These findings concur with the theoretical idea of balance, suggesting that groups move to find equilibrium when they are sensing some form of disproportionality (Brodt and Neville, 2013). Beyond simply returning to balance, the evidence of this study is that Renew might

be deployed at other times too to strengthen collaborative agency in advance of, or after, any Ruptures. In other words, the groups might be storing a reservoir of social capital that can be deployed when needed and which does not need to be manufactured adjacent to the actual moments of fragmentation.

According to the data, 'Technical Rescue' exhibits a run of six Ruptures interleaved by only one Renew. I speculate that with this number of discontinuities, and without sufficient Renewal, the group might be in danger of fragmenting, saved latterly by sufficient repairs for them to regain their equilibrium. My speculation is borne out by the Elicitation interview and the acknowledgement that the conversation had – at times – not been coherent: "I haven't a scoobies what we're doing". The segment 'Employee Survey Results' exhibits a similar rip with two Ruptures without an interleaving Renew. Here many practices of *appreciating, laughing and silence* occur before and after the Ruptures. This is the segment that had a disagreement in the comments from participants, with some reporting it was a "good" meeting and others being less complimentary. A possible explanation is that these two ruptures, left unrepaired for seven or eight minutes, may have had the effect of leaving a disproportionate uncomfortableness within the group, but that ultimately that discomfort was resolved.

Looking at the two other segments where the interweaving of Rupture (red) and Renew (purple) coexist, it seems possible that the groups built up or maintained reservoirs of repair material, as exemplified in the purple strand of Renew, sufficient to weather the storms of any Ruptures that they encountered. Similarly, in the two segments that did not suffer from Ruptures, 'Objectives for the Day' and 'Funding a New Post', the group

continued to build and maintain reservoirs of Renew which I am suggesting amounts to increasing levels of goodwill across the participants. Specifically, in 'Funding a New Post', the example where the practice of *CC* emerges, this seems to make sense. The discussion is contentious, the group uses practices to build their Renewal and this avoids Ruptures and builds *CC*.

I am proposing that in an unspoken understanding across the groups, they are acquiring a felt sense of a balanced whole and that they naturally heed these experiences through their deployment of practices. Skilful use of Renewal enhances the bonds that keep the group coherent, while at the same time allowing the re-orientation of Flow. Hence, balance may be achieved even when harmony is not (Brodt and Neville, 2013). This is a possible explanation too for why they experience *CC* but I do not see it. One idea might be that, as an observer, I mistake harmony for *CC*. These fleeting and unacknowledged moves made within the group may have the effect of limiting or repairing the disruption caused by any Ruptures. It seems reasonable to believe that collaborative agency can fluctuate momentarily within a segment and further expect that, if repair processes (via Renew) had not occurred, the groups' coherence could have suffered more damage (Hedegaard, 2020). Recent theoretical development in the trust repair literature can help expand these ideas (Kim et al, 2013), and they are explored as I develop future propositions for research.

6.2.4 *Conscious Coalescence (CC)*

Against the foregoing, I believe that I have established that this study meets the requirements essential to answer the research questions by placing the phenomenon of interest firmly within a paradigm of LAP and among groups of collaborative agents

exercising various gradations of leadership. This then allows me to consider my findings on CC.

The emergence of *CC* is considered important for the exercise of leadership by collaborative agents because, without it, individuals remain embedded in their own world view, epistemology and sets of choices. Collaboration encompasses 'we-ness' whereby agents "transcend their own immediate embeddedness" (Raelin, 2016a, p.138), freeing them to see new world views and considering new choice sets (Nonaka, Toyama and Hirata, 2008).

The evidence presented in the findings suggests that, for these participants, *CC* was a felt sense in at least two of the three Cases. The participants' descriptions are vivid and visceral, suggesting that this is more than a cognitive change of view but also a state change (Flores-Pereira, Davel and Cavedon, 2008; Jankowski and Holas, 2014; Robinson et al, 2017). For example "bits lift you", "there is a deep respect", "all clicks", "times of uplift", "all showing up", "coming alive", and "an ahh haa".

Gendlin (1982) considers that we have the capacity to listen to our own bodies and that we are constantly paying attention to our felt senses. Oftentimes, this bodily sensing is below the surface of awareness, but it is nevertheless used to interpret and make sense of the world, our place within it and the relationships we are forging. According to Husserl (1980), there can be no perception without *awareness of the acting body*. This perceptual experience is not always a cognitive experience but is instead an embodied dimension of inter-relating (Mcdonald, 2004; Sinclair, 2005; Taylor and Ladkin, 2014). It is proposed that,

even when participants can turn their embodied experiences into language, the felt sense is beyond the immediate cognitive realm (Ropo, Sauer and Salovaara, 2013) but that the felt sense continues to aid decision-making (Haidt, 2012) and this is the domain that Elicitation seeks to explore (Hogan, Hinrichs and Hornecker, 2016; Petitmengin et al, 2009).

The trouble is that, for this study, embodied experience usually reverts to an atomised and individualised perspective. Yet I am arguing that *CC* is trans-subjective in nature and therefore the accompanying felt sense has also been investigated as trans-subjective. This assertion and this finding have roots in other leadership scholarship and elsewhere where authors write about the shared and mutually constitutive understandings that groups can develop (see for example: Cooren, 2004; Mcphee et al, 2006; Vogus and Sutcliffe, 2012; Weick and Roberts, 1993).

In the earlier literature review, I maintained that trans-subjectivity is the most appropriate term to describe the phenomenon *CC,* as the prefix 'trans' indicates that it is not residing within one person but is instead across many. Thus, both we-ness and across-ness are indicative of a trans-subjective group coherence. With quotes such as "the very best of us" and "we were 'on it'" and "see the totality of us" giving credence to this idea, I conclude that this is entirely evident in the manner in which the groups describe their experience.

A further finding from this study is that participants use *CC* to resist becoming complacent about the meeting and its attendant discussions. This heightening of vigilance is predicted by, among others, the work of Weick and Roberts (1993), Weick et al (1999), and

Pirson (2014) who find in their studies of Heedful Interrelating and Collective Mind that groups can pay active, vigilant attention to their work, communicate with each other about what they perceive and interrelate with others in heedful ways. This heedfulness carries with it a sense of care, which offsets the unhelpful affective feel of vigilance (Oliver et al, 2017; Weick and Roberts, 1993). Within this frame, it is possible to conceive of a peer's scrutiny in a benign and caring way (Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). As participants in this study reported, they received a "challenge" as helpful, encouraging them to deepen their own thinking, not as a confrontation to their thinking. So while other authors have characterised this heightened involvement in the group as a form of vigilance, through these findings I suggest that it is a dynamic combination of attention, intention and awareness (Shapiro et al, 2006), which has a transformative effect on practices that could be otherwise received as confrontational.

These ideas are explored in the yellow strand of the secondary coding. Yellow represents the sets of practice that ensure the groups get 'underneath' the ideas or issues being discussed, and for this reason they are called Reveal. One possibility is that, for individuals to transcend their embeddedness, they must be curious, attentive and awake to the subject at hand. Being on automatic pilot does not allow for the understanding and assimilation of new information. Consequently, it would seem reasonable to suggest that a group that is to practise *CC* needs to be attentive enough to engage in the practices of *check, challenge* or *exchange.* It is therefore likely that connections exist between the interleaving of green (Flow) and yellow (Reveal) strands.

Extending this logic a little further, if the group is in Flow (green) and then the group re-orients due to any of the practices within yellow (Reveal), this becomes a moment of waking up, or a turn-point in the forward momentum that prompts nonautomatic thinking. In one context, it is possible to imagine that this is frustrating; but in the context of *CC* it is experienced as helpful, and participants are forthcoming, revealing their thinking/logic/rationale.

Before leaving this section on *CC*, I would like to linger on a finding that I believe is new and is not addressed in the literature that I have reviewed. This finding is that throughout the course of the investigation, I reliably _under_coded or failed to recognise *CC,* while those who were participants coded it and talked about it more frequently. It becomes clear that this is almost inevitable, as I have explored an interior experience that is not always accessible to an observer. This explains why I did not 'see' *CC*, because I did not 'experience' it.

Undercoding a research phenomenon may be of detriment to the research contained herein and remains a concern which I reflect on further (see p.271). On the other hand, the opposite – overcoding – might be even more damaging to the credibility of this thesis. Considering the likelihood of overexuberance in finding a phenomenon is what draws me to wonder about other research and how methods allow researchers to be so committed to their perspectives. In the group literature this is explored by Carter, Carter and DeChurch (2018) when they note that researchers are prone to conclude too early that emergent phenomena have been found. In short, the greater risk in my view is that of researchers overcoding which could lead to inaccurate substantive conclusions.

Participants code *CC* in video segments 'Strategy Session', 'Objectives for the Day', '18 Appliances', and 'Technical Review'. The only overlap in their coding and mine is in 'Funding a New Post'. This discrepancy is even wider in the segment 'Slides for Tom', which I read as hostile to, and undermining of, the leader-facilitator, yet the segment receives half the participants' coding for *CC*. While I attended meetings as a non-participant observer, I have come to see this disjuncture because my method required me to collect data and privilege participants' experiences. Further I considered that the research was undertaken *with* participants making me a sensemaking participant and embodying the 'with-ness' described by Shotter (2006).

As mentioned above, I highlight this finding because I believe it may have far-reaching impacts for other research more generally – calling into question what we can and cannot see and what we can and cannot document from our limited perspective as an observing researcher (Chia, 2014). Notably, other research designs address this head-on for example by embedding researchers into the situation that they seek to explore through methods such as action and grounded research, where the stance of the researcher is as insider. But for those researchers who continue to hold an outsider point of view (Blaikie, 2007), this might be a real problem both for over- and – as is the case here – for under-reporting phenomena.

There is a further finding that has not yet naturally arisen from the narrative. It is an unexpected by-product of this research and has interesting implications for praxis. For both JFA and F&W, the process of revisiting segments of a meeting and watching themselves on video had an effect of its own accord. Interpersonal process recall interviewing uses video-

assisted recall to access conscious yet unspoken experiences (Crews et al, 2005; Larsen,

Flesaker and Stege, 2008). It was only while reflecting on what happened and trying to

make sense of it, that I found the academic literature explaining a well understood

procedure in, for example, therapeutic practice. However, the literature dwells on the

benefits to the researcher of this technique; by contrast I noted the benefits to the

participants.

The video recall process was not designed as an intervention, but inevitably it

became one. At the outset I emphasised through the use of video clips of starling

murmurations that the unit of analysis was the group, not the individuals, and that,

consequently, the discussion about the segment would be about the group not any one

specific behaviour by any one specific individual. In addition, the group used graphic vectors

for their coding, which may have had the effect of depersonalising their observations of

themselves. I believe that this may have provided adequate reassurance for them to lose

self-consciousness and to become immersed in the video as if it were an artefact. They

expressed genuine surprise that they could watch themselves so dispassionately and yet

remain connected analytically to what they were seeing. They were very taken up with

talking about the precision of what they observed and, for example, whether what they saw

was a *challenge* or was it <u>really</u> a *check*. Or when was *challenging* <u>really</u> *diverging.*

Watching them watch themselves, I had a real sense that this was democratising the

groups' understanding of themselves and their practice. This sense is very much echoed in

the quotes that the groups provide in, for example, Figure 36 and Figure 51. My conclusion

is that the combination of the video recall process and the graphical vector coding provided

the groups with both a new lens and a new language with which to talk about themselves and their practice. Objects – in this case video – can be considered co-generators of leadership effects (Hawkins, 2015). Inadvertently, the video may have contributed to the groups' ongoing leadership development.

The production of leadership effects through co-practice with objects became figural in the study in two other respects. Through the practice lens, objects are considered constitutive of the practice in which they are involved (Nicolini, 2013a). In 'Slides for Tom', two computers were sociomaterial objects of practice. The first computer was used by the leader-facilitator to project slides on the screen, which by proxy became the guiding structure that imposed a set of logics onto the conversation. Another participant objected to the draft proposal being shown and discussed, and said she had "done something different". Without waiting for concurrence from others or any signal at all, she leant over and disconnected the HDMI cable and re-plugged it to her computer thereby monopolising the screen. The reader will recall I have recorded that, to me, this felt like an important fragmentation within the group, yet the leader-facilitator who was overtaken through this exchange of artefacts disabused me of that view.

Looking beyond whether I am right or wrong in my reading of the situation, is the use of an artefact to enact a practice, in this case *redirecting* the group to a new way of structuring the discussion. In this Case, the appropriation of the computer became a proxy for control of the narrative within the meeting and demonstrated agential power (Nicolini, 2013a). Circling back to the original concern of this segment, I consider that my reading of this short moment is justifiably characterised as a major fragmentation: a fragmentation

that is not simply corrective as in the case of Ruptures. Instead, I consider that these are

fleeting moments where the group has been shattered and that group-ness is only just

maintained. If Ruptures are like rocks thrown into the stream of leadership practice, these

types of instances are equivalent to damming up the stream. Therefore, the reassurances of

the usurped leader-facilitator that this was 'support' strengthens the more general idea that

groups try to attain balance, especially immediately after some major disruption within the

group.

Another interesting idea is that artefacts allow deeper divisions within the group to

play out in a way that a purely human practice could not. This leads me to consider the role

that the report played in the Case F&W. Nicolini (2013a, p.169) proposes that "artefacts

and things fully participate in social practices just as human beings do". However, my

fledgling idea is that the report acted orthogonally to the human practices. As the group

tells it (refer to Figure 49 and Figure 51 for their quotes), this report and other reports in

general are used to "flush out" opposition, to find the outright objections that different

parties might have. But this is not a human practice that is observed in the group, or any of

the other Cases.

In the pilot study and coding development trials, I did not observe and therefore did

not develop a code for, outright insurrection. Yet I now believe that the incident with the

computer and the way in which the report is used allow for the practice of *insurrection-by-*

stealth. Thus, there may be some use in considering the sociomaterial practice afforded by

objects as allowing otherwise taboo human practice to emerge.

6.2.5 Summary

So far, the findings have yielded nine themes. In this summary I consolidate these ideas as a way to introduce the next section where I expand my thinking, introduce new literature and develop propositions. In this study, the emergence of *CC,* is not described as linear, stepwise or causal, but instead arises from messier and emergent process, which builds into the following themes:

- Through the secondary coding, I identify that the length of the green strand indicates Flow. From time to time, Flow can be too strongly in a forward direction and, when Flow is uninterrupted, the group may be disengaged and working on automatic. In these instances, participants are likely to be working as atomised individuals and not as collaborative agents producing leadership.

- The interruption of the green strand seems to indicate that Flow is being re-oriented by the group. This appears as a laddering effect in the DNA charts. When groups get stuck in Flow they fail to move horizontally across the charts.

- The mix of horizontal *and* vertical strands maybe as important as any single strand to the practice of *CC*. The weaving of the strands across and down may show how the group moves from units of one to one unit.

- The interaction of the red and purple strands seems to demonstrate the tiny Ruptures and repairs that go on ceaselessly whereby the group Renew their commitment to working trans-subjectively.

- The punctuation of the green strand by the yellow strand (Reveal) is indicative of an awake and enlivened dialogue, where the group is not on automatic. As the group

becomes attentive to what lies underneath the subject of interest, their attitudes, attention and intention allow them to attune to each other, thereby smoothing practice that could otherwise be received as confrontational.

- In the groups in this study, *CC* is not a rare emergent process. It is coded by the group 27 times across 10 video segments. They describe it in a way that it is an embodied experience that brings about a state change, described as "magical" and "the totality of us". The process has the felt sense of trans-subjectivity, suggesting that people were able to transcend their own embeddedness.

- As an outside observer, I was only able to see and capture the experience of *CC* twice in one video segment.

- Three of the segments where *CC* was experienced by participants involved the leader-facilitator framing the discussion as 'not known'. In two of these segments, the group might have struggled initially to move from a meeting of leaders to a place of collaborative agency where transcendence of individualised selves could occur. Working as collaborative agents in a group may be on a spectrum from high to low, and not a uniform occurrence.

- In this study, I believe I have seen *insurrection-by-stealth*. This suggests that sociomaterial artefacts may provide a way to expand the repertoires of practice, especially where the group needs to facilitate previously taboo human practice of extremes. The shattering of the group by these taboo practices are made less destructive because of the use of material objects, to speak them out loud may be unforgiveable.

- The groups benefited from the democratisation of their knowledge of group process. The research approach provided them with new tools of interpersonal recall using video and the language of vectors to continue to develop as a group should they so choose.

To build these ideas into future research propositions, I now explore additional literature that can contribute to theorising.

6.3 EXTENDING THEORY

The aim of this study is *theory elaboration*, drawing on and extending important ideas from research on LAP. Theory elaboration is used when pre-existing ideas can provide the bedrock for new studies (Maitlis, 2005; Yin, 2013). In this section of the discussion, my intention is to extend existing theory by combining current literature with findings from my study to build new narratives that elaborate our understanding of LAP. In so doing, I make seven contributions plus one supposition to the extant theory of pluralised, practice-based leadership where individuals transcend their embeddedness to work as collaborative agents.

By way of framing for this section, it is helpful to return to the basic tenets of the Pragmatist and Practice views. As I begin to extend theory, and particularly as I relate my findings to the work of others outside of these traditions, it is important to recall that explanatory mechanisms are not being sought. As Nicolini and Monteiro express it: within the practice-turn it is "turtles all the way down" (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017, p.16).

Therefore, when combining Pragmatist and Practice views, I am adopting what is called a flat ontology (Seidl and Whittington, 2014), meaning that there are no further

explanations to be found beyond the practices. Mechanisms are already encoded in the practices and do not need to be sought out through other explanations (Schatzki, 2006). The core belief is that practice(s) are entirely processual, not an instantiation of other phenomena that are hidden or underlying (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017; Schatzki, 2006) everything that needs to be understood is right here. So, unlike other philosophical perspectives, praxeology does not engage in representational theorising. This way of seeing the world stands in contrast to other social constructionist views. So whilst there is much in common between Pragmatism and Critical Realism (Whitbeck and Bhaskar, 1977) it is on this point of a flat ontology that the two views of the world diverge.

This means that for those of us seeking to contribute to praxeology, we do not set about looking for something else so as to "reveal hidden forces, mechanisms, or logics that lie behind the practice itself" (Nicolini and Monteiro, 2017, p.6). Thus, when exploring other literatures, I am continuing to look for helpful ideas, understandings and framings, and then even while acknowledging that they are incommensurate (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) to wrestle them back to the Pragmatist and Practice paradigms without claiming them as mechanisms. Against that understanding, I now turn to the contributions I seek to make.

6.3.1 The Importance of Flow and Re-orienting Flow

'Leadership' may be a category mistake (Kelly, 2008, 2014; Ramsey, 2016) whereby those who have hierarchical positions of power, known as leaders, may be irrelevant when we spotlight the ways that critical organising gets accomplished. The category of leadership might therefore be indistinguishable from other categories where the unified effort of multiple parties is studied (Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012). To break this impasse and allow

differentiation of categories, other researchers have proposed characteristics that are specific to the category of leadership. A functionalist ontology as proposed by Drath et al (2008) is helpful because it describes outcomes that would be specific and exclusive to leadership: Direction, Alignment and Commitment, irrespective of who is producing the outcomes. Since their framework focuses on outcomes, this allows Drath et al (2008) to argue that the production of Direction provides the critical indication that leadership has been accomplished (Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff, 2010; Cunliffe and Eriksen, 2011; Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012; Raelin, 2011). Thus, the production of Direction is one of the key outcomes that helps us to differentiate between groupwork/teamwork and leadership, for example (Drath et al, 2008; Raelin, 2020).

Accepting that the production of Direction is a key function of leadership, it falls to Simpson (Simpson, 2016) to modify this point of view by offering that Direction that persists without intervention is unlikely to be leadership. "Leadership surely resides in those emergent turning points, or leadership moments, that re-orient the Flow of practice towards new, or at least different, directions. Without leadership, the Flow of practice would continue unchanged ..." (Simpson, 2016). Rationally, it follows that Direction needs to be adjusted for leadership to be present and these adjustments or turning points are the places that leadership is revealed. Thus, "leadership itself is viewed when conceived from a practice point of view ... as providing direction for organizing processes and as re-orienting the Flow of practice through collaborative agency" (Raelin, 2016b, p.10).

Ramsey (2016) introduces a similar idea called "conversational travel" (Ramsey, 2016, p.198). Conversational travel is the moment-by-moment switching in dialogue that

groups undertake that develop or change topics. Ramsey describes this as a "trajectory" (Ramsey, 2016, p.204), which aligns very well with the idea that the trajectory of Direction is changed by the collaborative agents in producing leadership. Conversely, without adjustments to Direction it is possible to see groups working well together but failing to work as collaborative agents and failing to produce leadership.

As I have argued, these three Cases bring these critical distinctions to life. In this study the genesis of the coding development relied on vectors to visually describe and codify the groups' movements and to remain as close as possible to the 'things themselves'. Vectors provide a good approximation of trajectories or direction of travel. From the vectors, primary coding identified three types of forward momentum that can be considered as analogous to Simpson's definition of 'Flow', these are practices where the group are *adding*, *advancing* or *aggregating,* all of which, one way or the other, keep the group moving forward and furthering the discussion. These are the practices concerned with progress. There are times when the groups only move forward, and therefore Flow is not being re-oriented and the trajectories are not being interrupted. Applying the logic of Simpson (2016), Ramsey (2016) and Raelin (2016), I have previously proposed that, at these times, there is no leadership because the group is producing Direction and is not adjusting its trajectory in its practice.

These ideas of flows and trajectories rely on a strong-process ontology, which considers that any emergent phenomenon is always _becoming_ (Crevani, 2018; Hernes, 2007; Tsoukas and Chia, 2002). As an emergent phenomenon, leadership is constantly being made and remade in practice. What I believe is missing – and what I believe I have

foregrounded here – are the micro-moments when leadership emerges but also where it _declines_. I propose that the production of leadership is constantly developing and diminishing.

When building the ideas of LAP, Raelin (2016) points to the inseparable nature of agency and leadership. Agency springs from engaged social interaction that unifies effort and is therefore named collaborative agency (Raelin, 2016b, 2016a). The contention is that collaborative agency has an 'inseparable connection' to leadership (Raelin, 2016a, p.1742). This inseparable nature has not been further explained, suggesting that Raelin means the two concepts to be synonomous. If, as proposed earlier, the trajectory of the group is unchanged, signalling a momentary decline in leadership (following Simpson), then similarly, at these times of decline, collaborative agency too must be reduced (following Raelin). These logics set up the following contributions:

Contribution 1: Flow that is too strong in a forward direction, and which is uninterrupted, suggests that the groups are not working as collaborative agents producing leadership.

Contribution 2: The production of leadership by collaborative agents is fleeting and fragile. Leadership intensifies and ebbs suggesting leadership is not binary but instead sits on a spectrum.

6.3.2 Interrupting Flow with Rupture and Renew

Flow requires that "participants are … [adding] significance and dimension to each other's offerings" (Gergen and Hersted, 2016, p.183). But in this study, while Flow is the dominant strand, there is abundance too of other strands that re-orient Flow in several

ways. One way is through the strands of Rupture (red) and Renew (purple). In writing the findings earlier, I cautioned against the idea that Ruptures might be conflicts or irreconcilable differences among the group. Rather, I had the sense that they were used in some other way. This section will use literature to explore both sets of ideas: first, that Ruptures are points of conflict; and then, that these interruptions may be used in a more subtle way. Against both those frames of reference, I will also consider the practices that make up Renew, which on the DNA charts is adjacent to Rupture.

To help aid comprehension of these points and those that will be raised through the remainder of the discussion, below is an A4-sized view of the seven video segments (Figure 67). The larger A3-sized view is in the Appendix at A.4.
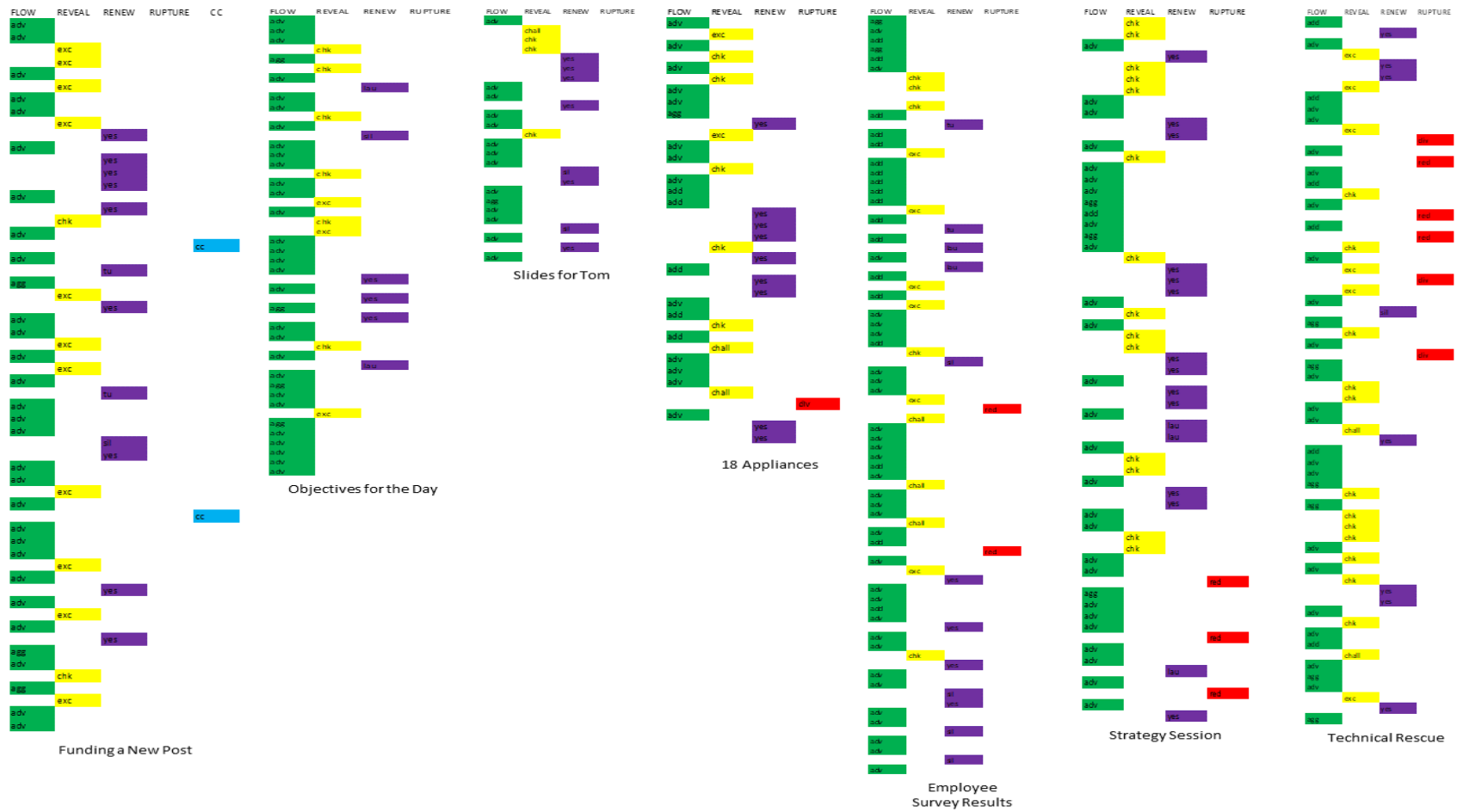
Figure 67 – All DNA charts for seven video segments

I turn now to ideas in literatures that help to consider Rupture as either a conflict or a correction before finally looking at the practices of Renew within that context.

6.3.2.1 Rupture considered as a conflict

According to the teams literature, teams form through the aggregation of dyadic relationships (Humphrey et al, 2017) and conflict arises within those dyads, spreading like a contagion across other dyads. Team conflict is broadly defined as a "process in which one party perceives that its interests are being opposed or negatively affected by another party" (Wall and Callister, 1995, p.517). However, conflict within teams is said to differ in nature from, on the one hand, task conflict, which is "disagreement among group members about the content of tasks being performed" to, on the other, relationship conflict, which is "interpersonal incompatibility" (Jehn, 1995, p.258). Conflict in teams has been widely studied because it is theorised that, when conflict intensifies, it lowers group cohesion and therefore that conflict is best minimised (O'Neill and McLarnon, 2018; Tekleab, Quigley and Tesluk, 2009).

Despite the logic of minimising conflict, some authors have studied the beneficial effects of task conflict, claiming that, up to a certain level, it increases creativity and innovation by stimulating critical thinking and idea generation, opinion divergence and alternative assessment (Humphrey et al, 2017). Therefore, some small amounts might be considered as having a positive effect on outcomes (Humphrey et al, 2017). But other researchers dispute this idea and, in their studies, show that task conflict can be as harmful as relational conflict (O'Neill and McLarnon, 2018).

There is a wide consensus that relational conflict is consistently negatively associated with team performance (Humphrey et al, 2017; O'Neill and McLarnon, 2018; Park, Mathieu and Grosser, 2020; Tekleab, Quigley and Tesluk, 2009). As research on team conflict has evolved, two further developments are worth noting. Process conflict has entered the narrative, defined as "perceived incompatibilities regarding roles, responsibilities, timelines, duties and resource allocation" (O'Neill and McLarnon, 2018, p.379). Plus, the conceptualisation of team conflict has broadened to acknowledge that there is a vast collection of relationships and therefore treating conflict as a contagion emanating from a single dyadic relationship does not sufficiently represent the dynamic nature of teams and their inter-relating (Humphrey et al, 2017; Park, Mathieu and Grosser, 2020).

Extending this last point, I would add a point of view based on emergence, which suggests that when we first meet a person in the team we are joining, that relationship is a dyad. But thereafter, the next person we meet is added to that first dyad as the second relationship but not necessarily as the second dyad. The addition of a second connection inevitably changes the first connection. So that each additional relationship infringes on the previous sets of connections, thereby reshaping the net of relating. This process of adding and changing the connections is recursive and ongoing. My basic conceptualisation of a group is therefore at variance with the dyadic view on which team conflict relies.

Further, the Oxford English Dictionary[4] provides a definition of conflict as "to come into collision…to be incompatible" and Jehn confirms that there is often tension, animosity and annoyance, team members yell at each other and there are heated disagreements (Jehn, 1995). Of course, not all cultures disagree by yelling at each other and yet they can still disagree. But, within a Western context, the data from this study do not support this view of team conflict because there was no apparent animosity within the groups (although a notable exception does occur in 'Slides for Tom', which is discussed later). The coded practices are of a different nature and this is explored in the next section where Rupture is considered as a correctional force.

6.3.2.2 Rupture reconsidered as correction, not conflict

To consider that Rupture may not be conflict, I turn to Ramsey and the ideas of conversational travel (Ramsey, 2016). Borrowing from improvisational theatre, she suggests that there are three archetypal foundational moves that participants can make: "offering", which is the initial and opening move followed by one of two countering moves, "blocking" or "accepting" (Ramsey, 2016, p.202). A block might resemble what I have called a Rupture and previously I described these events as rocks thrown into the stream of leadership practice.

In improvisational theatre a block is a refusal to work with the initiating move and shifts the plot away from the original offer. The practices of Rupture – *missing, diverging* or *redirecting* – might be seen similarly because they are practices that punctuate the Flow of

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[4] OED.com entry 38899 accessed October 2020

the group. *Diverging* and *redirecting* are two practices that take the prevailing 'move' and either move away from it or divert it in another direction. *Missing* is a practice that also ends up diverting the group, but it comes about because different parts of the group work at odds to each other: for example, misunderstanding the use of a word or subject and using it in another context. *Missing* was only coded for twice overall: once in the segment JFA 'Gallup'; once in the segment JFG 'General Business'. Each time, the group had different understandings of a technical definition and spoke in different ways to those different understandings. Neither of these segments was included in the consolidated data that were included in the secondary coding for the reasons previously explained.

The language of improvised theatre allows us to consider these Ruptures to be juxtapositions and a natural unfolding within the group, and to set aside any previous framing that might prejudice us to see interruptions as being conflict (Vera and Crossan, 2005). Instead, here in improvisational theatre, blocks are simply one way to move the trajectory of the group. Ruptures appear to be similar to blocks: having the use of moving the Flow of the group in new ways.

The analogy with improvisation continues in the tradition of Dialogue where there is value in keeping the conversation or story alive by taking what has come before and adding to it. A radical deflection may take the story in some wholly unexpected direction and in doing so create aliveness, humour and surprises. Yet, always in Dialogue there is a building on what has come before (Gerard, 2005). Dialogue is one means that allows parties to co-orient their ideas and actions (Cooren, 2004).

Dialogue takes its definition from the Greek 'dialogos': 'logos' means the 'word', or 'meaning' and 'dia' means 'through' (Bohm, 1996; Isaacs, 1999). Bohm says: "The image suggests a stream of meaning flowing among and through two or more, out of which will emerge some new understanding, something creative ... When everybody is sensitive to all the nuances, and not merely to what is happening in one's own mind, there forms a meaning which is shared. And in that way, we can talk together coherently and think together. It is this shared meaning that is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together" (1996, p.2). Consistent with these ideas captured in the narratives of Dialogue, I am considering the practice of the groups as a flowing and accordingly it feels that these two lines of enquiry are compatible.

However, I also turn to Dialogue because it too has a vector form that allows us to see different dialogic practices in relation to each other. These vectors are described initially by Isaacs (1999) who credits the work of David Kantor (1999).

Figure 68 below is the original Four Player System as developed by Kantor and found in Isaacs (1999: e-6018).

DAVID KANTOR'S FOUR PLAYER SYSTEM
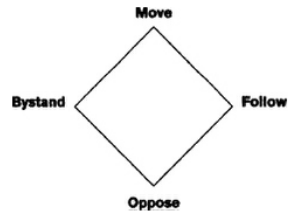
- Without movers, there is no *direction*.
- Without followers, there is no completion.
- Without opposers, there is no correction.
- Without bystanders, there is no perspective.

Figure 68 – Four Player System as developed by Kantor and found in Isaacs

Isaacs maintains that Dialogue becomes generative when people let go of their positions, which is the essence of this thesis, where *CC* is defined as the practice whereby individuals are able to transcend their own embeddedness. Isaacs' expression of this experience is remarkably similar: "They found themselves attending simply to the Flow of conversation, a Flow that enveloped us and lifted us to a new level of shared understanding about Dialogue" (Isaacs, 1999: e-744). Given these close similarities, this dialogic approach is likely to be relevant.

Initially, the work of Isaacs (1999) used the language of Kantor's Four Player Model: Move, Follow, Oppose, Bystand. He proposed that each of these positions was of value to the conversation. Isaacs described it as follows:

"When someone makes a move; they are initiating an action. They carry, at least for the moment, the focus of the conversation. Another person listening to this

initial proposal might agree and want to support what is being said. This person says

so, and symbolically comes close to the first person. The second person could be

said to be following the first. A third person, watching these two agree, may think to

him- or herself – there is something not quite right with this picture. He or she steps

in and opposes them, challenging what they are saying or proposing. Symbolically,

this third person might stand between the first two. Finally, a fourth person, who

has been observing the entire situation, and who has the advantage of having one

foot in and one foot out of the circumstance, describes from his perspective what he

has seen and heard. This person may propose a way of thinking and seeing that

expands everyone's vision and could be called a bystander. He or she adds a

valuable dimension to the conversation. The term bystander here does not

necessarily mean someone who is uninvolved or silent. Bystanders can speak, but

they provide perspective instead of taking a stand." (Isaacs, 1999: e-2841)

Dryborough and Goddin (2014) have translated the work of Bohm (1996); Isaacs,

(1999); and Kantor (1999) from individualised vectors to team vectors and in doing so have

amended the terminology in what I consider a very important way. Their articulation of the

four vectors becomes: Direction, Correction, Perspective, Completion; and this re-

articulation is shown in a more nuanced manner (see Figure 69 below) for teams.

Importantly, each vector remains *in relation* to the others. For example, Direction is flanked

by Perspective and Completion and contrasts with Correction. Similarly, Perspective is

flanked by Direction and Correction and contrasts with Completion. All four vectors connect

to two others and remain in relation to the third. While Correction is located opposite

Direction, it is not opposing. It is not a countervailing force, but a correcting force.

Within a team, if there is too much Direction and Completion, there might be a risk

of drive without useful challenge or perspective. If there is too much Direction and

Correction, the flavour of the Dialogue becomes one of continual debate without getting

Completion. If there is not enough Perspective, the group may lose sight of the needs of

others not represented in the conversation (Drybrough and Goddin, 2014). In this view of

Dialogue, Correction is therefore a vector that redirects Direction.
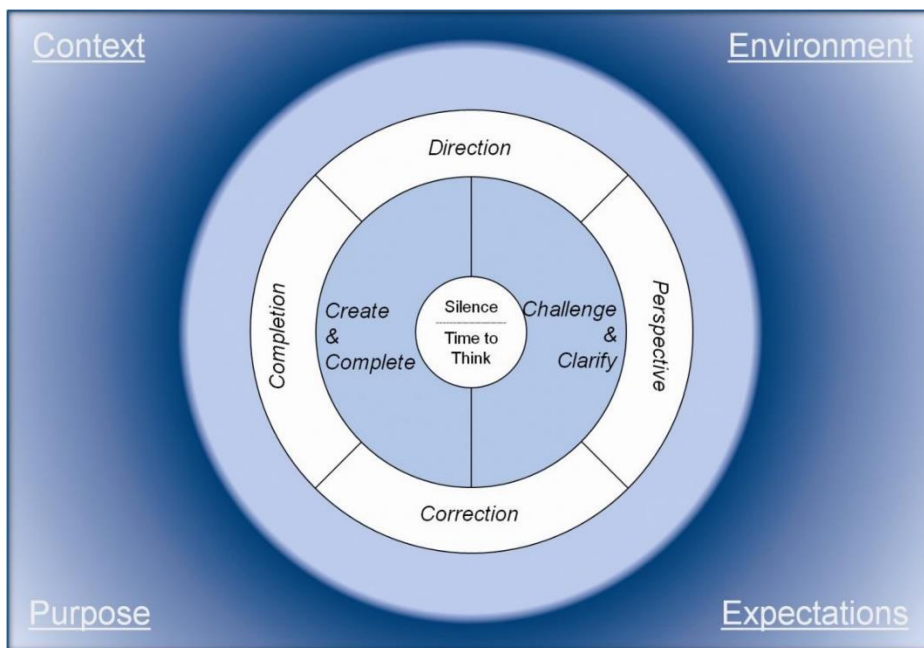
Figure 69 – Picture of four vectors of Dialogue, taken from Dryborough and Goddin (2014)

Both the conversational travel literature and the dialogic literature raise the very real

question of whether Ruptures, as I have named them, shatter the group or re-orient the

group. In the foregoing reviews, I have concluded that the practices of *missing, diverging, redirecting* have the use of re-orienting the Flow of the group.

As mentioned in the brief review of team conflict, a modicum of task conflict was theorised as having a positive benefit for teams. Some of the enthusiasm for this idea came as an acknowledgement of and response to the perils of groupthink (Janis, 1982). Janis's (1982) work on groupthink suggests that when teams overly cohere, then under certain circumstances members of the team suspend their ability to think and express critical ideas. This is evident, for example, in apocalyptic groups – groups that are radicalised and that are tight-knit in order to protect their worldview. When a counterview to their prevailing beliefs is strong enough to penetrate their self-reinforcing thinking, this can cause a crisis within the group. Umbrasas (2018) has considered these circumstances and suggested that apocalyptic groups lose their homeostasis. The idea of homeostasis, which here is understood to be the tendency to return to a reasonably stable equilibrium between entwined practices, is appealing to me, as it frames the group as a living system.

The data show a set of practices, called Renew, that sit alongside Ruptures and it is to this strand that I turn now to consider how they might be part of the group continuing to hold their homeostasis.

Through the paradigmatic assumptions of complex adaptive systems, a group such as those in this study might be seen as made up of multiple interacting agents who are sufficiently different that their responses will never be exactly the same in the same conditions. Nor is there any individual lead agent (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1998). This aligns

with the ways in which I framed the study, where I showed the groups videos of murmurations to help them adjust to the idea of the group level of analysis. Flocks are often considered examples of complex adaptive systems.

Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) do not refer to homeostasis but use equilibrium to describe how these systems constantly adjust: "never settl[ing] into equilibrium but never quite fall[ing] apart either" (p.12). Continuing the biological metaphor, they propose that all systems are at their most vibrant, surprising and flexible in this "intertidal zone" (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1997, p.29). Equilibrium does not require stasis but is the series of ceaseless adjustments required to collectively adapt. Thus, it can be imagined as the monitoring and adjusting a group undertakes to move from-equilibrium state to midpoint and back to from-equilibrium state (Uhl-Bien and Arena, 2018).

This accords with Salas, Reyes and McDaniel (2018) who assert that effective teams self-correct and remain cohesive as they undertake such adaptions. Inevitably, an interruption to the Flow of practice will cause some unbalancing. During this jolt, efforts might be momentarily fragmented, but it also affords the group an opportunity to "mindfully examine their patterns of interaction" and to adjust accordingly (Summers, Humphrey and Ferris, 2012, p.315). Zhang et al (2017) concur, suggesting that disturbances can bring about momentary instability and the changing pattern of interaction within a group.

The practices of Renew include *yessing, laughing, silence and appreciating*, and the consistent logic that I proposed that bound these together suggested the practices were

used to assert, reconfirm or repair cohesion. The foregoing exploration of homeostasis and equilibrium supports the idea that these practices were in use as a way of restoring equilibrium. But, consistent with emergent process ideas, these were not one-off activities; instead, the groups were constantly adjusting. Initially, it may be useful to set these adjustments against the strands of Rupture, but they are not always fully adjacent. As the ideas of Brown and Eisenhardt (1997, 1998) permeate this thesis, I may be inclined to consider that the Renew strand is more universally applicable across the other three strands, not simply Rupture.

Following the logic of Conversational Travel and Dialogue, I argue that Ruptures appear to change the Flow of the group in new ways. They are helpful corrective forces that occur in opposition to the prevailing forward movement, but the practices included in Rupture are practices that are not stopping the Flow, simply re-orienting it. Adding to this backbone of understanding, I turn to ideas of homeostasis and equilibrium and suggest that the group is constantly adjusting and reasserting its collaborative agency. These adjustments are never ending and always needed as the group works as a living system repeatedly adapting to new situations.

These logics set up the following contributions:

Contribution 3: Cycles of Rupture and Renew are two important ways in which Flow is re-oriented. Rupture is conceived of as a corrective force.

Contribution 4: Renewal is undertaken by the group of collaborative agents as a way to restore temporary equilibrium. Renewal is a ceaseless process.

So far, contributions one and two have taken the green strand (Flow) as the focus of theorising and suggested that Flow needs to be interrupted when groups of collaborative agents create leadership. Next, contributions three and four looked at the red and purple strands (Rupture and Renew) and suggested that these were two ways that Flow was interrupted. Both Rupture and Renew interrupt Flow: Rupture as a counter to the direction of Flow; and Renew as a constant set of adjustments returning the group to the momentary equilibrium of collaborative agency, before once again re-adjusting as Flow and Rupture ceaselessly arise.

The last strand, yellow, is Reveal and the interaction of Reveal with Flow, Rupture and Renew is now considered as the fifth and sixth contribution to Leadership-as-Practice.

6.3.3 The Interruption of Flow to Reveal Underpinning Logics

The use of Reveal (yellow strand) practices is considered by returning to earlier ideas of heedful inter-relating (HI). HI relies on a social-interactionist view that suggests that when people act as if there are social forces, then those social forces come into being, and one of the consequences is a sense of "groupness" (Daniel and Vaughn, 2010, p.3). The three social forces of HI are Contributing, Representing and Subordinating, which are enacted with heed. To act with heed is to act with care or regard (Weick and Roberts, 1993), but heed does not preclude being critical, conscientious, vigilant, purposeful and attentive, all of which can be enacted with more or less care. Heed is not of itself a behaviour but a quality that pervades and flavours the action; compare, for example, the Japanese Tea Ceremony with the British habit of making tea. Generally, the former might be considered more heedful. Weick and Roberts (1993) have suggested that heed is a way

of "putting one's heart into something…thinking what one is doing" (Weick and Roberts, 1993, p.361).

HI also suggests contributions are made within the context of a group awareness of how efforts are purposefully supporting their collective goals (Dougherty and Takacs, 2004). Thus care is focused not solely on the content of the group discussion, but also on the manner of the group discussion. Contributing – a facet of HI - describes the actions that participants provide for each other (Stephens and Lyddy, 2016). When heed is added then contributions are shaped so that they fit with contributions that others are making; contributions are not random but are carefully selected to fit in with others.

This requires that the group should hold a systemic understanding of the whole and that the stream of contributions emanating from the group should modify and integrate into an updated whole (Dougherty and Takacs, 2004; Stephens and Lyddy, 2016; Weick and Roberts, 1993). Contributing heedfully requires that attention should be given to how each action fits into or affects the group's functioning (Daniel and Jordan, 2017; Weick and Roberts, 1993). "Engaging in HI requires that one notice, take careful action [contribute], and pay attention to the effect that action has on a collective situation" (Daniel and Jordan, 2017, p.200).

Heed and Contributing seem specifically relevant to the Reveal strand. The practices *challenging, checking* and *exchanging* are conjoined in the secondary coding by the reasoning that they all encourage explaining, exploring and sharing of underpinning assumptions. Driven by this logic, these practices are categorised as Reveal (yellow strand).

Nevertheless, in a group with the quality of low heed or caring less, *challenging, checking* and *exchanging* are all practices that have the potential to feel like monitoring or surveillance. Instead of encouraging a participant to share their logic, it is possible to imagine that it might feel confrontational; for example, it might feel like others are demanding to know more, requiring verification of data, undermining 'my' judgement.

By contrast, in this study, participants commented on the heed with which these practices were used. They said:

"It was really additive … But also it challenged, but it felt like the challenging was positive to move it forward … "

"You could tell in the exchange the movement going forwards because nothing was off the table. You know, why do we have X? Why do we restrain ourselves in such a way? So that language then creates more opportunity for active listening and contributions … "

"It was far more honest, and the point was the questioning…quite often you use questions…because you know the answer…Whereas this was genuinely not that. People were questioning because they genuinely had a question and quite often said, I don't know the answer to this, or you could tell they really didn't … that's a quite honest kind of disclosure and vulnerability … and you feel much more comfortable going to places you wouldn't normally go."

"Yeah, checking that we're all understanding the same thing … "

"There were layers of challenge", " … just check where we are … "

These comments, made during group Elicitation interviews, suggest that the practices were enacted with care and interpreted not as surveillance, but as useful and encouraging in raising the quality of debate.

As predicted by HI theory, I propose that the Cases in this study provide examples of attentiveness to the actions of group members with regard to how these practices affect the collaborative endeavour. The groups have articulated a form of benign vigilance where they remain attentive to the coherence of the group, taking care as to how they articulate their questions. Further, this is an example of the group exchanging signals across the group to improve the quality of their inter-related actions (Bijlsma-Frankema, de Jong and van de Bunt, 2008). Whereas *checking, challenging* and *exchanging* have the potential to be experienced as monitoring or surveillance by others, the care of the group cohesion – expressed through Renew practices – might be sufficiently strong that it inoculates the group from those interpretations (Yu and Zellmer-Bruhn, 2018). This sense of care may invite a more welcoming relationship to the practices of Reveal.

These logics set up the following contributions:

Contribution 5: Groups of collaborative agents seem to interrupt the Flow of the group's work, using practices of *checking*, *challenging* and *exchanging* to Reveal each other's thinking.

Contribution 6: Groups of collaborative agents that heedfully inter-relate do not seem to interpret the practices of Reveal to be monitoring or surveillance, but instead welcome the opportunity to think together and improve the quality of debate.

6.3.4 *Conscious Coalescence (CC)* **as a Trans-Subject Phenomenon**

Earlier, in setting out the rationale for the research questions that guide this thesis, I argued for a new lens and an epistemology that is commensurately aligned. While other authors have alluded to the nature of the conjoining of group participants, the emergent social processes are under theorised and under studied, with the exception of the HI field. *CC* (represented as the blue strand in the DNA charts) is the description that I have used in this thesis, derived from the bountiful expressions from a variety of narratives that all point to the same ideas but using different language. For example:

Hegel (1807/1977, S.177) *"an I that is a we and a we that is I."*

Heidegger (1987, S.263) *"I-Thou relationship, it would be more adequate to talk about the 'Thou-Thou' relationship …"*

Weick and Roberts (1993, p.359) *"[collective] mind is 'located' in connections and the weights put on them rather than in entities."*

Nonaka and Konno (1998, p.41) *"…emotional, experiential and mental thresholds between individuals are removed."*

Fayard (2003, p.26) *"the recognition of the self in all."*

Stanley (2012, p.201) *"radically undermining the distinction between self and other."*

Raelin (2016, p.138) individuals *"transcend their own immediate embeddedness."*

Despite these tantalising hints at what happens when groups conjoin, the lived experience of those who participate in *CC* has not been sufficiently explored. In this thesis I have set out to do so, first by arguing that the phenomenon is best considered to be trans-

subjective and then to consider that it is made in the mundane and everyday practices of collaborative agents as they enact leadership.

Nonaka and Konno (1998) argue that for actors to conjoin, a shift to the group level of thinking must be made, in which emotional, experiential and mental thresholds between individuals are removed. This removal of thresholds between individuals is explored through the concept of Ba and helps illuminate ideas of *CC*.

The Japanese Kanji for Ba is 場. Kanji is a symbolic language and meanings are not fixed and are better described than defined (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010). Ideograms symbolise the idea of a thing and require us to understand an essence, not an exactness. This Kanji is created with 12 pen strokes consisting of four parts: 一 土 日 勿. Within these forms are meanings of place, spot, ground, case, situation and field of awareness. Ba is part of the "self-transcending process through which one transcends the boundary of the old self into a new self by acquiring a new context, a new view of the world, and new knowledge" (Nonaka et al, 2000, p.8). Indeed, "to participate in Ba means to get involved and transcend one's own limited perspective or boundary" (Nonaka and Konno, 1998, p.41). In other words, individuals no longer stand on their own ground but stand together on shared ground.

Ba provides the container in which this transcendence can occur, but it is not a dispassionate object nor a direct actor. It is interwoven into the very fabric of the process. In France, winemakers talk of Terroir an essence that infuses the vineyard, the groundwater, the people who work there and the final product. In much the same way, Ba is ineffable and

integral, described as a "living social topos" (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010, p.22). For

Gueldenberg and Helting (2007) Ba is the process of "opening up a space or lived place"

within which human beings can encounter each other and the world they face (p.112).

Hence, the place of Ba is neither an attribute of things nor an attribute of consciousness nor

is it a place for simply locating things, but instead Ba provides an opening for human

experiencing.

A study by Fujii (2012) concerned with different aspects of problem solving begins to

shine a light on *how CC* might sit within Ba. In the study, Japanese students working

together resonate off each other and create Ba. Fujii explains " … while they are working

together, they do not simply act as separated actors but rather resonate off each other by

entraining themselves in the given place or Ba. In other words, their places or Ba merge into

one and create a stage where each self, interacts" (Fujii, 2012, p.657).

Ba draws attention to the importance of looking not just at the activity between the

participants, but also across and around them. My findings reflect this as the group

describes how they "move up a level" and there are "times of uplift". Ba assumes the

Japanese and Buddhist philosophical positions of mutual dependence, impermanence, and

non-separation (Hanks et al, 2019) – once again highlighting the need to shift collaborative

agency from an intersubjective to a trans-subjective phenomenon. Fujii (2012) suggests

that in Ba the outer regions of individualism can dissolve to allow the re-making of a fresh

entity (see Figure 70 taken from pp.657-8).
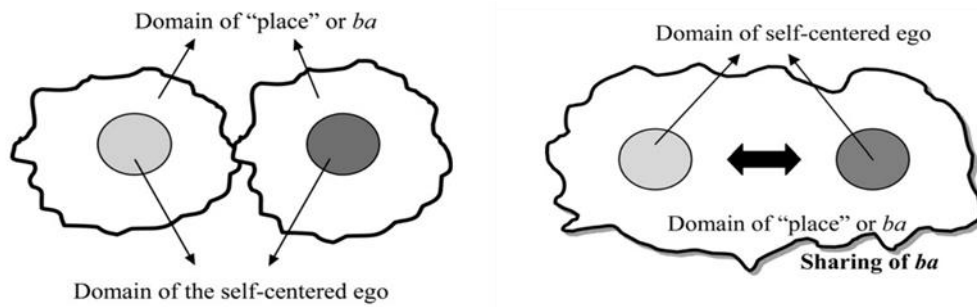
Figure 70 – Self-transcendence in Ba

Hence, when in Ba, a person does not continue individualising, but experiences ever-changing intimacies. In the Cases reported previously, they claim that they "can all be different but still build and reinforce each other". The groups appear to have a felt sense of themselves, dynamically arising from the social weaving that is of their creation and which creates them too; this is what I have named '*Conscious Coalescence'*.

I propose that Ba offers a way to understand *CC* and concurs with ideas previously expressed on trans-subjectivity. Ba is talked and enacted into being (Choo and de Alvarenga Neto, 2010; Nonaka and Toyama, 2002; Weick et al, 2005), and from this talk and action, much like in any living system, a new Being emerges. In Ba there is co-emergence of self and other (Von Krogh et al, 2013), that is, multiple participants mutually forge each other, everyone is bound together, and hence individual self is sublimated to the collective self. It is possible, and natural in Ba, to transcend ideas of subject and object to become pure unselfconscious experiencing (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010). Although derived from the East, these ideas resonate with modern academic thinking, including the pluralised and emergent views of leadership (Denis et al, 2012; Will, 2016), strong-process theories e.g. Hernes and

Weik (2007) and Tsoukas and Chia (2002), and the 'practice-turn' e.g. Gronn (2015); Crevani (2018) and Jarzabkowski and Spee (2009).

These logics set up the following contribution:

Contribution 7: Groups of collaborative agents may transcend their own embeddedness to practise *Conscious Coalescence* when the strands of Flow, Reveal, Renew and Rupture are intertwined in such a way that a place of Ba is brought into being.

6.3.5 The Paradox of Rebelling and Belonging

This next section reaches beyond LAP and extends slightly beyond the evidence base I have presented nevertheless it may enrich our understanding of collaborative agency and the nature of trans-subjective inter-relating. Two intriguing findings spark this enquiry. The ambushing of a computer by one participant and the use of controversial pre-meeting reports by other participants. Both these sociomaterial artefacts are small bit-parts in the study but provoke an exciting line of reasoning.

Elastic coordination describes the ways in which groups push against and challenge boundaries before rebounding and returning to a new mode (Harrison and Rouse, 2014). The push and challenge allow change to be initiated in a more radical manner than if it proceeded incrementally. This elastic stretch and rebound between autonomy and constraints enables the interaction patterns to become re-patterned as the elastic stretches a little bit. Previous studies have shown how sociomaterial artefacts are inscribed with properties that establish both constraints and affordances and subsequently influence how users interact with them (Case and Śliwa, 2020; Hawkins, 2015); for example, the use of

PowerPoint slides in strategy making (Kaplan, 2010), the use of stickies in planning (Arevuo, Reinmoeller and Huff, 2017), the use of a brief in perfume creativity (Endrissat, Islam and Noppeney, 2016).

Taking a side-step to the Strategy as Practice literature, Jarzabkowski and Bednarek (2018), in investigating relational competition among re-insurers, develop theory that suggests that individuals both cooperate and compete across a cycle of bidding and placing of re-insurance deals. Micro competitions between individuals can be rivalrous while at the same time the social obligation to the collective is maintained. The participants in the market understand that without coherence there is no longer a functioning market, and this would erode long-term value and viability for members. So, ultimately, they are bound together to create a harmonious system that "lifts all boats" (p.26). Nevertheless, because there is a bidding system in place, there are winners and losers. This in-depth case study allows us to see how, within living systems of interaction, it is possible to have paradoxical practice (relational and rivalrous) but, overall, the ecosystem remains coherent. Whereas Jarzabkowski and Bednarek (2018) have called this coherence harmonious, I prefer to consider this as a form of equilibrium seeking such as referred to earlier, because it better describes the dynamic and recursive form of inter-relating and does not rely on peace among the participants.

Against the above ideas, I believe that there are times in the life of a group where conflict is inevitable, while still it remains dangerous to threaten group coherence and may temporarily shatter the group. Sociomaterial objects may be one way that participants can collide within the group without apparently being at war. Objects are commandeered to

provide camouflage for what they are doing and allow them to express their direct

disagreement without direct attribution. I call this '*insurrection-by-stealth*'. In this study

this is exemplified by reports that are circulated prior to the meeting, which flush out

vehement opposition, the group Flow is dammed up. The report is withdrawn and re-

written before being re-submitted. In the segment 'Slides for Tom', one computer was

unplugged and another plugged in to utterly overthrow the slides being shown on screen.

In both situations my reading of these events was that the likelihood of outright conflict

around the group was very high and that these sociomaterial practices allow a person(s) to

say "no" to something without ever having to say "no" directly.

Within the literature the concept is absent, and it suggests an interesting line for

future research. Although the evidence and the theorising are scant, there is enough for me

to make a supposition:

SUPPOSITION: By mobilising artefacts, participants may be able to conduct *insurrection-by-stealth*

temporarily risking the coherence of the group.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION TO METHOD AND PRAXIS

In addition to the findings of this study, which I have used above to suggest ways in

which future theory might be built, in this section I answer the call of other scholars to

contribute to method and practice. I believe a further contribution of my research is to the

concerns of research methods and specifically to the issues of compilational research when

studying an emergent process. Hyysalo et al (2019, p.4) warn us that "the dangers of

inadequate or limited research designs are not trivial". Throughout this thesis I have been

quick to point out that much of the empirical data used to build the extant Leadership-as-

Practice concept has relied on individuals as the unit of analysis and is not based sufficiently on group-level analysis. This is at best contradictory and at worst undermining of the very theory it seeks to support. It is contradictory because LAP is built on an argument of *social*, so it is social units that need to be accounted for. It is undermining, because if we accept that individual units of analysis can be added together, we are not truly investigating ideas of emergence. Emergence, or *becoming*, form the very bedrock of LAP.

In the pilot studies undertaken before the main research studies, it became apparent that groups had difficulty talking about themselves as a unit of analysis. They consistently reverted to an analysis of their practice through "he did …" Or "she did …". I realised that I needed a mechanism to help them adjust their ways of seeing so that they could express their experience through this lens of emergence. The mechanism I invented was the vector: for example, $\longrightarrow$ for *advancing* or $\overleftrightarrow{}$ for *missing*. By providing coding sheets to the groups with the schema for these vectors at the top of the sheet and in an explanatory handout, I was able to engage the groups in a discussion about practices at the group-level. They were further sensitised to this orientation through the use of videos showing waves on a beach and starling murmurations, both concepts that are indivisible. By giving this issue particular consideration, I was forced to improvise my own methods, which I have taken care to document fully here, thereby making them available to future researchers.

An unpredicted outcome of this commitment to group-level analysis was the use of the groups' voice through the Elicitation interviews. Once again, I improvised a way to keep the group true to the data and not rely on memory, which could be faulty and contested.

Replaying segments of videos to the groups allowed them to see themselves and talk about themselves, without invoking individual actions. Although conceived as a research method, this approach would be easily translated into a leadership development context.

A few scholars in the field of pluralised leadership have suggested that it is time to relinquish individual leader development and turn towards development programmes that are more representative of the usual settings in which leadership is performed (Collinson and Tourish, 2015; Fitzsimons, James and Denyer, 2011; Kennedy, Carroll and Francoeur, 2013; Sinclair and Searle, 2010). This suggests that where leaders are working together as collaborative agents there may be benefit in giving them tools to talk about themselves without individuation. Tools such as the vectors developed in this study and the use of video replay to analyse and see how they transcend their own embeddedness.

These logics lead me to suggest a contribution to method and praxis:

CONTRIBUTION TO PRAXIS: Vectors and Elicitation interviews focused on group-level analysis by participants as they watch themselves have the potential to be a valuable leadership development toolset.

6.5 DISCUSSION SUMMARY

In the foregoing discussion I have continued to work with my findings in several ways. The first section of the chapter uses the findings directly to consider what they might mean and the themes that arise strongly and a few contradictions too. Then I return to the original literature of LAP to consider the outcomes of this study in comparison to what else is known or theorised. In particular, I lean on Simpson (Carroll and Simpson, 2012; Simpson,

2016) to continue to build on her theorising and empirical results concerning the importance of re-orienting the Flow of practice. In considering how the Flow of practice is moved (horizontally in the DNA charts), I then add in new literature and new ideas that help to explain why this may be important. In the next chapter, Conclusion, I return to a central interest of all research, 'so, what?'.

7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I consolidate the purpose of this study, the findings and my contributions to theory, method and praxis and conclude by suggesting interesting lines of enquiry for future studies. Following this chapter are my personal reflections on, and critique of, this thesis and its limitations.

Research is often motivated by a shortfall in knowledge that has the potential to be of benefit beyond Academia to affect those who work in the public, private and third sectors. The intersection of three issues impelled my interest in this research and it is this intersectionality that has significance in daily life within organisations. Organisations consistently struggle with the question of leadership: how to find it, develop it and deploy it. I personally came to believe that most organisations were seeing the issue of leadership in the wrong way as they continued to hold fast to ideas of individuals as leaders. From my own experience as a leader, I knew at a visceral level that no leader leads alone, and this led me to the literature of LAP.

7.1 LEADERSHIP-AS-PRACTICE (LAP)

The LAP literature provided the foundation for an understanding of leadership as a social, pluralised and emergent set of practices found in the mundane activities of people drawn from anywhere in an organisation. This literature acknowledges that 'power' to lead does not rely on hierarchical position or role or title, but on the intricate interweaving of people working together as collaborative agents. Nor does collaboration rely on sophisticated matrix structures. For example, the adoption of an Agile method does not necessarily confer agility. LAP helps to show how the formal structuring of an organisation

or the formal structuring of a team's processes might have no beneficial effect. It offers an alternative view where agency does not rest on formal power but resides in the actions (and inactions) of people up and down the organisation. Even when leaders have the official authority to hire and fire people, this is insufficient to bend people to their will. Leaders quite simply cannot MAKE anything happen; all leaders rely on others.

By acknowledging that leadership is something beyond a leader or even beyond leaders, the theoretical focus moves away from the entities of people towards the *relating* of people as a collective and accordingly to the nature of the collective itself. When leadership is pluralised, the many entities that make up the collective are backgrounded so that the inter-relating can be foregrounded. The 'essence', of pluralised leadership lies in the interaction of the collaborative agents, the "*behaving together*" (Will, 2016, p.262 emphasis in original).

I was enormously curious to learn about non-heroic and non-entitive leadership, and noted the call by Kempster, Parry and Jackson (2016) to settle down to the "real" task of empirically extending the Leadership-as-Practice narrative (Kempster, Parry and Jackson, 2016, p.258). Issue two of the intersection that I identified was the concern to understand one of the fundamental processes on which LAP rests: that of transcending individual embeddedness.

7.2 TRANSCENDING INDIVIDUAL EMBEDDEDNESS

LAP scholarship identifies the issue of individual embeddedness, suggesting that those who participate as collaborative agents in collective leadership, need to forgo their

individualism to participate in give-and-take inter-relating that transcends the usual negotiated positions and compromise.

I have called this process whereby people conjoin into collaborative agents *'Conscious Coalescence'*, and I argued that although others have named it (albeit differently, see Table 9 – Processes and different terms by different authors) and relied on it in their theorising, few have studied it directly. I further argued that if *CC* is pivotal to the achievement of LAP, we should know and understand more about it. To guide my investigations of this process, I turned to the third idea, that is, the literature of collective mind: heedful inter-relating.

7.3 HEEDFUL INTER-RELATING (HI)

HI (Weick and Roberts, 1993) is aligned to ideas found within LAP and I have used it here to enrich my appreciation of how the inter-relating of collaborative agents may be understood. Both LAP and HI have the effect of moving the focus of research. As already discussed, LAP moves the focus to collectives of collaborative agents, whereas HI moves the focus to inter-relating. The social view of organis*ing*, (Weick, 1979) extends ideas of organisations beyond the psychological to embrace the very processes of mobilising and uniting peoples' actions.

Based on the seminal five-year study on board Nimitz class carriers, Weick and Roberts (1993) detailed the way that "collective mind" was developed through three practices of inter-relating: Contributing, Subordinating and Representing. The authors lean on mindfulness as a root construct for their theorising. Elsewhere, mindful leadership is

growing in popularity, yet in general, mindful leadership continues to define leadership as a

heroic capability, where mindfulness is added into an individual. So the definitions and

guiding theory that are used in mindful leadership are orthogonal to the new streams of

leadership. Contrary to the mindful leadership narrative, here I am arguing that *CC* is trans-

subjective in nature and therefore the accompanying felt sense also has to be investigated

as trans-subjective.

In sum, my curiosity centred on how groups of collaborative agents produced

leadership as a collective and, if they experienced the process of *CC,* how they experienced

it. I also wanted to listen to participants' stories of these moments and discover what we

might learn that is of importance to other groups of collaborative agents. Glimmers in

literature, not associated with leadership or HI or mindfulness but more associated with

creativity – music, dance, jazz – suggest that *CC* might be something special: when things

"just click" (Hefferon and Ollis, 2006); a "eureka" moment (Hargadon and Bechky, 2006;

Hernes, 2007); or, the experience of "insight", an epiphany (Dane, 2019). Depending on the

literature and depending on its particular leaning, these moments can be important because

of their catalysing nature. Within LAP they seem important and interesting yet not

necessary for collaborative agency and this flies in the face of much leadership development

mythology, which eulogises peak experiences.

As noted earlier, I was disappointed to find that previous studies had been

inconsistent in using ontologies coupled to relevant epistemologies. I committed to "a

[group-level] perspective; with attentiveness to the interaction of component parts; interest

in the ways in which an emergent systemic whole is different than the sum of its parts; … [a]

focus on processes … [and] nonlinear relationships … " (Will, 2016, p.263). As well as foregrounding the experience of participants.

Discovering that existing data collection methods failed to meet these self-imposed standards, I set about creating a set of tools that were internally consistent with the goals of this thesis and the guiding research questions. The use of video meant that the practices of groups could be captured and revisited multiple times without relying on memory or notes made hastily in situ. Elicitation interviews were used as a way of probing the groups' felt sense of experience, ensuring that the results were less likely to be shaped by impression management or pop psychology and stayed close to the phenomenology of trans-subjectivity. To facilitate the interviews, I used video segments and asked the groups to speak to their practice and experience. During the pilot studies it became clear that this was not a natural way for people to see themselves and speak about themselves and it was this understanding that provoked me to develop a vector coding system. The tight coupling of video segments, Elicitation interviews and vector coding is new in research methods and has ensured alignment of ontology and epistemology for this project.

7.4 RETURNING TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My first guiding research question was: *What is the lived experience of participants when* Conscious Coalescence *emerges?*

It seems that *CC* is not a banal felt sense but is a vibrant state that people recognise even if they cannot name it. The exuberant expressions provided by the participants leave me in little doubt that they felt a shift, like a gear change, signalling an unspoken

understanding of ''an I that is we and a we that is I'' (Hegel, 1977, sec. 177). This powerful existential shift is more possible and more prevalent than might be imagined, as it was coded 27 times across ten video segments. It seems that it is not a once-in-a-meeting experience but might fleetingly arise and fade in micro segments.

Throughout the study, I have called attention to my _under_coding of *CC* yet, participants coded it and talked about it more frequently. Naturally, it becomes clear that this is almost inevitable as I have explored an interior experience that is not always accessible to an observer. This explains why I did not 'see' *CC*, because I did not 'experience' it. Under-coding is an artefact of my method but provides a finding that may have far-reaching impacts for other research more generally – calling into question what we can and cannot see and what we can and cannot document from our limited perspective as an observing researcher (Chia, 2014).

My second guiding research question was: _How does Conscious Coalescence emerge (and not emerge) in groups of collaborative agents?_

The answers to this question are more nuanced and more equivocal. Despite working with groups of leaders through the LAP lens, it is possible to suggest that leader**ship** is not always present. My suggestion is that the leaders' practice demonstrates a spectrum of leadership. At the one end, there are segments where the groups are constantly re-orienting the Flow of practice and at the other end there are times when the groups are leaving the Flow unmediated. My conjecture is that this study has captured the heroic/post-heroic and leader/ship divide and that the groups flipped from looking to an

individual for direction and the answer, to groups of collaborative agents working to create solutions together. Thus, we see unmediated Flow flipped to Flow that is more consistently re-oriented. This finding contributes to the refinement and definition of leadership within the LAP narrative.

7.4.1 Contributions to Theories of Leadership-as-Practice (LAP)

The findings of this study do not present a runway to *CC* of neat causal links but instead the data and analysis suggest a messier and emergent set of processes. In keeping with this messiness, I have offered the following contributions to the literature on social, plural, emergent leadership theories:

CONTRIBUTION 1: Flow that is too strongly in a forward direction, and which is uninterrupted, suggests that the groups are not working as collaborative agents producing leadership.

CONTRIBUTION 2: The production of leadership by collaborative agents is fleeting and fragile. Leadership intensifies and ebbs suggesting leadership is not binary but instead sits on a spectrum.

CONTRIBUTION 3: Cycles of Rupture and Renew are two important ways in which Flow is re-oriented. Rupture is conceived of as a corrective force.

CONTRIBUTION 4: Renewal is undertaken by the group of collaborative agents as a way to restore temporary equilibrium. Renewal is a ceaseless process.

CONTRIBUTION 5: Groups of collaborative agents seem to interrupt the Flow of the group's work, using practices of *checking*, *challenging*, and *exchanging* to Reveal each other's thinking.

CONTRIBUTION 6: Groups of collaborative agents that heedfully inter-relate do not seem to interpret the practices of Reveal to be monitoring or surveillance, but instead welcome the opportunity to think together and improve the quality of debate.

CONTRIBUTION 7: Groups of collaborative agents may transcend their own embeddedness to practise *Conscious Coalescence* when the strands of Flow, Reveal, Renew and Rupture are intertwined in such a way that a place of Ba is brought into being.

In addition to these substantive contributions, I have made a further proposal in the form of a supposition.

SUPPOSITION: By mobilising artefacts, participants may be able to conduct *insurrection-by-stealth* temporarily risking the coherence of the group.

Beyond the domain of theory, I believe this thesis also contributes to method and praxis.

CONTRIBUTION TO PRAXIS: Vectors and Elicitation interviews focused on group-level analysis by participants as they watch themselves have the potential to be a valuable leadership development toolset.

Contributions 1 and 2 emphasise the importance of Flow and re-orienting Flow. Flow is the way in which the groups generate and sustain forward momentum. Sometimes the groups get too caught up in Flow. When Flow subsists uninterrupted for an extended

period, then leadership abates because the group is not re-orienting the Flow of practice. This understanding extends and adds the idea of gradation to LAP because it acknowledges that leadership is not 'on' or 'off' but is continuously fluctuating, moment by moment. To date, the literature has acknowledged that practice needs to be re-oriented, because this is the essence of leadership (see Raelin (2016); Simpson (2016)) but the fleeting and fragile nature of these practices has been missing.

Contributions 3 and 4 demonstrate how interrupting Flow with Rupture and Renew help to enliven leadership among the collaborative agents. The practices of Rupture are major and abrupt re-orientations for the group, but I have argued that they are not conflictual. Using other authors' work, I seek to demonstrate that Ruptures are corrections that the group make to the forward Flow of the agenda. Ruptures are the ways in which the group disagrees or adjusts to a new direction. The strands of Rupture and Renew seem to work in a complementary, although not a pair-wise, manner. Renew encapsulates the practices that act as glue to the group. Renew practices, I suggest, offset any rancour that might arise from the Ruptures. Through the yo-yoing of Rupture and Renew, temporary equilibrium is achieved, but the adjusting and re-adjusting is endless. The lens of practice requires us to see the unfixed nature of reality, but this aspect of LAP has been understudied. This study makes manifest the dynamics and ceaselessness of leadership.

Contributions 5 and 6 suggest that groups can welcome the interruption of Flow when the practices of Reveal are used to uncover underpinning logic. In the Elicitation interviews the groups remarked on the felt sense among them when questions were being asked. They noted that, in some circumstances, questions could be subterfuge for

undermining each other, while in others they could be transformational. The segments

during which *CC* was experienced seem to be the segments where this transformation

occurred such that the participants felt <u>invited</u> to Reveal their underlying assumptions,

rationales and logics rather than challenged to <u>defend</u> their position. Hence, these findings

point to the same practices having very different effects and affects. Additionally, the

stance of 'not knowing' seems to be part of the inclusive and welcoming nature of the group

when working in this way.

Contribution 7 explores *CC* as a trans-subject phenomenon through the lens of Ba – a

Japanese term that is best considered as a living social topos. This is an existential space in

which individualism can disintegrate without collapsing into groupthink. The study by Fuji

(2012) proposes a model that imagines the outer edges of individuals dissolving so that

individuals can resonate off each other. Raelin (Raelin, 2011, 2013, 2016b, 2016a), a major

proponent of LAP and the author who argues that individuals need to transcend their

embeddedness, provides no model to help us conceive how this might occur. I propose that

the consideration of Ba is a worthy addition to the LAP literature, without inclining to

mechanical explanations of causality.

As an additional extension of theory, I put forward a Supposition which is more

speculative than the previous seven Contributions to theory. My Supposition alights on the

paradox of rebelling while still belonging. While previously I have reasoned that Rupture is

not the complete fragmentation of a group, there are times when it seems necessary for

highly affective ideas to be expressed that have the potential to seriously damage the

sociality of the group. Quite simply, some ideas may be dangerous to the cohesion of the

group. In this study there are very small hints that sociomaterial objects may be helpful as catalysts in these types of situations. My logic is that by mobilising artefacts participants may be able to conduct *insurrection-by-stealth* without risking the coherence of the group, using objects to express what they are too afraid to bring to the fore. Objects may allow ideas to be brought forth without the person becoming implicated by the idea. In this study, I believe that the incident with the computer (JFA) and the way in which the report (F&W) is used allow for the practice of *insurrection-by-stealth*. Thus, there may be some use in considering the sociomaterial practice afforded by objects as allowing otherwise taboo human affect to be expressed. Although only weakly evidenced here, this may be a valuable and rich vein of future enquiry.

I am very pleased to find that an offshoot of this thesis is a very practical application using the video playback process (Contribution to praxis). Showing groups themselves, giving them a new language that is not individualised and thereby making it safe for them to comment on their group practice, seems to be a useful development tool. It emancipates the group to make sense of itself and to engage in a dialogue about strong patterns that are holding it fast. Also, it highlights and helps the members become mindful of the fleeting, fragile but precious moment-by-moment occurrences where they are transcending their embeddedness.

7.5 WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF THIS THESIS

When we truly understand that leaders do not lead alone, there are wide implications. For a start, recruitment of leaders into organisations needs to come under scrutiny. First the department that does the recruitment might reconsider what truly

constitutes leadership, offering the possibilities that: even those people not labelled leader are already achieving leadership; roles might be defined in new ways to reflect more collaborative endeavours. Also, those with the title of leader might be encouraged to recognise that they are part of a system of inter-relating where every act of relating has the potential to advance or frustrate the Flow of the organisation.

Further, pluralising and collectivising leadership has significant impact on the way we develop leadership. Two enshrined systems are undermined by this. The first system that needs radical re-evaluation is whether it is possible to develop leaders as sole operators. This study is leading me to argue that we need to find alternative ways to keep people in situ in their roles and to construct development programmes around the work; placing development alongside constellations of collaborative agents to help them to understand how their everyday mundane practices of inter-relating create, or fail to create, leadership. Second, I suggest that we need to scrutinise the all-pervading deficit model of personal development. Even those models that are strength-based fail to acknowledge that it is in inter-relating with others that imbalances can be ameliorated. Granted there are team-based psychometrics that help people to understand their leadership style relative to others (see for example, Belbin©, Primary Colours©). However, they are relative to each other, not trans-subjectively relating to each other. In other words, the practical application of ideas of leadership remains at the shared or distributed level of collective leadership but has not yet embraced the collaborative and relationality views of leadership. Leadership development has a long way to go if we are to help people understand and attune to the trans-subjective nature of collaborative agency. In this study, the combination of the video

recall process and the graphical vector coding provided all the groups with a new lens and a new language with which to talk about themselves and their practice. During the Elicitation interviews, while watching the groups watch themselves, I had a real sense that this was democratising the groups' understanding of themselves and their practice. In keeping with the emancipatory ideals of this thesis, I propose that those who work alongside leaders and leadership teams embrace these ideas.

7.6 FUTURE LINES OF ENQUIRY

I would like to commend any of the above contributions as future lines of enquiry with a continuing curiosity as to _what is_ happening rather than _why it is_ happening. In addition, there are other ideas embedded in this thesis that may be overlooked and may be even more interesting. Because these ideas are more tentative and do not feature in the contributions above, I am using this section of the chapter to explore them a bit further here.

7.6.1 Practices as absences

The practices I developed and looked for were presences; that is, actions or undertakings by the group. Only one absence was coded, that of _silence_ because it was a clear ceasing of talking. But there might be other absences that are equally powerful and interesting. One that emerged was a 'not knowing' that provided the container for the 'Strategy Session' segment. Other absences such as 'not doing' might be worthy of consideration. Holding space as a group is referred to in both the literature of Dialogue and Ba, so there are good precedents to suggest this line of study. Further, the practice of _silence_ would benefit from refinement. I tried but failed to code consistently for _silence_ as

an act of consolidation in the group, versus a moment of awkwardness. This refinement was abandoned because I was attributing intention in a way that made me uncomfortable. But with more time with the groups to debrief and enquire as to their felt sense, this refinement would be possible.

7.6.2 Yes does not mean yes

Yessing was used many, many, times by the groups and I have commented that it was equivocal in meaning. In some instances, I was sure that "yes" meant agreement; in other instances, I was sure that it meant the group was bored and wanted to move forward, so it was a proxy for "hurry up". When developing the secondary coding schema, I decided that "yes" was not always agreement but better sat in the Renew strand, the difference being that if it is agreement, then it should be more appropriately set within Flow as forward momentum. I was influenced in this choice by a book by an FBI negotiator (Voss and Raz, 2016) who suggests that "that's right" is a better expression of agreement. Understanding how groups of collaborative agents deploy "yes" would be a very helpful refinement to our understanding generally. But specifically, it might help explain why so often agreements made in the room seem to fall apart on implementation.

7.6.3 The living social topos and resonance

It would be easy to equate the living social topos of Ba to Western ideas of culture, but I am unconvinced that they are equivalent. For example, again we cannot disregard the felt sense of the thing – "[w]e cannot relate to it from the outside as observers, but only be 'indwelling' and experiencing it … the 'here-now-relationships in action' – interacting and mutually determining one another. In other words, it becomes 'pure activity'; an open

process which is not causally attributable to any substantial 'prime mover', neither the one nor the many, the whole nor the parts. This essentially means that we are forced to overcome the tacit presupposition of (Western) science that everything is to be expressed in terms of static spatio-temporal, and physical forms of order" (Graupe and Nonaka, 2010, p.22). Authors working in the tradition of non-Anglo/American cultures encourage us to step out of our deterministic thinking and embrace a more organic and intuitive sense of organis*ing*. In a similar vein, I have no idea how one would go about researching resonance as described by Fuji, which is from the same tradition, but these realms seem to me to be exciting directions for Western scholarship to pursue.

8 LIMITATIONS

"Advocates for transparency in qualitative research mistakenly couple it with replication. Tying transparency tightly to replication is deeply troublesome for qualitative research, where replication misses the point of what the work seeks to accomplish … [more importantly] identifying solutions for enhanced trustworthiness … " (Pratt, Kaplan and Whittington, 2019, p.1).

In keeping with the views expressed by Pratt et al, I aim to use this chapter of my thesis to increase the transparency of my work and my rationale for the choices I made with the aim of enhancing trustworthiness. This chapter is followed by another in a similar vein, Reflections, which moves beyond the methodological issues of the research to issues of a more personal nature. Central to both chapters is a commitment to reflect on the choices I have made, to make them explicit and demonstrate the effect those choices have had on the study and results.

Limitations are generally viewed as features of the study that weaken the findings or results of the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2008). The five limitations that are explored here place boundaries on the extent and strength of claims that I make in this thesis.

8.1 USE OF CASES

Case studies provide a rich set of understandings but they are not adequate for theory testing (Yin, 2018). Understanding the limitations of case study research, I have set out to explore processes and extend theory, but I have not set out to make statements that

are generalisable, and so my contributions are deliberately phrased as tentative. Many case studies are focused on one group; one organisation; or one situation. At the outset, I did not know whether I was going to be able to find *CC.* Although it was extant in the literature, there was no previous study on this process, so I could not know whether I was searching for the elusive Yeti or white tigers – both very rare, but the latter actually sighted.

By choosing multiple Cases, I was trying to increase the likelihood of uncovering *CC* and, as with all research choices, this has trade-offs. The Cases are each complete within the meetings and interviews using the method as described, but I did not collect or review documentation, news reports or other stakeholder opinions. The groups within the Cases were my main source of material, most particularly the multiple meetings that I attended. In F&W, the meetings were spaced apart by a month; in JFA, the meetings were two days adjacent to each other; in JFG, one meeting, with the follow up cancelled.

A process perspective regards each moment as a new moment, and this renders the question of longitudinal research somewhat moot because even within an hour everything is changing: both arising and fading. I was hesitant at first about whether the study was limited by the quasi-longitudinal nature of the meetings but became convinced that the number of meetings did not need to expand beyond the two days for each group. What convinced me was JFA. On the Monday afternoon they had their 'Strategy Session', which had gone extremely well (as described in the Findings section) and the group adjourned slightly giddy with the success of the session. The Tuesday morning session – 'Objectives for the Day' – was "… not how you'd want to do it. You'd never design it to go that way, would you?" (comment in the group Elicitation interview). It was the polar opposite to the

discussion less than 12 hours earlier. Seeing the group ricochet from one situation to the other within one meeting convinced me that extending the research further would not strengthen the research in a meaningful way.

8.2 ADEQUACY OF DATA

The data collected for this study comes from three Cases, and two Cases derive from the same organisation. Although a large amount of video and audio recording was collected (over 40 hours in total), once the groups had selected their chosen segments, the amount of footage actually reviewed was small. Moving from a large set of data to a smaller set raises concerns about what is not included and what might be missed. The small data set draws attention to the question of whether it is possible to say anything at all after an analysis of just 5½ hours of video. In partial response to that concern, I point to another finding that I highlighted in section 4.5.2.4, where I mention that, in all Cases, all individuals choose the same segments for review. Throughout the entire study everyone agreed on what it was they were interested in seeing again. The reason this might be important when considering the adequacy of data is that it suggests that these truly were the _salient_ moments and that implicitly the groups are agreeing other events may be interesting but may be less central. On the other hand, the narrowed choice of salient moments might be a form of subtle collusion among group members but that would require a degree of coordination that I believe they would be disinclined to undertake. Overall, I feel confident that the groups chose a range of salient moments that demonstrated a variety of practices in different circumstances.

Furthermore, in the Case of JFG, I coded the entire meeting containing their chosen segment 'Employee Survey Results'. This provides a useful check against the rationale provided above, because it demonstrates that there are no wild deviations from the previously established patterns of the other nine segments.

Other concerns about the data might include whether there are sufficient diverse data. One organisation is a commercial trading company with a listing on the UK stock exchange, the other organisation is a public service, funded by local government. So the organisations are actually very different. Nevertheless, the nature of the practices within the groups being studied were remarkably similar. Strong research always benefits from greater diversity and I recognise that these two organisations miss a wide range of other types of organisations such as Charities, Non-Governmental Organisations, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises and Start-ups. The recognisable nature of the group practices from these two Cases gives me some reassurance that a more diverse range of organisations might not bring about any novel data.

8.3 PARTICIPANT CODING VS. RESEARCHER CODING

At the outset of this study, I committed to privileging the voices of participants. This was driven by the understanding of the social nature of leadership, meaning participants would be expected to experience collaborative agency in different ways. The methods adopted set out to achieve this through individual and group interviews and individual coding of video segments while in the group. As a result, a substantial body of data was collected that achieved the aim of giving voice to those most closely involved in the practices.

However, having received the coding sheets from the individuals during the Elicitation interviews, it became clear that the plurality of voices that I was keen to capture also posed a problem in collation. The sheets deliberately excluded any personal identifier so that people could feel unconstrained to freely express themselves with anonymity. So that although they sat within the group, their coding sheets were a route that allowed them to differ from the group should they choose to. When I collected the participants' coding sheets, I could see it would be possible to honour these differences, but I was left with the concern about how to collate them in a way that they could be comparable.

The solution was for me to code all the video segments contemporaneously with the participants and to use my coding as a cross-Case comparison. By using my coding, I was violating my own commitment, but I could find no other consistent way of moving from group to group and making comparisons.

Aware of this contradiction, in the write-up of the findings, I have given space to the plurality of views and voices of every participant in every group so that they are truly represented. Only in the last section of the Findings have I inserted myself and my coding as a way of producing charts that can be assessed across the Cases.

This is not a change that I take on lightly. Throughout the Findings and Discussion, I have made several comments that I am unsure about the extent to which _my_ coding adequately represented _their_ experience. The two best examples of this have been repeatedly referred to already: 'Slides for Tom' and under-coding *CC*. Both these examples make very clear that my 'reading' of the group was at odds in some important way to their

'reading' of the practices. Equally, both these examples can be – and have been –

'explained' by sound logic.

Having made the choice to use my coding, not the participants, it also became

apparent that JFG could be used in the study. Although I had the data for JFG, I did not have

the benefit of the outcomes of the Elicitation interview (as Covid-19 restrictions prevented

this happening). However, my judgement was that I had sufficient to include the Case and

to use my coding of the video segment 'Employee Survey Results'. This treatment would

keep JFG consistent with JFA and F&W.

8.4 RESEARCHER DISCRETION WHEN CODING

The use of vectors for primary coding is an unusual choice, made in this instance

because each vector was designed to visually represent the movement of the group. It

seemed to me that a vector most adequately expressed the stop : go : veer off : go back of

collaborative agency. Faithfully and accurately representing what the group was actually

doing through the vectors was of primary importance when developing the schema of 15

codes.

But this was easier conceived than done. What I discovered when coding was that

there were moments when it was unclear which vector/code was the most faithful

representation of what I was witnessing. The main dilemma was when one person made an

intervention: did I choose to code their practice given it was a group-level code?   Similarly,

when a sub-group formed and used practices at odds to the rest, which practices should

prevail in the coding? I solved this by constantly considering whether minorities –

individuals or sub-groups – were having a material effect on the whole group. For example, in 'Objectives for the Day' one participant called out "Stop! What are we doing?", and because it had the effect of stopping the group and causing them all to pause, I chose to code that as a Rupture. There were other instances where individuals made an intervention, but the group continued onward without missing a step, so in those cases it was Flow that was coded. I have chosen to illustrate two extremes where my rule-of-thumb made it very clear how the coding should faithfully represent the action. Nevertheless, there are other times when my heuristic was helpful, but I was still left with a dilemma.

Having a measure of coding discretion is not an artefact of this method alone. It is also the case when coding interviews or participant-observation studies. As documented in the section 4.6 on coding development, I spent some months *before* setting out on my field research, training myself by watching videos again and again and trial coding repeatedly so that I was fairly confident that my coding would be internally consistent. Before working with the groups, I had increased my accuracy of coding so that seeing one sequence of events in one group would receive a coding sequence and if by chance the sequence was repeated, it received the same sequence of coding.

8.5 TEMPORALITY OF PRACTICES

Although I have made comparisons from Case to Case, it could be argued that the Pulse charts are not comparable because the vertical axis – time – does not have a standard unit. This has arisen because one practice can be fleeting, while the next practice can continue for minutes. It was the move from one practice to another that triggered a new code. Consequently, ten codes in one group may represent 10 minutes, whereas ten codes

in another group could be 4 minutes. The rate of coding varied from group to group and from segment to segment. The rate of change seemed to give an indication of tempo within the group, and I chose to keep the vertical axis nonuniform. The alternative was to re-base all the coding to the highest number of codes per minute. For example, one cell had 14 practices; re-basing would have meant taking all coding and interpolating between two codes in a cell until all cells were re-based to 14. While adopting a re-based coding, would have achieved a uniform vertical axis, I believe that it would have eroded basic data integrity because so much of the coding would end up being interpolated from the original.

8.6 SUMMARY

Overall, it is necessary for me to defend the rigour of this thesis while continuing to acknowledge its inadequacies. It is reassuring to know that no research is perfect, and this study is not pretending to be. Discussing openly the choices I have made allows readers to assess for themselves whether any of the described limitations are fatal. As an extension to this chapter, the next – Reflections – considers my relationship to the research and other choices and dilemmas I faced.

9 REFLECTIONS

In the previous chapter, I reflected on issues of methodological choice that have the effect of limiting the findings and conclusions of this study. In this chapter, my reflections are of a more personal nature. Here, I would like to be introspective about the rubbing points in the last five years; rubbing points are those places where one comes to a juncture and, probably without fully understanding the consequences, chooses to step forward in a certain direction. According to Alvesson et al (2008), reflection – referred to as reflexivity in the academic texts – can be an epistemological practice that emphasises intellectual critique. The purpose is to turn back on oneself to explore: the subjective nature of knowledge; the contextual factors that influence when and how research is conducted and knowledge is produced; the ambiguous position of the researcher (Calas and Smircich, 1999). The chapter is organised chronologically because that is the easiest way to make sense of how these ideas and issues unfolded, it also reflects the linear narrative of my researcher notes.

9.1 CHOOSING A TOPIC

Becoming a PhD student required that on application I produce a written document explaining the phenomenon of interest, the literature domains and the likely research question. At this point, my language is definitive; there is nothing tentative about it: *this* is what I plan to study. But it quickly becomes apparent that the topic is going to shift. I heard several times from Supervisors that this was normal and expected, yet every couple of months, through the university processes, I was asked to name my topic as if it was a fixed thing. What I found so dispiriting was that ideas were gayly suggested through review

processes and conferences, all of which were interesting, but they seemed to take me further and further away from what I really wanted to study.

For example, while I was at my former university, having completed my full literature review, I met with a Professor who announced that 'mindful leadership' was not a suitable topic for my PhD. It crushed me. Some years later, sitting here now, I can still feel the pain of that, but I also realise the good sense of it. My literature review had identified a mess: a mess of ideas; a mess of theories; a mess quite frankly too big for any PhD student to wade into. So, I then moved to an adjacent literature – heedful inter-relating (HI). It had enough connection to mindfulness to keep my interest, but it had a better-formed base of theorising from which to work.

This triggered another literature review, which felt a dogged slog. To keep myself motivated, I found a single paper that tested some of the key propositions of HI and decided that a small pilot study replicating those findings would be useful as foundational work. I will reflect later on the pilot study. But in completing the literature review for HI and planning the pilot study, I realised that HI was placing the idea of collective mind in teams. The literature on teams held little appeal for me and once again I found myself pulled away from the locus of interest that initially motivated my studies.

Three conferences helped me to gain a foothold once more. The Academy of Management (AoM) Annual Meeting in 2017 accepted two submissions from me as a doctoral student allowing me to meet with leading voices in different fields of study. One Professor helped me to lay to rest my concerns about HI. It had several features that I

found unappealing: it was located in groups, yet the theory was at a systems level, so it was disconnected from everyday work; and the main literature was situated in Resilience, which was interesting but not <u>that</u> interesting. So at AoM I understood that I was not going to use HI as my framing. Luckily – and yes, I stress LUCK because it was so unplanned but nevertheless liberating – I worked with Spencer Harrison (2014) during a colloquium and received enormous encouragement to work inductively on a phenomenon of interest and to be less constrained by theory and a priori knowledge. The second bit of luck was stumbling into a Paper session at AoM on LAP. The emancipatory ethos of the ideas I heard was uplifting; I bought the book and felt I had found my way.

Coincidentally, Warwick Business School announced a workshop on video ethnography and, given my brush with Harrison, I was inspired to go along to explore its potential. Another Warwick conference on the practice lens drew the threads together.

After roaming the many hinterlands of topics, I felt the 'click' inside me: I was home. Raelin (2016b) even expressed the phenomenon I was interested in, whereas previously I had used the language of mindfulness or HI, within LAP it was "transcend individual embeddedness".

Throughout many of the literature reviews that I attempted, I found myself bored to tears, falling asleep, restless and unruly. My internal narrative told me that I was an undisciplined student and I must be more stringent with myself; I must knuckle down and just do it. I became a tough disciplinarian. But this internal narrative was not entirely true. I was bored and I was frustrated because I was <u>*not*</u> fired up by what I was reading.   Now, I

read literature and while sometimes my head does nod, more usually I find myself excited and enlivened.

This issue of finding the right topic is no small thing. It sits at the heart of my motivation to continue and to finish. Discipline comes more easily when the topic is right. I had not expected this part of studying to be such an emotional rollercoaster, nor so protracted.

9.2 REFLECTIONS PROVOKED BY THE PILOT STUDY

The pilot study replicated and extended a study by Stephens and Lyddy (2016). In writing up the pilot study, I also wrote up my reflections and learning from the experience. These are in the following section, almost verbatim. Reading these reflections two years later, some of the points I mention seem minor, but I have left them intact here because every little thing contributed to the overall learning journey of the PhD. The points that I now consider to be fundamentally important have been expanded slightly by my more recent understandings. Those written at the time of the pilot study are in "".

"There are three key points that I would like to reflect on relating to the experience of running the pilot study and analysing the results. The first is the use of the HI questionnaire; then the use of the Elicitation interview; and finally, the process of coding".

My first reflection, documented then, was that the HI questionnaire was aggregated to a group level for reporting. As I was concerned to stay with group-level analysis, I did not ask individuals to put their pseudo-names on their answer sheets, so I had no way of knowing who had answered in what way. Remarkably, only two items on the questionnaire

had high scoring results and it piqued my curiosity as to who answered in what way and could I see this described behaviour reflected in the video recordings. Sadly, I had no way of tracking back in this way. In future when someone gives a very high score to "I tried to respond to ideas offered by my group members", I will make sure that I can then look back at the video to see if I can verify this behaviour. Reading this comment now, I notice that I continued to provide participants with anonymous data coding sheets so that they could communicate their feelings and responses independently of the group, if they chose to.

As I moved from pilot study to field study, I weighed up the desire to have an audit trail from individual comment to video recording against the desire to have a way of ensuring greater honesty during the Elicitation interviews. In the end, I sacrificed the audit trail for hoped-for honesty. Also, the emphasis on being able to triangulate an individual's view of their practice with my view of practice became less important. However, this idea of what a person intends, or thinks they intend to contribute to the group, versus what they actually effect is an ongoing point of concern for me in this study and is explored in more depth below.

"Two of my research questions in the pilot study relied on me coming to an understanding of individual's experience and this required me to undertake first-person investigation using Elicitation interviews. This is one of my main criticisms of other empirical work on HI where they fail to ask group participants about their experience and given that the operationalisation includes things such as 'balance of attention on self and others' and 'felt quality of unity', my argument is these are things that researchers cannot infer from observation.

"This point is well illustrated through the instantiation of anxiety – which is ONLY made manifest in the Elicitation interview. It is completely invisible in the video recordings. Yet it is a non-trivial aspect of the group that is brought to my attention as expressed doubt. Knowing of this anxiety causes me to reflect more deeply epistemologically – namely that, on coding the videos, even knowing what the group had told me, I can see no external evidence of this anxiety. Like swans, it is possible they are paddling hard internally while maintaining serenity externally. However, a further reflection is that I noted the presence of laughter in the findings and took that to mean a form of contributing, while another possibility is that it was a form of anxiety-release. What I observed on the video is manifestly *different* to what they talk about. However, without recalling that reference point that the participants pointed to, I had coded the full video and identified an alternative time-point where I judged the mood/tempo of the group changed. Around this point in the action, I noted the level of excitement increased and there was a sustained period of talking over each other – this was behaviour that had been noticeably absent until this point".

The mismatch between my observation of the group and the group's reported lived experience was a concern learnt in the pilot study but still not fully resolved in the field study.

9.2.1 Lived Experience versus Observer Experience

Having identified in the pilot study that the group's reported lived experience did not match my observed experience, I recognised that I needed to unpick the different aspects of the problem and seek to ameliorate them. In my view, there were three aspects to this

issue. 1) If the problem lies with me, then the issue is whether I could hone my researcher

skills to record practice in a way that did not rely on me understanding the activity but

retained fidelity with the group practice. 2) On the other hand, the issue might not lie with

me, but instead might be an artefact of impression management. That is, participants might

be *saying* that they meant one thing whereas at the time, they might have actually meant

another thing. 3) Finally, as I believe that reality is socially constructed, irrespective of the

answers to 1. and 2. People will _always_ view situations through their personal lens.

Taking these ideas further, the development of the vector coding of practices was

largely driven by the concern to capture the groups' sayings and doings in a way that did not

rely on me trying to have a facsimile of their experience but retained fidelity to the practice.

This might be a view that is axiologically close to researcher as impartial observer, which is

not a stance usually found in any interpretivist methods. It acknowledged that I was outside

the group and their felt sense of the group would be different to mine, while there was no

single truth to be found; it also acknowledged that the representation of the groups' work

needed to truthfully represent what was going on. The vectors were all developed to be

descriptive of what was happening and not why it was happening, which had the advantage

that the practices were value-neutral and many of the vectors were entirely equivocal,

driven by the reflections from the Pilot Study. In the course of developing the vector coding

of practices, I videoed many groups at work and repeatedly coded their practices to make

sure that the vectors were sufficiently diverse to express the full range of activity and also to

make sure that I 'saw' the same activity in the same way each time.   Someone trained in

shorthand can read their squiggles off the page into intelligible sentences, similarly, I can read my coding back and describe reasonably accurately what the group was doing.

Several of the academic papers that were influential to my thinking used Conversational Analysis (CA) to record a group's undertakings. While admiring the scholarship of these papers, I recoiled at CA because to my mind it was so obviously the researcher saying *this is what's really real*. In other words, the participants don't really know what's going on, but, as a researcher, I do. My view of the relationship between the participants and me, as a researcher, is entirely the other way round. It is their reality, not mine, that I have tried to come to understand.

I also considered whether people's responses in the HI questionnaire as to their intentions might be a form of impression management. This reinforced my commitment to a group interview where I felt it would be difficult for someone to claim good intent in front of their colleagues when their colleagues experienced mal-intent. I wanted to be sure that any say/do gap would be minimal; it seemed to me that the group interview afforded a degree of personal transparency that might be covered over if I only interviewed people individually. This is another aspect of the methods where I hoped to leverage transparency to achieve greater levels of honesty.

The third concern was the most difficult to reconcile. My paradigmatic assumptions took a social constructionist view: social reality is always in the process of being constructed, rather than discovered. In short, there is no single truth about what is happening. Yet the nature of research requires a single voice to prevail. I truly could not

reconcile this dilemma and have instead been transparent about the plurality and anomalies of different perspectives. Through the Findings section, I have tried to faithfully present the data each participant presented to me, including all the places where their coding failed to converge and individual comments contradicted the main group comments. I considered choosing one participant's coding per group to help with a cross-group analysis but realised that I had no way of choosing which coding would prevail. Lacking a strong rationale for privileging one participant's voice, I could not privilege any participant's voice. The default then fell to me and the coding I undertook for each group because that provided a consistent set of data across Cases. This decision made me very uncomfortable, but I could not support any other rationale.

Reflecting on this issue now and considering the well-worn adage that I have used at least twice in the last three pages – there is no single truth – I wonder that I ever expected the participants' data to correlate or even to reconcile in the most benign way. Nevertheless, I have been consistently amazed at how little agreement there is between any two individuals. Partly, this might be because they are individually constructing a different reality but continue to faithfully record their reality. Partly, it might be because they are not sufficiently versed in the use of the vectors to faithfully record their reality and this means that although they interpret what is happening similarly, they are interpreting the vectors differently.

If I was repeating this study knowing the difficulty of comparing between individuals and across groups, I would invest much more time in training the participants in the use of the vector coding of practices. Perhaps I would even have a separate training session

exclusively for this purpose, drilling the participants until their data more precisely triangulated and to the point where I could be sure that they were faithfully representing a different reality, versus unfaithfully representing the same reality. By ensuring their coding was internally consistent within the group, I could then use participants' views, not my views, of the practices in action.

9.2.2 Elicitation Interviews

Returning to the reflections derived from the pilot study, "one further point on the Elicitation interview is that during playback and coding, I noticed the inadequacy of my own inquiry. I become aware that I fail to probe sufficiently about specific experiences, nor do I ask about specific explanations, my questioning is too superficial. It is painful to see how shallow this part of the process is, but it is a great lesson for me for the field studies. The group narration of 'what happened' is so central to my research question, this is not an aspect of the study to rush".

Conscious of this reflection from the pilot study, I took great care to write detailed protocols for the group Elicitation interview so that I had a more powerful set of questions and a more spacious attitude to allow more freedom for people to talk. Appendices A2 and A3 include all the protocols from the Pilot and Field Studies that I used. However, even with this awareness and guidance, sad to say this was not a strong point in the study. Time did constrain how much the group would linger on points and spend time investigating them. They got restless and bored and turned to their phones to clear emails, which I took to mean 'move on'.

9.3 REFLECTIONS PROVOKED BY THE FIELD STUDIES

9.3.1 In the Meetings

Aspects of the meetings themselves continue to concern me. As is the way these days, many people bring computers with them to a meeting, and many refer to source material on their screen and some make notes of the meeting as items progress. The activity that goes on behind the raised lid of a computer is private and it is clear neither to other participants nor to me whether that person/computer are dedicated to this meeting or clearing an email backlog. The attribution of whether they are 'in' the meeting or 'out' may be a function of history, relationships or knowledge. It was commented on by participants in their individual interviews with me, only in a rancorous way, so the attributions I heard were negative. As with other behaviour, I hold a belief that both options can be true, and because I often sat directly behind the participants, I could see what they were doing, which was a mixture of both.

My presence in the meetings, and in F&W the presence of guests, was also a concern. I was also concerned that having video cameras dotted around the room was distracting. The cameras were small (approximately 3 inches by 3 inches) but they also had leads and tripods and LED lights and occasionally they beeped. When planning the studies, I specifically requested meetings that were going to be many hours long and preferably meetings where the content would be compelling. My rationale was that being there with the participants for many hours would acclimatise them to my presence and I would have a chance of becoming 'part of the furniture'. Also, if the content was important, I hoped that the participants would dedicate more mental concentration to the meeting than to worrying

about me. In the post-meeting interviews, people all reassured me that they quickly forgot my presence and they forgot the cameras too. But I have to remain slightly sceptical of how possible it is to ignore such interference. I have shown photographs of the set up at F&W to illustrate this point (see Figure 13 and Figure 14).

Also, I wish to note that in JFA on Day One, the main video camera ran out of battery charge and that another camera only captured part of the group. My technical skills improved through the field study, but it made me turn up on other occasions with three cameras and an audio recorder. This made the equipment even more invasive but provided greater reliability.

9.3.2 Jet Flyer G (JFG)

JFG is an outlier because they did not complete the full research cycle. They are also unusual because they worked entirely on telepresence. The nature of this type of videoconferencing is that it sets up the room in two semi-circles sitting opposite each other, much like the House of Commons. This creates two sides looking at each other through a screen. Add in the individual computer screen, and the view is of a screen of disembodied projecting heads looking back at you over a sea of screens.

I have not adjusted the findings for JFG to take account of this difference and I would not know how to. If we had worked according to plan, this would have been an area for investigation in the Elicitation interview with the group.

9.3.3 Selecting Video Segments for Review

I determined that I would ask individuals to nominate segments of video of the meetings to review as a group and that I would not influence them to look for good or bad examples. So I alighted on the use of the word 'salient', meaning what is relevant and important to *you*. Mostly this worked very well in JFA and JFG, although I have a side-bar comment to make on that aspect in a moment. However, the point I want to make here is that F&W struggled with that turn of phrase. I found that in asking them to select parts of the meeting for us to review together it was impossible to communicate to them what it was I wanted them to select. They would ask if I was interested in 'best practice' within the group or 'highlights' and I steered away from these because I felt that they adhered too closely to 'old' paradigms of groupwork or heroic leadership. This of course is a matter of judgement, but this was the judgement that I made at the time.

I remain concerned that in the F&W case study, I had to rely on the motto used by the characters in *The Three Musketeers* by Alexandre Dumas: "All for one and one for all". Was it too 'leading'? I had asserted/assured myself that I could allow the process to come about and to be defined inductively by the groups within the study without my imposition. But under their cross questioning of me, I crumpled and offered them the definition: 'one for all'. Later, when reviewing the video of 'Funding a New Post' one of them did say "the totality of us", which I have used in the verbatim comments, but I did wince because it was very close to the Three Musketeers motto.

I was delighted that JFA and JFG did not need additional prompts and that the question of what was salient was enough for them to identify common segments. There

was an almost unanimous agreement on the segments, and, as mentioned in the Findings section, some might have been selecting those segments because they considered them 'good' or 'bad'. Of more concern to me is whether they were simply selecting the moments in the meeting where the affect was highest, because the agenda items were the most important to the organisation. They appear to have de-selected material that was routine and of low consequence. My concern here is that affective charge is confounding my understanding of *CC*. This awareness came too late in the study for me to change the framing of the question, but if I was re-doing this study, I would ask them to select segments and I would select an equal number of segments to find out if that affective essence is trivial or important for *CC*.

9.3.4 Returning Again to 'Slides for Tom'

I have struggled with understanding this video segment throughout the thesis and tried to truthfully capture my puzzlement over what was *really* happening. In this section, I will not repeat all those previous comments but return to some philosophical musings. First, to note that Pragmatism does not accept the idea of a single reality, yet here I am struggling to get to a single version of the truth about this meeting. When I step back, I recognise that this segment might be a perfect illustration of this philosophical stance. Hence, I am inclined to say that it is not whether the group was fracturing or cohering BUT BOTH may be true.

Secondly and somewhat wryly earlier I noted that I did not develop vector coding for sociomaterial practices. Yet, here, particularly, these codes would have been imperative. I have read of the work of Davidoff (Adams, 2012) on colour who argues that without a word

for a particular colour, we have no way of identifying that it is different, thus making it

harder for us to notice what makes it distinctive— even though our eyes are physically

seeing the phenomenon in the same way. This segment is not quite in that category,

because I saw the overthrow of one computer by a participant – and this is why I can write

about it, because I did see it. But my range of coding options is inadequate to represent the

violence of that moment. This reflection suggests to me that my vectors can be expanded in

ways that allow for coding of something unexpected or previously unidentified.

Alternatively, when watching videos back, spending time deliberating and considering what

is not being coded adequately and how it might be represented.

Lastly, and with a good deal of caution, I raise the subject of race in 'Slides for Tom'.

Recognising before embarking on this subject, that a) this event was before the Black Lives

Movement (BLM) gained prominence and b) also acknowledging my whiteness and

privilege. At the beginning, the participant who was leading the session was male and the

newest and blackest member of the team. The participant who overthrew the computer

and took over the leading of the session was female and white and a long-standing member

of the team. The new, black, male participant did not complete his probation period and

moved companies.

I tread carefully and try to be sensitive in reflecting on issues of race and gender.

They were never mentioned by the participants, nor did I ask. In today's context of BLM, I

think everyone would be more sensitised to these issues which may have the effect of

either sublimating this behaviour or making it more acceptable to speak about this

behaviour or, it may make it even more prohibited.

In summary, three sets of data align for this video segment: the participants comments align with their coding, and this aligns with my coding too. The _only_ data that is not aligned is my internal construction of the computer incident and my visceral sense of the room at the time. With three sets of data aligned, I willingly conclude that those practices are a fair representation of the video segment.

9.3.5 Group : Individual : Group

In both the Limitations chapter and in this chapter, I have explained at length the dilemma of adopting a group-level coding but seeing individuals take action. When coding, I kept asking whether the individual was representing group or self and that determined whether and how the practice was coded. In the group interview, I paid no attention to who said what, only what got said. The individual interviews impacted the study only in that they provided verification that I was influencing the group to the most minimal extent and to select video segments. My principal learning from this study is that one of the gaps I found from previous studies was there for a reason! The mesolevel of theorising is difficult to achieve. Great authors like Weick and Roberts (1993) slip from meso to meta and to micro and in my view the group-level theory is poorer for it. But staying rigidly at group-level robs the thesis of some richness. To end on a happier note, the group-level analysis is also the prism that has yielded the interesting ideas expressed in this thesis and it will be my preferred unit in future studies, mixed more seamlessly with the individual unit of analysis. I am excited to embark on the next study in LAP.

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APPENDICES

Appendices 1 to 3 provide supplemental material referred to within the main thesis document. Appendix 4 provides the data charts that are best viewed in A3 format and, because of this format decision, are too big to be accommodated within the main body of the document.

A.1 PILOT STUDY DOCUMENTATION FOR SET UP

A.1.1 Pilot Study: Ethics Application, Signed Approval Received on 15th October, 2018

This is a copy of the ethics application that I wrote to conduct the Pilot Study. The application is from October 2018, and the Pilot Study was carried out in February 2019. As mentioned in the main thesis, at this point my framing was rooted within the literature of Heedful Interrelating as described by Weick and Roberts (1993). Therefore, both my application for ethics approval and my research questions reflect that framing:

Henley Business School

Research Ethics Committee

Application for Research Project Approval

Introduction

The University Research Ethics Committee allows Schools to operate their own ethical procedures within guidelines laid down by the Committee. The University Research Ethics Committee policies are explained in their Notes for Guidance (http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/res/ResearchEthics/reas-REethicshomepage.aspx) .

Henley Business School (HBS) has its own Research Ethics Committee and can approve project proposals under the exceptions procedure outlined in the Notes for Guidance. Also note that various professional codes of conduct offer guidance even where investigations do not fall within the definition of research (eg Chartered Institute of Marketing, Market Research Society etc). A diagram of the Research Ethics process is appended to this form.

Guidelines for Completion

- If you believe that your project is suitable for approval by the Research Ethics Committee you should complete this form and return it to the Chair of the Committee. Note that ethical issues may arise even if the data is in the public domain and/or it refers to deceased persons.

- Committee approval must be obtained before the research project commences.

- There is an obligation on all students and academic staff to observe ethical procedures and practice and actively bring to the attention of the Research Ethics Committee any concerns or questions of clarification they may have.

- Records will be maintained and progress monitored as required by the University Research Ethics Committee, overseen by the School Ethics Committee

- This form should be completed by the student/member of academic staff as appropriate. **All forms must be signed by a member of the academic staff before submission.**

- This form is designed to conform to the University's requirements with respect to research ethics. Approval under this procedure does not necessarily confirm the academic validity of the proposed project.

- All **five** parts of the form and **all** questions must be completed. Incomplete forms will be returned. Students should submit forms to their supervisor, who together with staff should pass these to the REC.

- **Student research projects** – initial approval may be given by the academic supervisor. **At the completion of the project students should submit a further copy of the form** to confirm that the research was conducted in the approved manner. **The project will not be marked until this form is received**. If in the course of work the nature of the project changes advice should be sought from the academic supervisor.

1. Project details

Date of submission: Student No.832962
1st October 2018

Title of Proposed Project:- PILOT STUDY – THE EMERGENCE OF HEEDFUL INTERRELATING

Responsible Persons

Name: Jenny Robinson
Email: j.l.robinson@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Name and email address of supervisor Claire Collins: les07cec@reading.ac.uk

Nature of Project (mark with a 'x' as appropriate)

Staff research	☐	Masters	☐
Undergraduate	☐	Doctoral	☑
MBA	☐	Other	☐

(**Student research projects** should be signed off in **section 2. 3** below by the supervisor)
(**Staff research projects** should be signed off in **section 2. 4** below by the Research Ethics Committee)

Brief Summary of Proposed Project and Research Methods

In heedfully interrelating groups the individuals act as if they are interrelated and they coordinate their actions with care. Heedful Interrelating is an emergent, social phenomenon of collective action allowing individuals to synchronize "as if one piece" rather than a disjointed set of contributions (Stephens and Lyddy, 2016).

The role that mindfulness plays in the achievement of heedfulness is underspecified. Further, the levels of analysis of the two constructs need to be better understood. In the pilot study, described in this application, I wish to understand the link between mindfulness and heedful interrelating. For this proposed pilot study my guiding research question is:

- *How does heedful interrelating emerge in groups?*

And, following this headline research question, two subsequent questions are:

- *In a group that is heedfully interrelating, what are individuals experiencing?*
- *What is the group experience of heedful interrelating?*

The pilot study that repeats and extends a previous experimental study by Stephens and Lyddy (2016), with certain aspects of the methodology and method modified to align with my chosen paradigmatic approach. The modifications and the rationale to support them are below.

Four Modifications to the Original Study
- An Additional Unit of Analysis
- Additional Metatheoretical Assumptions
- Include Mindfulness
- Collective-level Data Collection

Once ethical approval has been granted, an advertisement will be placed online using the University of Reading, Department of Psychology's intranet site where students can sign up as participants in studies for credits. Other mature students will be recruited in a similar manner from Henley Business School's Executive MBA programme, however these participants will not receive credits. A third group of participants will be sought from Dr Riddell's cognitive neuroscience group.

In the original experiment, which will be replicated, groups were randomly created from a mix of strangers and each group was given a task to write a jingle within a time limit. Interactions were video recorded and coded against a detailed schema. The authors have kindly provided me with their coding schema.

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☑   I confirm that where appropriate a consent form has been prepared and will be made available to all participants. This contains details of the project, contact details for the principal researcher and advises subjects that their privacy will be protected and that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without reason.

☑   I confirm that research instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, etc) have been reviewed against the policies and criteria noted in The University Research Ethics Committee Notes for Guidance. Information obtained will be safeguarded and personal privacy and commercial confidentiality will be strictly observed.

☑   I confirm that where appropriate a copy of the **Consent Form** and details of the **Research Instruments/Protocols** are attached and submitted with this application.

---

2. Research Ethics Committee Decision (*delete as appropriate*)

2.1 I have reviewed this application as **APPROVED** and confirm that it is consistent with the requirements of the University Research Ethics Committee procedures

2.2 This proposal is **NOT APPROVED** and is returned to the applicant for further consideration and/or submission to the University Research Ethics Committee

2. 3. <u>For student and programme member projects</u>
SUPERVISOR – AT START OF PROJECT   *STUDENT – ON COMPLETION OF PROJECT*

Signed (Supervisor)   Signed (programme member or student)
& Print Name   & Print Name
(*before start of project*)   (*on completion of project*)

2. 4. <u>For staff research projects</u>

Signed:

(Research Ethics Committee Chair or member)

3. Please reply to **all** of the following questions concerning your proposed research project and whether it involves:-

		Yes	No
	Are the participants and subjects of the study patients and clients of the NHS or social services to the best of your knowledge?	☐	☑
	Are the participants and subjects of the study subject to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 to the best of your knowledge (and therefore unable to give free and informed consent)?	☐	☑
	Are you asking questions that are likely to be considered impertinent or to cause distress to any of the participants?	☐	☑
	Are any of the subjects in a special relationship with the researcher?	☐	☑
	Is your project funded by a Research Council or other external source (excluding research conducted by postgraduate students)?	☐	☑

If you have answered **YES** to **any** of these questions, refer to the University's Research Ethics Committee. If you are unsure about whether any of these conditions apply, please contact the secretary of the University Research Ethics Committee, Nathan Helsby (n.e.helsby@reading.ac.uk) for further advice.

4. Please respond to **all** the following questions concerning your proposed research project

		Yes	No
	The research involves archival research, access of company documents/records, access of publicly available data, questionnaires, surveys, focus groups and/or other interview techniques.	☑	☐
	Arrangements for expenses and other payments to participants, if any, have been considered.	☑	☐
	Participants will be/have been advised that they may withdraw at any stage if they so wish.	☑	☐
	Issues of confidentiality and arrangements for the storage and security of material during and after the project and for the disposal of material have been considered.	☑	☐
	Arrangements for providing subjects with research results if they wish to have them have been considered.	☑	☐
	The arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent of this have been considered.	☑	☐
	Information Sheets and Consent Forms had been prepared in line with University guidelines for distribution to participants.	☑	☐
	Arrangements for the completed consent forms to be retained upon completion of the project have been made.	☑	☐

If you have answered **NO** to **any** of these questions, contact your supervisor if applicable, staff members should refer to the Research Ethics Committee.

If the research is to be conducted outside of an office environment or normal place of work and/or outside normal working hours please note the details below and comment on how the personal safety and security of the researcher(s) has been safeguarded.

If these questions cannot be confirmed please contact your supervisor.

Please confirm that at the conclusion of the project primary data will be :-

Destroyed ☑ Submitted to the Research Ethics Committee ☐

A.1.2 Pilot Study: Recruiting Participants

Below is a sample of text that I used to send to MBA colleagues at Henley Business School to try

to encourage them to participate in my Pilot Study. It demonstrates how I chose to explain the

nature of my study to participants:

Dear MBA Colleagues

THE EMERGENCE OF HEEDFUL INTERRELATING

Please spare just a few minutes of your valuable time, so I can make a sales pitch to ask you to help me with my research!

My name is Jenny Robinson, I am a PhD student at Henley Business School and I would like to invite you to join an experiment in group creativity on Sunday the 16th of December at 5:30pm, after the day's workshop has finished.

If you are interested in joining my study, here are some more details about what will happen and when.

In groups of around five people and you will be asked to do a creative task that is non-threatening (and I hope a bit of fun). The group will take just one hour.

The other things you need to know are, that:

- There are two questionnaires: one is online before you join the group; the other is completed while you are in the group; and
- I will video and audio record the group conversation which forms part of my analysis for my PhD.

In my write-up of the group, you will be completely anonymous, I will never use your name or reveal your identity in any other way.

You will be asked to sign a consent form before joining a group so that the University has a record that everything was explained to you in advance.

I hope you're excited to take part and look forward to meeting you. Please click here to sign up; receive participant information and get the consent form.

Thank you so much for considering my sales pitch, I hope to meet you in person in a couple of weeks.

Best wishes
Jennifer (Jenny) Robinson
Doctoral Researcher, Henley Business School
xxxx@pgr.reading.ac.uk

A.1.3 Pilot Study: Participant Consent Form

Below is the Participant Consent Form which was provided to everyone who agreed to take part in the Pilot Study. These forms were printed out and a copy was left at each place setting in the meeting room where the study took place. Everyone signed two copies, one was handed to me and one was given to them to keep for future reference, should they need it:

PILOT STUDY – THE EMERGENCE OF HEEDFUL INTERRELATING

Title of the Project: The Emergence of Heedful Interrelating

Name of the Researcher: Jennifer Robinson
Contact Details: xxxx@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Tel: +44 xxxxx
Tel: +44 xxxxx

1.   I confirm that I have been informed about the aims and objectives of this research project and agreed to give my inputs.

2.   I understand that all personal information that I provide will be treated with the strictest confidence and my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation. I have been provided with a participant number to ensure that all raw data remains anonymous.

3.   I understand that the information I provide will be used by Henley Business School for the purposes of this research project only. The data will be stored on a secure network accessed only by authorised users (the researcher and the supervising staff).

4.   I understand that the results of the research may be published in scientific journals, and an anonymised version of the data may be published in support of these results.

5.   I understand that I am free to withdraw from this project at any stage during the session simply by informing a member of the research team, for whom contact details have been provided. I also understand that I can also withdraw my data for a period of up to 7 days from today, as after this time it will not be possible to identify my individual data from the aggregated results.

6.   I understand that the group discussion will be recorded on audio and video and that I will not be personally identified as a participant in that discussion, nor will my contribution to that discussion be identifiable as mine.

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _____

Participant's name: _____

Participant's email :_____

Participant Code: _____

A.1.4 Pilot Study: Participant Information Form

Below is a copy of the Information Form that accompanied the Consent Form. Again,

these were left at each place setting in the room where the study was conducted.

Participants were asked to take and keep their personal copy.

PILOT STUDY – THE EMERGENCE OF HEEDFUL INTERRELATING

Form (on letterhead)

Jenny Robinson
Henley Business School
Doctoral Office
xxxx@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Tel: +44 xxx
Tel: +44 xxxx

February, 2019

Information Sheet for Participants

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Title of Project: THE EMERGENCE OF HEEDFUL INTERRELATING

Investigator: Jenny Robinson: PhD student at the Henley Business School

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, please take time to read about the study and what it will involve. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

What are the aims of the study?
The study aims to understand how groups work together to solve complex problems and come up with innovative solutions. The focus is on the group, not on individuals.

How will the study be run?
I will observe natural groupings of people in meetings, and other ad hoc conversations, as people get together to work on a project, talk about complex problems or create innovative solutions. I am there to observe meetings, not to participate or interfere. After the group has concluded I will ask the group to answer some questions. Where possible I will video- and audio- record these conversations.

Are there any risks?

I have no intention of putting you at risk and your information will be used anonymously. If anything happens during the study that you feel does put you at risk, you can either inform me and I will take action or you can withdraw from the study.

Is there a complaints procedure?

This study has been reviewed by Dr Claire Collins, my supervisor. If you want to complain, she is the person who in charge of this programme of research. If you feel you need to and if you feel unable to talk to me about a problem, please contact Claire, she can be reached as follows: Dr Collins: les07cec@reading.ac.uk.

Data protection and storage

The video and audio recordings of the groups will be transcribed into a Word document for text analysis. Original texts will be deleted once they have been transcribed. All Word documents and text analysis will be stored on the University's secure servers. Reported results will be pooled data and no participants will be identifiable.

If you have any further questions, please contact me:
Jenny Robinson PhD Student
xxxxx@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Tel: xxxxx

Thank you for taking time to read through this information sheet and showing an interest in this research project.

A.1.5 Pilot Study: Mindfulness Trait Questionnaire

PILOT STUDY – THE EMERGENCE OF HEEDFUL INTERRELATING

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the Mindfulness trait questionnaire. The trait

MAAS is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of mindfulness, namely, a

receptive state of mind in which attention, informed by a sensitive awareness of what is

occurring in the present, simply observes what is taking place.

Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84, 822-848.

Carlson, L.E. & Brown, K.W. (2005). Validation of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in a cancer population. Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 58, 29-33.

Questionnaire

Instructions: Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1-6 scale below, please tick the box to indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

	1 almost always	2 very frequently	3 somewhat frequently	4 somewhat infrequently	5 very infrequently	6 almost never
I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until some time later.						
I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.						
I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.						
I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.						
I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.						
I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.						
It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.						
I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.						

	1 *almost always*	2 *very frequently*	3 *somewhat frequently*	4 *somewhat infrequently*	5 *very infrequently*	6 *almost never*
I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.						
I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.						
I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.						
I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.						
I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.						
I find myself doing things without paying attention.						
I snack without being aware that I'm eating.						

A.2 PILOT STUDY WRITE-UP

Below is a write-up of my Pilot Study, drafted around April 2019 when the study and results were fresh in my mind. I tried to make sure I captured everything of value in the experience of running a study, as well as the results of the study itself:

A.2.1 Introduction

Because my theorizing demands new combinations of methodology, some aspects of my proposal needed testing, before launching into full field studies. This chapter documents a Pilot Study (PS), its purpose and findings. I also reflect on how the findings impact on my overall Research Questions, what I learnt and what adjustments I consider thereafter regarding the subsequent field studies.

Framing of the Pilot Study

To begin, I make the case for a Pilot Study that repeats and extends a previous experimental study by Stephens and Lyddy (2016) using a sample drawn from the MBA (Masters of Business Administration) population at the University of Reading, Henley Business School. Although, this is not exactly the population that I plan to study in the field, as students of business, they are in my opinion a good approximation to business people in organisations. These students are often back in school having been out in industry, and the business school itself represents an organization which provides a parallel context. Also, conducting a PS in a Business School the environment can be controlled. Data collected in this way can help me to understand whether my PhD Research Question is likely to be tenable or whether it needs further revision.

In the Pilot Study, described in this chapter, I set out to understand the link between mindfulness and heedful interrelating. For this Pilot Study my guiding research question was:

How does heedful interrelating emerge in a group?

And, following this headline research question, two subsequent questions were:

In a group that is heedfully interrelating, what are individuals experiencing?

What is the group experience of heedful interrelating?

Repeating and Extending a Previous Study

As a way of structuring the Pilot Study, I chose to repeat and extend a previous lab study by Stephens and Lyddy (2016) which considered how effective patterns of cooperation and coordination emerged in teams as they set about writing jingles (lyrics to be set to music). The goal of the Stephens and Lyddy study was to examine the underlying mechanisms of Heedful Interrelating starting with the theorised facets of Contributing, Subordinating, Representing (CSR). Their research model is shown in Figure A71 :
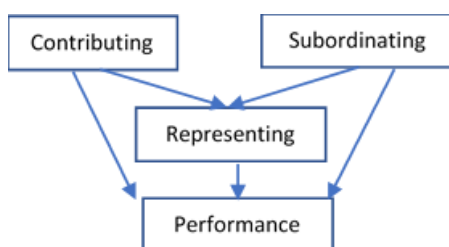
Figure A71 – Theorized relationships of three facets needed for the achievement of heedful interrelating and performance (taken from Stephens and Lyddy, 2016)

Teams were randomly created from a mix of strangers and each team was given a task to write a jingle within a time limit. Interactions were video recorded and coded against the CSR categories.

Their findings led to a revised path model of heedful interrelating (see Figure A72), whereby Subordinating is the only predictor of performance. Both Contributing, and Subordinating, predict Representing but Representing does not link to performance.
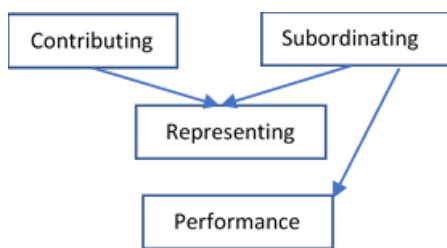
Figure A72 – Revised path model showing facets needed for the achievement of heedful interrelating and performance (from Stephens and Lyddy, 2016)

The study had utility for me as a template to follow for a Pilot Study, because it allowed me to incorporate certain aspects of my proposed methodology. The modifications are discussed in detail in the previous chapter (Chapter two), but are briefly revisited here for completeness:

Modifications to the Original Study

1. *An Additional Unit of Analysis*

The mindfulness of one individual added to the mindfulness of another is insufficient to explain the property of Heedful Interrelating but this is unexplored in any of the other previous studies of Heedful Interrelating. In this pilot, I used both

individual units and social units of analysis to allow this part of the theorizing to be examined.

2. *Additional Metatheoretical Assumptions*

My proposition is that the participants themselves can discuss their own behaviour and the use of Elicitation techniques interviewing would mitigate issues such as impression management. Mostly, because Heedful Interrelating is theorized as a felt sense, I wanted to ensure that this was not my inference but was a reported facet by those taking part. Interpersonal recall is a method whereby the group selects a critical moment in their interaction and the video is re-played to the group as they narrate back their experiences of that moment. This is a form of video ethnography but at a group-level. The important points about this process are that the group chooses what is most salient to them; and that the group describes the experience. It is the group that points to critical components and what helps or hinders in the emergence of heedfulness. This secondary discussion can also be videoed and coded.

3. *Include Mindfulness*

As previously noted, Weick's original definition of heedfulness was referenced to the work of Ellen Langer (Langer, 1992) on mindfulness. It seems appropriate therefore to add the use of a scale of mindfulness/lessness which is a trait-based instrument.

In addition, heedfulness as a socially emergent group-level state cannot be subject to an equivalent instrument. As a proxy, I suggest using the heedful interrelating questionnaire designed and tested by (Daniel and Jordan, 2015).

In summary, my proposal was to repeat the study of Stephens and Lyddy (2016) (on a smaller scale) and to extend the study by including measures of mindfulness at an individual trait level and a social state level. To do this, I added data collection methods not found in the original study: the individual trait mindfulness questionnaire (MAAS by Brown & Ryan (2005); heedful interrelating questionnaire (Daniel and Jordan, 2015); the Elicitation interview and the interpersonal recall process. Table 1 demonstrates how each data collection method relates to a phenomenon of interest and the different units of analysis discussed above.

Table 21 – Data collection and units of analysis

Phenomenon	Data Collection Method	Unit of Analysis
Mindfulness (trait)	Mindfulness questionnaire	Individual
Heedful interrelating	Heedful interrelating questionnaire	Individual aggregated to Group
Heedful interrelating	Elicitation interview	Individual
Heedful interrelating	Interpersonal recall process	Group

A.2.2 Methods

Permission to undertake the Pilot Study was granted by Henley Business School on 15th October 2018, the application, supporting documentation, and consent forms from the participants are provided in Appendix A.

The initial plan was to recruit Full Time MBA in advance of the Christmas holiday. This population matched the original group included in the study of Stephens and Lyddy who used MBA students. The intention was, if sufficient students enrolled, different people with different levels of mindfulness would be allocated to different groups, providing a high and low mindfulness condition. As it happened, very few students enrolled before Christmas and the decision was taken to postpone until the new term.

Through January, a few students enrolled and eventually a group of seven people (three men, four women) were recruited for the study on the 14th of February 2019. Before joining, they each completed an online questionnaire for individual mindfulness. I used the Mindfulness Awareness and Attention Scale (Brown and Ryan, 2003) to measure individual-level, trait-based, mindfulness. This scale was chosen because it is considered a valid and reliable measure of mindfulness (Kotzé and Nel, 2016), although I note the strong criticism from other scholars who note that the MAAS is unidimensional and does not adequately reflect the more refined conceptualisations of mindfulness (for further issues in this debate see Grossman, 2011). However, for this Pilot Study, I am persuaded that the MAAS is helpful because when reviewed against other scales used to measure mindfulness, this instrument had,

at least to my reading, questions that people could better make sense of. For example, another often-used scale is the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Baer et al, 2006) which also has strong psychometric properties, uses questions such as: "I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them" which may be an unobvious idea for someone not imbued in mindfulness. In summary, the MAAS lacks some of the multidimensional aspects of other mindfulness instruments but appears to have questions that are simpler and more relevant to my target audience.

Once the group arrived in the room, they chose to sit at any place around the desk where forms were laid out for completion before participation. Attached to the forms were name badges that allocated each participant a code name: Sun, Moon, Fire, Water, Earth, Wind, Bird and they were asked to speak to each other using these names so as to ensure anonymity. They were provided with a 90 second section of pre-recorded music on a playback device that they could replay any number of times and they were asked to write an advertising jingle within 20 minutes, working as a group. The group was filmed from two angles as they worked. At the end of the allotted time, I returned to the room and asked the group to complete the Heedful Interrelating Questionnaire.

After completing the questionnaire, the group was invited to take part in an Elicitation Interview including interpersonal recall about their experience of working together. This interview was audio recorded.

The two camera video recordings and the audio recording were transcribed. The results from the two sets of questionnaires were entered into excel.

To begin the analysis, I began working atheoretically to develop codings and categories raw from the material available. This inductive coding provided categories substantially and qualitatively different to those provided by the literature. I then began to work theoretically, using the operationalisation provided by the literature for Heedful Interlating. The results of this coding are provided in the findings section below. As a final step, I looked back at the results of the two questionnaires to consider whether the findings were aligned to what the questionnaires might foretell. The results of this reflection are also in the findings section.

A.2.3 Findings

Contributing

Contributing is the facet that is most reliably observed, because it is clear when an individual is adding to the ideas of the group. However, besides these obvious speech-acts there are other less obvious contributions made to the group. In this section, I describe what contributions were made and by whom and how contributions relate to other contributions.

Contributing is considered as additive, with ideas offered, or invited, into the pot of ideas so that gradually the collective pot builds. Against the contributing facet, the Heedful Interrelating questionnaire asks to what extent participants: helped to clarify the idea of another group member; and, whether participants contributed relevant examples within the group. In the Pilot Study there were many instances where this accumulation of thinking can be seen. From the table of emergent coding (Table 4), 'inviting participation of another' is the most frequently coded behaviour.

Examples of additive acts include, for example, Fire is singing and through the singing providing new lyrics, Sun is writing down his lyrics, Wind too is taking notes of what he is singing. When Fire's rhythm-lyric combination breaks down, Sun turns to Bird, who offers her contribution. Later in the video, Sun turns to Water for his input. Sun also articulates this addition at about 9mins30sec when she says "Aasooo what if we put everything together, like if you say, eerrr, like if we add your part to say… go up, go everywhere, life is my playground [4 times]…go ahead, jump, jump, jump,

happy, happy, happy, happy. Right? [Bird is conducting or gesturing with her right

hand in time to Sun reading out the lines]".

These examples show contributing at its simplest, an offer is made and others

[apparently] accept it, support it or add it to what has previously been contributed.

The participants themselves remarked on this in the Elicitation Interview, saying "…and

each single person started to do some contribution". [We were] "kind-of inspiring

each other and it's like somebody taking initiative and then collecting ideas". "There

was a point when you [pointing to Sun] go using Tree's words". So, group members

recognise and name the acts of contributing in the additive sense.

The more nuanced operationalisation of contributing provided by Stephens and

Lyddy (2016) points to behaviours that "demonstrate some balance in attention to the

self and others" (p.4). This is a more subtle form of contributing to judge, because it is

difficult to know whether an actor is attending to others or is motivated by other

internal motivations such as simply being polite. For example, Fire and Moon have

bags of chocolates and offer them to the group. Another example is Bird offering a

spare piece of paper to Sun. These actions might be construed in different ways either

as contributing or as simple helpfulness. It seems likely that the interaction at around

11mins on the videotape is indicative of individuals paying attention to each other:

Bird reaches to the music player and looks to see if Sun wants the music to pause. Sun

is looking down and marking the paper and does not see that Bird is wanting an

indication from her. She looks up and Bird stops the music. Earth has his paper lifted

up to read from it better and to maintain eye contact.

Another facet of the operationalisation of contributing provided by Daniel and Jordan (2017), also encompasses "offering critiques of ideas" (p.200). This is evident in Fire's behaviour. Bird turns to Fire to share a lyric line. He points at her and checks that he understands her words. He plays back her words, but points to a modification to the words, so that it scans in time to the music. In another encounter, Moon asks about getting all the unique selling points of the products into the song, Sun challenges back saying that it is unnecessary in a jingle. Moon makes no counter, but Earth offers another comment which Moon accepts. Fire concludes this section of action by offering a repair – he suggests that as with gambling advertisements, they can use a really fast voice at the end to meet the concern of Moon without encumbering the lyric which is concerning Sun. There is a further comment/critique/comment sequence between Fire and Wind where the rhythm of 'brain' versus 'head' is discussed.

Stepping aside from the provided operationalisations of contributing and coding in an emergent way, other behaviours seemed to fit the essence of contributing. I also consider laughing as a form of contributing. There are several group members who make few speech contributions, for example, Earth does not speak for the first 9 minutes, but the group laughs from the early stages of the task, and throughout thereafter. I note that when there is laughter, everyone joins in.

Contributing has several facets depending on theoretical contribution: contributing is additive; contributing includes split attention to self and others; contributing includes clarification and modification. Evidence is found for all these parts of the contributing dimension within Heedful Interrelating.

Subordinating

Subordinating is a form of giving-way whereby an individual allows others to have precedence within the group. Somebody else's ideas or actions prevail. This section reflects on evidence that aligns to this definition but also looks at other specifics that can be seen in the group which might be included in this category.

While the group is in-task, the video recordings capture only a few examples of people allowing others to have right of way. Moon is about to speak, when she stops and indicates with her hand that she gives way to Sun. At another time, Water rocks in in his chair and then propels forward back over the table to address Fire, but Fire keeps talking and Water does not intervene.

Within the Elicitation Interview there are nine examples coded as subordinating, for example, Earth says, "I remember that we supposed actually to be working together" which is later contextualised, because he says that he withheld his work to allow others to make a larger contribution. Wind also reflects on how he modified his behaviour when he says "but then I said, no, I don't want to interrupt the silence."

The Heedful Interrelating questionnaire translates subordinating into two items. The first item is: "I carefully explained a concept to a group member who did not understand the concept" and this received zero positive responses. The other item: "I tried to think about how I could connect my ideas to ideas offered by other group members" received six positive responses (ranging from 'a little bit true of me' to 'very true of me'). This facet of subordinating is well illustrated in both the video

and in the Elicitation Interview. Sun herself remarks "You know what's funny is that I thought my words were crappy, but I didn't care! I was just like this is why I'm not in marketing, but it's okay. And, to be honest, I don't think I used any of the words in the song. It's everybody else's words that are like in the song, because I was like, yeah, yeah". But this type of quote illustrates some domain overlap between contributing and subordinating because it can be construed under both categories. What differentiates subordinating from contributing is that the former takes account of the shaping of an individual's behaviour by the understanding they have of the group's needs. So, Sun's statement maybe reinterpreted that she understood the need to make progress as a group and recognised that her best contribution would be to gather all ideas; she (despite having a music degree) had no need to shine personally.

Subordinating recognises that Heedful Interrelating relies on a subtle mix of give and take with individuals allowing their contributions to be shaped by the needs of the group. Or, individuals allowing the needs of the group to take precedence over their needs. Some of this type of behaviour can be found in the video recordings, Elicitation Interviews and responses to the HI questionnaire.

Representing

This is a facet unique to Heedful Interrelating, it is the ability of an individual to hold the unit of the group within themselves so that they deeply understand the interconnectivity and reciprocity of the whole. Through this understanding they are able to begin to predict how one action by one member will impact, affectively, on others in the group. This facet specifically operationalises the aspects of heed and care

that are hallmarks of Heedful Interrelating. It maybe that representing is a form of meta-cognition, which is an important idea stemming from mindfulness. Meta-cognition is defined as awareness of awareness and it is the capacity that allows an individual to notice where they are focusing and if/when necessary to consciously change their focus of attention (Good et al, 2016).

It is hard to know what representing behaviour would look like. In the open coding of the video recording, I have noted that there are four places where all speaking is arrested, and the group pauses. The pausing and ensuing silence seems intentional.

The a priori coding of the Elicitation Interview produces 26 examples of representing. Bird demonstrates her awareness of this when she says: "I'm actually the best person to do the reflection, I think, because all the way I was observing what happens. One main reason is I'm not a music person at all, so for me it was a whole chunk of project where there is no way to crack in. And then what I observed during the process is that it's really interesting to say how the group members reacted."

Water too describes what it was like to be in a group with this form of supra-individual consciousness "I think we took, like, mutually and sort of like we're going to go twice listening to the music and then we stopped and reflected on what we had and then sharing, bouncing ideas on each other and writing, singing again, discussing again, writing. I didn't think there was a pause was there, but might be some kind of, what do you say, thinking time to bounce idea, but not a pause pause, constant stop or conflict." And later in the progress of the group, Tree demonstrates how this collective

consciousness flourishes even further "I think I was like, ahh, good idea. I think that's

what came to mind and I think that's what I actually felt as well. But it was like an a-ha

moment when I heard his words I was like oh, this is brilliant. And then I think he

started explaining the mood as well and I was like, oh, I can see it. So it was like a mind

opening moment."

The HI questionnaire operationalises representing through two items: I

rephrased what a group member had said so that I could check my understanding of

his/her idea; and I asked a group member to elaborate on his/her idea so that I could

make sure I understood what he/she was saying. There are multiple examples of both

these sets of behaviours.

Representing is a frequently coded behaviour for this group and they

demonstrate it during the task and the group speaks of it extensively in the Elicitation

Interview.

A summary of the coding for contributing, subordinating and representing is

below in Table 22 to show the frequency of behaviours occurring in each category.

Table 22 – A priori coding of Elicitation interview

Name	Number of References in the Transcript
ELICITATION INTERVIEW	
Subordinating	9
Contributing	8
Representing	26

In addition to a priori coding, I also used open coding and this produced other

categories, which are explored in the section below. However, before moving to these

newly created categories, in the next section I consider the use of the mindfulness

questionnaire and what it adds to the findings from the Pilot Study.

Mindfulness

The mindfulness questionnaire overlays onto individuals a yardstick as to their

presumed trait levels of mindfulness. The results of the questionnaire for each

individual are shown in Table 23 below:

Table 23 – Trait levels of mindfulness results for each individual participant

Participant	*Total raw score*
Bird	70
Sun	64
Fire	63
Water	63
Earth	57
Moon	51
Wind	45

Based on these scores, it is interesting that the self-nominated leader of the

group was not the most mindful. However, the alliance of Sun and Fire – which was

the main axis of momentum in the group – were amongst the highest possible scoring

combinations. Bird, was the one who said in the Elicitation Interview that she was the

best to reflect what was happening in the group, and here she is scored as the most

mindful person.

These scores also highlight another puzzle. Wind who is scored as the least

mindful in the group exhibited a lot of behaviour that was equivocal – that is, it can be

viewed as either mindful or mindless – it is difficult to interpret. For example, Wind,

also had a degree in music, but only makes a contribution to the lyric building at the

last possible moment. This might be seen as helpful in that she does not dominate the

group – and therefore can be a form of subordinating. Or, it might be considered as a

form of withholding. Contrary to her low mindfulness score, I have coded her

behaviour as helpful and therefore beneficial to the overall sense of heedfulness.

Raw scores of themselves tell us very little. As a way of gauging how other groups

might score, I returned to the original group used by Brown and Ryan (2005) to

compare their raw average scores, these are shown in the Table 24 below:

Table 24 – Comparison of mindfulness scores with Pilot Study and original groups of Brown and Ryan

Question	1*	2*	3*	4	5*	6*	7*	8*	9	10*	11	12	13*	14*	15*
Total per question for Pilot Study Group	30	30	27	21	30	27	28	28	26	29	22	30	22	28	35
Average for question	4.2	4.2	3.8	3.0	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.7	4.1	3.1	4.2	3.1	4.0	5.0
Compared to Brown and Ryan original	4.0	4.1	3.8	3.4	3.8	3.4	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.5	4.3	2.6	3.6	4.1

Questions with an asterix show where the Pilot Study group has an average higher mindfulness score than the Brown and Ryan original group. With 11 out of 15 questions receiving higher scores.

Within the context of a mixed-methods study where I am taking a social constructionist approach, these results are interesting but are not used to imply cause:effect. I try to make sense of these findings in the discussion.

Other features of the group

In addition to the three facets of contributing, subordinating, representing (CSR) – used in the a priori coding – I undertook emergent or open coding. Table 25 below shows the new categories that were created using this method of data analysis:

Table 25 – Open coding used to create new categories

Name	*References*	*Ranking*
ELICITATION INTERVIEW		
Individual not struggling	4	3
Doubts about the group	4	3
Doubt from the individual about them self	10	2
Group affect on individual affect	11	1
VIDEO RECORDINGS OF GROUP DURING TASK WORK		
Directing action in the group	3	5
Inviting participation of another	7	1
Listening attentively to each other	5	3
Laughing as encouragement	6	2
Writing down another's idea	4	4
Clarification of another's idea	2	6
Build on another's idea to improve it	2	6
Statement made to elicit agreement of group	2	6
Ahh haa encouragement	3	5
Group process	5	3
Representing the whole	4	4
Dyad agreement on a point	5	3
Other signals of encouragement	5	3

Some of these openly coded items naturally subsumed into the categories provided by CSR as a form of assimilation. Whereas some of these emergent codes

can be used to extend the categories of CSR. Both assimilation and extension provide greater depth and clarification of the operationalisations – and, will be taken into my future the field studies. These assimilations and extensions are further discussed below.

Open Coding Providing Assimilations and Extensions of CSR

Some open coding mapped directly to the core meanings embedded in CSR. For example, 'inviting participation of another', 'listening attentively to each other', 'writing down another's idea', 'clarification of another's idea', 'building on another's idea to improve it', 'laughing as encouragement'. Ahh haa encouragement and other signals of encouragement are all behaviours that align definitionally to CSR. The other code that I de-noted as 'representing the whole', are four sequences of video where Sun is reading back to the group the assemblage of all the ideas – she is literally representing the finished work produce of everyone.

Coding Un-related to CSR

But there are additional codes that neither sit within or add to the pre-existing CSR and these are discussed in this section. Codes from the transcript of the Elicitation Interviews are derived as: individual not struggling; doubts about the group; doubt from the individual about them self; group affect on individual affect; and group process. I define what each category represents and illustrate the findings for each category.

'Individual not struggling' is a cluster of reported experiences by individuals where they indicate full confidence in the group, they express the belief that they have

the [power] to shape the group / give the group a boost or that they see that someone

else is impacting the group. This category stands in contrast to subordinating whereby

the group has the affect; here the individual holds the affect. Examples are: "you know

what's funny is that I thought my words were crappy, but I didn't care"; "I had a whole

advert in my head".

'Doubts about the group' is as described. Individuals expressing their concern

about the group's ability to perform. For example, "we will not get this done in 20

minutes"; "it was the first time that we ran the sound and put lyrics into it and you

were singing and the first line sounded very well, but then the second didn't fit and I

felt like oh…"; and "for me I would say that that was the only moment that I felt that

there would be failure". Note here, that these doubts only surfaced retrospectively in

the group interview, they are unexpressed in the video recording.

'Doubt from the individual' about them self is when a person suffers a collapse

of confidence and feels that their contribution is inadequate, unhelpful or lacking

quality. In a creative context these individuals are unable to contribute, so this

becomes a form of absence: "I didn't really know what to do"; "…like I kind-of felt a

little bit blank"; "I don't want this to be the thing that I want to share about what I've

done".

In common with subordination, the next category captures the group impact on the

individual, but this time it is about the individual feeling their state is changed because

of the actions by the group. Actions maybe general or directed specifically towards the

individual. For example: "I think that for me it triggered my mental juices at that

moment…"; "having somebody kind-of start and break down the creative wall and everyone else could join in".

There are other categories that emerge from the open coding of the video recordings of the task work, these are: group process, directing action in the group, statement made to elicit agreement of group, dyad agreement on a point. Each is described.

'Group process' describes actions by individuals that affect how the group works together. Fire controlled the time "very strictly"; Wind suggested keeping the music on repeat. But it is noticeable that other group process comments or interventions are missing, for example, groups often suggest to each other that they break the task into pieces or that they work in pairs or other directions that change group dynamics, these are absent here.

'Directing action in the group', might be proximal to group process because it is designed to shift the focus of attention or method of discussion. These are the smallest of interventions such as "again?" or "put that in there" or "we have a chorus". In a similar way, there are two statements with an inflection at the sentence end, which are used – both times by Sun – to check with the group on her conclusion. Group process, directing action and statement of intent might all form a clustered category representing a shaping of the group's activity.

The final category refers to dyadic conversations that occur between Fire and Moon and between Moon and Wind. There are five coded instances of this behaviour.

The dyads have side discussions and concur with each other before re-joining the main conversation (Figure A73 shows Sun and Wind in dyadic conversation). This is again equivocal behaviour. It is not obvious what Fire and Moon have said and agreed to. As Sun and Wind both have studied music, they are having more technical asides on the rhythm/beat of the music. Sun asks Wind directly to drum out the count for her to check the scanning of the lines. Although directly helpful to Sun, it is unclear whether this is exclusionary behaviour or in-group between them.

Figure A73 - Sun and Wind in dyadic conversation

Summary of findings

Contributing, Subordinating, Representing are the three facets operationalised in the literature for Heedful Interrelating. Other scholars have expanded and refined these facets so that they are multi-dimensional categories. In some cases, it is difficult to know whether observed behaviour is representative of the scholarly operationalisations.

Open coding was one way that I used to stay close to the data without needing to decide too early in the analysis whether I was observing CSR behaviours. As a result of open coding many behaviours did fall into the CSR categories, but other behaviours did not directly align. As a result, I have eight categories that describe behaviour not used within CSR, three of the eight categories might be united into one category. The discussion that follows reflects on these findings and how they inform my future field studies.

A.2.4 Discussion

This discussion seeks to reflect on several aspects of the Pilot Study. First, I consider the Research Questions and what the above findings help me to answer or leave unanswered. Then, I consider the process of running the Pilot Study and what this experience has taught me about future field studies. Finally, I look back at the conclusions from the PS, as well as the lessons learnt and begin to shape and refine my future Research in the Field including new Research Questions and approaches.

The Pilot Study Research Questions

For this Pilot Study my guiding research question was:

How does heedful interrelating emerge in a group? And, following this headline research question, two subsequent questions were:

- *In a group that is heedfully interrelating, what are individuals experiencing?*
- *What is the group experience of heedful interrelating?*

Results of questionnaires and my observations from the video footages suggest this group might or might not have achieved Heedful Interrelating, the evidence is

equivocal and inconclusive. Against the dimensions of CSR, the findings are uneven

and inconsistent. There is a lot of data within the contributing domain – the group

worked in a very additive way. I feel the need to record their success (see Figure A74

below) and the achievement of the task they were set. Below is the lyric sheet (see

Figure A74) that they performed to me at the end of the 20 minutes.
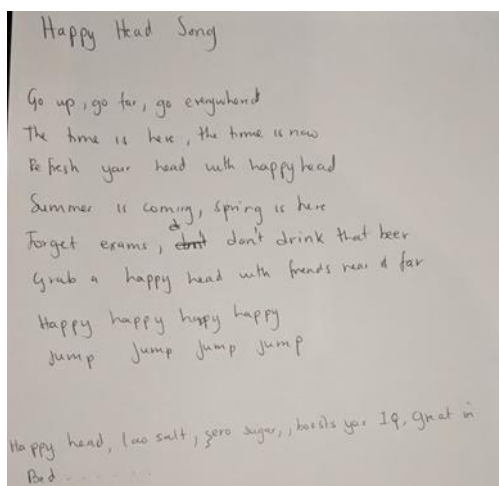

Figure A74 – Lyric sheet handed in and performed after 20 minutes

The group's performance was on-target – the assignment delivered on time

and to the quality expected. This I believe is a great example of teamwork, the central

question that remains is however, relating to the Research Question – How does

heedful interrelating emerge in a group of strangers? Key to answering this, are the

fine details of the operationalisations: in *contributing* the aspect that makes this facet

heedful is the "balance of attention to self and others". Central to the

operationalisation in *subordinating* is the "adaptive to the demands of the team" and

for *representing* is the "felt unity of cohesiveness". These conceptualisations are, in

my opinion, what differentiates heedful interrelating from the usual teamworking

because they incorporate "heed" or "heedfulness" which tracks back to "mindfulness".

It is therefore important to consider, where were the moments of heed?

Where is the heed or care of heedfulness?

In the emergent coding of the videos, the attitudes and actions of attentive listening are in evidence. Mostly, this is in the form of taking notes or of direct eye-line. At one point, Wind shows through eye-line and posture that she is interested in Wind's contribution. Others are also attentive to his involvement. In addition, there are other signals of heed – Fire uses thumbs-up gestures to different parties after they have said something that he wants to support; Water and Wind can be seen nodding vigorously when they like an idea supplied by someone else. In two different places, when Sun is singing, Moon dances in her seat mimicking the words in her arm-ography (see Figure A75 below). I take this to be a sign of heed. Wind and Earth share a joke and mutual hand signals of acknowledgement. There are also examples of ahh hhaa expressions which is a non-verbal way of staying in the conversation energetically when not having a specific idea to add at that point.

Figure A75 – Arm-ography of Moon

Attention is a concept central to mindfulness and attentive listening may be a proxy for heedfulness. The difficulty is that this might be learned behaviour and not at all representative of the internal landscape, it is possible to look as if one is attentive without actually being attentive. However, my counter to this point of view is the extent to which the silent, but, attentive individuals are also interactive. That is, there attentiveness is active and participative, and this suggests that it was not simply surface behaviour.

Two other findings support my contention that this was a heedfully interrelating group. As mentioned previously, the group made space and held silence a number of times during the work period. I coded three instances of *silence* and consider this as part of the representing facet. Grossman (2011) in lambasting scholars for de-nuding the definition of mindfulness from its original Buddhist roots, notes that "mindfulness is deliberate, open-minded awareness of moment-to-moment perceptible experience …. and is markedly different from everyday modes of awareness" (p.1035). This form of mindfulness is built on contemplative practice where silence is imperative for the individual's investigation of the mind. Hence, I consider a group holding silence to be a pivotal act. And possibly a time when the group is able to achieve a reperceiving which is defined as "a shift in perspective associated with decreased attachment to one's thoughts and emotions." (Brown et al, 2015, p.1021). The second and third Research Questions help to unpack this a little further, because it is only through understanding the experience of the individuals involved that we can discover whether such a shift in perspective was facilitated by the silence.

Research Questions two and three, were: In a group that is heedfully interrelating, what are individuals experiencing? What is the group experience of heedful interrelating? Two of the modifications that I made to the original Stephens and Lyddy study were the use of an additional unit of analysis at group level and to use a social constructivist paradigm. These modifications resulted in the use of an Elicitation Interview, with the group, such that they could reflect on the moments in the group which were important to _them_ and then describe their experience of that.

In the Elicitation Interview, the group identify a period of working around 7 minutes into the group task where they felt a shift in dynamics, "the ahh haa moment" a time of rising confidence in the group and possibly the glimmer of Heedful Interrelating. As Earth relates at that moment he felt a sudden opening and he says "I think it did open a lot that we could kind of do it.". This flourishing is accompanied by a sense of surprise and inspiration, a sense of being uplifted or propelled along by the group, even if individually one has doubts or feels unable to contribute.

In the development of this Pilot Study, I stated that I wanted to explore an under-theorised question of whether the mindfulness of one individual added to the mindfulness of another is helpful in explaining the collective state of Heedful Interrelating. To expand on this concern, I consider below the top two and bottom two individuals and their role in the group and seminal interventions that they make.

Bird

According to the MAAS questionnaire, Bird is the most mindful individual in the group. During the task work she makes three moves to support the group. As she is

proximal to the playback device she is often the initiator of re-connecting to the music, she leans over, often unasked to start the jingle playing. She also adds a lyric focused on Happy Head boosting your IQ, which is an idea that generates some further clarification and comment between her and Fire, but which does not get included in the final article. Her other move within the group is to be actively attentive to others, although she is minimally verbal, she is maximally present physically. This behaviour aligns with the mindfulness/heedfulness construct.

Bird is the self-proclaimed processual observer of the group "all the way I was observing what happens" and in the Elicitation Interview offers a wealth of observations, without dominating or crowding out others. She is able to recall details of the group and what happened and to describe them (her descriptions accord with the video playback too). This seems to indicate a meta-cognitive awareness congruent with mindfulness.

Sun

Sun is the second most mindful individual and nominally the "leader". Her moves are very different to Bird's, most noticeably, she has her head down a lot taking or altering notes. Her main move within the group is to invite contributions by others and to sing back to the group the combined results. Sun asks Wind to help tap out the beat so that she can check her recall of the rhythm. Sun makes no comment on the process, whilst in the process – which might be an expected normal move by a leader. Sun does not praise anyone's specific contribution, does not denigrate anyone's

specific contribution and only pushes back on one suggestion (from Moon re. USPs of the product) but I note that these USPs are included on the bottom of the lyric sheet.

In the Elicitation Interview, Sun is very descriptive of the shift in group mood:

"I think I was like, ahh, good idea. I think that's what came to mind and I think that's what I actually felt as well. But it was like an a-ha moment when I heard his words I was like oh, this is brilliant. And then I think he started explaining the mood as well and I was like, oh, I can see it. So it was like a mind opening moment."

Although I note that nothing about Sun's behaviour changes on the video recording at the moment that she describes above – I reflect on this further in the next section.

I continue to be fascinated and concerned about how individual and collective mindfulness relate to each other conceptually. From the scant evidence of this Pilot Study, I simply note that the most mindful person was not the leader. The leader, who is allegedly the second most mindful person, did not exhibit any particular behaviour that would have led me to that conclusion.

Wind is the person scoring lowest in the mindfulness scores. Her behaviour, as described above is equivocal and can be read in two ways. The main moves she makes for the group are to put to the speed of the music saying "it's very fast" and she uses her physical expressions to indicate approval of others contributions: leaning forward, nodding, eye contact, hand gestures. Despite being lower in the MAAS, Wind is very similar to Bird in that she speaks infrequently but is consistently engaged and showing her levels of attentiveness. The other notable behaviour of Wind's is the number of times she initiates a tête-à-tête private side conversation with Sun; Sun conversely

initiates one of these. In reflecting on her experience of the group, Wind says

"[c]omfortable. Yeah, it was good. Yeah, it was a good feeling, like a sense of

camaraderie". It seems unlikely therefore that she was mindless and disconnected

(running on auto pilot) from the group. Another explanation that is possible is that

Wind is more mindful than represented in these scores. A criticism of these

instruments is that the very nature of mindfulness can cause an individual to down-

rate their own mindfulness because they are more aware of their mindlessness.

Mindful people notice when they are not mindful; whereas less mindful people do not

notice (this debate can be found in Baer et al, 2006, 2008; Krech, 2006). From the

evidence of this study, I cannot judge.

Moon is the penultimate low scorer on the scale. The behaviour she shares

with Wind is the tendency to have side conversations with Fire. These are the only

two pairings (Wind:Sun and Moon:Fire) that initiate this behaviour. Moon is also

singular in making a contribution that is countered by Sun. On two occasions, Moon

chair dances. She makes more verbal suggestions than Wind and sings along with Fire

when he offers a contribution. As noted for the other group members, I can see no

point where her attention diminishes, so she remains energetically involved in the

group even when not directly speaking or offering ideas.

Summary of Research Questions

Although I have expressed some doubt as to my findings of Heedful

Interrelating, on balance I believe this is a group that did achieve a shift to supra-

individual collective coordination and collaboration. In the Elicitation Interview they all

cited the same moment that they felt the shift and they use similar language to describe their experience of it. The findings show strong evidence for Contributing; and Representing and less strong evidence for Subordinating, but all three facets of the operationalisation were present.

Most remarkably, despite a variation in individual mindfulness scores, the individuals within the group demonstrate a high level of attention to each other and to the task. Focused attention is the foundational skill of mindfulness.

Discussion of the Process of the Pilot Study

There are three key points that I would like to reflect on relating to the experience of running the Pilot Study and analysing the results. The first is the use of the HI questionnaire; then the use of the Elicitation Inverview; and finally, the process of coding.

The HI questionnaire is aggregated to a group-level for reporting. As I had this in mind, I did not ask individuals to put their pseudo-names on their sheets, so I had no way of knowing who had answered in what way. Remarkably only two question results had high scores and it piqued my curiosity as to who answered in what way and could I see this described behaviour reflected in the video recordings. Sadly, I had no way of tracking back in this way. In future when someone gives a very high score to "I tried to respond to ideas offered by my group members" I will make sure that I can then look back at the video to see if I can verify this behaviour. A good lesson to learn in my PS not in the field work.

Two of my research questions relied on me coming to an understanding of individual's experience and this required me to undertake first-person investigation using Elicitation Interviews. This is one of my main criticisms of other empirical work on HI where they fail to ask group participants about their experience and given that the operationalisation includes things such as "balance of attention on self and others" and "felt quality of unity", my argument is these are things that researchers cannot infer from observation.

This point is well illustrated through the instantiation of anxiety – which is ONLY made manifest in the Elicitation Interview, it is completely invisible in the video recordings. Yet it is a non-trivial aspect of the group that is brought to my attention as expressed doubt. Knowing of this anxiety, causes me to reflect more deeply epistemologically – namely that, upon coding the videos, even knowing what the group had told me, I can see no external/behavioural evidence of this anxiety. Like swans, it is possible they are paddling hard internally whilst maintaining serenity externally.

However, a further reflection is that I noted the presence of laughter in the findings and took that to mean a form of contributing, another possibility is that it was a form of anxiety-release. What I observed on the video is manifestly *different* to what they talk about. However, without recalling that reference point that they pointed out, I coded the video and would identify another time-point [00.13.14] where I judged the mood/tempo of the group changed. Around this time the level of excitement increased and there was a sustained period of talking over each other – this was

behaviour that had been noticeably absent until this point. Yet no one had expressed the need to take turns. This re-affirms to me the necessity of asking people about their experience, rather than simply inferring their experience from behaviour.

One further point on the Elicitation Interview is that during playback and coding, I notice how inadequate is my own inquiry. I do not probe sufficiently about specific experiences nor about specific explanations, everything is treated superficially. It is painful to see how superficial this part of the process is, but it is a great lesson for me for the field studies. The group narration of 'what happened' is so central to my Research Question, this is not an aspect of the study to rush.

I turn now to the most perplexing, frustrating and intriguing part of this study: The equivocal nature of behaviour and subsequent coding to categories. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, researchers continue to infer meaning onto behaviour, yet nearly all behaviour is neutral and intent, good or bad, can always be imputed and maybe more about the Researcher than the Participant. Some behaviour closely aligned to the essence of the operationalised terms, some behaviour seemed to marginally extend or add particulars to the understanding of HI.

Other behaviour, in total from this study eight categories, are not directly related to the phenomenon of interest. For the purposes of this study, I set aside these eight new categories and focus on the extensions and clarifications provided by the coding process. The new codes that I take to be aligned with CSR are: 'inviting participation of another', 'listening attentively to each other', 'writing down another's idea', 'clarification of another's idea', 'building on another's idea to improve it',

'laughing as encouragement' and 'representing the whole'. I also note that these are descriptors of behaviour that are frequently found in functional teamwork and that by themselves they lack the elements of heed and care which are so distinctive and captured in Heedful Interrelating. Nevertheless, the attentiveness with which these actions were taken was certainly in evidence.

Looking Forward to the Field Study

In this next section I return to the literature to reflect on the original Stephens and Lyddy study and how my findings add to theirs; and I also reflect on other studies and how knowledge of Heedful Interrelating might be refined.

The study by Stephens and Lyddy led to a revision of their hypothesis suggesting that only Subordinating is a predictor of performance. And that both Contributing, and Subordinating, predict Representing but Representing does not link to performance. As there study was quantitative, our findings are not directly comparable. However, I offer the following comments, based on the literature and the PS.

The theory of HI states that all three facets are required to be present for collective minding to occur (Cooren, 2004; Dougherty and Takacs, 2004; Mcphee, Myers and Trethewey, 2006; Styhre et al, 2008; Weick and Roberts, 1993) what is unclear is whether all facets need to be equally represented. Against the findings of this PS, I would conclude that they do not. Subordinating was the lowest represented facet, still observed but rarely and equivocally but sufficiently to show that heed was being taken and that the group prevailed over the individual.

Cooren (2004) offers that Heedful Interrelating should not be reduced to times when it is perfectly in evidence. Actions that tend to be "careful, critical, consistent, purposeful, attentive, studious, vigilant, conscientious and pertinacious" are worthy of being considered part of the admixture of Heedful Interrelating (Weick and Roberts, 1993, p.361). Against this yardstick, I wholly concur.

A contribution to theorising by Styhre et al (2008) suggests that an element of playfulness is necessary for the initiation of heed. The frequency of laughter and the inclusiveness of the laughter in the PS suggest that playfulness was present within the group. Although I noted earlier that this might be an anxiety reducing action overall it seems more likely to be team play, given the nature of the task being addressed.

The literature is silent on the issue of Heedful group leadership and so I have no basis, at this point, to draw conclusions on the importance of leading (individual or shared). For completeness throughout this write-up I have noted the actions taken by Sun (who appeared as the self-appointed leader) and by Fire (who also took leadership actions). For example, Fire invites Moon to share her lyrics. Fire is also timekeeper and is the only other person to "sing" lyrics. This leaves me with questions such as:

Maybe the most mindful person does not have to be leader? Maybe collective mindfulness is supported by the "group process" moves of a mindful person?

As I move forward into field studies, I am interested to embrace some of the anomalies encountered here. The HI questionnaire will have a space for a name. The additional categories derived from open coding will be used. I will do a better job of Interviewing participants using Elicitation. I will recognise that Heedful Interrelating

does not have to be perfectly formed. And, that issues of leadership maybe a valuable line of enquiry.

A.2.5 Conclusion

In conducting this Pilot Study I noted in my research notes that I set out to learn:

- Whether CSR is suitable notation for observation?
- Whether high/low mindfulness in individuals is evident / makes a difference / shows up?
- Whether the group discusses any of the facets in the Stephens and Jordan questionnaire?
- Whether the questionnaire by Stephens and Jordan bears any relation to what happens / what is observable on video?

In summary, would these instruments/observational and questioning techniques get to the phenomena of interest in the field?

Briefly, my answers are as follows. The CSR facets are of limited value for observation, the way they are written require the Researcher to imply a further level of intent which needs to be done with great care. I have noted several instances where behaviour could be viewed as both positive and negative in degrees of heed. The observation of the behaviours is a necessary part of the process, but only when coupled with interviews can it be truly possible to understand whether individuals are exhibiting CSR.

Higher and lower levels of individual mindfulness were NOT evident. It cannot be said whether they made a difference or not. Overall, the group did exhibit high levels of attention and I believe that that made the difference.

The group did spontaneously mention both Subordinating and Representing behaviours directly in the Elicitation Interview. Their description of the achievement of Heedful Interrelating was consistent across the group, it was viscerally felt and they claim it made a difference.

The HI questionnaire provides further helpful operationalization of the facets of collective mind but in the Pilot Study it was not immediately evident that these behaviours were in action within the group.

In summary, the combination of these instruments, observational and questioning techniques – with some modifications – will enable me to confidently work towards the phenomena of interest in the field.

A.2.6 References for Pilot Study

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A.3 FIELD STUDY DOCUMENTATION FOR SET UP

All the documents that following in Appendix A.3 relate to the Field Study. A3.1 to A3.6 are mostly duplicates of the Pilot Study. The documents vary in two ways, both are explained in the main thesis, that is: whilst at the beginning I continue to frame the study as heedful inter-relating as I talk to potential sponsors for the Cases, leadership becomes more prominent until eventually (following the Academy of Management Meeting), I move the frame to LAP; secondly, as a result of the Pilot Study, I begin to introduce the language of *Conscious Coalescence*. At first, *CC* continues to be framed within heedful inter-relating, but latterly moves towards LAP. These two shifts are evident in the following:

A.3.1 Field Study: Ethics Application, Signed Approval Received On 29th March 2019

Henley Business School
Research Ethics Committee

Application for Research Project Approval

Introduction

The University Research Ethics Committee allows Schools to operate their own ethical procedures within guidelines laid down by the Committee. The University Research Ethics Committee policies are explained in their Notes for Guidance (http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/res/ResearchEthics/reas-REethicshomepage.aspx) .

Henley Business School (HBS) has its own Research Ethics Committee and can approve project proposals under the exceptions procedure outlined in the Notes for Guidance. Also note that various professional codes of conduct offer guidance even where investigations do not fall within the definition of research (eg Chartered Institute of Marketing, Market Research Society etc). A diagram of the Research Ethics process is appended to this form.

Guidelines for Completion

- If you believe that your project is suitable for approval by the Research Ethics Committee you should complete this form and return it to the Chair of the Committee. Note that ethical issues may arise even if the data is in the public domain and/or it refers to deceased persons.

- Committee approval must be obtained before the research project commences.

- There is an obligation on all students and academic staff to observe ethical procedures and practice and actively bring to the attention of the Research Ethics Committee any concerns or questions of clarification they may have.

- Records will be maintained and progress monitored as required by the University Research Ethics Committee, overseen by the School Ethics Committee

- This form should be completed by the student/member of academic staff as appropriate. **All forms must be signed by a member of the academic staff before submission.**

- This form is designed to conform to the University's requirements with respect to research ethics. Approval under this procedure does not necessarily confirm the academic validity of the proposed project.

- All **five** parts of the form and **all** questions must be completed. Incomplete forms will be returned. Students should submit forms to their supervisor, who together with staff should pass these to the REC.

- **Student research projects** – initial approval may be given by the academic supervisor. **At the completion of the project students should submit a further copy of the form** to confirm that the research was conducted in the approved manner. **The project will not be marked until this form is received**. If in the course of work the nature of the project changes advice should be sought from the academic supervisor.

1. Project details

Date of submission: 5th March 2019   Student No. bb832962

Title of Proposed Project:-

A Field Study To Understand The Emergence of Conscious Coalescence

Responsible Persons

Name & email address of principal researcher/student/programme member *(delete as appropriate)* Jennifer (Jenny) Robinson, PhD Student – j.l.robinson@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Name and email address of supervisor *(if applicable)*Claire Collins, Supervisor – claire.collins@henley.ac.uk

Nature of Project (mark with a 'x' as appropriate)

Staff research	☐	Masters	☐
Undergraduate	☐	Doctoral	☒
MBA	☐	Other	☐

(**Student research projects** should be signed off in **section 2. 3** below by the supervisor)

(**Staff research projects** should be signed off in **section 2. 4** below by the Research Ethics Committee)

Brief Summary of Proposed Project and Research Methods

> My aim is to explore, describe and understand the emergence of Conscious Coalescence via the supraindividual state of mindfulness and the micro-practices that promote it.
>
> In Heedfully Interrelating groups the individuals act as if they are interrelated and they coordinate their actions with care. Heedful Interrelating is an emergent, social phenomenon of collective action allowing individuals to synchronize "as if one piece" rather than a disjointed set of contributions (Stephens and Lyddy, 2016).
>
> The role that mindfulness plays in the achievement of heedfulness is underspecified. Further, the levels of analysis of the two constructs need to be better understood. In the field study, described in this application, I wish to understand the link between mindfulness and heedful interrelating.
>
> In the mindfulness literature, Langer's work has shown how conditional forms of language directly affects levels of mindfulness and mindlessness (Langer and Imber, 1979). Thus, discursive micro-practices will be considered as a potential initiator of

[continued from previous page]

> For this proposed study the overarching research question is: ***how does Conscious Coalescence emerge in groups***? Other more granular questions are:
>
> 1. How do patterns of discursive micro-practices promote or diminish mindfulness?
>
> 2. How does the interrelating within the grouping change when mindfulness fluctuates?

3. How do patterns of discursive micro-practices promote or diminish Heedful Interrelating?

Initial data will come from group meetings. Following the research approaches of Gioia, Donnellon and Sims (1989) and Rouleau (2005), I will attend and record meetings, across several meetings and at several time points in each groups' life cycle. Each grouping will become a case study.

Additionally, where possible, members will be invited to interviews so that they can explore and narrate key moments in the interaction. I will use Elicitation techniques for these interviews, this approach is chosen because through the use of Elicitation it is possible to access the pre-cognitive processes that underlie the cognitive outputs (Petitmengin, 2006). In Elicitation interviews participants are asked to explain their experience in increasingly finer levels of detail (Hogan, Hinrichs and Hornecker, 2016; Petitmengin, 2006; Vermersch, 1999).

Both the meetings and the interviews will be video and audio recorded for transcription.

A third set of data will come from both Mindfulness (Langer, 2004) and Heedful Interrelating (Daniel and Jordan, 2015) questionnaires, which will be administered to each grouping/group member at different points throughout the study.

These research tools have been trialed in a Pilot Study given Ethics Approval by Henley Business School on 30th October 2018, the Pilot Study was successfully concluded on the 14th of February 2019.

In summary, Heedful Interrelating is a dynamic phenomenon that must be continually accomplished and re-accomplished in the everyday, I am conceptualising Conscious Coalescence as critical to this accomplishment. I turn to the mundane and discursive practices of groups working together to understand how these practices affect mindfulness and thereafter Heedful Interrelating. The research considers how Heedful Interrelating is achieved (or not achieved) in the mindfulness repertoires sustained through talk, this is a gap in current theorizing. Further methodological gaps are also addressed by introducing additional units and levels of analysis; including mindfulness and collective-level data collection.

☒ I confirm that where appropriate a consent form has been prepared and will be made

available to all participants. This contains details of the project, contact details for the principal

researcher and advises subjects that their privacy will be protected and that their participation is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any time without reason.

☒ I confirm that research instruments (questionnaires, interview guides, etc) have been

reviewed against the policies and criteria noted in The University Research Ethics Committee Notes for Guidance. Information obtained will be safeguarded and personal privacy and commercial confidentiality will be strictly observed.

☒ I confirm that where appropriate a copy of the **Consent Form** and details of the

Research Instruments/Protocols are attached and submitted with this application.

2. Research Ethics Committee Decision (*delete as appropriate*)

2.3 I have reviewed this application as **APPROVED** and confirm that it is consistent with
the requirements of the University Research Ethics Committee procedures
2.4 This proposal is **NOT APPROVED** and is returned to the applicant for further

consideration and/or submission to the University Research Ethics Committee

2. 3. <u>For student and programme member projects</u>

SUPERVISOR – AT START OF PROJECT   *STUDENT – ON COMPLETION*

OF PROJECT

Signed (Supervisor)   Signed (programme member or student)

& Print Name   & Print Name

(*before start of project*)   (*on completion of project*)

2. Research Ethics Committee Decision (*delete as appropriate*)

2.1 I have reviewed this application as **APPROVED** and confirm that it is consistent with the requirements of the University Research Ethics Committee procedures

2.2 This proposal is **NOT APPROVED** and is returned to the applicant for further consideration and/or submission to the University Research Ethics Committee

2. 3. For student and programme member projects
SUPERVISOR – AT START OF PROJECT   *STUDENT – ON COMPLETION OF PROJECT*

Signed (Supervisor)   Signed (programme member or student)
& Print Name   & Print Name
(*before start of project*)   (*on completion of project*)

2. 4. For staff research projects

Signed: Professor Andrew Godley
                         Associate Dean, International
                         Head of Leadership, Organisations and Behaviour

(Research Ethics Committee Chair or member)

COMMENTS (where application has been refused)

A.3.2 Field Study: Recruiting Companies

Below is the email that I used to introduce my work to the Sponsor for each Field Study:

The Theoretical Background

Leadership has been studied for 100 years, yet despite the huge body of knowledge, outcomes still vary widely with some groups of people working as leaders outperforming, others underperforming and, many performing erratically.

Throughout this opus of research, people and behaviour have been treated as variables to be controlled and changed at will. Yet when teams are established, and when circumstances change, many variables are uncontrollable.

Moving research to a new "practice" based approach offers the possibility of radical new and novel insights into teams and groups. Practice-based approaches acknowledge the wide-ranging changes in context do not lend themselves to normative and programmatic reactions. Instead, flexible, collaborative and adaptive responses are needed. Through a practice lens, groups producing leadership are seen as the foundation for these flexible and adaptive organisational responses.

Two further possibilities arise when adopting a practice lens: Because the focus is moved to the group-level, not the individual, it becomes apparent that it is sequences of practice – not individuals and their behaviour – that are likely to be important for critical new outcomes. Most exciting of all, if these sequences of practice are replicable then the possibilities for teams to be effective under a full range of circumstances becomes achievable.

In keeping with the practice-turn, my PhD is looking for '*Conscious Coalescence*' – defined as the spontaneous moment when the group "clicks" and moves their practice to another level. These moments are uniquely positive and have been named as "Eureka!" by participants who are already committed to this study. Here the "Eureka!" is less about a breakthrough discovery or endpoint achievement but is instead a stepping off point from which all manner of interesting, unusual or innovative discoveries may become apparent to the team. It is the moment of coalescence, but it is simply a shift in point of view and it exists within a much bigger process. Thus, Eureka (the moment of realisation), is the point of activation of collaboration, both resulting from and leading into different patterns of practice. This thesis sets out to understand the coalescence of individuals into a whole and how different group practices allow collective mindfulness to emerge and continue onwards.

Expected Outcomes

This is an exploratory piece of research guided by gaps in the existing theories, so it would be unethical of me to promise any specific outcome. Nevertheless, my PhD relies on new and novel findings on team practices, so our interests are completely aligned.

Time Investments

The schematic below shows the research steps and the time investment:

Timings and Timelines

Estimate, 6 to 8 weeks

Observing

Onboarding
- Talk to everyone in the team
- Explain research and obtain consent
- Individual questionnaire completion

- Attend meeting(s) where there is a "problem" or focal subject e.g. future strategy
- Video record interactions

Sensemaking
- Time in another team meeting to interview team-as-team
- Individual interviews
- Group questionnaire completion

Max: 1 hour with each person

Max: 8 hours team meetings (either one day awayday or multiple smaller meetings)

Max: 2 hours team-as-team interview; Max: 30 mins individual interviews

Thank you for considering my research proposal,
Jenny Robinson, 12th October 2019

Expected Participant Organisations

- A consistently competitive Formula 1 racing team (advanced-stage discussions)
- UK's largest infrastructure provider (advanced-stage discussions)
- Jet Flyer manufacturer (completed, highest security clearance required)
- Global infrastructure project manager (in progress)
- Largest online aggregator of travel data (early discussions)

A.3.3 Field Study: Recruiting Participants at Each Case

This is a sample of an email that the Sponsor of the study in each Case would send out to members of the groups that were identified for the Field Study:

Dear Team

Please meet Jenny, copied above. Jenny is the Researcher from Henley Business School whom we discussed working with last week. Jenny's research on Leadership groups will start in August but before that she would like to speak to each of you individually and explain in more detail what is involved, and most importantly, to get your consent to participate. Once again, to emphasise, this is all confidential, you will not be named nor will [company name], her study is at the team level not the individual level which is one of the things that makes it super exciting.

Can I ask you please to find time to talk to Jenny before August's meeting.

Thank you so much

[signed]

A.3.4 Field Study: Participant Information Form

The information provided to the participants is broader in its description of the study, so that they are not made aware of the specific phenomenon of interest. This is shown in the Information Form that I provided:

7 July 2019

Leadership Organisations and Behaviour
Henley Business School

University of Reading,
Reading, Berkshire, RG6 6AH
Tel:
http://www.henley.ac.uk/school/leadership-organisations-and-behaviour/
henley.ac.uk

Title of the Project: An investigation into leadership groups

Information for Participants

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET FOR YOUR RECORDS.

 Investigator: Jenny Robinson: PhD student at the Henley Business School

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to participate, please take time to read about the study and what it will involve. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

 Thank you for reading this information sheet.

What are the aims of the study?

 The study aims to understand how groups work together to solve complex problems and come up with innovative solutions. The focus is on the group, not on individuals.

How will the study be run?

I will observe natural groupings of people in meetings, and other ad hoc conversations, as people get together to work on a project, talk about complex problems or create innovative solutions. I am there to observe meetings, not to participate or interfere. After the group has concluded I will ask the group to answer some questions. I will video- and audio- record these conversations.

Are there any risks?

I have no intention of putting you at risk and your information will be used anonymously. If anything happens during the study that you feel does put you at risk, you can either inform me and I will take action or you can withdraw from the study.

Is there a complaints procedure?

This study has been reviewed by Dr Claire Collins, my supervisor. If you want to complain, she is the person who is in charge of this programme of research. If you feel you need to and if you feel unable to talk to me about a problem, please contact Claire, she can be reached as follows: Dr Collins: les07cec@reading.ac.uk.

Data protection and storage

The video and audio recordings of the groups will be transcribed into a Word document for text analysis. Original texts will be deleted once they have been transcribed. All Word documents and text analysis will be stored on the University's secure servers. Reported results will be pooled data and no participants will be identifiable.

 If you have any further questions, please contact me:
Jenny Robinson PhD Student
j.l.xxxx@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Tel: xxx

 Thank you for taking time to read through this information sheet and showing an interest in this research study.

A.3.5 Field Study: Example of Consent Form, Signed and Returned by All Participants

Before commencing the study, each participant was sent a Consent Form.

During an onboarding phone call, I repeated all the points concerning: their safety,

data, choice, confidentiality and complaints procedure – before asking them to sign

and return the form to me:

12 July 2019

Leadership Organisations and Behaviour
Henley Business School

University of Reading,
Reading, Berkshire, RG6 6AH
Tel:
http://www.henley.ac.uk/school/leadership-organisations-and-behaviour/
henley.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM

Title of the Project: An investigation into leadership groups

Name of the Researcher: Jennifer Robinson
Contact Details: j.l.robinson@pgr.reading.ac.uk
Tel:

Tel:

1.   I confirm that I have been informed about the aims and objectives of this research project and agreed to participate.

2.   I understand that all personal information that I provide will be treated with the strictest confidence and my name will not be used in any report, publication or presentation. I have been provided with a participant code (below) to ensure that all raw data remains anonymous.

3.   I understand that the information I provide will be used by Henley Business School for the purposes of this research project only. The data will be stored on a

secure network accessed only by authorised users (the researcher and the supervising staff).

4. I understand that the results of the research may be published in scientific journals, and an anonymised version of the data may be published in support of these results.

5. I understand that I am free to withdraw from this project at any stage during the session simply by informing a member of the research team, for whom contact details have been provided. I also understand that I can also withdraw my data for a period of up to 7 days from the team meeting, as after this time it will not be possible to identify my individual data from the aggregated results.

6. I understand that the team discussion will be recorded on audio and video and that I will not be personally identified as a participant in that discussion, nor will my contribution to that discussion be identifiable as mine.

Participant's signature: _____   Date: _12 July 2019
Participant's name: _
Participant's email :

Researcher's signature: Date: 12 July 2019

Participant Code: JFDA

A.3.6 Field Study: Participant Letter

Henley Business School
UNIVERSITY OF READING

Jenny Robinson, Doctoral Researcher
Leadership Organisations and Behaviour
Henley Business School

http://www.henley.ac.uk/school/leadership-organisations-and-behaviour/

henley.ac.uk

Dear Leadership Team

It was wonderful to meet you all in August and to have the opportunity to record your team meeting. I will be re-joining your team in October to take the discussion further. This discussion is still part of my research which has the consequence that a) I still won't express an opinion! b) I still want to record our discussion. It is important to my research that you are involved in the sensemaking around the audio and videos clips that we look at together.

In trial runs with other groups when we have these discussions they revert to nomenclature that is in the "classic" teamwork manuals – body language; use of open questions etc., whilst these may be interesting and valuable, that language reduces the data to the individual, it becomes "he did xyz" or "she did abc". I am concerned to teach groups a new language of groups to look for patterns of interaction. By introducing you to a new language it opens the possibility of new seeing. This is the discussion I hope to enable when we meet on telepresence.

A LITTLE PREPARATION, PLEASE. Attached are some handouts, in normal circumstances I would bring copies and "hand them out" but as we are working virtually, please could you print these out for yourself and bring with you to the meeting. Also, there is a postage-paid

label because I would like you to post back to me the forms that you fill in, even if they are only partially filled in.

Thank you so much once again for your kind assistance,

I remain deeply grateful for your participation and promise that I will return with data and insights in around November!

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Robinson

A.3.7 Field Study: Amendment to the Protocol for Group Discussion

Jet Flyer A, the first Case that I completed, asked me to run the group discussion in a virtual environment, using telepresence. This caused me to write the following note (26th August 2019) to my supervisors suggesting a change in method for this phase of the data collection:

REVISING MY METHODS

In my original paper/chapter draft, I placed emphasis on the group level of analysis arguing that it is a group phenomenon I am studying and it requires levels of and units of analysis to match. To accomplish that match, the third stage of data collection is the ***group elicitation interview.***

The group interview uses a video of the group at work as the prompt for the elicitation.

In individual interviews, each member of the group has identified agenda items that exemplify the group at its best and the group at its worst. This data has been convergent. I have edited the 24 hours of audio and video footage down to concentrate solely on these exemplar moments in the group.

The elicitation interview – based on phenomenological practices – asks the group to ***re-live*** the experience and to narrate what is happening. This is the group making sense of the group. The group telling me what is happening. The group deciding what is salient and what is not.

The elicitation interview is also video'd and is also coded.

Flies in the ointment

We were expecting to do this interview in November, face to face. However, one member is pregnant and there is now a travel ban. All future meetings are therefore on telepresence and I too will be dialling in remotely.

Setting aside the IT concerns, which I will sort with the client IT department, my other concerns are:

- Keeping the discussion at the ***group-level***, not allowing the discussion to become individualised/personalised etc (there are some tricky points in the video, for example)
- Keeping the discussion phenomenological, especially as this is telepresence and we will be dis-embodied

Adjusting the data capture protocol

This may be a problem with future groups too, so good that it has come up now with the first one. The following allows me to be consistent for groups not yet commenced.

From the interviews of the eight individuals in this group, I have prepared an initial schema using shapes and representational objects. My thinking is that this use of schema elevates the conversation; transcends cultural differences; keeps the discussion away from the personal. The schema are attached and below is my early thoughts on how this might be used.

Step 1

- Distribute schema sheet to each member of the group
- Explain how to use the schema during video playback
- Talk through / answer questions on the schema – ensure similar understanding

Step 2

- Provide written transcripts of the video segments (without names of individuals)
- Play video (may be local playback, not centralised) MAYBE PART ONE
- Leave time for people to reflect in silence and mark their schema for frequency and any order that they observe (note that I would like the schema afterwards, so they know this is not private)
- Ask them to create new schema for interrelating they see but which are not adequately represented
- Ask them to modify the schema provided if that helps them better express what they see

Step 3

- Seek permission to record
- Turn on audio and video

Step 4

- Ask for general reflections
- Specific questions about the schema they have marked
    - Which one was most frequent
    - Which one was most absent
    - Was there a schema order that they noticed? What was it and what happened?
    - Was there a schema missing – can they draw it? What do others think?
    - The most frequent – what is that like? How does it show up in the body? In the mind? How do they know? What do you all notice?
    - Step by step through a section of the video – what is happening? What is that like? How does it show up in the body? In the mind? How do they know? What do you all notice?
    - Where is the moment that you experienced the "self in group; the group in self"? Narrate that moment.
- Ask them to code their sheet and pdf and send to me (after this meeting)

Repeat 2,3,4 for Part two video

In our discussion, 30ᵗʰ August 2019, we agreed on these amendments.

A.3.8 Field Study: Protocol Used by Researcher in Group Discussion

Following the agreed amendments documented in A.3.7, these are my notes to help me prepare for and run the group discussions. I tried to keep to the same protocol each time. This set of notes are modified for the March 2020 meeting with Fire & Water:

PACKING

Print out of the practices and vectors for everyone
Print out of coding sheets for everyone

PROCESS NOTES

Check audio and video still recording

Remind them we are recording this as well

1. Set the scene, help people relax
- No right or wrong answers
- Your view of yourselves
- No individual comments about individuals, even yourself

2. SHOW clip of waves and birds
- Group level of analysis

Looking for moments of interaction that are salient/important to you: what moments make a difference in the group

1. GIVE OUT the Vector diagrams
- Explain each practice
- The group as a unit, in general are you moving forward; moving backwards; pausing to clarify something; in the midst of a challenge

2. GIVE OUT the Coding sheet
- Explain column one

- Explain column two
- Explain column three

STOP AND ANSWER QUESTIONS
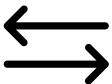
1. SHOW video segment 'Example'
- Just for fun
- Just to warm up our brain and get into the groove
- No worries about messing it up

PAUSE check temperature of the room

1. INVITE comment
- What did they see?
- What was revealed?
- What was happening?
- What bodily sensations did you experience?

2. SHOW video segment '18 Appliances'
- Code as you go
- Capture the moments you consider most important / salient

3. INVITE comment
- What did they see?
- What was revealed?
- What was happening?
- What bodily sensations did you experience?

4. SHOW video segment 'Technical Rescue'
- Code as you go
- Capture the moments you consider most important / salient

5. INVITE comment
- What did they see?
- What was revealed?
- What was happening?
- What bodily sensations did you experience?

6. Repeat above for 'Funding a New Post'

A.3.9 Field Study: Explaining the Vectors and Coding of Practices

During the group discussion, each participant received a sheet that explained the vectors:

1		Adding New ideas New meanings
2		Advancing Group keeps moving forward No obstacles to furthering the discussion
3		Aggregating Consolidate ideas or meanings
4		Yessing Agreeing Nodding
5		Exchanging specifics with a colleague may be in the form of a question or fact giving
6		Missing the point of each other Misunderstanding
7		Silence
8		Laughing

9	**?**	Checking understanding generally
10	↗	Re-directing Taking the group in a new direction
11	✖	Not agreeing Fragmenting/diverging Not acting in concert
12	→ ←	Challenge Directly confront
13	▬▬	Conscious concurrence Altogether, people let go of positions to coalesce More than the sum of the parts The totality of us
14	😊	Thank you Appreciation for others Happiness for someone's contribution
15		[left blank for you to add anything else you see that's important]

A.3.10 Field Study: Field Notes Following First Group Discussion Using Vectors

The following note, I wrote the day after I completed the Case Jet Flyer A and the group discussion:

NOTES ON THE FIELD STUDY VIDEO, USING THE PRACTICES VECTORS

The practices are deliberately agnostic about classic "group work" theory such as, it is best to only have one conversation in the group at a time; or that body language signals an individual's intention. Instead, the vectors allow for a non-judging of the group at work as they produce leadership. Unconstrained by these edicts, new things arose in my awareness:

1. *New things became apparent*

Having watched the videos many times previously to transcribe them and code them in an atheoretical way, I was deeply familiar with the material. Despite this familiarity, using the vectors force me to watch with fresh eyes and new things became apparent.

2. *Atypical patterns can be foregrounded*

In the first-round of watching and coding, I had noted that from time to time the group fragmented into different subsets and conversations continued in parallel. I was unsure how to evaluate this behaviour. Clearly it is a fragmenting of attention on one level because people have not got a single focus.

In this round of coding, I found many more instances than previously of the fragmenting of the group. In fragmenting the group goes to a multiplicity of focus –

but they are not unaware of each other, they remain connected through an awareness across the group. This therefore might be a manifestation of collective mindfulness at a supra-psychic level. The fragmentation is momentary and immediately followed by a resumption of a single focus – without anyone calling attention to this "move".

3. *The vectors are "sensitive" enough to moments to catch significant fragments*

Caught up in the activity of coding, I lost touch with the timestamp on the video, noting in a rote fashion without noting what I was doing. At the moment, that the group had previously identified as the moment of "Eureka", I found a congruent practice of conscious concurrence – and my notes record that the participants are saying "yes, yes, yes". This "blind" re-coding provides weak, but important, triangulation of the vector practices: working at a meso level, but still sensitive to the fleeting moments that need to be captured.

A.3.11 Field Study: Example of Participant Using Vectors on Coding Sheet

Participants used the vectors to record how they viewed each video segment. They also wrote long hand comments alongside these vectors and they were invited to make up any new vectors that they wanted to. Below is an example of a returned coding sheet from Jet Flyer A (Figure A76).

Figure A76 – Example of participant coding sheet

Field Study: Example of Excel Coding Derived from Vector Coding

This extract from an excel spreadsheet demonstrates how I translated the vectors – either the participants, or mine – into a shorthand, e.g. *advancing = adv; challenging = chall; exchanging = exc.* An example of how this appears in excel is below in Figure A77. This data was then used to create the pulse and DNA charts derived from primary and secondary data analysis.

	A	B	C
1	Time	Practices	
2	0	adv	
3	1	chall	
4	1	chk	
5	2	chk adv	
6	2	yes	
7	2	yes	
8	2	yes	
9	2	adv	
10	3	adv	
11	3	yes	
12	3	adv	
13	3	adv	
14	4	chk	
15	4	adv	
16	4	adv	
17	5	adv	
18	5	sil	
19	5	yes	
20	5	adv	
21	5	agg	
22	5	adv	
23	6	adv	
24	6	sil	
25	6	adv	
26	6	yes	

Figure A77 – Transferring vector coding into Excel spreadsheet

This simple data is transformed into a numerical code which allows Excel to produce the charts. This process is shown in Figure A78 below:
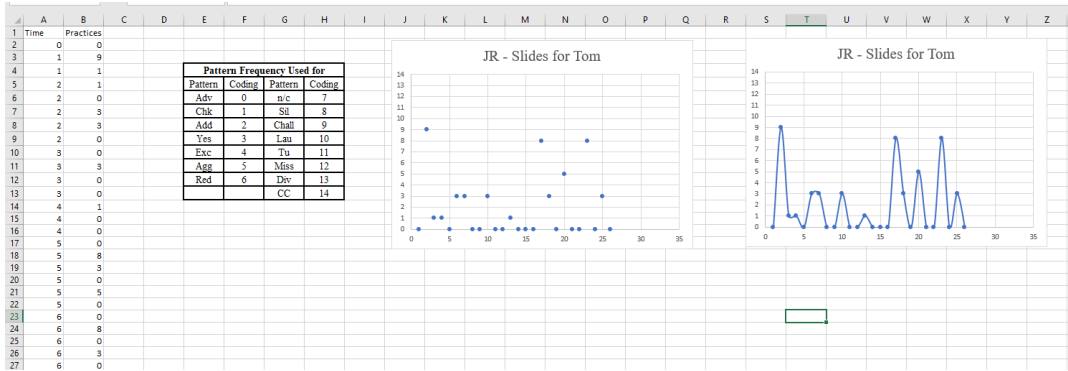
454

Figure A78 – Creating charts from the Excel spreadsheet

A.4 FIELD STUDY: LARGE FORMAT CHARTS

The following pages are large format to allow easy viewing across all the charts.

The commentary for these charts is on page 216 for the Pulse charts and page 244 for
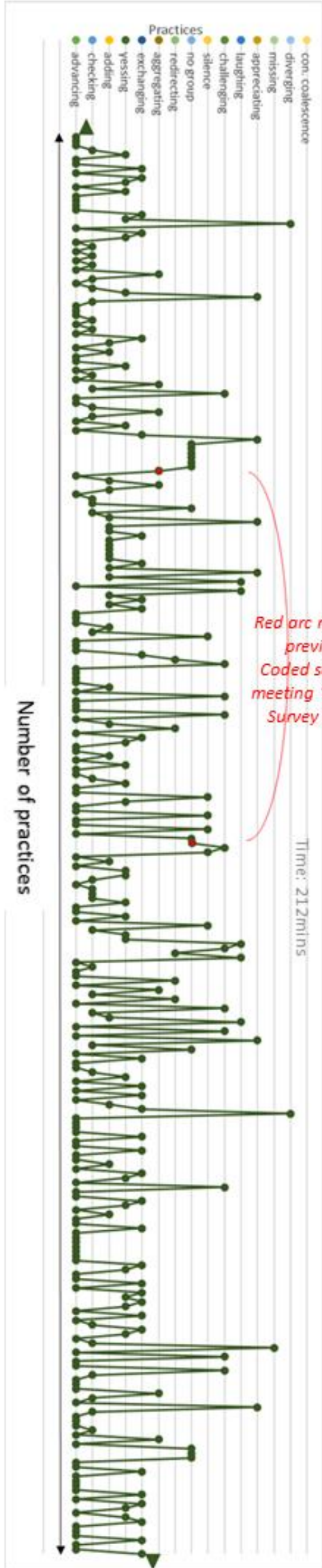
the DNA Strands.

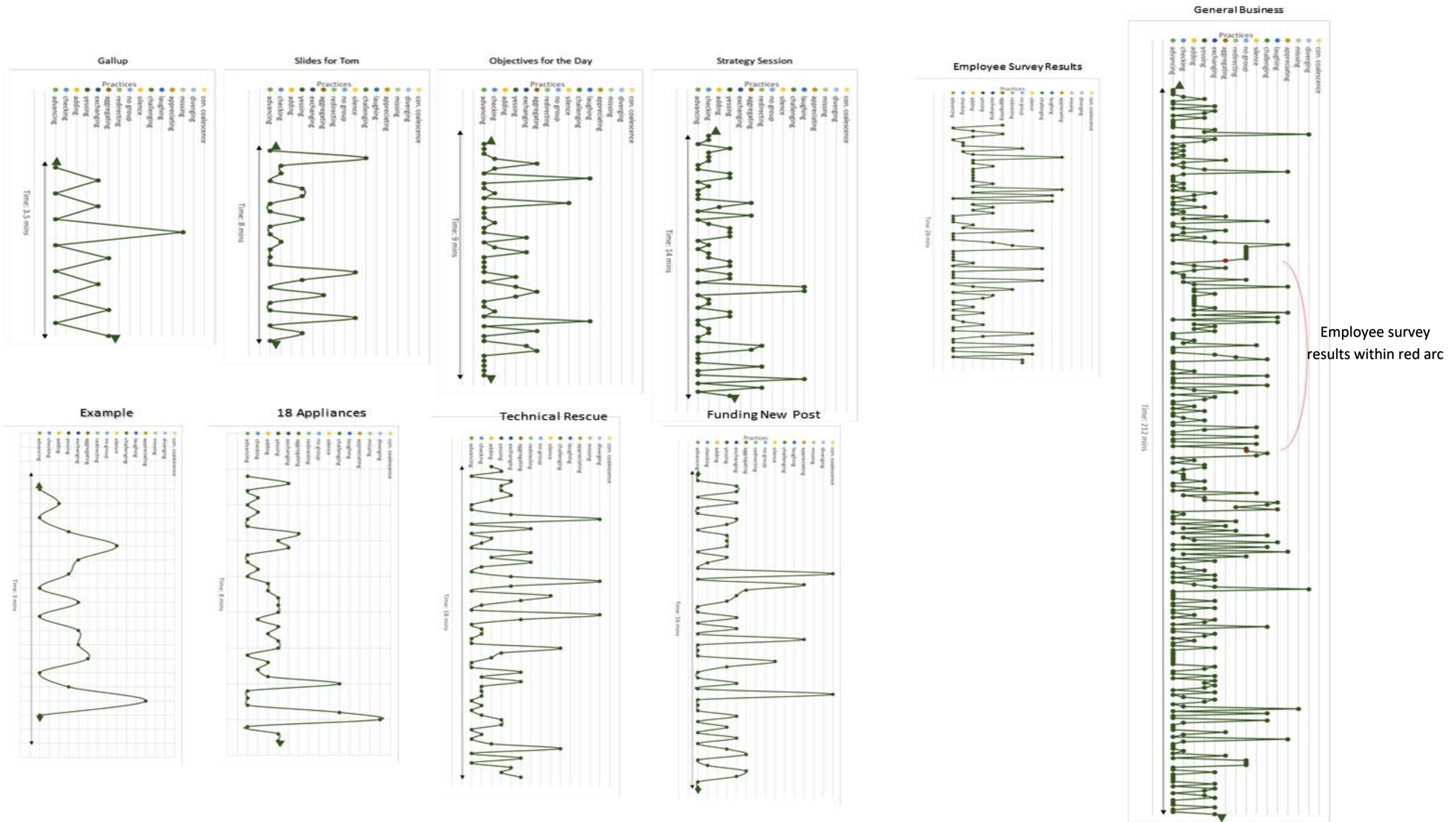**Figure A79 – Pulse chart of coding by JR for 'General Business'**
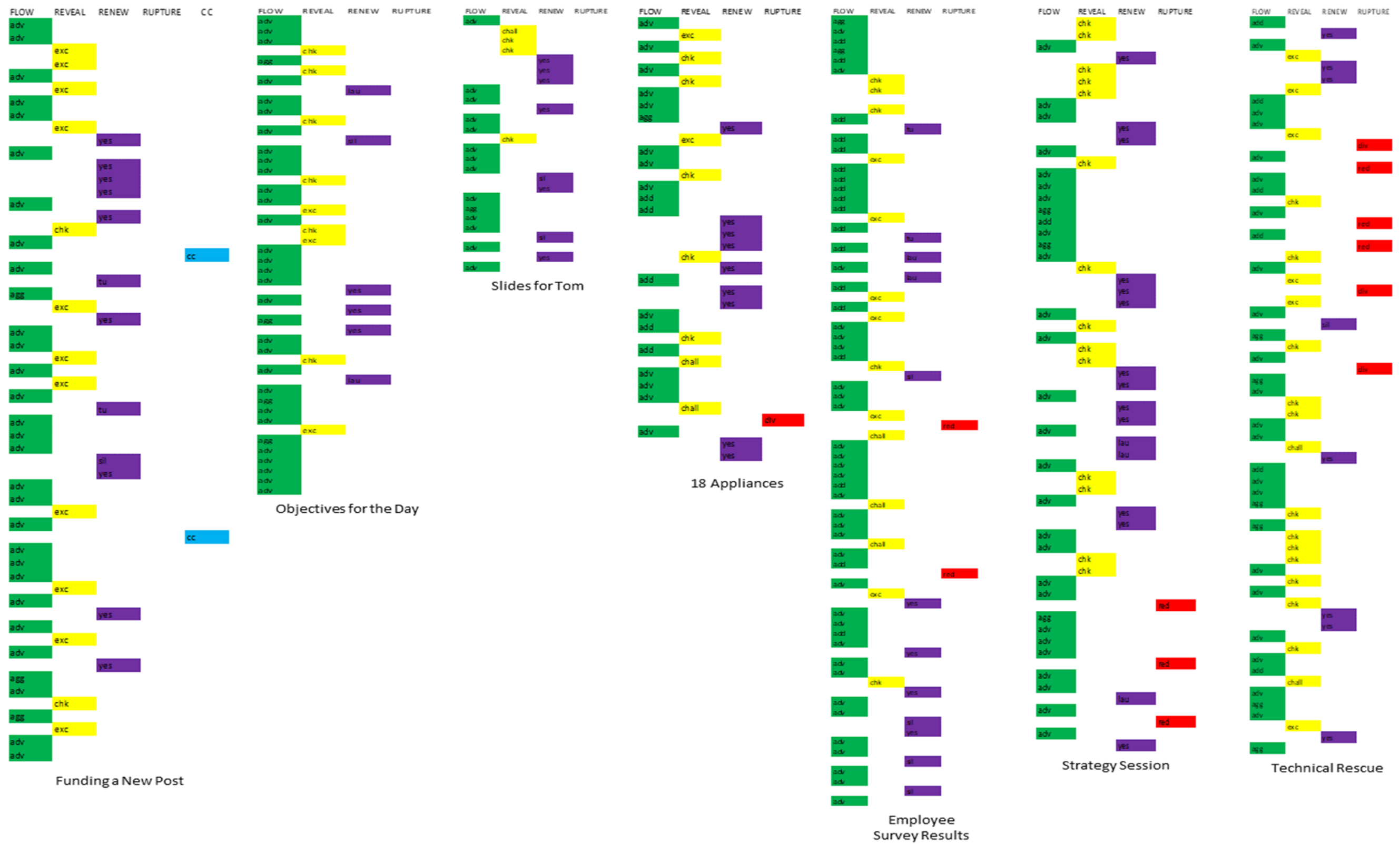
Figure A80 – 10 Pulse charts from primary coding

Figure A81 - 7 DNA charts using strands from secondary coding