An Interpretive Study into the Manifestation of Servant Leadership in Relation to Corporate Social Responsibility

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I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form to the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abstract

This study seeks to develop understanding into servant leadership, exploring the construct's manifestation in the context of three organisations' respective activities relating to corporate social responsibility (CSR). The construct of servant leadership is in its formative stages and there are therefore several limitations in current understanding. Limitations include a lack of definitional and conceptual agreement, no objective measurement tool, and concerns relating to the distribution of power within the approach, such as how individuals can lead and serve simultaneously; critiques have therefore been raised with regards servant leadership's positioning as a post-heroic approach. As servant leadership receives increased attention from both scholars and practitioners, so too has CSR with the relationship between organisations and society experiencing intense scrutiny, potentially due to corporate irresponsibility; this has revealed the importance of leadership's role in CSR-related activities.

This research adopts an interpretive approach to further explore leadership as a process, which encompasses the importance of followers and context. Data were collected from participants in three organisations located in the NW of England over a three-month period and included managers, non-managers and Managing Directors. In addition, overt observations and field notes as well as secondary data sources including organisation-published literature, company documentation, and photographs were compiled. Data analysis comprised a combination of thematic, semiotic, and document analysis. There were three findings. First, formal and informal organisational structures are utilised concurrently within the manifestation of servant leadership as a process. These structures are significant with regards establishing, developing and contributing towards communities both internal and external to one's organisation. Second, formal and informal channels of communication are used simultaneously within the process of servant leadership. This contributes to the development of high-quality, dyadic relationships in the interest of valuing agents as individuals with personal needs and requirements. Third, the process of servant leadership resonates with both post-heroic approaches to leadership as well as critical leadership studies. It encompasses a participatory, collectivist attitude assimilated to post-heroic approaches but resonates with critical leadership studies particularly through the notion of empowerment. Future research is therefore encouraged into this dialogue.

This research makes three theoretical contributions. First, conceptual insights are derived into servant leadership, including its cyclical nature through the characteristic of stewardship, as well as the notion of community both internal and external to respective organisations. Second, insights into power and influence are developed with a focus on the empowerment of individuals. This contributes towards understanding how servant leadership as a process contends with paradoxical expectations of leaders in contemporary society, such as leading from a position of servility. Third, insights into the nature of relationships within servant leadership are made, in particular the leader-follower relationship. Of significance are the instilling of ownership and responsibility in employees through fostering autonomy, establishing trust, practising inclusivity, and increasing unity.

This research also provides two practical contributions. First, the content of leadership development programmes could be enhanced to include focus on those behaviours which promote servant leadership. This has a range of benefits including at the individual level for both servant leader and follower as well as at the organisational level by promoting a culture in which CSR can flourish. Second, this research provides insights for practising leaders in the interest of developing high-quality, dyadic relationships within their organisations that can facilitate a positive organisational culture.

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Contents Page

List of Tables, Figures, Images, and Graphs

Chapter 1: Introduction

The concept of leadership is a much sought after, highly valued commodity within contemporary society, it continues to experience considerable attention despite its long history (Grandy and Sliwa, 2017). Interest continues to grow from both theoretical and practical perspectives respectively (Antonakis, 2012), illustrating its saliency to society. One potential reason for this is increased awareness in corporate scandals permeating through society (Knights and O'Leary, 2006; Beitelspacher and Rodgers, 2018), resulting in more focused attention on the relationship organisations share with wider communities; this relationship forms a central component to corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Freeman, 1982). The global and more localised impacts of corporate scandals such as those at Enron and Arthur Andersen have acted as the catalyst for explorations into how and why scandals arise, with leadership being identified as one root cause (Christensen et al, 2014; Ormiston and Wong, 2013). Reasons such as personal gain (Tourish, 2014), a focus on short term financial growth (Trompenaars and Voerman, 2009), and the building of moral credits through other perceived CSR actions (Ormiston and Wong, 2013) have all been cited as important within the enactment of corporate scandals. As such, leadership studies have experienced a shift away from traditional notions of heroic leaders towards more distributed approaches that promote the importance of followers and situations (Grandy and Sliwa, 2017).

Post-heroic leadership approaches have therefore begun to emerge that focus on the "relational, collectivist, and participatory nature of leadership" (Sobral and Furtdao, 2019) as opposed to individualist and Great Man approaches (Pearce and Manz, 2005), that are more likely to negate the potential for individual leader narcissism and irresponsibility (Tourish, 2014). Servant leadership is one such approach, concerned with "going beyond one's self-interest" (Greenleaf, 1977: 7), a feature that although present in other leadership approaches, forms a foundational and therefore distinguishing characteristic (Van Dierendonck, 2011). It is founded upon the notion of service (Greenleaf, 1973) whereby the leader possesses the desire to serve first before "conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (Greenleaf, 1970: 15); service as the root construct differentiates servant leadership from all other leadership approaches (Crippen, 2017).

The notion of service encourages considerations relating to power dynamics within the leader-follower relationship as servant leadership challenges the traditional distribution of power associated with leadership (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006). Historically, power operated unidirectionally whereby leaders enacted power upon followers (Peyton et al, 2018); developments in leadership theory however challenged this position, recognising the importance of additional variables such as contextual factors (Hershey and Blanchard, 1969) and the importance of followers (Baker et al, 2011). Like post-heroic approaches to leadership, servant leadership supports the notion of sharing power across the leader-follower relationship (Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002) which distinguishes it from heroic traditions. Current understanding into how power is manifested within servant leadership however is limited and therefore forms a foundational critique of the approach: how can one lead and serve simultaneously (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015)? This critique is similarly reflective of the contradictory positions expected of leaders in contemporary society however, such as the requirement for leaders to focus on the needs of individual followers at the same time as maintaining the interests of the collective (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014). This research contributes towards these discussions by exploring the structures that are present within servant leadership as a process in the context of CSR-related activities that facilitate leading from a position of servility.

A further foundational concept within servant leadership theory is that servant leaders consciously consider their "effect on the least privileged in society" (Greenleaf, 1970: 15), ensuring that they also benefit or at least are not further deprived. This position therefore assumes an inherent responsibility within servant leadership to consider communities beyond self-interest, which resonates with the foundational principles of CSR. CSR explores the relationship between organisations and wider society (Tang et al, 2014), suggesting that organisations have wider responsibilities beyond those of the immediate shareholders (Compapiano et al, 2012). Carroll (1991) has presented arguably the seminal writings regarding CSR, which continue to be relevant today (Crane and Matten, 2004). The philanthropic pillar of responsibility associated with Carroll's (1991) interpretation of CSR appears synonymous with several foundational characteristics of servant leadership (Christensen et al, 2014), such as the focus on the other (Maak and Pless, 2006) and recognising the importance of community (Liden et al (2008; Eva et al, 2019). Despite community being a relatively well-established feature of CSR theory, understanding regarding community within servant leadership literature remains indeterminate (Margolis et al, 2009). The natural disposition to care for the community within servant leadership (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) suggests CSR to be an antecedent of the approach yet Christensen et al (2014) have called for future research to explore CSR as an outcome of the behaviours associated with servant leadership. One avenue in which to extend understanding into servant leadership theory therefore is to draw upon the notion of community with CSR-related literature to understand how servant leadership as a process facilitates the serving of both followers and the least privileged in society.

A further distinguishing factor between servant leadership and alternative approaches is the inherent focus on the development of followers within servant leadership, beyond that of other approaches (Russell and Stone, 2002; Harvey, 2001). Although many conceptualisations consider follower development, servant leadership theory grants higher importance to follower development than organisational achievements for example, which further propagates the need to lead from a position of servility. However, it is potentially this focus on the individual that renders servant leadership most capable when balancing between fiscal responsibilities and positively contributing towards local communities (Kincaid, 2012). A foundational debate in the field of CSR is to whom one has responsibilities to, all stakeholders or solely shareholders (De Ruiter et al, 2018)? Drawing upon Senge's (2002) considerations into working environments, Kincaid (2012) postulates that the notions of trust, communication, and authenticity prevalent within servant leaders facilitate them with an armoury to balance commitments to both shareholders and stakeholders. The present thesis develops Kincaid's (2012) considerations by exploring the processes through which servant leadership maintains a focus on the personal development of individual employees when engaging in CSR-related activities, drawing upon Stakeholder Theory to accomplish this.

Servant leadership therefore offers a unique perspective on leadership theory and, potentially as a result of its formative stages of development, multiple areas for further exploration. Knowledge pertaining to conceptual limitations such as its cyclical nature, the notion of community, and the manifestation of empowerment can all be enhanced by exploring the structures that are influenced by the process of servant leadership within the context of CSR-related activities. Knowledge can also be developed into relationships within servant leadership, such as that of leader and follower, by exploring how the process of servant leadership facilitates leading from a position of servility; this will also develop understanding into power dynamics within servant leadership to address how it is positioned within post-heroic and CLS approaches. Considering these areas where knowledge can be developed, the following research aim has been devised:

To develop understanding into the ways in which servant leadership is manifested in an organisation's CSR-related activities.

In order to satisfy this research aim, three research questions have also been delineated. The research questions draw upon the facets of understanding that are limited, thus increasing the propensity for meaningful contributions to be made. The three research questions are:

RQ1: In what ways does servant leadership influence formal and informal organisational structures in relation to CSR?

RQ2: In what ways do relationships associated with servant leadership impact the nature of CSR-related activities within organisations?

RQ3: In what ways does servant leadership facilitate employee empowerment in the context of CSR-related activities?

1.1. Contributions of the Thesis

With the primary focus of the present research being on servant leadership, this thesis identifies several limitations in understanding that at an abstract level relate to conceptual understandings, issues pertaining to measurement, and the notions of power and influence. These limitations however are broad and expansive, and no single thesis could consider each limitation to a just extent. As such, the present research identifies more nuanced limitations in understanding, subsumed under the more abstract limitations, which the present thesis then contributes towards developments in understanding. As such, the present research makes three theoretical and two practical contributions.

The first theoretical contribution of this research is that it develops conceptual understanding into servant leadership as a process, specifically in relation to its cyclical nature and the notion of community. This is not to say that this research contributes to negating conceptual plurality that exists within servant leadership theory (Van Dierendonck, 2011), rather it contributes towards enhancing understanding with regards the manifestation of servant leadership as a process with respect to CSR-related activities. The notion that servant leadership is cyclical in nature has been present since Greenleaf's (1970) initial conceptualisation of the construct, however it remains theoretical to date (Northouse, 2016). A cyclical nature suggests that once one is exposed to the construct, they recognise the positive consequences and are therefore likely to embrace the values, behaviours and processes they have been exposed to (Greenleaf, 1977). This resonates with the notion of role modelling whereby individuals aspire to emulate the attitudes, values and behaviours of others they perceive of positively (Bandura, 1977); in organisations, this is often those in positions of leadership (Schwartz et al, 2016).

Role modelling is encapsulated in the characteristic of stewardship within servant leadership theory (Van Dierendonck, 2011), which has been demonstrated to be an essential aspect of the construct (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). This research sought to develop understanding with regards the manifestation of stewardship within the process of servant leadership in relation to CSR-related activities with the aim of eliciting new understanding into the cyclical nature of servant leadership. Drawing upon formal structures such as employing individuals who have experienced personal difficulties in their lives, and informal structures such as engaging in ad-hoc chats with employees while spontaneously walking around organisational premises, this research illustrates the cyclical nature of the process of servant leadership through the enactment of behaviours associated with the characteristic of stewardship, including role modelling.

This research also contributes conceptual understanding with regards the notion of community within servant leadership theory. Despite constituting a foundational characteristic in prominent conceptualisations such as Spears (1995), Laub (1999), and Liden et al (2008), the notion of community has experienced theoretical neglect since servant leadership's inception (Northouse, 2016). For example, Christensen et al (2014) suggest that by exploring servant leadership in the context of CSR-related activities, understanding can be developed into what Greenelaf (1970) suggests are 'the least privileged in society' or what Christensen et al (2014: 173) refer to as "those who lack". The findings of the present research illustrate how servant leadership can result in positive consequences for both internal and external communities, drawing upon insights garnered when servant leadership is considered in relation to CSR (Carroll, 1991; 2016) and Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1983; 1984; 1994). The research illustrates how the inherent focus on the other and improving the lives of the least privileged in society within servant leadership (Greenelaf, 1970; Covey, 1996; Maak and Pless, 2006) can become manifested through behaviours and processes such as providing opportunities, the combination of different communication techniques, and empowering employees. This has positive consequences internally to the organisation such as with the development of high-quality dyadic relationships between employees throughout the organisational hierarchy, the development of cohorts that support and assist one another from both a professional and social perspective, and the personal development of employees. It also facilitates positive consequences external to the organisation such as in terms of community development and enhancing the lives of others. As such, conceptual understandings into the core characteristic of community within servant leadership theory are developed by demonstrating that the structures, communication channels and notion of empowerment all contribute towards building communities within organisations as well as enable servant leadership to positively contribute towards external communities. This therefore supports Christensen et al's (2014) suggestion that understanding can be enhanced into the conceptual foundations of community within servant leadership theory by drawing upon CSR.

The second theoretical contribution of this research relates to one of the core principles of leadership theory, power and influence. The notion of power is fundamental to discussions of leadership (French and Raven, 1959; Collinson, 2014); developments in understanding pertaining to the variables and distribution of power have contributed towards the direction of leadership studies (Northouse, 2016) resulting in contemporary dialogues including those between post-heroic approaches and CLS. Traditionally, power has been assumed to operate unidirectionally whereby the leader enacts power upon their followers (Kellerman, 2012) but recognition of leadership as a process incorporating factors including behaviours (Blake and Mouton, 1964), context/situation (Stogdill, 1948; 1974) and followers (Hollander, 1992; Rost, 1991) has resulted in understanding leadership as a relational, multidirectional process (Burns, 1978; Collinson, 2005), co-constructed by those involved (Liu, 2019). Understandings relating to power therefore have transcended from being individualised, located within 'Great Men' (Pearce and Manz, 2005) towards more distributed approaches that recognise the variable notion of power depending upon a number of factors including context and followers (Grint, 2011; Northouse, 2016). Despite these advancements in understanding, CLS scholars suggests that the notion of leadership remains founded upon white, masculine, North American ideals (Elliott and Stead, 2008; Liu, 2019; Collinson, 2020) and that studies relating to collective forms of leadership akin to post-heroic approaches largely omit power from their focus (Collinson et al, 2017). There is therefore potential to expand knowledge pertaining to power dynamics within collective leadership approaches.

As such, this thesis develops understanding into how servant leadership as a process facilitates the ability for leaders to lead from a position of servility by adopting a number of formal and informal structures and communication channels that increase the propensity for employee empowerment; the second theoretical contribution of the research therefore pertains to power and influence. Sobral and Furtado (2019) suggest that post-heroic approaches to leadership are founded upon relational, collectivist and participatory values that promote the value of individuals and their inclusion in organisational dynamics such as the decision-making process, an important context from which to observe power dynamics. Findings of the present research relating to formal structures such as committees founded in the interest of ensuring CSR-related activities are representative of the entire organisation as well as a structure affording the opportunity for employees to experience personal development and empowerment, resonate with theoretical underpinnings of participation and collaboration in post-heroic leadership. Implementing such structures enables leaders to establish organisational cultures that practice inclusivity and promote unity in the interest of empowering employees to take ownership and responsibility of the decision-making process, with respect to CSR-related activities.

Informal structures similarly contributed here in terms of contributing towards the development of an organisational culture that satisfies the needs of employees with a preference for less formalised approaches to power dynamics. Instilling ownership and responsibility in these employees by providing them with the autonomy to make decisions and pursue activities they had a personal affiliation towards, afforded employees with differing needs and desires to similarly contribute towards CSR-related activities and experience personal development. Informal structures were implemented in the process of servant leadership, such as engaging in chats with employees, that facilitated an understanding into the needs and desires of employees which developed high-quality, dyadic relationships between leaders and employees; this enabled leaders to implement both formal and informal structures that satisfied individual employees' needs and requirements. This resonates with the foundational concept that "at the core of servant leadership is the leader's belief in the intrinsic value of each individual" (Van Dierendonck, 2011: 1246); structures are therefore implemented that satisfy the desire to adhere to the different needs of employees arising out of the recognition of their individuality. Formal and informal structures implemented by the leaders therefore establish the desired ways of working across their respective organisations while simultaneously serving the needs of individual employees, thereby illustrating the feasibility of leading from a position of servility and overcoming the paradoxical positions expected of leaders in contemporary society (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014).

This contribution pertaining to understanding how servant leadership increases the propensity to lead from a position of servility however also requires further exploration. A critique of post-heroic approaches to leadership is that they negate to consider the notion of power within the relational, collectivist approach to leadership (Collinson et al, 2017), potentially as a result of the over-dichotomisation between leaders and followers (Harter, 2006). The findings of the present research illustrate the structures within servant leadership, such as developing a high-quality, dyadic relationship with employees by engaging in chats with employees as well as operating with an open-door policy, enabled leaders to develop understanding into the needs, requirements and skills of their employees, so that employees were invited into the decision-making process as they were able to positively contribute insights and understanding. Although this resonates with a recognition that one is not 'leader or follower' but 'leader and follower' depending on context and situation (Fairhurst, 2001; Ryoma, 2020), the power dynamics within contexts such as these require further explorations. The present research therefore theoretically contributes towards understanding that servant leadership supports the feasibility of leading from a position of servility but there is resonance with aspects of both post-heroic approaches to leadership and CLS and further research is therefore encouraged here.

The third theoretical contribution of this research relates to relationships within servant leadership and in particular the leader-employee relationship. The importance of relationships within leadership have emerged as a result of developments in understanding pertaining to leadership as a process as opposed to leadership being inherent to specific individuals who may or may not possess specific behaviours or characteristics (Alvehus, 2018; Northouse, 2016; DeRue and Ashford, 2010). The leader-follower relationship specifically has drawn increased attention due to its significance within leadership as a process, there can be no leader without at least one follower, for example (Kellerman, 2007). The leader-follower relationship within servant leadership is particularly unique given the inherent desire for leader to serve first before "conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (Greenleaf, 1970: 15). As such, the third theoretical contribution has close assimilations to the preceding two contributions drawing upon the characteristics demonstrated within servant leadership as a process as well as the notion of empowerment and the ability to lead from a position of servility.

The findings of the present research contribute to conceptual understanding within the leader-follower relationship, drawing specifically upon the notion of interpersonal acceptance. Interpersonal acceptance encompasses an ability to empathetically adopt the psychological perspectives of others and relate to these in a warm, compassionate manner, irrespective of the potential for conflict (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Reddy, 2019). The present research contributes conceptual understanding into the notion of interpersonal acceptance within servant leadership theory by illustrating how interpersonal acceptance can be manifested within leader-follower relationships in the context of CSR-related activities. The formally appointed hierarchical leaders that participated in this research demonstrated humility and understanding, such as when providing employment opportunities for those experiencing difficulties in their lives or when engaging in community-related projects to maintain employees when regular work was limited; this also enabled the organisations to positively contribute towards the communities in which they operate. Demonstrating humility also facilitated the reduction in distance between formally appointed leaders and employees resulting in high-quality, dyadic relationships where leaders were perceived as friends rather than colleagues. The implantation of formal structures such as State of the Nation talks as well as informal structures such as operating with an open-door policy facilitated interactions between members of the organisation throughout the hierarchy where the individual needs and requirements could be deciphered and behaviours and processes altered according to such needs. This research therefore contributes towards understanding how servant leadership creates high-quality, dyadic relationships between leaders and employees and the positive consequences of doing so.

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this research also makes two practical contributions. With regards leadership studies generally and servant leadership in particular, the developments in conceptual understandings can be drawn upon in leadership development courses in the interest of increasing the propensity for individuals to adopt the characteristics associated with servant leadership, particularly when individuals are focused on contributing towards CSR-related activities. This research presents structures and mechanisms that can be adapted to meet the needs of individual employees in the interest of developing personal relationships so that both leader and follower can experience personal development. Adopting the principles of servant leadership may also increase the propensity to create positive outcomes within wider society, such as assisting those suffering personal difficulties or contributing to socially responsible actions related to individuals with disabilities, for example.

The second practical contribution that this research presents is that the findings can be of interest to individuals with a desire to practice servant leadership in smaller organisations. For example, there are positive implications that can be derived from the current research and implemented within alternative organisations, such as the structures and processes that may facilitate the development of high-quality, dyadic relationships across one's respective organisation. This may increase the propensity for the development of a supportive and collaborative organisational culture.

1.2. Thesis Organisation

The following chapters present a comprehensive review of literature associated with servant leadership, drawing upon Stakeholder Theory and CSR-related literature where applicable, the methodological approach adopted throughout this research, and the findings of the research and their relevance to existing literature.

Chapter 2 explores and critically analyses the subject of servant leadership with respect to its position in leadership studies more broadly. It is important to note that the review does not contend with every aspect of leadership theory or CSR respectively, rather it focuses on the aspects of each that are most relevant to the development of servant leadership as a construct; it is beyond the scope of the present research to provide such a review of the two literatures. For this reason, Chapter 2 begins by providing insights into CSR which are subsequently drawn upon in later sections. The chapter proceeds by exploring existing literature pertaining to servant leadership, including thematic developments that have resulted in its emergence, how it relates to alternative leadership approaches, and current understandings and limitations within servant leadership theory. The chapter concludes by presenting the theoretical framework that directs this research.

Chapter 3 then outlines the methodological approach adopted throughout the research by drawing upon philosophical and epistemological assumptions. It proceeds by explaining the research strategy utilised throughout this research, encompassing aspects such as participant selection, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. Ethical considerations are also considered in Chapter 3.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then present the main findings and discussions associated with the research, each chapter with reference to each of the aggregated dimensions identified through the data analysis phase of the research. Chapter 4 presents the findings and discussions relating to the aggregated dimension of providing opportunities and the associated second order themes of providing opportunities associated with personal development and providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities. Chapter 5 presents the findings and discussions relating to the aggregated dimension of promoting communication and the associated second order themes of promoting informal channels of communication and promoting formal channels of communication. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the findings and discussions relating to the aggregated dimension of empowering employees and the associated second order themes of empowering employees through ownership and empowering employees through community.

Chapter 7 draws together the three previous chapters in an integrative fashion. Whereas Chapters 4, 5 and 6 consider the main findings and discussions pertaining to a respective aggregated dimension, Chapter 7 considers the findings at a more conceptual level, drawing the findings together in order to consider them holistically. A conceptual model is presented that incorporates the inter-relatedness of the three aggregated dimensions. The three research questions associated with the study are also answered.

Chapter 8 offers the concluding remarks with regards this thesis. As such, the answers to the research questions and primary findings of the research are drawn upon to satisfy the research aim of the study. The theoretical and practical contributions of the research are explicated which leads to the presentation of the limitations and areas of interest for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The aim of this chapter is to present a comprehensive overview of literature associated with servant leadership. However, in the interest of developing understanding and exploring areas of knowledge currently lacking in understanding, the review will also draw upon ideas and concepts from literature pertaining to CSR, developing understanding into the areas that are most closely assimilated to servant leadership; this will serve to highlight areas where knowledge pertaining to servant leadership can be developed.

Despite the primary focus of the thesis being servant leadership, the review begins with a high-level overview of the core concepts of CSR as these will be drawn upon during discussions pertaining to servant leadership in later stages; it is therefore important to provide insights into the construct of CSR to inform these discussions. As such, Section 2.1 presents the fundamental aspects of CSR. Tracing the historical development of CSR establishes the foundations for an introduction into the main theories, concepts and discussions occurring in the field, such as the debate between Stakeholder and Shareholder Theories, and different interpretations of the core responsibilities of organisations with respect to their position in society.

The review then proceeds with an introduction into servant leadership (Section 2.2) before drawing upon thematic development in leadership theory (Section 2.3), the notion of power (Section 2.4), and the relationship between servant leadership and alternative approaches to leadership (Section 2.5). Section 2.6 presents a summary of the limitations arising as a result of current understandings into servant leadership theory, highlighting that concerns can be primarily categorised as relating to either conceptual understanding, issues pertaining to measurement, or the notions of power and influence. This therefore leads to the identification of the research aim and questions. Section 2.8. concludes the chapter by presenting the theoretical framework associated with this research.

2.1. Insights into CSR

CSR has experienced increased attention in contemporary society from both academic and practitioner perspectives alike. Organisations have made greater investments into its associated practices and there has been a rise in academic curiosity (Sheehy, 2015); similarly, there has been an increase in standards and tools for implementation, partially arising as a result of societal expectations regarding the practices of organisations (Bessire and Mazuyer, 2012). Although affiliated interpretations of CSR were discussed as early as the 1920s (Gond and Moon, 2011), it was not until Bowen (1953) that a scholarly significant contribution was made to CSR as an explicit concept. Bowen sought to theoretically explain the relationship between organisations and society, resulting in CSR being defined as "the obligations of business to pursue those policies, to make those decisions or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of society". It can be argued that this is the first definition that highlighted the importance of additional stakeholders to shareholders, primarily focusing on those external to the organisation, therefore providing the foundations for later developments in developmental thinking such as Stakeholder and Shareholder Theories respectively.

The 1960s subsequently experienced increased scholarship regarding CSR, primarily focusing on what constitutes social responsibility, and on its importance to both business and society (Masoud, 2017). McGuire (1963: 144) for example, proposed that "the idea of social responsibilities supposes that the corporation has not only economic and legal obligations but also certain responsibilities to society which extend beyond these obligations"; this illustrates a shift in thinking beyond the mere relationship between organisations and society towards establishing the components that define said relationship. Limited progress with regards establishing the nature of the relationship were made until the 1970s however, until the emergence of influential thinkers and theorists such as

Friedman, Freeman and Carroll. According to Bessire and Mazuyer (2012) the works of authors such as these have shaped the understanding of CSR that permeates through contemporary society.

Emerging from the discipline of economics, Friedman's (1970) belief is that the sole responsibility of a business is to increase profits for shareholders through the strategic deployment of resources; this perspective has formed the basis of Shareholder Theory which assumes that as long as all engagements are free from deception and fraud and promote open competition, organisations hold no other responsibilities (Freeman, 1982). This understanding of the relationship between society and organisations continues to dominate the shareholder perspective towards the relationship and provides foundational understandings into the economic responsibility associated with CSR (Lucas et al, 2001). Friedman's (1970) writings however were not universally accepted with multiple perspectives outlining perceived discrepancies, particularly when considered from a cross-contextual basis. One such perspective was presented by the Committee for Economic Development (CED, 1971: 11) who stated that, "business is a function by public consent and its basic purpose is to serve constructively the needs of society to the satisfaction of society". Whereas Friedman's perspective derives from economics, the CED's perspective emerges from social policy-making, one is therefore driven by finance and the other societal needs; it is perhaps unsurprising therefore that the two perspectives appear incompatible. Emerging as a contrasting theory as a result of the perceived deficiencies of Shareholder Theory was Stakeholder Theory.

Originally proposed by Freeman (1983; 1984; 1994), Stakeholder Theory states that the primary responsibility of managers is to create as much value as possible for stakeholders, not just shareholders. Stakeholder Theory therefore considers who and what really count for an organisation; as opposed to the Shareholder view in which only shareholders are counted as important meaning there is a strong financial focus, Stakeholder Theory draws upon the requirements and needs of multiple stakeholders including employees, customers, suppliers, and local people (Miles, 2012). One difficulty associated with identifying stakeholders however is defining what constitutes a stakeholder (Carroll, 1991), should competitors for example be considered a stakeholder as a result of their ability to influence one's own organisation?

Stakeholder Theory has continually experienced high levels of interest from both practical and theoretical fields since its inception, to the extent that it can now be considered from three primary positions: normative (ethics), instrumental (social science), and descriptive (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). The descriptive perspective describes what actually occurs within an organisation (Jawahar and Mclaughlin, 2001), that is to say that it considers how things are rather than how they should be. Instrumental approaches however consider Stakeholder Theory more closely to Shareholder Theory than either descriptive or normative approaches as the instrumental approaches perceive Stakeholder Theory as a method to improve efficiency, with the ultimate aim of increasing profits for the organisation by considering others in one's decisions (Freeman and Philips, 2002). The normative approaches perceive Stakeholder Theory as an ethical concern in that each stakeholder has intrinsic value, each stakeholder's intrinsic value is also equal to all other stakeholders (Donald and Preston, 1995); it is the normative approach to Stakeholder Theory that has influenced much of the scholarly progress made in relation to the topics of servant leadership and CSR.

Concurrently to Freeman's (1984) seminal writings relating to Stakeholder Theory, Jones (1980) introduced the concept of CSR as a process where engagement must be voluntary (i.e. beyond legal or union contract), broad (i.e. beyond traditional duty to shareholders), and that the process of engagement is more important than the actual outcomes (Masoud, 2017). Jones' (1980) foundational principles of CSR appear to resonate strongly with the normative perspective of Stakeholder Theory, it is perhaps therefore unsurprising to observe the subsequent convergence of the two theoretical positions (Jamali, 2007). Further resonations can be observed such as in the belief of intrinsic value in others and dedication towards equality. As such, Christensen et al (2014:

174) suggest that “servant leadership, and the scholarship and theorising that continue to grow around the topic, offers an opportunity to advance findings about CSR- in large part because the servant leadership concept already includes explicit theoretical linkages to CSR activities (Hunter et al, 2013; Sun, 2013)”.

Drawing upon similar themes to Jones, Carroll (1979: 500) presented CSR as corporate social performance (CSP), suggesting “the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of an organisation”; this view has subsequently developed into the Pyramid Model of CSR (Figure 1), arguably the seminal model of CSR in contemporary society (Crane and Matten, 2004).

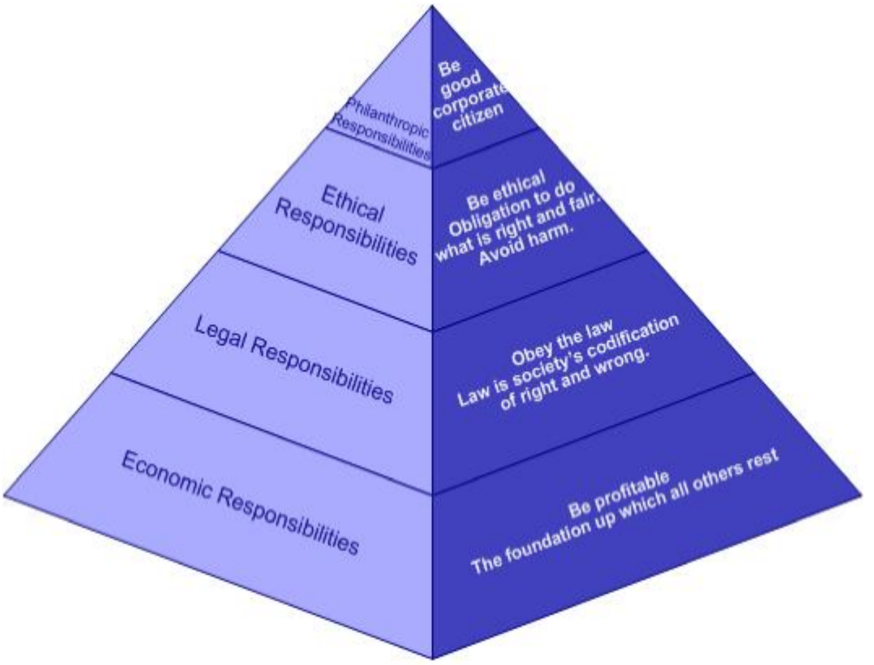


Figure 1 Carroll's (1991) Pyramid Model of CSR

The Pyramid Model of CSR embraces the four responsibilities considered foundational to CSR in contemporary society, namely economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. The model developed previous writings by specifying the nature of the philanthropic responsibility, suggesting it to embrace corporate citizenship (Masoud, 2017) and although accepting that the model did not incorporate new responsibilities, Carroll (1991) argued that it was only recently that the ethical and philanthropic dimensions had gained such traction. Table 1 describes each of the four responsibilities.

Whereas economic, ethical and legal responsibilities are considered foundational (Elkington, 1999; Carroll, 2016; Carroll, 1991), philanthropic responsibilities have been contested as a constituting factor. L’Etang (1994) for example, questioned whether philanthropy was a responsibility in and of itself and Schwartz and Carroll (2003) suggest that it has been subsumed within the three other pillars.

Responsibility	Description
Economic	The basic premise of any business is to “produce goods and services that consumers needed and wanted and to make an acceptable profit in the process” (Carroll, 1991: 41).

Legal	Society requires organisations to produce goods and services in a manner adhering to the federal, state, and local government-defined rules and regulations outlined by legislative bodies. Society has established the minimal ground rules under which business can operate.
Ethical	Extend beyond fairness and justice to include "standards, norms, or expectations that reflect a concern for what consumers, employees, shareholders, and the community regard as fair, just, or in keeping with the respect or protection of stakeholders' moral rights" (Carroll, 1991: 41).
Philanthropic	Those that promote human welfare or goodwill and are often presented in terms of the voluntary donation of resources, time or money to causes of goodwill as defined by the population. Differ from ethical responsibilities as ethical responsibilities are often seen as obligatory whereas philanthropic responsibilities are seen as voluntary.

Table 1: The four pillars of responsibility within Carroll's (1991) Pyramid Model of CSR

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) on the other hand, suggest that CSR is concerned with bringing about positive change on both a personal and institutional level rendering philanthropy an important feature. Furthermore, continued verification of Carroll's Pyramid Model of CSR in different cultures and contexts (Visser, 2005) has illustrated the inherent necessity of philanthropy as a responsibility; Visser (2011) for example, posits that philanthropic responsibilities are given the second highest priority, behind economic responsibilities, in developing countries suggesting their importance ahead of ethical and legal requirements. The importance of philanthropic responsibilities has also been linked to positive individual outcomes such as increased employee engagement (Lee et al, 2014) and employee motivation in the workplace (Kim and Scullion, 2013; Lewin and Sabater, 1996).

Several scholars (Weyzig, 2006; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009; Aminu et al, 2015) have criticised Carroll's model, focusing particularly on the weighting granted to philanthropic responsibilities. In less developed societies, citizens require philanthropy to survive and organisational actions are therefore expected to reflect this where in more developed states, philanthropy is less pivotal (Visser, 2012). These discussions however do not question the presence of philanthropic responsibilities, rather the importance of them with the entirety of CSR as a construct. Carroll (2016) revisited the model stating that "the purpose of the pyramid was to single out the definitional aspects of CSR and to illustrate the building block nature of the four-part framework" (Carroll, 2016: 4). As such, there is an expectation towards organisations "to fulfil all responsibilities in some sequential, hierarchical fashion" (Carroll, 2016: 6), and that the dimensions are interchangeable; it is understandable that the four aspects will operate in trade-offs with one another, but all activities should encompass all responsibilities. Carroll further clarified that although ethical responsibilities form their own respective domain, ethics continues to permeate all levels of the pyramid.

Perhaps the main strength regarding Carroll's Pyramid Model of CSR is that it has been empirically tested over many years (Aupperle et al., 1985; Clarkson, 1995; Edmondson and Carroll, 1999); these tests appear to have confirmed that there are four distinct yet related components of CSR, that the weightings given by Carroll to each of these dimensions is approximately correct in a Western context, and the importance of organisational culture with regards attitudes to CSR. Given the importance of the leader in determining the organisational culture (Warrick, 2017), it is important to consider leadership's relationship with Carroll's (1979) model, and in particular servant leadership.

Servant leadership theory suggests an inherent sense of right and wrong through which leaders aspire to develop followers and create positive change in others (Covey, 1998). Gautier and Pache (2015) note how the trait of altruism features prominently in the individual philanthropic literature. For example, Sanchez (2000) has suggested that philanthropic acts can be driven by altruistic motives that reflect individualistic and paternalistic attitudes, where "the non-reciprocity reciprocity condition [is] the acid test" (Godfrey, 2005: 778); this resonates with servant leadership theory. Altruism within servant leadership has been compared to numerous aspects of other studies such as the Big Five factor model of personality or the GLOBE study. Here, altruism has been likened to the trait of agreeableness, whereby one is generous and has a high disposition to assist others (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Similarly, altruism also forms an integral aspect of the humane orientation aspect of the much-cited GLOBE study (House et al, 2004), where individuals are rewarded for being benevolent, caring and kind to others (Ryan, 2008). With regards altruism forming dimensions to models of CSR, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006: 318) include altruistic calling as one of their five dimensions of servant leadership, describing it as "a leader's deep-rooted desire to make a positive difference in others' lives. It is a generosity of the spirit consistent with a philanthropic purpose in life". Similarly, Patterson (2003: 4) states that servant leaders' behaviours and motives are informed by altruism, which is simply explained as "helping others just for the sake of helping". Despite its contentious nature for some, drawing upon the philanthropic responsibility within the CSR domain can advance our understanding of servant leadership by acting as the channel through which the behaviours of servant leadership can become manifested.

2.2. Servant Leadership

Servant leadership draws upon the notion of service as the foundations of leadership (Greenleaf, 1973), and thus adopts a unique position compared with other leadership approaches. However, this unique perspective derives from developments in leadership theory including the saliency of the leader-follower relationship and notions of power and influence. At present however, much of the literature regarding servant leadership remains "indeterminate, somewhat ambiguous, and mostly anecdotal" (Russell and Stone, 2002: 145), rendering further research into the construct necessary; our knowledge and understanding of the construct remains essentially limited which provides opportunities to explore the construct more fully. The aim of this literature review is to establish and explain these limitations, grounding them in current theoretical understandings.

Leadership itself is a broadly contested term (Bass, 1990; Kotter, 1990) with contrasting views regarding what leadership is, consists of, or does (Hale and Fields, 2007). Early researchers often conflated leadership with the occupancy of a leadership position (Arvey et al, 2007), a characteristic of leadership studies that continues today. However, shifts in focus from individuals' traits to the inclusion of context, followers and behaviours as fundamental to the process of leadership have resulted in alternative conceptualisations as something beyond role-adoption (Judge et al, 2009). Developments such as these gave rise to the emergence of servant leadership, an approach to leadership predicated upon the foundational belief of the intrinsic value of each individual first and foremost, whereby the leader desires to serve first before conscious choice brings them to aspire to lead (Greenleaf, 1973).

Despite increased attention in recent years (Liden et al, 2015), Greenleaf's (1970) portrayal of servant leadership continues to be the most frequently referenced (Northouse, 2016). Greenleaf (1970: 15) states that servant leadership:

> "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead… The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that the other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test… is: do those served grow as persons; do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?"

Although potentially a description rather than definition, this passage is the closest to a definition that Greenleaf provided (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of this definition is the focus on servitude as opposed to leadership, adopting the role of leader emanates as a result of the desire to serve, "the natural feeling that one wants to serve *first*". Upon the realisation and adoption of a leadership position, the servant leader then continues to serve those they lead, including the "least privileged in society", ensuring that decisions improve or at least do not further deprive those least well-off in society (Greenleaf, 1973). This care and concern emerges as a result of a focus on individual followers as opposed to external (organisational) objectives, targets and goals. For Spears (2004) this manifestation arises as a result of an individual who considers creating value for others to be the primary goal of leadership.

Developmental works have distinguished servant leadership as a leadership approach in its own right. Liden et al (2008) for example, conducted multi-level hierarchical linear modelling and found that servant leadership makes a unique contribution beyond transformational leadership and LMX in explaining employees' organisational commitment. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) had similarly illustrated servant leadership as a better predictor of LMX quality than transformational leadership, hypothesising this was as a result of the notion of service within servant leadership. As such, Liden et al (2015: 254) suggest servant leadership is "a desirable approach to leadership, because it promotes integrity, focuses on helping others, and prioritises bringing out the full potential of followers". The focus on integrity, guided by a moral compass (Graham, 1991), assists servant leaders in avoiding the negative consequences of pursuing self-interest (O'Reilly et al, 2013) and narcissism (Tourish, 2014).

An additional aspect of Greenleaf's portrayal that distinguishes servant leadership is the explicit focus on society external to the organisation. Greenleaf's (1970) definition appears to strongly resonate with the expectations of contemporary society in terms of developing people capable of building a better tomorrow (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Other prominent definitions of the construct that have been provided in attempts to conceptualise servant leadership, such as those of Spears (1995, 1998, 2004) and Laub (1999) have also included the notion of building community as foundational characteristics, illustrating the saliency of the impact of servant leadership on both employees and the wider community.

Servant leadership has emerged as a desirable approach to leadership within contemporary society (Liden et al, 2015). The evolution of leadership theories has resulted in a detailed and sophisticated understanding of the variables and processes interacting, which results in what we perceive as leadership. In order to entirely appreciate the concept of servant leadership, and its relationship with CSR, it is necessary to understand how servant leadership has emerged as a result of thematic developments in leadership theories throughout history.

2.3. Thematic Developments in Leadership Theories

Although leadership studies date back to Ancient civilisations and the works of scholars such as Plato and Aristotle amongst others, formalised leadership studies as we know it today date back to the Industrial Revolution (Carlyle, 1841). Since then, thoughts have developed from Great Man theories to Trait and Behavioural Theories respectively, and the importance of considerations relating to situation, context, and follower involvement; these developments enable us to largely categorise leadership approaches into three main groups: heroic, post-heroic, and critical leadership studies (Collinson, 2020). The most prominent of these three groups in terms of receiving attention and having been studied for the longest period of time is the heroic perspective, which focuses on one single individual leader, superior in terms of knowledge, wisdom and power to their followers (Crevani et al, 2007), who often adheres to characteristics affiliated to white, masculine, North American ideals (Elliott and Stead, 2008; Collinson, 2020); indeed, leadership has traditionally been perceived to be a masculinised position adopted by men (Elliott and Stead, 2017).

Several prominent theories regarding leadership developed within the heroic traditions, each of which focused on different aspects based upon the shortcomings of previous theories; some of the most pivotal considerations relate to the trait perspective (Stogdill, 1948; Katz, 1955), behavioural approaches (Stogdill, 1974) and latterly the situational approach (Hershey and Blanchard, 1969, 1988; Blanchard et al 1993). Founded within the Great Man theories, trait theorists believe that only those possessing innate characteristics can become effective leaders (Northouse, 2016), a set of intrinsic qualities such as physical features, one's personality, or one's intelligence distinguish leaders from others (Bryman, 1992); as such, leadership is located within individuals and thus cannot be learnt.

Stogdill (1948) raised the primary concern of the trait approach in that no conclusive list of traits could be established across a variety of situations, despite certain traits being more prevalent in those who held leadership positions than those who did not. Specifically, Stogdill (1948: 65) stated that "the evidence suggests that leadership is a relation that exists between persons in a social situation, and that persons who are leaders in one situation may not necessarily be leaders in other situations", therefore moving beyond the importance of traits to consider contextual factors. Scholarly support for Stogdill was strong, Ghiselli and Brown (1955: 47) for example, suggesting that "under one set of circumstances an individual will be a good leader and under others he will be a poor one". As such, leadership began to be reconceptualised as a relational process occurring between individuals (Northouse, 2016) with additional importance granted to situational factors (Zaccaro, 2007). Stogdill's (1974) influential second meta-analysis validated the findings of his first in terms of there being a list of necessary traits, yet also supported the notion that situational factors are significant to leadership. As such, a movement was initiated within leadership studies that considered the importance of situational factors.

Emerging as a result of efforts to discern a universal list of traits, Katz (1955) suggested that effective administration, or leadership, is predicated upon three basic personal skills, which acted as the foundation for the emergence of the skills approach. Katz's (1955) three skills, technical (knowledge and proficiency in a certain task), human (the ability to work with people), and conceptual (the ability to work with ideas and principles), are all required but the weightings of each skill varies depending on one's position. Developments were made by Mumford and colleagues (2000), such as introducing the notion that leadership no longer resided in individuals alone, which makes leadership accessible to all as opposed to being reliant upon an inherent set of traits. This is an important shift within leadership theory and in particular with regards to servant leadership as making leadership accessible to all supports and perpetuates the cyclical nature of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970; Farling et al, 1999); individuals are able to develop their skillset in accordance with their surroundings, contexts and stakeholders, and are therefore able to serve one another interchangeably.

Developing the notion that leadership is not reliant on traits and skills, the behavioural approach "focuses exclusively on what leaders do and how they act" (Northouse, 2016: 71). The behavioural approach was premised on leader behaviours being either task-oriented (i.e. focused on goal accomplishment) or relationship-oriented (i.e. focused on ensuring the comfort of followers). Formative studies were conducted with task-oriented and relationship-oriented as opposites on a spectrum (Kahn, 1956), meaning that a leader could only be task- or relationship-oriented not both simultaneously. However, later studies recognised that a leader could potentially possess both orientations and so reconceptualised the constructs into two independent leadership orientations, meaning both could be present simultaneously (Northouse, 2016). One prominent limitation emerges from the behavioural approach, namely the contradictory notion of the same behaviour resulting in effective leadership in some cases and not others, that is to say the behavioural approach negates to afford enough importance to contextual factors (Vecchio, 1995; Awan and Mahmood, 2010). Leader behaviours therefore appeared not to operate distinctly and explain leader effectiveness, which gave rise to the importance of situational factors (Bass and Stogdill, 1990).

Situational leadership was originally proposed by Hershey and Blanchard (1969) but has since been revised on numerous occasions (for example, Hersey and Blanchard, 1988; Blanchard et al, 1985; Blanchard et al, 1993). Ultimately, the situational approach "demands that leaders match their style to the competence and commitment of the followers" (Northouse, 2016: 94) and subsequently adopt their style to the needs of the followers. It proposes that "effective leadership requires a rational understanding of the situation and an appropriate response, rather than a charismatic leader with a large group of dedicated followers" (McCleskey, 2014: 118). Situational leadership also depends upon the maturity of the follower, whereby the leader understands the amount of direction required in order for the follower to be successful (Hershey and Blanchard, 1969).

The situational approach was originally well-received, perhaps as a result of its adaptability in a time when leader-flexibility was in high demand (Yukl, 1989); this view was supported by Bass and Stogdill (1990) who suggested that the situational factors demanded different leaders to emerge that were most competent in the given situation. However, Nicholls (1985) criticised the approach in terms of consistency (with regards leader behaviours), continuity (behaviours should conform to a continuum as opposed to being disjointed) and conformity (the followers must behave in a particular manner for the approach to work). These critiques have subsequently been supported by Bass (2008) who notes a lack of internal consistency, conceptual contradictions, and ambiguities, which are in accordance with the three logical violations outlined by Nicholls (1985). The situational approach to leadership however acted as the catalyst for the emergence of post-heroic perspectives towards leadership, thus providing important developments in leadership theory.

Despite subjectivity shrouding the definition of 'leadership', it is almost universally accepted that influence is a root construct (Northouse, 2016); this suggests that irrespective of effectiveness, end goal, or any other variable, influence (and power) are fundamental to the construct. As with leadership, power is a difficult concept to define, it can be interpreted in a number of ways but within leadership studies it is generally held to be concerned with the ability to influence the beliefs, attitudes, or behaviours of others (Northouse, 2016); as such, the converse of this would be corruption, which is the misuse of entrusted power for private gain (Nussbaum and Wilkinson (2007). Traditionally and within heroic perspectives, "leadership is all about the attainment, exercise and retention of power. The boss has only one goal: to ensure that people do what he or she wants. It consists mostly of handy strategies to win" (Trompenaars and Voerman, 2009: 80) which given the increasingly competitive market, is one potential reason for the rise of narcissism in leadership leading to corporate scandal (Tourish, 2014).

The identification of narcissism within individual, charismatic leaders is one of the potential reasons for the emergence of post-heroic approaches to leadership, a shift in perspective away from more traditional, individualistic models of leadership to shared and distributed models (Pearce and Conger, 2003) that focus on leadership as process with intended learning outcomes for both oneself and the wider community (Fletcher, 2004). Post-heroic leadership perspectives highlight the relational, collectivist, and participatory nature of leadership (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019) whereby the ideal post-heroic model of leadership is one where the leader empowers their followers by encouraging risk taking through innovative ideas and participation, and seeks development for one and all even if this risks the leader becoming dispensable (Eicher, 2006; Crevani et al, 2007). Fletcher (2004: 650) also suggests post-heroic leadership to:

> *"Re-envision the "who" and "where" of leadership by focusing on the need to distribute the tasks and responsibilities of leadership up, down, and across the hierarchy. It re-envisions the "what" of leadership by articulating leadership as a social process that occurs in and through human interactions, and it articulates the "how" of leadership by focusing on the more mutual, less hierarchical leadership practices and skills needed to engage collaborative, collective learning."*

This shift in perspective from the individual leader to collective factors recognises the additional importance of followership and context (Collinson, 2018), thus developing beyond traditional notions of leader as 'hero'. Heroic perspectives towards leadership are almost exclusively leader-centric, that is they focus on the traits and behaviours of individual leaders that enable them to not only emerge as leaders but what they need to be/do to be effective (Kaiser et al, 2008). Heroic approaches therefore romanticise leaders and leadership by virtue of reconstructing a series of casually unrelated, ambiguous events retrospectively to suggest the performance of intentional actions which are then deemed to be 'leadership' (Fletcher, 2004).

In response to negating leadership romanticism, post-heroic leadership draws upon the importance of additional influences such as context and followers, which illustrates how post-heroic perspectives have emerged as a result of the shortcomings within the situational approach. Crevani et al (2007) note how leadership studies are beginning to focus on the collaboration between two or more persons, where single individual leaders are being replaced by shared leadership practices whereby multiple individuals adopt different responsibilities in given contexts, and thus are diverging away from traditional notions of 'hero' leaders. Sobral and Furtado (2019: 211) support this shift by identifying the "special importance to those who are led". Bohl (2019) suggests that one of the primary critiques against leader-centric approaches is that they negate to recognise leadership as an open and complex social system, subject to change over time and space, which has contributed to the emergence of post-heroic leadership perspectives that consider leadership more holistically as a process as opposed to the mere actions and traits of one individual.

Despite developments in understanding regarding leadership as a process recognising more than individual leaders, Collinson (2005) introduces Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) which postulates that rather than post-heroic perspectives negating romanticism in leadership, they invert romanticism in favour of followers, thereby continuing to support a romanticised interpretation of leadership with only the subject of romance changing. One of the foundations of CLS is the over-dichotomisation within traditional leadership studies Collinson (2005), whereby leaders are privileged and separated from followers and you are 'either-or' (either leader or follower; transformation or transactional) (Fairhurst, 2001), when the matter should be approached from a 'both-and' perspective; Collinson (2005) suggests this should be a dialectical relationship. Although both post-heroic and CLS perspectives recognise the importance of factors beyond mere leader to leadership, the dialectical relationship between leaders and followers provides the primary distinction between the two approaches.

Collinson (2005: 39) argues that leadership studies have been over-dichotomised historically, such as being transformational or transactional, whereas the most effective leaders often demonstrate features of both approaches; this over-dichotomisation is problematic as "it constrains analysis by over-simplifying the complex, inter-connected, and shifting relationships that characterise leadership dynamics". Collinson (2014) argues that post-heroic perspectives similarly over-dichotomise leadership by merely replacing the privileging of leaders with the romanticism of heroic followers. As such, post-heroic approaches to leadership are also susceptible to the same critiques of heroic perspectives in that they both rely on individual 'heroes' rather than the process as a collective.

Within CLS, there continues to be a growing recognition "that leadership relations are typically not so asymmetrical and top-down that they are invariably one-way and all-determining" (Collinson, 2014: 37), as the leader-follower relationship (overlooking the over-dichotomisation of leader-follower in this instance) is co-constructed and thus entails both positive (loyalty, consent, etc) and negative (dissent, resistance, etc) components (Collinson, 2005). As such, Fairhurst and Connaughton (2014) recognise the growing interest in tensions, paradoxes, and contradictions of leadership dynamics and organisational life, observations that resonate with one of the primary criticisms targeted at servant leadership: how can one lead and serve simultaneously as the positions appear contradictory (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015).

Taking these developments regarding leadership studies into consideration, servant leadership has been positioned as a post-heroic approach due to its relational aspect (Liden et al, 2008), the focus on the follower (Van Dierendonck, 2011), and the focus on growth (Sobral and Furtado, 2019), all of which distinguish it from heroic traditions. Additional features of servant leadership theory, such as recognition of leadership distinct from white, patriarchal ideals (Elliott and Stead, 2008) in favour of more 'feminine' characteristics such as empathy and humility (Crevani et al, 2007), and the encouragement of innovation (Van Dierendonck, 2011), have also led to scholars positioning servant leadership as a post-heroic perspective. Despite this positioning however, servant leadership "begins with the natural feeling one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead" (Greenleaf, 1973: 15), which strongly resonates with the claim of CLS that leadership studies across both heroic and post-heroic traditions have over-dichotomised individuals as leader or follower (Collinson, 2005), as opposed to leader and follower, adopting roles along a spectrum during a silo of time. The servant leaders' status as "primus inter pares" (Crippen, 2017) and servant first (Greenleaf, 1970) suggests that servant leadership as a theoretical construct may be more akin to the CLS tradition, despite the assimilation with post-heroic traditions. Maintaining a "primus inter pares" status necessarily entails considerations relating to power and the turn away from traditional understandings of power within heroic leadership studies, again suggesting servant leadership can be considered within CLS. Given this potential confusion within servant leadership theory, further exploration, particularly through the lens of power and the unconventional distribution of power associated with servant leadership with regards to alternative leadership approaches, may elicit greater understanding into the positioning of servant leadership with regards post-heroic and CLS respectively.

2.4. <u>The Notion of Power</u>

Seminal writings relating to power and influence within the leadership domain are found in French and Raven's (1959) Five Bases of Power, later adapted to include a sixth dimension. Based upon the premise that social influence can be considered as a change in one's beliefs, attitudes or behaviours as a result of another's actions (Raven, 2004), French and Raven (1959) established five bases of power: referent, expert, legitimate, reward, and coercive; Raven (1965) subsequently introduced the notion of information power to the existing five bases. The original five bases can be subdivided into two further categories, personal power (referent and expert) and position power (legitimate, reward and coercive) (Parmer and Dillard, 2019).

Since French and Raven's (1959) seminal writings, the notion of power and influence has experienced much attention from both theorists and practitioners alike; many of the perceived developments however have faced criticisms such as Podsakoff and Schriesheim's (1985) suggestion that statistical attempts to differentiate between the bases of power have been unsuccessful, results have been unreliable and unreproducible. Blois and Hopkinson (2013) are similarly critical, suggesting that empirical studies tend to contradict theoretical postulations, contradict other empirical evidence, and increasingly illustrate a concern for the importance of context within power-base research. The notion of power within leadership studies therefore remains contested.

Traditional notions of leadership in organisational contexts specifically have observed leaders as heroes and therefore a positive aspect of organisational life, thereby rendering power unproblematic as a result of the positive influence of leaders on organisations and individuals (Collinson, 2020). Post-heroic approaches have emerged however, whereby leadership is understood as a "collaboratively produced, distributed, and emergent phenomenon highly dependent upon situation and context" (Alvehus, 2018: 536), and the socially constructed nature of leadership and “importance of (empowered) followers” (Collinson, 2020: 3), have been revealed. Both post-heroic and CLS perspectives recognise the essential nature of power to leadership (Collinson, 2014), and the potentially destructive consequences of power such as leader intoxication (Owen, 2012), increased impulsive behaviour (Asad and Sadler-Smith, 2020), or an inability to appreciate others’ opinions (Useem, 2017), all of which can be related to unethical behaviour and corruption (Bendahan et al, 2015; Giurge et al, 2019).

Positive enactments of power however can be enabling in terms of increasing productivity and empowerment (Schyns et al, 2019), particularly when a “power-with” approach is adopted as opposed to “power-over”. Cunliffe and Erikson (2011) suggest that post-heroic leadership perspectives adopt a power-with approach which establishes the collaborative, developmental nature of the leadership approach, as opposed to dictatorial nature of power-over approaches. Ryoma (2020) confirms the power-with approach within post-heroic traditions, citing the context of a professional ice hockey team. Ryoma (2020) suggests in off-stage contexts (i.e. any time aside from a match) the coach (leader) possesses ultimate power in terms of planning, tactics, and game-plan, whereas in on-stage contexts (i.e. when the match begins) the coach (leader) has very limited power and is reliant upon individual players (followers) to execute the plan. As such, power shifts between on- and off-stage contexts so that the coach (leader) must serve and empower players (followers). This analogy can be applied within the organisational context whereby business leaders (coaches) inform strategy, plan, and set overall objectives but then individual employees are the agents who will manifest these strategic objectives. Ryoma’s (2020) insights therefore illustrate tensions within leadership whereby it is not a stable entity across contexts; power, for example, can shift within time and space and is not limited to one stakeholder but is distributed to leaders and followers depending on context and situation. This therefore distinguishes between heroic and post-heroic perspectives towards power within the leader-follower relationship illustrating how leadership is a process as opposed to an action committed by one to another.

Ryoma’s (2020) observations resonate with contemporary expectations of senior figures within organisations, such as being both leaders and followers, being in control and also relinquishing control, and being able to plan while surrendering to unknown and unforeseen events (Parush and Koivunen, 2014), all of which appear inconsistent and contradictory based on traditional understandings of power distribution. A further contradictory position is that of servant leadership, the notion of serving and leading simultaneously and the difficulties associated with power within these contradictions; roles are precarious as there is the potential for identity distance, negotiation of expectations and performance, and resistance to formal authority and change (Collinson, 2006; DeRue and Ashford, 2010; Uhl-Bien et al, 2014). As such, there is a requirement to consider power asymmetries and hierarchy in social structures (Alvehus, 2018), given the conflicting expectations towards senior leaders in contemporary organisations. Understanding how servant leaders position themselves within social structures within their organisations may elicit insights into how they overcome the contradictory positions of leading and serving simultaneously.

In his original portrayal, Greenleaf (1973: 15) suggests that servant leadership “begins with the natural feeling one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (Greenleaf, 1973: 15). Service therefore appears to be at the heart of the construct (Russell and Stone, 2002), whereby the leader facilitates the development of others through their provision of time, resources and knowledge (Fairholm, 1997); this has important consequences for the positioning of power within servant leadership theory. Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) note how traditionally leaders have controlled and commanded others from their privileged positions, yet leading from a position of service suggests that leaders are “primus inter pares”, that is first among equals (Crippen, 2017).

Jackson and Parry (2011) suggest that serving implies being secondary to leaders so leading and following simultaneously may be incompatible positions; this resonates with contradictions in current expectations of senior leaders (Parush and Koivunen, 2014). Greenleaf (1970) himself notes the contradiction but states this is imperative to the construct; its importance was highlighted by scholars such as Ford (1991), Graham (1991) and Farling et al (1999) who all recognised the importance of the contradiction to the approach stating its necessity. Service does not arise as a result of personal weaknesses or character flaws, rather it is the strong self-image, belief in one's own values and comfort in one's own identity that allows them to perform in a sacrificial manner. Furthermore, Van Dierendonck (2011: 1231) contends that "working from a need to serve does not imply an attitude of servility in the sense that the power lies in the hands of the followers or that leaders would have low self-esteem", rather it incorporates placing the good of others over one's own self-interests (Hale and Fields, 2007), encompassing aspects of authenticity and generosity (Patterson, 2003). Despite its fundamental position within the construct, Grisaffe et al (2016) suggest that serving has not featured prominently within servant leadership literature, and there are therefore large knowledge gaps that need to be addressed.

One potential way in which knowledge can be derived into the notion of leading and serving simultaneously, therefore contributing to debates relating to contradictory expectations of leaders within contemporary organisations founded upon power, is when observing how servant leaders perceive engagement in CSR. Panaccio et al (2015) for example, suggest that starting from service increases the propensity for servant leaders to display a concern for CSR as a result of the inherent desire to serve others (Laub, 1999). Drawing on the cyclical nature of servant leadership, Panaccio et al (2015) also hypothesise that as a result of the servant leaders' concern for others, the propensity for employees to engage in CSR increased. Considering that instrumental motives drive engagement in CSR at the individual level, that is to say, "personal values, commitment, and awareness of CSR" (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012: 952) are the key drivers as well as an employees' perception of organisational justice in terms of shaping their behaviours and attitudes (Aguilera et al, 2006), the influence of the leader on employee engagement in CSR-related activities appears to be an important consideration. This supports the findings of Brown et al (2010) who suggest that an organisation's executives' personal beliefs and values influence the values, beliefs and behaviours of their subordinates. This research can develop understanding into how servant leaders lead from a position of servility to enhance individual employee participation in CSR-related activities; this will contribute to wider discussions relating to contradictory expectations of leaders in contemporary organisations such as the adoption of seemingly contradictory roles as well as the manifestation of power and influence.

In addition to the contradictory positions of leading and serving simultaneously, Grisaffe et al (2016) also suggest that the notion of influence and power within servant leadership theory distinguish it from both heroic and alternative post-heroic approaches to leadership. Servant leadership theory demands the practice of sharing power, thus positioning the approach within the post-heroic tradition (Coetzer et al, 2017). The shift towards a shared and distributed model of power can be identified in the Kantian interpretation of leadership, where leaders have a responsibility to increase the autonomy and responsibility of individual followers and thus enhance their ability to think for themselves (Bowie, 2000); this resonates strongly with the foundational belief in facilitating personal development inherent to servant leadership theory (Liden et al, 2015; Eva et al, 2019). One aspect of power distribution to be explored within servant leadership theory, perhaps as a result of the focus on individual followers within the wider context of leadership as a process, is the notion of autonomy.

Autonomy has featured in several leadership studies, particularly in relation to the construct of team leadership, where it is believed leaders grant autonomy to individual team members to unleash their talents (Northouse, 2016). Defined as being "the experience of having choices and of initiating action oneself" (Chiniara and Bentein, 2016: 127), Gergen (2006) raises concerns regarding the notion of autonomy with regards leadership as it appears to contradict traditional features of leadership such as directing, concern for production, goal setting, and creating a vision; this therefore resonates with current tensions experienced within contemporary leadership discourse of adopting contradictory positions simultaneously (Fairhurst and Connaughton; 2014). The shift in focus within servant leadership however from organisational objectives to the needs of individual followers (Greenleaf, 1970; Russell and Stone, 2002), includes autonomy as one aspect of personal growth that can be experienced by followers when they are exposed to the behaviours associated with servant leadership. Graham (1991) suggests that servant leadership theory dictates that the primary objective of servant leadership is the development of individuals, as opposed to transformational leadership for example which seeks to complete organisational objectives, which not only differentiates servant leadership from a large proportion of other post-heroic approaches to leadership but also posits the development of autonomy as fundamental to the construct.

Furthermore, facilitating employee autonomy acts as a catalyst for the development of high-quality dyadic relationships within servant leadership as a process, "which in turn is associated with higher [employee] engagement in challenging tasks" (Van Dierendonck, 2011: 1247). Servant leaders' encouragement of employees to engage in challenging tasks is linked to their belief in contributing towards the personal development of individuals (Liden et al, 2015; Eva et al, 2019), and their engagement in the decision-making process. Including employees in the decision-making process enhances personal autonomy as employees feel a responsibility towards contributing to the advancement of the business (Murari and Gupta, 2012). Rupp et al (2010) drew upon self-determination theory, which is based upon the universal and innate psychological needs of competence, autonomy and psychological relatedness (Ryan and Deci, 2008), to suggest that decisional contexts within organisations that foster employee autonomy may also drive CSR engagement. Tao et al (2018) also drew upon the interaction of leaders and employees within the decision-making context of CSR to establish that employees' basic psychological need for autonomy is satisfied when invited into the decision-making context. Tao et al (2018) further suggest that experiencing high-levels of autonomy, such as when engaging in the decision-making process, increase the propensity for long-lasting engagement of employees in CSR-related activities. Although positioned by some as a post-heroic approach (Eva et al, 2019), the facilitation of employee autonomy appears to resonate with the over-dichotomisation of traditional leadership studies (Collinson, 2005); individuals can be considered not just formerly appointed leader or follower but as individual agents that simultaneously contribute towards the enhancement of the organisation whilst experiencing personal development. This therefore raises the question as to whether servant leadership adheres to the post-heroic tradition or is more akin to CLS, a consideration returned to frequently throughout this thesis.

2.5. Servant Leadership and Alternative Approaches to Leadership

As Van Dierendonck (2011) alluded to, it can occasionally be difficult for followers to distinguish between servant leadership and other closely related leadership approaches, such as transformational, authentic, spiritual, and inclusive leadership respectively. However, Parris and Peachey (2013) and Liden et al (2015: 254) note that the quantity and quality of empirical research conducted recently "has demonstrated the incremental value of servant leadership as evidenced by the explanation of additional variance beyond TFL [transformational leadership], LMX [leader-member exchange], and/or consideration/initiating structure (Fleishman, 1998) in individual (Liden et al, 2008; Neubert et al, 2008; Van Dierendonck et al, 2014), group, (Ehrhart, 2004; Schaubroeck et al, 2011), and organisational (Peterson et al, 2012) outcomes". Although sharing similarities, subtle differences distinguish servant leadership from other post-heroic approaches to leadership, and the focus on empowerment within the approach may even suggest it to be more akin to CLS. The following sections comprehensively explore the differences between servant leadership, closely related post-heroic approaches, and the emerging influence of CLS on these discussions.

2.5.1. Transformational Leadership

Originally proposed in a political context (Burns, 1978), transformational leadership is "the single most studied and debated idea within the field of leadership studies" (Diaz-Saenz, 2011: 299), and distinguishes between transactional and transformational leadership approaches. Transactional leadership focuses on exchanges between leaders and followers where a 'transaction' occurs. Transformational leadership on the other hand, seeks to allow both leaders and followers the chance to achieve their maximum potential (Burns, 1978) by creating connections between people so that motivation and morality levels increase. Transformational leaders are seen to be confident and competent, and able to articulate their often-strong ideals in a way that many define as visionary (Shamir et al., 1993). As a result of this, followers possess a desire to emulate their leaders due to feelings of trust and belief.

Although this visionary, confident persona appears positive, some scholars argue the nature of these characteristics gives rise to potentially negative aspects of transformational leadership. Although positioned here as post-heroic due to the relational aspect and shared mentality (Kark and Shamir, 2013), the accusation that transformational leadership is another form of heroic leadership (Yukl, 1999) is yet to be sufficiently answered as the leader's confidence and competence can impede the potential for challenges from followers and stakeholders (Northouse, 2016). Attributes such as confidence and competence are closely aligned to the notion of charisma which manifests itself in transformational leadership theory through idealised influence (Northouse, 2016). Van Dierendonck (2011: 1235) raises concerns regarding idealised influence in terms of "for whom or for what do followers grow?" which gives rise to the primary distinction between transformational and servant leadership. Whereas transformational leadership focuses on obtaining organisational objectives (Burns, 1998; Yukl, 1998), the focus of servant leaders is on the growth and development of their followers (Parolini et al, 2009), the organisation will develop thereafter. Organisational objectives such as profit maximisation are replaced in favour of individual followers' health, wisdom, freedom, and personal development (Greenleaf, 1970). Given that "at the core of servant leadership is the leader's belief in the intrinsic value of each individual" (Van Dierendonck, 2011: 1246), there is a clear distinction between transformational and servant leadership theories respectively.

Servant leadership is also distinct from transformational leadership by virtue of the notion of morality (Graham, 1991). The lack of a moral component affords the opportunity for narcissistic tendencies to arise in transformational leaders (Van Dierendonck, 2011) which have been demonstrated to facilitate an 'I' rather than 'we' culture within organisations (Peterson et al., 2012). Similarly, Tourish (2014) argues that transformational leadership theory perceives organisational influence to flow unidirectionally, from powerful leaders to submissive followers, yet the emergence of the situational approach and followership cast this into doubt. Tourish (2014: 82) continues by arguing "it is obvious now that concentrating power in the hands of a few, whether in countries or organisations, has not been a successful experiment in decision making". Negative aspects of organisational culture can arise if organisational influence flows unidirectionally, such as the elimination of dissent, the accumulation of centralised power in the hands of a few, and the belief in divine inspiration for the leader rendering them essential to an organisation's success (Conger, 1990; Tourish, 2014). Examples of these negative aspects manifesting themselves proliferate organisational studies, the demise of organisations such as Enron and Arthur Andersen offering prime examples (Tourish and Vatcha, 2005). Servant leaders are able to negate the potential for these negative aspects as a result of their inherent moral compass that guides them towards the follower's personal development, as well as their innate sense of right and wrong that develops in accordance with societal expectations (Russell and Stone, 2002). Given contemporary expectations for leadership theories to overtly encompass ethical considerations as a result of corporate scandals (Waldman and Galvin, 2008), servant leadership appears theoretically well-positioned to transcend transformational leadership.

2.5.2. Authentic Leadership

Servant leadership has also been compared to authentic leadership. Grounded in attempts to "concentrate on the root construct underlying all positive forms of leadership" (Avolio and Gardner, 2005: 316), authentic leadership is argued to be the enactment of one's true self (Ford and Harding, 2011). Despite the positive associations of acting in a manner consistent with one's inner thoughts and feelings, scholars have cited deficiencies that this may lead to in theoretical conversations, as well as contributing to the division between theoretical and practical understandings of authenticity (Izsatt-White and Kempster, 2019). Ford and Harding (2011) for example, suggest that a leadership approach that reflects the "true self" is impossible in the organisational context as in order for leaders to sacrifice their subjectivity to the organisational collective, they are by very nature acting inauthentically- they are forgoing their personal thoughts and feelings in favour of the organisations. Costas and Taheri (2012) further challenge authentic leadership in terms of replacing traditional notions of authority with a categorical focus on love, harmony and completeness, an argument that appears to resonate with the over-dichotomisation of heroic and post-heroic approaches to leadership present within CLS (Collinson, 2005). Furthermore, Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) raise an existential challenge towards authentic leadership questioning what it means to be authentically human? Without an answer to this subjective existential conundrum, how can one claim to be an authentic leader? Despite these concerns, interest in authentic leadership continues to grow (Izsatt-White and Kempster, 2019).

There are numerous theoretical similarities between servant leadership and authentic leadership, illustrated by the fact that Wong and Davey (2007), Sendjaya et al (2008), and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) all include authenticity as a fundamental characteristic of servant leadership theory. Avolio and Gardner also noted how authentic leadership is a "root construct" underlying all positive leadership styles; the authors also claim however that it remains theoretically distinct. In addition to authenticity, both leadership approaches are predicated on high levels of morality (Wu et al, 2013) incorporating characteristics such as integrity, honesty and humility (Dirks and Ferrin, 2002; Russell and Stone, 2002). Both approaches appear to rely on their moral integrity to guide decisions and behaviours rather than being influenced by external pressures (Ling et al, 2017), which perhaps suggests one reason as to why servant leaders are postulated as one of the best at balancing internal responsibilities to shareholders and external pressures from stakeholders (Bennis, 2004). Furthermore, the two approaches are also relational by nature (Derue et al, 2011), that is that they focus on follower development by establishing a positive leader-follower relationship.

The two approaches remain distinct despite these similarities, for example, in terms of scope. Hale and Fields (2007) argue that servant leadership theory places the good of followers over leaders' own self-interests thus leaders adopt a position of servility; the spirit of self-sacrifice therefore is reflected in the moral virtue of servant leadership. Authentic leadership theory however neglects to include a serving dimension. This can also be extended to include a moral dimension present within servant leadership and not necessarily in authentic leadership; authentic leaders are authentic to oneself whereas morality encompasses others which distinguishes servant from authentic leadership (Ling et al, 2017).

The two approaches can also be distinguished when considered in relation to the notion of community. Servant leadership includes concern for not only the leader and the follower but also wider society, the organisation, and other stakeholders (Ehrhart, 2004; Walumbwa et al, 2010). Despite demonstrating a concern for communities existing since the earliest conceptions of servant leadership (Laub, 1999), current understanding is somewhat limited to conceptual perceptions with regards how this care for the community can become manifested. Authentic leadership on the other hand, has a much narrower scope. It appears to have a restricted focus to the self-development of leaders and followers, negating the influence that the approach has on the organisation and other stakeholders (Ling et al, 2017). Research into authentic leadership appears premised upon the belief that that the current conceptualisation of the construct is absolute whereas Iszatt-White and Kempster (2019) suggest this is not the case and there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence directed towards verifying and clarifying the constituent factors of the construct. As such, there is a need to establish the nature of authentic leadership to establish the core components which will then enable understanding to develop with regards scope and impact of authentic leaders.

2.5.3. Spiritual Leadership

Servant leadership has also been compared with spiritual leadership. Originally presented by Fry (2003), spiritual leadership "appeals to the virtuous leadership practices and intrinsic motivating factors to cultivate a sense of meaning, purpose, and interconnectedness in the workplace" (Sendjaya et al, 2008: 404). Fry (2003) postulated three qualities of spiritual leadership: vision, altruistic love, and hope/faith. Starting from vision, spiritual leaders are able to establish a culture that intrinsically motivates both leaders and followers as a result of developing meaning for oneself. Along with meaning, altruistic love also facilitates the perception of feeling understood and appreciated which results in the sense of being part of a community (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Spiritual leadership therefore draws upon the values, attitudes and behaviours that enable one to realise self-motivation, while simultaneously motivating others so that both experience a sense of calling and membership (Chen and Yang, 2012).

Spiritual leadership therefore appears similar to servant leadership in terms of humility, interpersonal acceptance, and integrity (Sendjaya et al, 2008). Indeed, servant leadership has been considered (Miller, 1995; Rinehart, 1998) as a spirituality-based approach to leadership considering the religious and/or spiritual metaphors employed in its depiction. Furthermore, both approaches appear to favour alternative goals to organisational objectives, servant leadership however focuses primarily on the growth and development of followers whereas spiritual leadership strives for overall social growth through the mechanisms of membership and calling (Contreras, 2016). Contreras (2016) also suggests that both approaches are predicated upon the ability of the leader to inspire their followers beyond both ethical and moral principles; they both strive for social and organisational growth as a result of high-quality leader-follower relationships (Northouse, 2016).

Despite these conceptual overlaps, Van Dierendonck (2011) suggests that little is actually known about what behaviours are actually associated with spiritual leadership; much of how spiritual leadership is conceptualised appears to be based on organisational culture as opposed to the role of the leader. Although the leader is a central stakeholder in discerning an organisation's culture (Maldonado et al. 2018), Van Dierendonck's critique of the conceptualisation of spiritual leadership remains valid; in the absence of understanding the influence of the leader, spiritual leadership remains hypothetical. Similarly, Sendjaya et al (2008) had previously suggested that servant leadership offers a more compelling and holistic approach for several reasons. Firstly, Sendjaya et al (2008) suggest certain characteristics that appear to be outcomes of spiritual leadership, such as calling and membership, appear inherent to servant leadership. Whereas servant leaders are driven by an inner sense of calling that then develops to assist others (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006), spiritual leadership appears to require the identification of follower's callings before the leader acts (Fry, 2003). Other variables inherent to the construct of servant leadership, such as the notion of service and adherence to a generally perceived moral code, also do not feature within spiritual leadership, which Sendjaya et al (2008) suggests renders spirituality one aspect of servant leadership rather than an approach in and of itself.

Spiritual leadership has also faced criticism as being another heroic approach to leadership. Tourish and Tourish (2010: 218) for example, suggest that starting from a visionary position merely "enables powerful elites to promote sectional interests while claiming that they embody universal truths and principles"; this therefore raises concerns as to the romanticising of an individual heroic leaders operating from a privileged status. Collinson et al (2017: 9) also note that spiritual leadership is overly-romanticised with respect to its position on faith, suggesting that faith is premised upon an unverifiable accountability and "something that does not require validation in an external referent" such as science, politics, or aestheticism. Collinson et al (2017: 9) further suggest that spiritual leadership "offers a closed, self-referential system, akin to the totalistic and autonomous conception of nature within romanticism". Collinson et al (2017) cite the construction of all-encompassing values inherent to spiritual leadership, such as altruistic love, as ahistorical and transcendent, beyond power relations, and external to any philosophical, scientific or political anchor; this is problematic as it requires individuals to surrender to an intensification of the transcendent (Benjamin, 1996) grounded in a vacuum of empirical evidence. Although the foundational principles of servant leadership appear more established than those of spiritual leadership (Sendjaya et al, 2008), servant leadership has also been criticised in terms of appealing to universal and transcendental truths (Ford and Harding, 2015; Collinson et al, 2017) thereby also over-romanticising the role of the leader. However, from a conceptual perspective servant leadership incorporates the cultivation of shared goals between leaders and followers, thereby recognising the importance of inclusivity and diversity of thought. The present research seeks to explore this inclusive mindset by considering the manifestation of servant leadership in the context of CSR-related activities which will provide insights into how shared goals become manifested within servant leadership as a process.

2.5.4. Inclusive Leadership

Servant leadership also draws similarities with inclusive leadership, which is based on "universal participation of the populace and self-actualisation of the individual by means of a commonly agreed upon goal or vision" (Echols, 2009: 87). As with much of the leadership literature, there is no universal consensus as to the definition of inclusive leadership although there are generally agreed upon concepts that position inclusive leadership as a post-heroic approach to leadership. Originally proposed by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), it was defined as "words and deeds by a leader or leaders that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others' contributions"; Hollander (2012: 3) however, suggests this simply means "doing things with people, rather than to people". A more contemporary understanding was presented by Gotsis and Grimani (2016: 989) who stated, "inclusive leadership is collaborative and consensus building, centred on empowering employees to advance career prospects (Sabharwal, 2014)". The more contemporary understanding reflects the shift towards 'power-with' approaches to leadership, which "requires an appreciation of others' efforts" (Ryoma, 2020: 12).

Characteristics shared by the two leadership approaches include the collaborative style of leadership where followers are invited to contribute towards organisational objectives (Ye et al, 2018), and the focus on empowering, developing, and establishing a sense of belonging in individuals (Sugiyama et al, 2016; Carmeli et al, 2010; Ye et al, 2018). Echols (2009) also noted that both inclusive and servant leadership theories respectively focus on the empowerment of individual followers; inclusive leadership develops a culture that perpetuates the morality of the worth of the individual, granting individuals status and importance, and thus it acts as a defence against the potential for despotism and authoritarianism. This appears to strongly resonate with the work of Tourish (2014), relating to the emergence of narcissism and unilateral power in some leadership approaches, suggesting that inclusive leadership can combat the shortcomings of transformational leadership in particular. Given both inclusive and servant leaderships' respective attitudes towards employee empowerment, it is feasible to suggest that servant leadership is also well-positioned to overcome the emergence of leader narcissism through practising inclusivity. Furthermore, Hammermeister et al (2008) found that student athletes could differentiate three dimensions of servant leader coaches from other coaches, with the trait of inclusion being one of these (the other two being humility and service). This would appear to suggest that inclusivity is an inherent concept within servant leadership as opposed to forming an approach in and of itself.

The notion of empowerment here evokes considerations relating to the distribution of power within the leadership processes of servant and inclusive leaderships respectively. As empowerment encourages self-directed decision making (Konczak et al, 2000), it appears to promote a shift in power towards followers, as the ability to make decisions incorporates elements of personal power (Yukl, 2006). As such, leaders are therefore expected to relinquish elements of control while simultaneously 'leading', thus also resonating with the contradictory expectations of leaders in contemporary society (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014). In accordance with arguments presented in CLS, further explorations are therefore required into the nature of inclusivity, both in terms of a leadership approach in its own right as well as inclusivity within servant leadership theory, to explore the role of power within the manifestation of inclusivity.

Echols (2009) states that servant leadership is by its very nature inclusive, an argument supported by Greenleaf's (1970) initial postulation that servant leaders "primus inter pares", that is first among equals (Crippen, 2017). Boumbulian et al (2004) had previously noted this inherent capacity for inclusivity based upon the implicit interdependence among people, communities and institutions prevalent within servant leadership theory. Gotsis and Grimani (2016) have subsequently argued that servant leadership embodies an inclusive leadership philosophy that fosters inclusive climates, in particular the need for belongingness and uniqueness, and established a number of organisational practices. However, the same authors also state that "there is a paucity of theoretical and empirical research" relating to how servant leaders "meet the needs of multiple stakeholders in promoting inclusion" (Gotsis and Grimani, 2016: 1000). As such, the present research seeks to develop understanding into how servant leadership can enhance inclusivity across organisations, specifically in the context of CSR. This may also elicit insights into whether servant leadership can be considered a post heroic approach to leadership, within the CLS tradition, or a hybrid of both.

Despite similarities, inclusive and servant leadership remain both theoretically and empirically distinct. Qi et al (2019) for example, suggest that servant leadership is focused on helping employees grow and succeed (Liden et al, 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011), whereas inclusive leadership is focused on tending to members' needs for work group openness and availability. Similarly, Randel et al (2017) suggest that inclusive leadership holds unique status in developing acceptance, belonginess, uniqueness and inclusiveness in work teams as a result of traits such as accepting employees for who they are and facilitating employee contributions that utilise their unique abilities and perspectives. However, there appears to be no empirical evidence suggesting potential mechanisms and avenues through which the unique levels postulated are achieved beyond those of other leadership approaches and their associated characteristics, such as interpersonal acceptance within the servant leadership literature (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

The development of positive relationships between servant leaders and followers, potentially as a result of the development of trust arising from a leader's wisdom and authenticity (Bugenhagen, 2006), provides theoretical evidence as to the mechanisms that facilitates inclusivity within servant leadership, but this remains theoretical at present. Although the characteristics of wisdom and authenticity are not unique to servant leadership, it has been suggested that they are important considerations with regards relationships within servant leadership (Zacher et al, 2014; Rahimnia and Sharifirad, 2014). As such, the present research aims to further contribute towards the notion of inclusivity within servant leadership theory by developing understanding into the perceptions of leaders and followers with regards to the structures and practices through which servant leadership fosters inclusivity, in the context of CSR-related activities.

2.5.5. Distributed and Shared Leadership

Servant leadership has also been compared to a number of other approaches to leadership, albeit less-comprehensively. Distributed leadership for example, which is a complex vortex of variables where influence is shared by team members who adopt the role of leader as and when their skills and competencies are best suited (Thorpe et al, 2011; Northouse, 2016), is formed on a social contract between members of a team (Serrat, 2017). It can encompass, but is not restricted to, three leadership practices: collaboration, intuition and relationships (Gronn, 2002), and has been linked to faster responses to more complex issues (Morgeson et al, 2010; Pearce et al, 2009). Page and Wong (2000) provide the analogy of an elite rowing team to encapsulate distributed leadership; they state that although it may look like the athlete at the back of the boat is directing operations, there is also the "stroke" who dictates the pace of movement, the captain who has additional responsibility when not on the water, and the coach who is not even in the boat. Without any one of these roles, the boat would not operate and there is not one standalone leader as all roles take ownership of distinct operations.

There are several similarities between servant and distributed leaderships respectively, least of all their shared focus on relationships. Like authentic leadership, distributed leadership shares servant leadership's focus on the leader-follower relationship, a process that involves sense-making and direction (Serrat, 2017; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Distributed leadership also shares servant leadership's rejection of traditional notions of organisational hierarchy in favour of shared power throughout organisation's members. However, whereas empirical research has begun to verify and validate potential antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership across different contexts, the transferability of distributed leadership across contexts has been questioned as most research into the construct has been focused in the educational sector (Bolden, 2011); there are concerns as to the effectiveness of distributed leadership within the education sector even, Mayrowetz (2008) suggesting that the possible benefits of distributed leadership remain hypothetical. One potential reason for this may be that important aspects of leadership studies have been neglected within the theorising of distributed leadership, such as the distribution and manifestation of power and influence within the approach (Klar et al, 2016). Although positioned as a post-heroic approach, Klar et al's (2016) concern regarding the lack of understanding into power and influence within distributed leadership, and their attempts to elicit understanding into power distribution within the approach, resonates with emerging arguments within the realm of CLS. Lumby (2013) for example, suggests that power is not problematised within distributed leadership theory, a critique of post-heroic approaches more generally, which renders the negative aspects of power such as coercion and force, negated. This may therefore suggest that as understanding develops into the manifestation of distributed leadership, its position within the post-heroic tradition may be called into question.

Servant leadership has also been compared to shared leadership, which is a "dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisational goals or both" (Pearce and Conger, 2003: 1). As with distributed leadership, the traditional vertical approach to influence is negated in favour of a horizontal approach where team members show leadership to one another (Bligh et al, 2006). With the lack of direct supervision, individual members become empowered to assist in the development of team objectives and coordination between team members (Sousa and Van Dierendonck, 2002), the focus on empowerment therefore appearing to make servant leadership and shared leadership closely related.

Carson et al (2007) suggest that the internal team environment which consists of a shared purpose, social support, and voice, as well as external coaching, are the predictors of shared leadership emergence, which again resonates with servant leadership theory. The notion of working towards a shared vision appears synonymous with Van Dierendonck's (2011) key characteristic of providing direction, yet it differs as the team members are responsible for establishing the shared vision within the shared leadership approach whereas within servant leadership, the direction is established as a result of the high-quality dyadic interpersonal relations between leaders and followers (Ferris et al, 2009). This is perhaps the primary distinguishing factor between servant leadership and shared leadership, within servant leadership there is a clearly identified leader who assumes a hierarchical position more elevated than that of their followers; within shared leadership however, leadership is distributed between equally-ranked team members who assume leadership roles collaboratively. This distinction also renders capturing authentic shared leadership difficult and arduous, as one leader is turned into multiple team members rendering there a lack of a single point of reference from which to measure (Pearce and Sims, 2002; Gockel and Werth, 2010; Hoch et al, 2002). Difficulties with regard observing authentic shared leadership are synonymous with Collinson et al's (2017) critique that collective leadership approaches often negate to consider the influence of power within their theories, rendering explorations difficult. Developing understanding into power dynamics within servant leadership theory however can be established through the notion of empowerment.

This section has critically evaluated servant leadership with respect to alternative approaches to leadership, identifying similarities and differences at both conceptual and practical levels, within a framework informed by the research aims of the present study. Table 2 summarises these critical evaluations, drawing upon the comprehensive considerations outlined in the section. The evidence continues to distinguish servant leadership from other leadership approaches in terms of scope, nature and outcomes, as well as identifies limitations with regard servant leadership literature to date specifically; these limitations are further explored in the following section.

	Similarities	Differences
Transformational Leadership (TL).	Visionary. Development of followers. Aspects of trust. Act as model to followers. Leader self-awareness. Considerations relating to positive social exchanges.	Concept of morality unspecified in TL. TL perceives organisational influence to flow unidirectionally. TL focus on organisational goals; SL focus on service to the follower. TL motivate followers using their charisma; SL motivate through stewardship.
Authentic Leadership (AL)	Authenticity as a root construct. High levels of morality. Relational. Leader self-awareness. Considerations relating to positive social exchanges.	The notion of service is not prevalent in AL. The question of whom one is authentic to is raised. The notion of community does not feature in AL. AL firmly grounded in clinical, positive and social psychology literatures.
Spiritual Leadership (SpL)	Develop meaning in followers. A focus on humility, interpersonal acceptance, and integrity. Positive moral perspective. Attempt to generate a sense of interconnectedness within the workplace. Leader self-awareness. Considerations relating to positive social exchanges.	Motivations to lead. Concept of morality unspecified in SpL. Calling and membership are inherent concepts to SL; they are outcomes of SpL though.
Inclusive Leadership	The notions of empowerment, collaboration, and belonging. Increased employee well-being and innovative behaviour. Increased team performance. A focus on inclusivity.	The focus of each approach (follower growth and empowerment/work group openness and availability).
Distributed Leadership (DL)	The rejection of traditional notions of hierarchy. The potential for leaders to emerge.	Transferability across contexts. DL can be considered a method/process encompassed in other leadership approaches.
Shared Leadership	Working towards a shared vision. The notion of empowerment.	An identifiable leader versus multiple focus points.

Table 2: A comparison of servant leadership to alternative leadership approaches

2.6. A Summary of Current Understanding and Limitations to Servant Leadership Theory

The previous sections discussed developments in leadership theory that have resulted in contemporary understandings of leadership as a process incoproating notion sof power and influence between different stakeholders within specific contexts (Stogdill, 1948; Hale and Fields, 2007; Northouse, 2016). This section will expand upon limitations alluded to previously and suggest how aspects of CSR literature can provide unique understandings into areas of knowledge currently lacking within servant leadership. Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) noted that as a result of Greenleaf's original depiction we currently fluctuate in a position of limbo whereby we possess knowledge of motivations and outcomes associated with servant leadership, yet very little of the behaviours that facilitate the manifestation of these motivations; the present research aims to contribute towards reducing this gap.

The limitations can be broadly categorised into the following three aspects, each of which will be comprehensively explored in the proceeding sections: the various ways in which servant leadership has been conceptualised (Section 2.3.1); the different measurement tools and techniques permeating the field (Section 2.3.2); and, the notion of power within servant leadership theory (Section 2.3.3). The existing limitations appear to have arisen chronologically, potentially as a result of scholars attempting to explore and develop the field without establishing firm understanding and knowledge. For example, the limitation regarding measurement appears to suffer somewhat from similar fallacies as the limitations relating to conceptualisations; studies into measurement however primarily occurred subsequent to conceptualisations and these limitations therefore could have potentially been avoided. Eva et al (2019: 114) summarise one reason for the emergence of these limitations as "an overwhelming majority of servant leadership studies provide loose descriptions of what, why, and how servant leaders behave towards their followers as they do". The following sections comprehensively explore these limitations and outline how the present research will contribute towards negating them.

2.6.1. Conceptualisations of Servant Leadership

There have been multiple attempts to conceptualise servant leadership which has resulted in conceptual plurality; this can be attributed to Greenleaf's (1977) lack of clarity when defining the construct as it is inadequate enough to guide empirical research (Eva et al, 2019). MacKenzie's (2003) warning regarding poor conceptualisations, such as the fact that it is virtually impossible to create a meaningful, coherent theoretical rationale for why Construct A should be related to Construct B, if the exact meaning of Construct A has not been established, provides one potential explanation for current conceptual plurality. The lack of a universally accepted definition (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011) has led to multiple conceptualisations where "the definition and indicators [of servant leadership] were stretched to fit each author's argument" (Eva et al, 2019: 114). Many of these conceptualisations have been influential in directing developments in servant leadership theory, and it is therefore necessary to evaluate these developments to understand today's conceptual plurality.

Servant leadership was neglected in leadership discussions (Northouse, 2016) until the developmental works of Spears (1995, 1998, 2004) when interest was reignited. Based upon Greenleaf's original writings, Spears distinguished ten characteristics of servant leaders: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, philosophy, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community. These characteristics were the first attempt to conceptualise the approach in model-form and have therefore provided sustenance to ensuing debates (Eva et al, 2019; Van Dierendonck, 2011); the simplicity of the characteristics ensures the conceptualisation is relatable and comprehensible while remaining distinct from other leadership approaches (Van Dierendonck, 2011). However, the intrapersonal aspects, the interpersonal aspects, and the outcomes are not delineated in Spears' conceptualisation rendering it impossible to accurately operationalise the model (Reinke, 2004). As such, valid and reliable studies based on Spears' characteristics are difficult to perform and thus empirical research based upon the conceptualisation is hindered (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

Using Spears' ten characteristics as a foundation, Laub (1999) reconceptualised servant leadership as placing "the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader" through six variables: values people, develops people, builds community, displays authenticity, provides leadership, shares leadership. The influence of Spears on Laub can be observed in shared dimensions such as the high regard for individual followers and focus on building community. The inclusion of the notion of community is particularly relevant within these two conceptualisations given the focus of the present research as the two conceptualisations are respected and influential in the developmental journey of servant leadership (Parris and Peachey, 2013); this therefore suggests the inherent necessity of community to servant leadership.

Despite similarities, there is one primary distinction between the conceptualisations. Spears' model appears to focus primarily on the character of the servant leader and is thus aligned to the trait approach to leadership, whereas Laub's model appears to focus primarily on the behaviours associated with the servant leader which therefore affiliates the model to the behavioural approach (Matteson and Irving, 2006). This distinction perhaps reflects the exploratory nature of servant leadership's early conceptualisations, encompassed in the different approaches adopted by prominent scholars.

Russell and Stone (2002) drew upon Laub's (1999) conceptualisation to distinguish nine functional characteristics and 11 additional characteristics of servant leadership in the belief of the cross-contextual validity of servant leadership. They believed that for servant leadership to be distinguishable from other approaches, "one should be able to observe characteristics and behaviours in such leaders that are distinctive" (Russell and Stone, 2002: 145) which appears to resonate with the trait approach to leadership. Russell and Stone (2002: 152) state the foundations of their conceptualisation to be the "cognitive characteristics of the leaders" as one's actions and approach to leadership emerge as a result of personal values and core beliefs. Considering Russell and Stone (2002: 153) suggest that the cognitive characteristics are "independent variables" within their model, suggesting that this interpretation lies within the trait perspective. As such, it is feasible to suggest that Russell and Stone's (2002) model suffers at the hand of one of the primary challenges directed towards trait approaches to leadership, namely that it requires a leader to inherently possess certain characteristics and inherent qualities (Stogdill, 1948; Ghiselli and Brown, 1955). Van Dierendonck (2011) also cautions that there are no theoretical or empirical justifications as to why the attributes are defined as functional or accompanying, the sole justification being "prominence within the literature" (Russell and Stone, 2002: 146). Van Dierendonck (2011) therefore recognises this as a methodological weakness.

Patterson (2003) similarly based their conceptualisation upon the innate characteristics of servant leaders but Patterson differs from Russell and Stone (2002) as there is a focus on leader virtues. Patterson (2003) delineated seven virtuous constructs (love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service) to inform their theoretical model. Virtues have long been established as an area of academic interest, dating as far back as the Ancient Greeks (Van Dierendonck, 2011), potentially as a result of their being concerned with doing the right thing at the right time.

Patterson's (2003) model provides early insights into the distinct nature of servant leadership with regards alternative approaches, particularly with regards to insights relating to the virtuous nature of servant leaders' characteristics such as altruism and humility. The notion of virtue resonates strongly with Greenleaf's (1970) initial conceptualisation in terms of manifesting the need to serve first and foremost (Greenleaf, 1970). Despite the need for the notion of service appearing to be satisfied within this model, Van Dierendonck (2011) suggests that the leader aspect appears to be neglected as a result of the need for virtues; the intent focus on the virtuous character of the leader potentially neglects the required attention to suggest how the virtuous leader contends with the challenges of leading and as such, the model can potentially be considered incomplete. By focusing on the virtuous nature of the leader alone, Patterson's (2003) approach also appears to be entirely leader-centric, reliant upon the individual characteristics of a single leader who embodies universal truths and principles, and therefore resonates with Tourish and Toursh's (2010) critique of spiritual leadership.

These prominent conceptualisations share several similarities yet remain distinct from one another; they are four of the earliest conceptualisations and have informed the majority of subsequent research. The focus on the character of the leader in Spears' (1995), Russell and Stone's (2002), and Patterson's (2003) respective conceptualisations for example differentiates these with Laub's (1999) conceptualisation as Laub focuses on behaviours and actions. Similarly, there are also tensions between the constituting factors of the conceptualisations, despite the presence of overlap. The notions of empowerment, providing direction, and focusing on the development of followers appear prominently but other dimensions such as empathy (Spears, 2004), authenticity (Laub, 1999), and trust (Patterson, 2003), contribute to the conceptual plurality plaguing the construct. Dimensions are presented inconsistently across the conceptualisations, the notion of authenticity for example is presented as a fundamental dimension within Laub's (1999) offering but is subsumed under the virtue of service within Patterson's (2003) version. These different understandings and attributions of importance to dimensions further contribute to the inability for scholars to delineate the precise nature of servant leadership rendering MacKenzie's (2003) warning regarding theoretical incoherency and the development of meaningful insights prevalent within the field.

Although definition inconsistencies (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Eva et al, 2019) appear to predict a sombre future for servant leadership, positive developments can be made towards reducing conceptual plurality by drawing upon related fields. For example, the present research seeks to negate conceptual plurality surrounding the notion of community within servant leadership by drawing upon similar foundational principles shared with CSR-related literature. The notion of community appears in early conceptualisations of servant leadership such as that of Laub (1999), who suggests that building community through collaborative working and allowing for individuality are fundamental characteristics of servant leadership. Similarly, Spears (2004) identifies building community as one of the characteristics of servant leadership, premised upon the belief that there is an understanding that much has been lost as a result of the shift from local communities to larger institutions as the primary influencers and shapers of human lives. For Spears, servant leadership builds true community if individual servant leaders demonstrate, accept and act upon their responsibility and liability for specific community-related groups. The prevalence of the notion of community featuring throughout the conceptual developmental journey of servant leadership illustrates its saliency, yet large knowledge gaps remain. For example, knowledge pertaining to the structures that servant leadership as a process creates in the interest of building communities remains vague (Reinke, 2004). Laub (1999) conceptually suggests that collaborative working and accepting individuality may build communities, but the latter of these appears to be a characteristic or trait as opposed to a behaviour or part of a process. Although collaborative working can be considered an output that has received empirical verification through existing research (Garber et al, 2009), the structures impacted by servant leadership to achieve such collaboration remain unknown. By drawing upon the notion of community present within CSR, this research can enhance understanding of community within servant leadership theory.

The notion of community is integral to CSR, the very nature of CSR refers to discussions pertaining to the relationships shared between stakeholders from both organisations and wider society (Jones, 1980; Carroll, 1991); this is also the essence of Stakeholder Theory. Christensen et al (2014) suggest that social responsibilities are essentially "baked into" servant leadership theory and practice, confirmed by Greenleaf's (2002: 27) suggestion that servant leaders focus on the "least privileged in society", which results in close similarities between the two constructs. The purview of CSR is the betterment of society (Christensen et al, 2014) which resonates strongly with the purview of servant leadership, namely the development of individual people (Van Dierendonck, 2011); both CSR and servant leadership therefore have a primary focus on the betterment of others. The introductory writings of Laub (1999) and Spears (2004) both suggest that for servant leaders to build communities, there is a requirement for them to embrace responsibility and facilitate individuality; subsequent developments in servant leadership theory that have included the notion of community however have failed to provide insights into how servant leaders can manifest this responsibility in practice, rendering the notion of community theoretical to date. The works of Christensen et al (2014) suggest that by drawing upon the affiliations of community within CSR, such as within Carroll's (1979) seminal writings, knowledge can be developed into the notion of community within servant leadership.

One potential reason for the lack of robust scholarly developments relating to community within servant leadership is that during its inception, Greenleaf (1970) never framed servant leadership in terms of creating societal value; rather he conceptualised community as a place where individuals felt comfortable to develop and expand themselves on a personal level (Northouse, 2010). This debate suggests confusion as to the notion of community within servant leadership between communities internal (i.e. teams in the workplace) and communities external to the organisation (i.e. groups in society). Research has begun to establish the positive influence of servant leadership on internal communities such as through team effectiveness and potency (Hu and Liden, 2011) and team commitment (Mahembe and Engelbrecht, 2013). Similarly, writings subsequent to those of Greenleaf (Hornblower et al, 2010; Ehrhart, 2004) have also demonstrated the positive impact servant leadership can have on communities within wider society external to the organisation, particularly through engagement in CSR-related activities. Much of this research has been conducted at the organisational level though (Margolis et al. 2009) and focuses on the antecedents and consequences with respect to the organisation; there therefore remains a lack of research into individual perspectives of the impact of servant leadership on external communities (Christensen et al., 2014). By drawing upon the ethically sound behaviours of servant leaders and exploring how these behaviours manifest themselves with regards employees and employee participation in CSR-related activities, it is perceived that the findings of the present research will develop insights into the structures that servant leaders adopt in order to contribute positively towards external communities to the organisation. In doing so, this research will also contribute empirical understandings into how servant leaders enhance, or at least do not further deprive, the least privileged in society.

A further conceptual aspect of servant leadership theory that has been negated thus far is the cyclical nature of the construct. Since its inception servant leadership has been hypothesised as cyclical (Greenleaf, 1970), that is it creates a ripple effect whereby after being exposed to it, individuals want to adopt it and influence others in a similar manner (Farling et al, 1999), thereby themselves becoming servant leaders. Indeed, Greenleaf (1970: 15) questioned in the best test of servant leadership whether those served become "more likely themselves to become servants", suggesting its saliency to the construct. However, this postulation has remained largely neglected in the literature (Northouse, 2016).

Aside from references to Greenleaf's (1970) best test, only Farling et al (1999) explicitly consider the cyclical nature of servant leadership. Farling et al (1999) presented a hierarchical model of servant leadership as a cyclical process encompassing two behavioural components (vision and service) and three relational components (influence, credibility, and trust). Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) however, have criticised Farling et al's (1999) model as it does not appear to contribute meaningful insights beyond alternative leadership approaches, such as transformational leadership. The plethora of research establishing the differences between servant leadership and alternative leadership approaches however, such as the inherent moral component within servant leadership (Graham, 1991; Van Dierendonck, 2011), the adoption of a position of servility towards followers (Hale and Fields, 2007) or the servant leader's focus on employee growth (Qi et al, 2019), somewhat negate Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) critique rendering further exploration of the cyclical nature of servant leadership warranted.

One potential avenue through which to explore servant leadership's cyclical nature may be through the manifestation of stewardship within leader-employee relationships. Featuring in prominent conceptualisations (Spears, 1995; Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) like community previously, stewardship enables leaders to "stimulate others to act in the common interest" (Van Dierendonck, 2011, 1234) by setting the right example and taking responsibility for the larger institution. Stewardship incorporates the notion of acting as a role-model for employees to follow (Van Dierendonck, 2011), and therefore relates directly to the leader-employee relationship. Servant leadership assuming a starting position of servility (Greenleaf, 1970) contravenes traditional notions of the leader-employee relationship, primarily from a power perspective as the primary intention of leaders is to serve first (Greenleaf, 1972). Focusing on service resonates with contemporary society's expectations of leaders to adopt seemingly contradictory positions (i.e. leading and serving) simultaneously (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014). This research seeks to explore the manifestation of stewardship within servant leadership as a process in relation to CSR-related activities with the aim of eliciting new understanding into servant leadership's cyclical nature.

2.6.2. <u>Measures of Servant Leadership</u>

The second limitation identified with regards servant leadership theory is that there are a plethora of measurement tools and techniques each of which potentially measures different aspects of servant leadership, and each of which are potentially premised upon different foundations such as the philosophical beliefs that underpin the tools to what constitutes servant leadership at all. Conceptual plurality has led to the development of individual measurement tools devised by scholars seeking answers and developments in understanding only loosely connected to previous developments (Eva et al, 2019). The emergence of a multitude of measurement tools is unsurprising given the 44 different characteristics identified as being associated with servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011), encompassing aspects such as behaviours, antecedents, consequences and mediating processes. Van Dierendonck (2011: 1232) advocates caution for these 44 characteristics however, stating that "models and measures may sometimes use different vocabulary for similar concepts", which illustrates the close relationship between limitations emanating from conceptual plurality and measurement tools.

With the development of conceptual models such as those of Laub (1999), Russell and Stone (2002), and Patterson (2003) and their similarities and differences, attention became divided between the presentation of alternative conceptualisations and how to measure servant leadership (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Despite this shift towards measurement however, "there is currently not an agreed upon measurement instrument of the theoretical construct" (Parris and Peachey, 2013: 389). Despite this lack of agreement, there have been four prominent measurement tools suggested in the literature that have influenced the works of others: Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), Liden et al (2008), Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), and a revised version of Liden et al's (2008) offering by Liden and colleagues (2015).

Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) first attempted to measure servant leadership when they developed subscale items to measure 11 potential dimensions, the 10 dimensions provided by Spears plus calling. Barbuto and Wheeler's considerations marked the beginning of a concerted movement towards the adoption of positivist methods of investigation in the interest of validating characteristics associated with servant leadership and their subsequent measurement; this is in contrast to the previous theoretical approaches, often focused on delineating previous texts in attempts to arrive at a list of traits or characteristics. Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) results suggested five factors of servant leadership that could be measured (altruistic calling, emotional healing, persuasive mapping, wisdom, and organisational stewardship).

A major strength of Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) findings is that conclusions were drawn based upon an extensive literature review and a large sample from which empirical evidence was derived, thus advancing the works of previous scholars using a comprehensive methodology based upon previous findings. However, Dannhauser and Boshoff (2007) attempted to replicate the quantitative design but were unsuccessful; Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) suggest this may render Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) model as one-dimensional. This is problematic as Dannhauser and Boshoff (2007) were aiming to achieve measurement invariance, that is to say that they were seeking to ensure that the same construct was being measured across two contexts, one being in the USA and the other South Africa. The inability to establish measurement invariance suggests that the measurement tool devised by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) is therefore measuring a different construct when applied in different contexts. The importance of Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) endeavours however cannot be understated as they marked the shift towards measuring servant leadership as opposed to conceptualising the construct.

Liden et al (2008: 162) then identified nine dimensions in the literature to date, predicated upon the belief that "the servant leadership literature offers an inconsistent set of dimensions that define this construct. As a consequence, our research was designed to define and validate the dimensions that constitute servant leadership as a construct". Liden et al continued to recognise the importance of identifying objective dimensions that could be applied to potential servant leaders, yet they also shared Barbuto and Wheeler's desire to employ positivistic methods to validate and verify emerging dimensions.

Liden et al (2008) conducted explanatory factor analysis which resulted in a seven-dimensional instrument of 28 items (SL-28), which was then confirmed through the use of confirmatory factor analysis. The findings established that servant leadership is a multidimensional construct that makes unique contributions beyond both transformational leadership and leader-member exchange in explaining three variables: community citizenship behaviours, in-role performance, and organisational commitment. A primary contribution of Liden et al's (2008) findings is that they offer the first empirically validated results distinguishing servant leadership from alternative approaches. However, (Sendjaya et al, 2018) have suggested that Liden et al overlooked the notion of spirituality within their instrument, highlighting not the religiosity aspect of spirituality but rather a sense of higher purpose, mission, and alignment between internal self and external world; it is this characteristic which enables leaders to treat followers as individuals.

Derived as a result of the perceived shortcomings of Liden et al's (2008) SL-28, Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) developed and validated their own Servant Leadership Survey (SLS). Like the SL-28, the SLS was based on confirmatory factor analysis to establish an eight-dimensional measure of 30 items; the eight dimensions are standing back, forgiveness, courage, empowerment, accountability, authenticity, humility, and stewardship. Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) suggest convergent validity with alternative measures but claim to go beyond these by providing a valid and reliable measurement instrument that focuses on the core elements of servant leadership confirmed across different cultures and countries; the authors' self-appraisal of their developed construct receives support from Chiniara and Bentein (2016) who suggest it to be a psychometrically sound measure. Both the SLS and SL-28 measures show a stable factor structure across multiple samples, incorporating the majority of the foundational concepts of servant leadership present in the literature (Qiu and Dooley, 2019). The SLS has also been utilised in multiple subsequent publications (Coetzer et al, 2017; Sousa and Van Dierendonck, 2017; Linuesa-Langreo et al, 2018) suggesting its reliability and accuracy.

Liden et al (2015) revised Liden et al's (2008) SL-28 to create the SL-7, comprising of 7 psychometrics. The psychometrics were informed by the derivation of the psychometrics used in the SL-28 which the authors claim ensures reliability and integrity of the scale (Liden et al, 2015). Through a number of statistical tests, the authors suggest "strong support for the use of the SL-7 scale as an alternative to the SL-28 scale when researchers are interested in investigating servant leadership as a composite or global variable. Three independent student samples demonstrated SL-7's reliability, factor structure, and convergent validity to be commensurate with the SL-28 composite measure" (Liden et al, 2015: 265). Further convergent validity was also demonstrated between the SL-7 and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) 30-items that form the SLS which further suggests the validity of the SL-7.

With regards the present research, the SL-7 is also significant "for its inclusion of the servant leaders' conscious and genuine concern towards creating value for the community around the organisation as well as encouraging followers to be active in the community" (Eva et al, 2019). It goes beyond previous measurement tools, such as Barbuto and Wheeler's, which do not include community in the measurement process, and the SLS which only notes community in passing. In addition to its simplicity of use encompassing only 7 items, the SL-7 also offers unique insights in terms of considering both conceptual-based and character-based dimensions. It therefore forms the most holistic measurement tool to date as well as resonating most strongly with the present research based on the inclusion of community.

This section has considered issues relating to measurement that permeate literature relating to servant leadership. Founded upon a lack of consensus regarding composite features, there is a lack of consistency between what the tools are measuring which potentially leads to a lack of cross-contextual applicability. The present research seeks to understand servant leadership as a process, including the behaviours enacted by formally appointed leaders as well the structures implemented within organisations that influence the nature of CSR-related activities, thereby contributing towards conceptual understanding of servant leadership which can inform future research regarding measurements tools.

2.6.3. The Notions of Power and Influence

The third limitation identified with regards to servant leadership literature concerns the notions of power and influence. Power can be considered from multiple perspectives including psychological (Tost, 2015), relational (Golgeci et al, 2018) and behavioural (Ward and House, 1988). Just as the issues pertaining to measurement can be attributed to conceptual shortcomings, so too can the issues relating to power and influence. Power has been fundamental to leadership studies since the seminal writings of French and Raven (1959), transcending from operating unidirectionally whereby the leader enacts power upon followers (Yukl, 2010) to more distributed perspectives whereby the importance of followers and situations are recognised within the context of leadership as a process (Northouse, 2016); this shift in perspectives is reflected in the development of leadership theories from heroic to post-heroic approaches and CLS.

Within heroic traditions, power operates unidirectionally, power is held and used by leaders alone and followers are submissive (Kellerman, 2008). Post-heroic traditions began to understand leadership as a process (Northouse, 2016) whereby situations and followers were recognised as impacting leadership; the unilateral direction of power was therefore dismissed in recognition of the benefits of solidarity, shared decision making, and negotiation (Bass and Bass, 2009; Galinsky et al., 2003; McCullough, 2018)".

CLS conversely recognises and assesses the considerable amount of power and influence leaders display in organisations (Collinson, 2017), acknowledging the 'positive' (empowering) and 'negative' (destructive) nature associated with power dynamics. For Collinson (2017), a central tenet of CLS is the encouragement of a plurality of perspectives that examine organisational power dynamics, something that previous leadership studies have failed to do. A potential reason for the emergence of CLS is the focus on the distribution of power in the co-construction of leadership as a process (Collinson, 2014), which informs that contradictory positions expected to be adopted simultaneously by leaders, such as being in control and also relinquishing control, and being able to plan while surrendering to unknown and unforeseen events (Parush and Koivunen, 2014); these contradictory expectations strongly resonate with servant leadership.

Servant leadership "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*" (Greenleaf, 1970: 15) which suggests a contradiction at the outset; it equates leading with serving (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015) which differentiates the approach from other post-heroic approaches in that the leader does not hold ambitions to lead, rather they are servant first. Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) suggest compassionate love as the underlying motive for servant leadership, whereby a concern is demonstrated to the other from the outset which provides the foundations for a desire to serve. The contradictory notion of leading and serving simultaneously resonates with Fairhurst and Connaughton's (2014) recognition of the growing interest in tensions, paradoxes and contradictions of leadership dynamics in contemporary organisational contexts prevalent within CLS. Servant leadership is potentially uniquely positioned to contend with the contradictory expectations emerging of leaders in contemporary society; contradiction is at its conceptual core with serving and leading being perceived by many as diametrically opposed (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015). However, Bennis (2004) suggests that servant leaders are some of the best at balancing internal responsibilities, such as shareholder expectations, and external pressures to serve a higher purpose, which suggests that servant leadership offers an interesting perspective towards power within leadership as a process. Historically, power has largely been affiliated with negative traits such as coercion whereas influence has been perceived positively, associated with working towards a shared goal (Collinson, 2005). Exploring a leadership process where the personal development of followers, growth of communities, and starting from a position of servility, may yield unique insights into the notion of power within leadership studies generally and servant leadership theory specifically.

Further drawing upon Collinson's (2020) call to explore shifting and paradoxical power relations within the context of distributed leadership styles also reveals interesting knowledge gaps pertaining to understandings of leader and leadership. Traditionally, leadership studies have focused on individual attributes and characteristics of leaders which resulted in heroic approaches whereby a single individual possessed and enacted power accordingly; this understanding of power is reflected in Great Man theories of leadership, for example. More contemporary understandings however have observed the emergence of post-heroic traditions whereby leadership is considered "a collective process, a product of interactions and relationships established by groups of people" (Sobral and Furtado, 2019: 209), resulting in bidirectional power dynamics between leader and follower (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000). As such, post-heroic approaches to leadership are distinct from traditional, heroic understandings in three primary ways: they are relational and founded upon mutual influence; they are other-centred, they recognise the importance of additional agents aside from the leader, and their need to be "seen, heard, and cared for" (Sobral and Furtado, 2019: 211); and they are collective, leadership is distributed among a set of individuals, instead of being centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts as a superior (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Leadership studies therefore have developed from focusing on the omnipotent individual leader to shared and distributed perspectives of leadership as a process; this has a collateral impact on power dynamics with leadership studies as traditional perspectives observe power within individual leaders whereas post-heroic perspectives understand leadership to be constructed in the spaces and interactions between individuals (Sobral and Furtado, 2019). Further investigations are therefore required with regard power relations in distributed forms of leadership (Collinson, 2020).

In light of the three distinguishing factors between heroic and post-heroic approaches to leadership, it is perhaps unsurprising that servant leadership has been positioned as a post-heroic approach. Van Diernedonck (2011) for example, highlights its relational aspect, drawing upon the focus on individual growth elements, in particular the notion of service; Rai and Prakash (2012) similarly draw upon the relational aspect of servant leadership when illustrating how it can be used to increase knowledge creation and exchange. Sobral and Furtdao (2019) cite going beyond one's self-interest as a primary illustration of servant leadership's status as being other-centred. This is robustly supported by Eva et al (2019: 114) who offer a three-part definition of servant leadership; this definition suggests "servant leadership is an other-oriented approach" founded upon the mindset of the leader and that the "orientation towards others reflects the leader's resolve, conviction, or belief that leading others means a movement away from self-orientation". And thirdly, servant leadership is also a collective approach, primarily observable in its focus on community development and welfare (Eva et al, 2019), a concept inherent to the construct in many conceptualisations (Laub, 1999; Spears, 2004).

Understanding the importance of additional agents influencing leadership as a process, as opposed to power operating unidirectionally within heroic perspectives, creates tensions between how we understand servant leader and servant leadership. Referring to individual servant leaders potentially holds us as hostages to fortune with regards understanding servant leadership as an heroic perspective to leadership; the servant leader may remain aloof with regards followers, possessing superior knowledge, attributes, or characteristics for example that do not reflect contemporary understandings of leadership and power dynamics. Rather, the formative writings of Greenleaf (1970) provide foundations for servant leadership to be understood as a post-heroic approach. Taking the cyclical nature for example illustrates this as if servant leadership was reliant upon certain heroic characteristics, it would not be an approach available to all and therefore not cyclical in nature. Greenleaf (1970) suggests that servant leadership produces a ripple effect whereby after experiencing the positive outcomes associated with servant leadership, followers themselves are more likely to become servant leaders. The other-centred focus of servant leadership also provides insights into power dynamics within the approach that distinguish servant leadership as a process rather than a heroic perspective. As such, servant leadership appears to transcend beyond heroic understandings of leadership towards post-heroic understandings whereby leadership is a process and not reliant upon the heroic servant leader.

Although servant leadership therefore appears to strongly resonate with the factors that distinguish post-heroic approaches to heroic approaches, there are critical components of servant leadership theory that also extend beyond post-heroic approaches and begin to resonate with CLS. For example, servant leadership appears to be founded upon the notion that one is not merely leader or follower, but that one is servant first (Greenleaf, 1970); this resonates with CLS's over-dichotomisation argument of traditional leadership studies. CLS scholars suggest that leadership studies have historically over-dichotomised agents as either leader or follower as opposed to being 'both-and' (Collinson, 2005), a criticism similarly targeted towards post-heroic perspectives whereby followers are privileged over leaders yet the over-dichotomisation remains (Collinson, 2014). As such, leadership can be considered a process within CLS whereby multiple agents co-construct 'leadership'. Considering this, CLS scholars suggest that post-heroic approaches do not consider the power dynamics associated with leadership as a process (Fletcher, 2004), which has ramifications for servant leadership theory.

Drawing upon existing understandings of power within servant leadership theory can illustrate the theoretical understanding of servant leadership as a process rather than being inherent to individuals. Within servant leadership theory, the notion of empowerment focuses on developing proactive, self-confident individuals with a personal sense of power (Van Dierendonck, 2011); it can also encompass decision making, information sharing and coaching for innovative performance (Konczak et al, 2000). As such, empowerment is concerned with developing individuals to be the best they can (Greenleaf, 1988). Krog and Govender (2015) suggest that empowerment is a key initiator of innovative thinking in employees as it grants employees the autonomy to act in manners that contravene the existing status quo without fear of rebuke. One potential for this increased innovative thinking is the construct of persuasive mapping within servant leadership theory (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006), which relates to the ability to conceptualise possibilities and opportunities for both individuals and the wider organisation, and the ability to communicate these to others in a compelling manner. Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) notion of persuasive mapping therefore also resonates with aspects of providing direction affiliated with servant leadership theory, which ensures that employees understand what is expected of them by making work 'tailor made' to individual needs in terms of ability, requirement and inputs (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Wong and Davey (2007) encapsulate the nuances of providing direction in their factor inspiring and influencing others, suggesting this is the impact servant leaders have on others. As such, elements of providing direction are closely related to how servant leadership increases the potential for employee empowerment.

Krug and Govender (2015) further suggest that leaders who exhibit high levels of wisdom are also less likely to increase perceived employee empowerment as employees who feel that their leader is omnipotent and unquestioningly correct are less likely to challenge and provide additional opinions (Hannay, 2009), therefore negating the potential to challenge existing status quos. Eva et al (2019) suggest that further research into how leaders empower their followers to make decisions, take risks, and make mistakes in the role of mentor as opposed to dictator, would be enlightening. Eva et al's (2019) recognition of the importance of being a mentor as opposed to dictator resonates with contemporary understandings of the need for leaders to be more aware of follower needs and expectations and less dictatorial and authoritative, drawing upon the notion of power being distributed through networks within contemporary organisations. The present research therefore seeks to contribute to these discussions by exploring how servant leadership impacts the empowerment of individual employees, drawing upon the specific context of participation in CSR-related activities.

2.7. Summary

This chapter has presented fundamental discussions pertaining to servant leadership, drawing upon literature associated with CSR in the interest of presenting robust evidence from which to develop knowledge into the respective constructs. The chapter delineates three primary limitations in existing literature that the current research aims to contribute towards negating. First, conceptual plurality is rife across servant leadership studies resulting in the lack of an agreed upon definition; it could therefore be considered difficult to discuss the construct as there is no agreed upon consensus as to what constitutes servant leadership and what does not. Second, there is a vast number of measurement tools and techniques proliferating the literature which can be considered problematic as scholars may be having conversations about similar yet distinct constructs rendering these discussions uninformative at best. Third, although widely positioned as a post-heroic approach, the notions of power and influence within servant leadership theory render questions regarding servant leadership's positioning with leadership studies salient. The notion of empowerment is fundamental to these discussions and therefore deserving of further attention in terms of addressing how servant leadership contends with societal expectations to adopt seemingly contradictory positions, such as leading and serving, simultaneously.

This research aims to contribute towards negating aspects of these limitations by drawing upon the notion of CSR to explore various features of servant leadership theory including its cyclical nature, the notion of community, and empowerment. This gives rise to the overarching research aim of the present research:

To develop understanding into the ways in which servant leadership is manifested in an organisation's CSR-related activities.

In order to guide and assist in satisfying this research aim, the following three research questions have been devised, each of which is founded upon existing shortcomings in the literature, as discussed above:

> RQ1: In what ways does servant leadership influence formal and informal organisational structures in relation to CSR?
>
> RQ2: In what ways do relationships associated with servant leadership impact the nature of CSR-related activities within organisations?
>
> RQ3: In what ways does servant leadership facilitate employee empowerment in the context of CSR-related activities?

2.8. Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework presents and describes the theory underpinning research and assists in explaining the necessity of the research (Lynham (2002). It is widely acknowledged (Jabarkhail, 2020) that Greenleaf (1977) articulated the first theoretical framework of servant leadership yet it is axiomatic that multiple conceptualisations and theories exist within the field, as explored in this literature review. As such, the theoretical framework for this study draws upon prominent conceptualisations of servant leadership such as those of Spears (1995), Laub (1999), and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), culminating in Van Dierendonck's (2011) conceptualisation which "is now widely used by scholars and practitioners for research and practice purposes" alike (Jabarkhail, 2020: 3). The theoretical framework presented here is founded upon Van Dierendonck's (2011) synthesis of the literature, developing areas identified as limited, and how drawing upon concepts within Stakeholder Theory and CSR-related literature respectively can develop understanding into servant leadership.

Drawing upon the broader limitations identified within servant leadership theory such as multiple conceptualisations, issues with measurement, and considerations relating to power and influence, three aspects of servant leadership were identified as requiring further exploration in order to increase conceptual understanding; these were the organisational structures implemented within servant leadership as a process, the nature of relationships within servant leadership, and the notion of empowerment. Two affiliated theories were used to explore these areas. First, this research drew upon elements of Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1983), in particular the belief in the value of multiple, diverse stakeholders as opposed to just shareholders in the interest of the contemporary capitalist society we find ourselves in. Of particular interest here is the notion that Stakeholder Theory does not necessitate a decision between shareholders and stakeholders, rather Stakeholder Theory offers a perspective that proposes value creation within trade, overcomes the problem of ethics in capitalism, and assists management in making decisions (Freeman et al, 2010). Considering multiple stakeholders within strategies and the decision-making process necessitates considerations relating to power, for example to whom does one have responsibility towards (De Ruiter et al, 2018)?

Second, elements of CSR-related theory were also utilised to guide this research, in particular Carroll's Pyramid Model of CSR (1991) and its associated pillars of responsibility. Carroll's pyramid consists of four distinct yet related responsibilities that organisations are expected to adhere to in all of their actions: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic respectively. The degree to which organisations adhere to each of these responsibilities is flexible depending on the nature of the activity, but all four responsibilities must be considered when making decisions (Carroll, 2016). With the focus of the present research being servant leadership, the notion of philanthropic responsibilities is of particular significance. Philanthropic responsibilities encompass all aspects of an organisations' giving, including voluntary and discretionary activities (Carroll, 2016) and therefore theoretically resonates with the desire to serve within servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970). Whereas economic and legal responsibilities are required of organisations within society as organisations are required to be profitable through fair means (Elkington, 1999; Carroll, 2016) and social responsibilities are expected, philanthropic responsibilities are expected/desired of organisations. Organisations are unlikely to considered unethical if they do not pursue philanthropic acts, but society does expect such acts so organisations may face negative consequences if they are not perceived to adhere to societal expectations relating to philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll, 2016). The nature of repercussions organisations may face include a lack of stakeholder investment or operating at a competitive disadvantage (Grigore, 2010). The notion of philanthropic responsibilities is therefore of particular interest in relation to the notion of service within servant leadership; it offers a lens through which to explore organisations' activities within their local communities which offer a manifestation of Greenleaf's (1970: 15) best test of the servant leader, "what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?" This is particularly significant given Visser's (2011) suggestion that philanthropic responsibilities are one of the most significant responsibilities of organisations in developing nations; this resonates with the notion of contemporary leadership studies that are considering leadership from positions beyond traditional white, heterosexual males in Western contexts (Elliott and Stead, 2008). As such, elements of both Stakeholder Theory as well as CSR-related literature will be drawn upon to enhance understanding into theoretically neglected aspects of servant leadership theory.

A conceptual aspect of servant leadership theory that has been negated thus far and therefore requires further exploration is the cyclical nature of the construct. Despite being included in Greenleaf's (1970) best test of the servant leader, explicit references to the cyclical nature of the construct remain largely omitted from literature; similarities can be identified however in related matters such as role modelling behaviours and reciprocal action. Liden et al (2014: 1436) for example, suggest "servant leaders may consciously or unconsciously encourage follower behaviours through role modelling" as a result of Bandura's (1977) social learning theory. Schaubroeck et al (2011) suggest characteristics affiliated with servant leadership to be desirable (such as high levels of trust, an ability to inspire, and in-role competency), which renders followers more likely to replicate leader behaviours (Hannah et al, 2011). Similarly, Van Dierendonck (2011) suggests reciprocity may support Greenleaf's (1970) best test of those served in terms of becoming servant leaders themselves. Crocker and Canevello (2008) illustrated that the creation of compassionate and supportive environments that are other-oriented in the context of self-sacrificing leadership, results in reciprocal follower behaviours. Although explicit references to its cyclical nature are largely omitted from the literature, there appears grounds to explore the cyclical nature of servant leadership further. The concept of other-oriented environments resonates strongly with both CSR and Stakeholder Theory.

As the purview of CSR is the betterment of society (Christensen et al, 2014) and the underlying premise of Stakeholder Theory is that the primary responsibility of managers is to create as much value as possible for stakeholders not just shareholders (Freeman, 1984), there are conceptual overlaps between the cyclical nature of servant leadership theory, CSR and Stakeholder Theory. CSR has been demonstrated a context in which leaders are able to demonstrate their role modelling credentials, whereby leaders demonstrate the intrinsic value of CSR-related actions and advocate employee participation in them (Chen and Hung-Basecke, 2014). This resonates with the notion of servant leadership as a cyclical construct whereby once one is exposed to the behaviours of servant leadership, they themselves are likely to embrace them (Greenleaf, 1977). The present research therefore draws upon the context of CSR-related activities to explore the cyclical nature of servant leadership and role modelling to ensure value is created for an array of stakeholders.

Another aspect of servant leadership theory that remains contested (Margolis et al, 2009) is the notion of community. Community can be considered foundational to servant leadership considering Greenleaf's (1970) initial portrayals including a concern for community, and both Spears' (1995) influential list of ten characteristics and Laub's (1999) much cited conceptualisation both including building community as a foundational concept. The natural disposition to care for the community within servant leadership (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) suggests CSR to be an antecedent of the approach; Christensen et al (2014) support this notion suggesting that social responsibilities are essentially "baked into" servant leadership theory and practice, as demonstrated by the focus on the "least privileged in society". The purview of CSR is the betterment of society (Christensen et al, 2014) which resonates strongly with the purview of servant leadership, namely the development of individual people (Van Dierendonck, 2011); both CSR and servant leadership therefore focus on the betterment of others, again suggesting CSR as an antecedent of servant leadership.

Despite these similarities, conceptual understandings relating to CSR as a consequence of behaviours associated with servant leadership could prove enlightening (Christensen et al, 2014). Van Dierendonck (2011: 1250) suggests value in investigating "whether servant leadership may enhance a broader perspective on CSR, one that also focuses on social aspects such as community relations and diversity", findings which would similarly contribute to studies of leadership and CSR respectively. Drawing upon the importance of relationships within servant leadership (Ferris et al, 2009) may elicit new understandings into how servant leadership impacts the relationship between organisations and society, through the theoretical lens of Stakeholder Theory. Stakeholder Theory draws upon the requirements and needs of multiple stakeholders including employees, customers, suppliers, and local people (Miles, 2012), and incorporating societal interests into business operations (Freeman and Dmytriyev, 2017). Indeed, Freeman and Dmytriyev (2017: 10) suggest that "Stakeholder Theory posits that the essence of business primarily lies in building relationships and creating value for all its stakeholders", which by definition includes employees and local communities. As such, drawing upon the motivational factors of Stakeholder Theory to consider one's actions on wider community stakeholders may elicit understanding into the nature of relationships within servant leadership, with respect to both internal and external communities.

A third aspect of servant leadership theory that is conceptually weak at present is the notion of empowerment. Focusing on developing proactive, self-confident individuals with a personal sense of power (Van Dierendonck, 2011), it can also encompass decision-making, information sharing and coaching for innovative performance (Konczak et al, 2000), as well as innovative thinking (Krog and Govender, 2015). As such, empowerment is concerned with developing individuals to be the best they can (Greenleaf, 1988). Empowerment draws upon persuasive mapping techniques (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) and providing direction (Van Dierendonck, 2011), whereby leaders are able to influence and inspire followers (Wong and Davey, 2007) to achieve personal growth.

Eva et al (2019) suggest further research is required into the nature of empowerment within servant leadership, particularly with regard decision-making, taking risks, and the opportunity for employees to make mistakes. Developing understanding into the manifestation of empowerment may also prove enlightening with regards understanding servant leadership as a post-heroic approach to leadership or within the CLS tradition, drawing upon the distribution of power within the approach. Participation in an organisation's CSR activities provides the context from which to explore empowerment as CSR has been demonstrated to enhance employee empowerment (Sulaiman and Muhamad, 2017) through providing employees the opportunity to take control and draw upon knowledge that executives detached from day-to-day operations may not possess (Lam and Khare, 2010). Drawing upon Stakeholder Theory may therefore be enlightening here as it suggests that organisation-stakeholder relationships are fluid and in constant flux depending on needs and requirements of both organisation and stakeholders (Friedman and Miles, 2002). Using Stakeholder Theory as the lens through which to explore how and why stakeholders, specifically employees in this scope of this research, gain prominence by exploring examples of CSR-related activities that organisations have engaged with will provide insights into the manifestation of empowerment within servant leadership, focusing specifically on the decision-making process of which activities to pursue.

This research therefore seeks to develop understanding into aspects of servant leadership theory that have been identified as lacking in understanding in this literature review, such as conceptually negated aspects including its cyclical nature and the notions of community and empowerment. This will be achieved by drawing upon associated elements of both CSR-related literature and Stakeholder Theory, in particular aspects of the respective theories that focus on community and the other. Chapter 3 now presents and discusses the research strategy and methods chosen to assist in satisfying the research aim and providing feasible answers to the research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter explains the methods and research approach adopted in order to develop understanding into the ways in which servant leadership becomes manifested in an organisation's CSR-related activities. The chapter follows a logical structure. First the research philosophy and approach is presented (Section 3.1). Addressing ontological and epistemological perspectives is important as they represent contrasting beliefs regarding the nature of knowledge and how we understand it, as well as the ways in which knowledge can be elicited. Upon considerations across the respective spectrums, it is concluded that a relativist ontological position in accordance with an interpretivist epistemological perspective are most applicable for this research; justifications for these decisions are presented.

In Section 3.2, the research strategy is presented; this is the logic of answering the research aims in accordance with the philosophical assumptions adopted, and an outline of the methods applied to achieve the aims of the study. The methods utilised in this study included in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Managing Directors, senior leaders, and employees of three organisations based in the North West region of England, as well as observations and the collection of supplementary data such as photographs, organisational documents, and field notes. A critical evaluation of the adopted methods is provided as well as justifications as to their selections. Section 3.2 also presents considerations relating to participant selection, interview question design, data collection, and data analysis. Section 3.3 will then explain the ethical considerations associated with the present research before Section 3.4 concludes the chapter with a summary of the chosen methodological approach.

3.1. Research Philosophy and Approach

All social research is conducted against a backdrop of ontological and epistemological assumptions that require clarification prior to the commencement of the study (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Easterby-Smith et al, 2012). Assumptions are often associated with negativity, but they are of fundamental significance to how individuals view the world; we all assume subconsciously, and this forms our research philosophy which enables us to interpret our findings in light of the wider body of knowledge (Kuhn, 1962). It is important be conversant across the spectrum of philosophical assumptions so as to adopt the most appropriate foundations for the research (Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Briggs et al, 2012), this chapter therefore proceeds by considering potential philosophical approaches that can be adopted in the course of this research.

3.1.1. Ontology

Easterby-Smith et al (2015: 334) suggest that ontology relates to views regarding the nature of reality whereas epistemology is defined as the "views about the most appropriate ways of enquiring into the nature of reality", or 'how we know what we know'. Depending on the assumptions made in these perspectives, our methodology emerges, that is the appropriate ways in which to garner new knowledge and build upon the existing body of literature (Carsrud and Cucculelli, 2014). For example, it is inappropriate to study knowledge believed to be ontologically objective through epistemologically subjective measures (Bryman, 2003), as this is logically inconsistent.

The ontological continuum flows from realism through to relativism. Realism is "an ontological position which assumes that the physical and social worlds exist independently of any observations made about them" (Easterby-Smith et al, 2015: 340). Although this offers an insight into realism, it must be noted that it is not an objective school of thought characterised by a unified definition; rather scholars tend to agree on similar themes which are grouped under the umbrella term of realism (Kuhn, 1962). On the whole, ontological realism suggests a single 'reality' or 'truth' exists independent of human interaction (Bhaskar, 1989). As such, investigations into knowledge require empirical investigation in the search for generalisable, objective 'laws' (Collis and Hussey, 2013).

Alternatively, ontological relativism is based on the belief that there is not one single 'truth' but instead 'reality' is constructed by people through their interactions and discourses (Cunliffe, 2001). Collins' (1983: 88) brief statement summarises relativism well, "what counts for the truth can vary from place to place and from time to time". Therefore, the importance of context and culture cannot be overstated (Easterby-Smith et al, 2015), as what may be held as true in one setting may not be true in another. With the belief that human experiences are shaped by social interactions, the relativist position is opposed to the notion of pure observation explaining single causal mechanism (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

Despite being introduced by Greenleaf (1970) half a century ago, servant leadership remains largely undefined, disputed and confused (Eva et al, 2019). Similarly, the contemporary notion of CSR is subjective, dynamic and continuously evolving as is demonstrated by the continually asked question: "who is responsible for what?" (De Ruiter et al, 2018). Definitional incoherency and disputed construct composition suggest relativism as a feasible ontological position from which to conduct research into leadership and CSR as relativism is predicated upon the understanding that one must accept that people will understand the concepts differently. As such, the lack of agreed upon definitions for both servant leadership and CSR respectively strongly supports the advocation of a relativist ontology in this research.

Christensen et al (2014) further suggest the need to understand the underlying motives for engaging in CSR at the individual level, a call for research that the present research aims to contribute towards. Christensen et al (2014) suggest that theories relating to CSR and servant leadership respectively share similar foundational principles, such as the care for communities and focus on the least privileged in society, and as such, synergistic explorations into the constructs may prove mutually beneficial. Drawing upon CSR-related practices can be enlightening in terms of developing understanding into the notions of community and development of individuals within servant leadership theory and as such, adopting a relativist ontology will propagate the personal interpretations of 'reality' through anecdotes and memories with regard the subject matter.

Furthermore, the research aim and research questions devised in this research pertain to the influence of servant leadership as a process on factors such as formal and informal organisational structures, relationships, and employee empowerment, all in the context of CSR-related actives. Ontological relativism is predicated upon the understanding that one must accept that people will understand and interpret constructs in varying ways, understandings which are susceptible to change over time and space (Klincewicz, 2014). These varying understandings are to be expected in the current research when exploring perceptions relating to aspects of leadership such as the influence of organisational structures, relationships, and employee empowerment, all of which may be understood in potentially different, personal ways by agents involved. Leadership in particular can be considered personal to individual agents (Eva et al, 2019) and studies into elements associated with leadership as a process such as in the present thesis therefore dictate the adoption of a relativist ontological position.

3.1.2. Epistemology

Much of the literature relating to epistemology refers to positivist and constructionist perspectives (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Collis and Hussey, 2013), Leitch et al (2010) however refer to positivist and non-positivist traditions located on a continuum with indefinite boundaries between epistemologies. A positivist epistemology emanates from Comte's (1853: 3) statement that "there can be no real knowledge but that which is based on observed facts", meaning that the social world exists externally to human interference (Easterby-Smith et al, 2015). As knowledge can be obtained solely via empirical investigation within this perspective (Marshall, 1998), Comte's comment appears to have an overarching realist ontological assumption. Leitch et al (2010: 69) highlight this ontological influence stating that “positivism is based on a realist ontology which assumes that observation is theory neutral and that the role of scientific research is to identify law-like generalisations that account for what was observed”.

Conversely, non-positivist epistemologies have emerged as a result of the perceived shortcomings of the positivist domain in relation to the social sciences (Easterby-Smith et al, 2015), namely that the empirical methods of testing the natural world do not transfer to the social world. Rather, ‘reality’ is not objective and exterior to humans but is directly related to the construction of ‘reality’ through the interaction of different subjects. Berger and Luckman (1966) initiated the movement away from positivism by stating that society is a human construct, just as man is. Gergen (1985: 267) developed these thoughts and predicated that the world is understood through social artefacts, “products of historically situated interchanges among people”.

A positivist perspective suggests a single scientific ‘truth’ or reality of which knowledge is obtained through empirical investigation, predominantly through the use of quantitative research methods, that test for causation and generalisability of results. Non-positivist approaches however favour the perspective of multiple ‘realities’ arising as a result of interactions between subjects and focus on the subjective meaning of experiences predominantly utilising qualitative research methods; these findings therefore are not focused on transferability or universality as would be the case with findings associated to positive traditions. It is important to note here however that these are basic guidelines and transferability of methods and approaches can occur along the continuum, for example this is particularly apparent in the critical realist tradition. There are also multiple non-positivist traditions that remain distinct entities in their own rights (Thorpe and Holt, 2008; Burr, 2015) such as social constructionism which emanates from a sociological perspective towards non-positive research, and social constructivism which emanates from a psychological backdrop. The epistemology adopted within the course of this study however will be interpretivism.

Interpretivist research provides rich insights into the complex processes of relationships based on the fundamental belief that the world is not governed by universal truths or laws (Saunders et al, 2012) and is thus aligned to a relativist ontology. Crotty (1998) states that at the root of interpretivism is the distinction between understanding (interpreting) and explanations, advocated by the approach therefore is the belief that it is “necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors” (Saunders et al, 2012: 116). According to Collins (2010: 38) interpretivist researchers “reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness”, that is to say that it is impossible to grant meaning to the world without first providing conscious thought to interpret the information an individual receives. Therefore, to explain social phenomena requires meanings to be studied through the lens through which people ascribe actions and objects (Schweber, 2015).

Considering the aim of this research is to develop understanding into the ways in which servant leadership becomes manifested in an organisation’s CSR-related activities, and the subjective nature of both CSR and servant leadership as respective constructs emanating from definitional incoherency (Carroll, 1979; Van Dierendonck, 2011; Eva et al, 2019), an interpretivist epistemological perspective appears the most suitable to adopt. Interpretivism enables the researcher to apply human thought and interpretation to the data in order to make sense of it (Collins, 2010). Interpreting the data includes considerations relating to meanings, processes and contexts (Schweber, 2015) which reflects the dynamic nature of both servant leadership and CSR as respective constructs. As such, the researcher will be able to perform an informed analysis with regards participant’s responses and other collected data, thus increasing the possibility of establishing a robust contribution to knowledge.

The collaboration of an ontological position of relativism and epistemological position of interpretivism also reflects some of the ways in which servant leadership and CSR have been studied previously. Eva et al (2019) for example, establish that many of the distinguishing features of servant leaders from other leaders can only be understood from qualitative positions, such as by establishing *why* leaders act in certain ways as opposed to others. This is typical of leadership studies in general, whereby exploratory research is conducted into the subjective experiences of leaders and followers with respect to certain conditions (Dinh et al, 2014). As such, research should focus on understanding "*how leaders influence underlying processes that lead to organisational outcomes*" (Dinh et al, 2014: 51) in the interest of unifying diverse theories and stimulating novel leadership research, an approach that necessitates the adopted philosophical positions of the present study.

3.2. Research Strategy

Defined, the research strategy is a conglomerate of means for answering the research question, in particular the methods for data collection, sampling and analysis (Bryman, 2003). Research focusing on servant leadership or CSR has a tendency to emanate from positivist traditions and therefore adopt quantitative methods (Eva et al, 2019; Aguinis and Glavas, 2012). With regards servant leadership, there has been a focus on formulating frameworks and models (Patterson, 2004; Winston, 2003) and scale development studies (Sendjaya, 2003; Liden et al, 2008; Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) which tend to employ quantitative methods to establish causation and causality and thus measurability; this theme is also prevalent within CSR-related research (Morgeson et al, 2013). Eva et al (2019) revealed the dominance of quantitative methods during their systematic review of empirical research finding that of the 192 articles publishing empirical research concerning servant leadership between 1998 and 2018, 156 (81%) had been quantitative in nature, 28 (15%) had been qualitative in nature, and eight (4%) had utilised a mixed methods approach. These figures are consistent with research methods employed across leadership studies in general (Antonakis et al, 2014). Despite there being robust examples of how qualitative research methods can advance our understanding of servant leadership (for example, Parris and Peachey (2013) and Han et al (2010)), these continue to be lacking in top publications. Similarly, CSR scholars have also advocated the use of qualitative methods in future research but also cite difficulties of publishing qualitative research in top publications (Benn et al, 2010; Cherrier et al, 2012; Soundararajan et al, 2018; Vazquez-Carrasco and Lopez-Perez, 2013). Applying research methods associated with qualitative traditions with regards servant leadership in relation to CSR therefore facilitates an avenue through which the current study can provide meaningful contributions.

In their investigation into the micro-foundations of CSR, Christensen et al (2014) suggest that knowledge can be developed in the field of CSR and leadership by utilising little-used methods to understand perceptions and motives of leaders and followers, rather than continuing to measure or test the relationship; this therefore suggests the need for qualitative research methods. Soundararajan et al (2018: 950) also advocate the use of qualitative research methods, suggesting that they will enable the researcher "to comprehend the workings of small firms, actors and institutions" in the interest of developing "a deeper understanding of the cultural, social, legal, administrative and political systems" operating within smaller organisations. With the focus of the current research being on the manifestation of servant leadership as a process in relation to CSR-related activities, research methods affiliated with the qualitative tradition are therefore adopted.

3.2.1. Participant Selection

In any research, the quality and quantity of participants are important factors with respect to the breadth, depth and saliency of the data so that analysis reveals authentic and meaningful insights (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Curtis et al, 2000). Purposive sampling was utilised in the present research to identify organisations in which the research could be conducted. The most common sampling method within qualitative research, it can be used when “the researcher has a clear idea of what sample units are needed, and then [the researcher] approaches potential sample members to check whether they meet eligibility criteria” (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008: 218). The “clear idea of what sample units are needed” enables the researcher to predefine suitability of participants based on the aims of the research and thus select the required number of participants.

Potential organisations were identified using Lancaster University’s business networks. In accordance with the research aims of this study, as well as the research being conducted in the SME context, a strict organisational profile was created that any potential participating organisations would have to adhere to: following the European Commission’s guidelines (European Commission, 2012), small to medium sized enterprises comprise of between 50 and 250 employees; in the interest of accessibility, the organisation must have its main offices located in the North West of England; and the organisations must have a public record of CSR engagement be it through the production of an annual CSR report, having received recognition for their involvement in CSR, or have had a rating for their CSR activities provided by an external source. The necessity for potential organisations to adhere to these criteria therefore dictated purposive sampling as the most appropriate sampling method to be adopted.

A second instance of purposive sampling was also employed during the screening process of the Managing Directors. In the interest of both the limited time available to conduct primary research and exploring servant leadership as opposed to an alternative leadership approach, there was a requirement to establish that the behaviours or characteristics associated with servant leadership were feasibly being practised within the organisations that participated in this research. Upon identification that the organisations were actively engaged in CSR-related practices as outlined above, a questionnaire was distributed to the Managing Directors who said they and their organisations would be willing to participate in the research (Appendix 4). It is important to note that the questionnaire was used entirely for the purpose of participant selection and not used in any form of data analysis such as measuring leadership styles or leadership effectiveness; rather, the questionnaire was distributed to increase the propensity for the researcher to spend the limited time available for the data collection phase of the research in organisations that were more likely to be engaging in the behaviours associated with servant leadership, according to the theoretical framework of this study. If the researcher was to enter an organisation without the questionnaire, the approach to leadership could be entirely misaligned with the aims and objectives of the present research, therefore potentially having a detrimental effect on the relationship between the organisation and Lancaster University as both organisation and researcher could be perceived to be wasting time. As such, the questionnaires were not a measurement tool akin to those utilised in positivist research studies, the questionnaires were used to ascertain the propensity for understanding to be developed through alternative data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and field notes.

Managing Directors were asked to what extent they agreed with 14 statements which were based upon Van Dierendonck’s (2011) review and synthesis of the servant leadership literature. At the time of distributing the questionnaires, Van Dierendonck’s conceptualisation of servant leadership was the most thorough and profound, as was discussed in Chapter 2. For Managing Directors to be considered suitable participants, they must have agreed with at least 5 of the 7 statements that were positively related to the foundational characteristics as discerned by Van Dierendonck (2011), and agree with no more than 2 of the remaining 7 questions as these are negatively related to the construct of servant leadership. This was deemed an effective method of participant selection as one organisation that was contacted had to be removed from the study as the Managing Director’s answers did not suggest an approach akin to that of servant leadership. As such, the researcher concluded that they could not use the organisation as the propensity to observe behaviours and characteristics associated with servant leadership were perceived to be limited and alternative organisations were pursued.

Reflecting upon this participant selection method suggests it was both appropriate and effective. Although questionnaires are more common within positive, quantitative research as opposed to interpretive approaches, the use of questionnaires was necessary to this research design; they ensured the propensity to observe behaviours associated with servant leadership using alternative data collection methods was increased while relationships between local organisations and Lancaster University were maintained. The considerable amount of data that was subsequently collected reflects the effectiveness of the questionnaire in forming the grounding for the analysis to be conducted.

Snowball sampling was then utilised to connect with additional participants within each organisation, a process whereby one research participant informs the researcher of another potential participant until the required number is achieved; this is a common method of participant selection within qualitative research generally, and servant leadership literature specifically (Jabarkhail, 2020). In the interest of gaining an insight into the perspectives of employees throughout the organisational hierarchy, further interviews were conducted with managers and non-managers in all participating organisations.

Initial contact with potential organisations was made through Lancaster University staff that already had a working relationship with the Managing Directors of the potential organisations; contact was designed in this way to increase the likelihood of the Managing Directors agreeing to participate. The advertisement to participate can be found in Appendix 1. Initial contact comprised of email exchanges including an introduction to both the research and the researcher. As a result of the sampling method and requirements of this study, three organisations eventually participated in this research.

In total, 26 individuals participated in this research. Interviews lasted between 17 minutes and 75 minutes with an average duration of 37 minutes. Table 3 summarises interview information. The interview code was designed to maintain participant anonymity and also as a method of labelling the

Interview #	Interview Code	Age	Gender	Level	Organisation	Interview Length	Method
1	01-MD-CO	45+	M	MD	GCS	47.12	In person
2	02-MD-HO	45+	M	MD	LBC	1.13.09	In person
3	03-SM-MO	25-31	F	SM	PPC	21.33	In person
4	04-EM-MO	18-24	M	EM	PPC	27.41	In person
5	05-MD-MO	45+	M	MD	PPC	38.15	In person
6	06-EM-MO	32-38	F	EM	PPC	21.53	In person
7	07-SM-MO	18-24	F	SM	PPC	19.13	In person
8	08-SM-MO	25-31	F	SM	PPC	17.57	In person
9	09-EM-MO	18-24	M	EM	PPC	17.17	In person
10	10-SM-MO	25-31	F	SM	PPC	31.02	In person
11	11-EM-CO	25-31	M	EM	GCS	20.02	In person
12	12-EM-CO	25-31	M	EM	GCS	21.03	In person
13	13-EM-CO	45+	M	EM	GCS	27.10.	In person
14	14-EM-CO	45+	M	EM	GCS	25.58	In person
15	15-SM-CO	45+	M	SM	GCS	42.02	In person
16	16-MD-MO	45+	F	MD	PPC	41.57	Telephone
17	17-SM-HO	25-31	F	SM	LBC	01.14.10	In person
18	18-EM-HO	18-24	M	EM	LBC	46.43	In person
19	19-SM-CO	45+	M	SM	GCS	43.35	In person
20	20-EM-CO	45+	M	EM	GCS	44.11	In person
21	21-EM-CO	39-44	M	EM	GCS	25.58	In person
22	22-MD-HO	45+	M	MD	LBC	45.50.	In person
23	23-SM-HO	18-24	M	SM	LBC	41.53	Telephone
24	24-SM-HO	45+	M	SM	LBC	01.01.12	In person
25	25-SM-CO	39-44	M	SM	GCS	45.52	Telephone
26	26-SM-CO	39-44	F	SM	GCS	49.14	Telephone

Table 3:

interview transcripts for future reference. The interviews were initially assigned a number according to the chronological order they were conducted, these two digits form the first two characters of the code. The second two characters refer to the hierarchical status of the interviewee within their respective organisation; MD was used for Managing Directors, SM for Senior Managers, and EM for all other Employees. The final two characters relate to the organisation from which interviewees herald; CO was used for Construction Org, HO was used for Hospitality Org, and MO was used for Manufacturing Org. Thus, as an example, 01-MD-CO would translate as the first interview conducted (01), the interview participant was a Managing Director (MD), and the organisation represented was Construction Org (CO). Devising the interview codes in such a way explicitly demonstrates in the presentation of data structures that the aggregate dimensions are present within all three participating organisations as well as through all hierarchical levels, thus demonstrating a degree of dependability across the results.

3.2.2. The Research Context

The participants of this research comprised of Managing Directors, senior leaders and non-managers of three organisations based in the North West region of England. This region was selected in the interest of accessibility as the research was to be conducted, where possible, in-person as opposed to remotely. The ability to conduct face-to-face interviews increases the personal nature of interviews which increases the propensity for high quality data to be collected (Vogl, 2013). Conducting face-to-face interviews also necessitated visiting organisational premises facilitating observations with regards leader-employee and employee-employee interactions contributing towards insights into contextual factors and non-verbal communications beyond the interviews. The organisations were also of similar scale in terms of number of employees. Considering the lack of research conducted into both servant leadership and CSR respectively in SMEs (Peterson, 2012; Vazquez-Carrasco and Lopez-Perez, 2013), as well as the propensity for servant leadership to be more prevalent within SMEs than larger organisations (Peterson et al, 2012), it was decided that the present research could contribute meaningful insights into both servant leadership and CSR literatures respectively by conducting the research in the SME-context.

Arguably the primary distinction between the organisations that participated in this research was the sector that they operate in; one operated in the construction industry, one in manufacturing, and one in hospitality. Operating in different sectors contributed towards further distinctions between the organisations, such as Manufacturing Org operating from just one site to Construction Org and Hospitality Org comprising of a dispersed workforce operating out of several different sites. As became evident during the data analysis phase of the present research, these differences impacted leader behaviours in terms of structures implemented in the organisation and communication methods adopted, points comprehensively discussed in the following chapters.

A further difference between the organisations was the heritage of each respective organisation. Construction Org for example, is a *"third generation family business"* (01-MD-CO) having been established over 70 years ago. Manufacturing Org considers itself a family run enterprise whereby the husband and wife assumed co-Managing Directorship but upon retirement, were likely to pass ownership of their organisation beyond family-ties. Hospitality Org on the other hand, was founded by two friends with the short-term intention of rapid growth and profit maximisation and was to be sold in the long-term, there was thus no succession plan conceived. Differences between family-owned and non-family-owned organisations are relatively well-explored, such as the influence of sub-systems (family, ownership and business system) in the organisation (Tagiuri and Davis, 1992) and potential lesser focus on growth compared to non-family-owned organisations (Graves and Thomas, 2004), yet the relative 'success' of the two ownership-type firms remains indeterminate (Crick et al, 2006).

In the interest of confidentiality, any information from which the organisations could be identified has been omitted or attributed a pseudonym. All of the information provided is correct to the best of the researcher's knowledge, up until the data collection phase of this research. For example, the organisations will be referred to as Construction Org, Manufacturing Org and Hospitality Org, identifying the organisations by the primary sector that they respectively operate in as opposed to using their registered names.

3.2.3. <u>Data Collection Methods</u>

In accordance with the qualitative research design adopted throughout this research, the primary method of data collection was in-depth, semi-structured interviews. However, observations, field notes, organisational documents, government documents, and photographs were also collected in the interest of crystallising the emergent themes identified within the interview data. Interviews are the most common qualitative research method associated with leadership studies (Holmes et al, 2010; Pless et al, 2012), potentially as a result of the focus on meanings, feelings and motives (Daft, 1983). Interviews have also been successfully employed in previous servant leadership research (for example, Liden et al (2008) and Parris and Peachey (2013)) and therefore appear an appropriate data collection method in accordance with the aims of the present research.

3.2.3.1. <u>Semi-Structured Interviews</u>

There are three primary types of interviews associated with data collection in the social sciences: structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews (Doody and Noonan, 2013). Table 4 outlines each of these approaches.

Interviews within servant leadership research have tended to be utilised in the educational (Eva and Sendjaya, 2013; Chikoko et al, 2015), not-for-profit (Udani and Lorenzo- Molo, 2013; Parris and Peachey, 2012), and sporting contexts (Crippen, 2017; Peachey et al, 2018), but have generally been a negated research method within the field. Some research has been conducted into the for-profit field, such as Cater and Beal's (2015) investigation into servant leadership in multigenerational family firms, and Carter and Baghurst's (2014) investigation into the influence of servant leadership on restaurant employee engagement. Therefore, there appears to be scope to develop understanding into servant leadership in an organisational context by adopting a semi-structured interview technique.

	Structured	Semi-structured	Unstructured
Prior to interview	Strict interview guide devised	A flexible interview guide devised.	Broad, open questions based on themes and concepts devised.
During interview	Rigid framework (same wording in the same order). Conducted efficiently in terms of timing. Researcher maintains control and direction.	Participant-led yet researcher-controlled. Opportunity to ask follow-up questions.	Flexible structure, following participants' chain of thought. Participant directed interviews. Follow-up questions can be asked.

Perceived advantages	Reduce the propensity for researcher bias.	Likely to elicit meaningful contributions from participants. Facilitates conversations relating to tangents that can be insightful.	Increases the likelihood of eliciting high-quality information relevant to the topic.
Perceived disadvantages	Restrictive to participants. Potentially only useful to elicit sociodemographic information.	Requires the researcher to actively listen which can be difficult. Potentially open to slight researcher bias.	Often time-consuming. Difficult to conduct one well. Difficult to analyse and identify patterns.

Table 4: An overview of different types of interviews associated with social science research

Similarly, quantitative research methods have dominated research relating to CSR, with around only 11% of studies adopting qualitative research methods; of these, over half are also used as a prelude to inform quantitative studies which suggests an imminent requirement to "expand the methodological repertoire used by CSR research" (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012: 954). Of the studies utilising qualitative research methods and interviews in particular, there is a strong focus on the impact of CSR on consumers (Oberseder et al, 2014; Oberseder et al, 2011; Yakovleva and Vazquez-Brust, 2012). Considering Agudelo et al's (2019) support for Carroll's (2015) predictions that CSR in the forthcoming years will encompass more aspects of stakeholder engagement, the prevalence and power of ethically sensitive consumers, the increased prominence of NGOs, the increased importance of employees' perceptions and employees as a driving-force of CSR, semi-structured interviews appear to be a feasible manner through which to explore these developments. The ability for the researcher to be able to engage in discussions with participants in order to elicit deeper understandings into their perceptions regarding the manifestation of servant leadership within the enactment of CSR-related activities, will afford the opportunity for the researcher to gather a holistic understanding into the nature of the construct being studied. Adopting this approach will also enable the present research to contribute towards Aguinis and Glavas's (2012: 954) call for more qualitative studies that "are needed to improve our understanding of the underlying mechanisms of CSR". Developing understanding into how servant leadership can influence formal and informal organisational structures, specifically with regard employee participation in CSR-related activities, necessitate the adoption of qualitative research methods, therefore satisfying the requirements for additional research methods to be utilised in studies pertaining to servant leadership and CSR.

Furthermore, considering the present research considers the nature of the leader-employee relationship which can be personal and subjective to the respective agents, engaging in semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to obtain insights into contextual factors that may or may not have contributed towards identifying themes across participants while ensuring participants were comfortable to discuss the relationship. Both researcher and participant were able to maintain elements of control in directing the interview which ensured the participant remained comfortable during discussions and the researcher was able to effectively collect important information. Structured interviews would not have permitted the flexibility to collect such information and unstructured interviews may have become disengaged with the focus of the research; the semi-structured nature of the interviews was therefore a suitable approach to adopt.

To further negate the likelihood of participants experiencing unease with the subject matter, particular attention was given to the conduct exhibited by the interviewer; this was achieved through building rapport with the interviewees at the start of the interview process, providing in-depth information relating to the purpose and aims of the study, and conducting the interviews in a manner that increased the confidence of the research participant. These interview tactics led to an increase in the likelihood of participants responding in a natural and honest manner as opposed to presenting themselves or their colleagues in a more favourable manner or answering the questions in a way in which they believed the researcher desired.

Similarly, the interview guides utilised throughout the interviews in this research were designed according to Bryman's (2004) approach, with a focus on flexibility and ensuring the research maintains control over the interview. The interview guides acted as a 7-point checklist ensuring key aspects were included; these were:

- Background details of the participant.
- Structure of the interview and interview questions.
- Opening up the interview and closing it at the end.
- Creating a rapport with participants.
- Managing expectations of participants.
- Engaging in a conversation over key points.
- Contingency planning (for example, risk aversion).

Designing the research guides following the guidance of Bryman (2004) ensured that before, during and after the interviews, a consistent approach was being used and that important considerations were not overlooked. Following strict ethical guidelines regarding data collection, the interviews were recorded with the participants' consent, uploaded to a secure network and original recordings deleted. Field notes were taken prior, during and subsequently to interviews to be used in data analysis. Secondary resources, such as organisational documentation, in-house survey results and photographs, were also obtained.

3.2.3.2. Methods of Crystallisation

Rather than employing the highly-positivist triangulation method to 'verify' findings and results, a number of additional data collection methods were employed to crystallise the findings. Richardson (2000) renders triangulation a method to create a two-dimensional, rigid structure which does not accurately reflect the methods and potentialities arising as a result of qualitative research methods. Rather, the findings of qualitative research often lead to "a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic" (Richardson, 2000: 934) more akin to the multidimensionality and complexity associated with a crystal. In accordance with non-positivist epistemological approaches, crystallisation contributes towards developing comprehensive analysis rather than internal validity (Mays and Pope, 2000) as findings and thus theories become more refined (Barbour, 2001). It ensures "that the resulting interpretations authentically and plausibly, though not with absolute certainty or accuracy (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993), explain the studied phenomenon" (Reay et al, 2006: 983) as it supports the notion that parameters and boundaries are not fixed and are constantly evolving (Ellingson, 2009). Table 5 outlines the multitude of data collection methods utilised throughout this research in the interest of crystallising insights; each of these methods are more comprehensively explored in the following sections.

Data sources	Purpose within current thesis	Affiliated analysis	Example identifier (and page number)

Semi-structured interviews	Primary data collection method.	Thematic analysis	Appendix 5 (page 200)
Observations	Supplementary data collection method.	Semiotic analysis	Referred to throughout, such as page 90 in the example of Managing Directors creating informal channels of communication
Field notes	Supplementary data collection method.	Thematic analysis	Appendix 6 (page 203)
Photographs	Supplementary data collection method.	Semiotic analysis	Image 1 (page 71)
Organisational documents	Supplementary data collection method.	Document analysis Semiotic analysis	Image 4 (page 103)

Table 5: Methods of data collection, purpose within the research and affiliated analysis technique

Observations can prove to be an insightful method of data collection within qualitative research as they can provide researchers with contextual understanding (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). They can provide “richer material for reflection and puzzle solving” (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000), are often cheap to conduct and although only a small sample size can be observed, rich data can be gathered (Thietart and Wauchope, 2001). Observations are used infrequently within both CSR and leadership literatures (Banks, 2008) as the two constructs are often difficult to observe, potentially given their subjective nature. Ebener and O’Connell (2010) however demonstrate how observations can be used as supplementary evidence within studies pertaining to servant leadership, and Kakabadse et al (2009) similarly used observations when addressing how CSR can be effectively implemented and driven through organisations. Drawing upon the interpretivist methodological position of the present research, observations are an appropriate supplementary data collection method to adopt in the interest of crystallising insights garnered from the interviews as they can “uncover accounts which may not have been accessed by more formal methods like interviews” (Anderson’s (2008: 151).

According to O’Leary (2014), there are four primary types of observation (Table 6). Of these approaches, non-participant candid observations were performed in this research. As the researcher was an external agent unrelated to the organisations in terms of conceptual or practical skills to employ to the benefit of the organisation, the researcher was uninvolved in any organisational practices and remained solely observant. In accordance with ethical considerations, the participants were are of the research being conducted within their respective organisations and therefore the researcher embraced the notion of candid observations. Non-participant candid observations are often utilised in conjunction with Easterby-Smith et al’s (2012) observations by interrupted involvement which occur when the observer is only sporadically present to observe such as when making multiple visits to an organisation to perform work or conduct interviews. Easterby-Smith et al (2012) suggest observations by interrupted involvement are most likely to occur when one is utilising observations to support alternative data collection methods, and in particular interviews. The research design therefore suggested that engaging in non-participant candid observations by interrupted involvement was a reasonable approach to conducting observations through the course of this research.

Type of Observation	Description	Example Observation

Non-participant candid observations	Observed aware of researcher. Researcher does not participate in studied phenomenon.	Observing a boardroom meeting.
Participant candid observations	Observed aware of researcher and researcher may participate in studied phenomenon.	Observing and participating in a university lecture.
Non-participant covert observations	Observed unaware being observed; limited interaction from researcher.	Observing pedestrians at a zebra crossing.
Participant covert observations	Researcher goes 'under cover' to gain an accurate sense of the studied phenomenon.	Observing marginalised/ illegal groups such as gangs.

Table 6: O'Leary's (2014) four types of observation with descriptions and examples.

A researcher must be wary of the 'observer effect' (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008) which relates to the potential for people to subconsciously alter their behaviour if they believe that they are being watched; this can influence the accuracy of the observations in terms of ensuring that the observations reflect normal practice. The authors do however suggest that people are quick to forget about being observed and revert to normal, thus negating the impact of the 'observer effect'. Furthermore, researchers must be conscious so as to ensure that the sample being observed is representative of the population involved in the research. Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researcher did not perceive the 'observer effect' or sampling biases to be a factor within this research as the candid approach adopted by the researcher where they were open and honest with participants was designed to limit participant fears to ensure maximum comfort.

Personal reflections of the researcher recorded within field notes during and immediately after the data collection phase support these perceptions. Events such as having lunch with research participants in their organisation's canteen assisted the researcher in developing relationships with participants and providing contextual evidence in the interest of enhancing the researcher's holistic understanding of phenomena; an example of a field note relating to the episode of sharing lunch in the canteen can be seen in Appendix 6. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) suggest there is no set criteria for recording or analysing field notes beyond those of ethnographic and/or phenomenological research, particularly within qualitative and mixed-methods research, but that the personal nature of the notes often provide excellent contextual insights. As such and in accordance with Charmaz and Belgrave's (2012) guidance, field notes were reviewed as soon as was convenient for the researcher, ensuring the meaning of the shorthand notes, scribbles and non-textual aspects (i.e. arrows) were clear and their meaning retained.

Photographs were also taken where appropriate, in the interest of providing a more holistic understanding of potential findings and enhancing the crystallisation process. Photographs were taken at the discretion of members of the respective organisations and taken in a manner so that the organisation and its members cannot be identified. Although the use of photographs within organisational research remains sparse (Ray and Smith, 2011), the addition of a visual methodological tool can contribute greatly towards developing understanding (Dougherty and Kunda, 1990). The addition of photographs for example are less susceptible to researcher subjectivity than an interview might be; photographs are more likely to capture aspects of organisational reality without the distorting effects of the researcher (Harper, 1994). Ray and Smith (2011) suggest that when a researcher captures photographs based on a research question when they enter an organisation, the nature of these photographs can be particularly well suited to develop understanding into processes that develop across organisations or sets of activities (Buchanan, 2001;

Petersen and Ostergaard, 2004). Drawing upon the interpretivist position adopted within this research, the use of photographs assisted the researcher by providing insights into comments made within interviews as well as to provide supplementary knowledge that may have only been touched upon within conversations. For example, photographic evidence was particularly insightful with regards Managing Directors' attempts to create and establish familial organisational cultures, comprehensively explored in Section 6.2.2, *Increasing Unity.*

In addition to photographs, secondary data sources were also collected to aid the crystallisation process. Secondary data included organisational documentation such as newsletters and posters as well as published material tracing the history of the organisation. Analysing organisational documents proved insightful in the course of this research as it negated the potential for the researcher misunderstanding participants' responses as the documents often acted as corroborators supporting the findings identified from the interviews, this was particularly evident in the case of organisational newsletters that were distributed amongst Construction Org.

3.2.4. Data Analysis Methods

In accordance with the philosophical assumptions and data collection methods outlined previously in this chapter, the primary data analysis method applied within this research was thematic analysis. A conventional data analysis technique that has been revised over time (Creswell, 2013), thematic analysis addresses interviews holistically in order to "preserve the meaningful relations that the respective person deals with in the topic of study" (Flick, 2011: 152). Adopting a holistic view of the interviews allows the researcher to gain an understanding into the mind-set of the research participant (Patton, 2002) which is an important feature of an interpretivist epistemology such as the one adopted in this research.

Thematic analysis is a flexible approach that has been widely used across a number of disciplines, incorporating multiple variations; scholars often engage in a thematic analysis without explicitly claiming it as their analysis approach such is the approach's flexibility (Meehan et al, 2000; Braun and Wilkinson, 2003). Thematic analysis has been the preferred method of analysis in several studies pertaining to servant leadership, such as in Crippen's (2017) examination of the impact of a servant leader-philosophy in the NHL and Sturm's (2009) considerations relating to servant leadership within community health nursing. The cross-disciplinary use of thematic analysis within existing servant leadership studies therefore supports the flexible nature of the approach, as well as supporting thematic analysis' use in the present research.

With reference to the discord regarding constituting factors of thematic analysis, Braun and Clarke (2006: 80) suggest that there is not one ideal theoretical framework for conducting the analysis, rather "what is important is that the theoretical framework and methods match what the researcher wants to know". The authors therefore suggest a simple, six-stage step-by-step guide on how one can conduct thematic analysis; Table 7 outlines Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis.

These six stages are not entirely unique to thematic analysis but are consistent with many phases of qualitative analysis techniques more generally (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The stages are guidelines not rigid rules, they must be applied with a degree of flexibility taking into consideration specific research aims and questions; this resonates with many frameworks associated with qualitative analysis (Patton, 1990). Further caution must be heeded considering the analysis process is unlikely to be a linear process and must therefore be engaged in iteratively so that emerging concepts are recognised in accordance with developments in one's thinking. As proceeding explanations will illustrate, the present research adhered to this iterative process such as when delineating the titles for the aggregated dimensions. The simplicity and reproducibility of Braun and Clarke's (2006)

Phase	Title	Description of the Process
1	Familiarising yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2	Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3	Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4	Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6	Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 7: Braun and Clarke's (2006) phases of thematic analysis

guideline across the social sciences rendered it a robust foundation from which to conduct the thematic analysis, on the understanding that additional authors could influence the analysis process if further guidance was required at any of the six stages.

The first phase when conducting a thematic analysis is familiarising oneself with the data; one of the most successful methods through which to achieve this is through the process of transcription. Despite transcribing often being delegated to a junior or assistant researcher, the author of this research completed all the transcribing to ensure "familiarity with data and attention to what is actually there rather than what is expected" which can "facilitate realisations or ideas" (Bailey, 2008: 129). Bailey (2008) also suggests that recordings can be of low quality and/or difficult to understand, often incorporating nuances associated with speech; this was experienced in this research, but the impact negated as a result of the contextual knowledge obtained by the researcher when conducting the interviews. Robinson and Griffiths (2004) and Green et al (2012) have suggested that the greater the contextual knowledge regarding a research topic, the better the transcription will be. The primary researcher conducting both the interviews and the transcriptions in this research therefore increased the prospect of accurately recorded data. The researcher was able to garner a conceptual understanding of the interviews, recalling from memory the participants' attitudes towards the interviews, which complemented the transcription process when local dialects were used.

Again, there is no universal framework to follow for the transcription process (Mclellan-Lemal et al, 2003). However, general guidelines and principles can be followed in the interest of systematically organising and analysing interview data (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984). As such, the researcher adopted Mergenthaler and Stinson's (1992) much-cited seven principles for developing transcriptions; Table 8 outlines and describes each principle. Applying these principles gave structure to the process which increased the propensity for consistent and logical transcripts. Considering participants' use of local dialects, the first of Mergenthaler and Stinson's (1992) principles, to "preserve the morphological naturalness of transcription", became particularly significant. This principle suggests that one must record as closely as possible what was said during interview in accordance with what is typically acceptable in written text. The researcher's understanding of the

Principle	Title	Description
1	Preserve the morphologic naturalness of transcription	Keep word forms, the form of commentaries, and the use of punctuation as close as possible to speech presentation and consistent with what is typically acceptable in written text.
2	Preserve the naturalness of the transcript structure	Keep text clearly structured by speech markers (i.e., like printed versions of plays or movie scripts).
3	The transcript should be an exact reproduction	Generate a verbatim account. Do not prematurely reduce text.
4	The transcription rules should be universal	Make transcripts suitable for both human/ researcher and computer use.
5	The transcription rules should be complete	Transcribers should require only these rules to prepare transcripts. Everyday language competence rather than specific knowledge (e.g., linguistic theories) should be required.
6	The transcription rules should be independent	Transcription standards should be independent of transcribers as well as understandable and applicable by researchers or third parties.
7	The transcription rules should be intellectually elegant	Keep rules limited in number, simple, and easy to learn.

Table 8: Mergenthaler and Stinson's (1992) seven principles for developing transcriptions, adapted from Mclellan et al (2003)

language used during interviews as a result of heralding from the local area facilitated the researcher's ability to adhere to the first principle.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) second phase of conducting a thematic analysis is generating initial codes, which are termed first order concepts in this research. Defined, "codes or categories are tags or labels for allocating units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study… Seidel and Kelle (1995) view the role of coding as noticing relevant phenomena; collecting examples of those phenomena; and analysing those phenomena in order to find commonalties, differences, patterns and structures" (Basit, 2003, 144). Tuckett (2005) simplifies this description by suggesting that coding is the process of organising the data into meaningful groups. In this research, open coding was employed as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1990), an approach previously employed in respected works such as that of Barbera et al (2015) and Maguire and Delahunt (2017). Open coding occurs when the process is conducted without the use of a pre-established set of codes as codes develop and are modified as the coding process is conducted (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). This enabled the researcher to fully immerse themselves into the data and increase the possibility of identifying patterns at an early stage of the process.

Drawing upon the reflexivity of the researcher and understanding one's own abilities and capabilities, the researcher adopted the approach whereby the completed transcripts were printed off ready to be initially coded by pen and paper as opposed to on a computer (Appendix 6). Saldana (2013, 26) argues that "manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencil gives you more control over and ownership of the work"; it provides the researcher with a "literal perspective" of the data they are engaged with as the researcher is not limited to technological capabilities. Understanding oneself as a researcher entailed the manual coding process using pen and paper which led to the development of first order concepts. Different coloured highlighters were chosen to represent different potential units of analysis; this provided a visual overview of whether research participants were discussing primarily organisational or individual level concepts or whether there was a fluidity between levels in the discussions and satisfied Braun and Clarke's (2006: 89) suggestion to "code for as many potential themes/patterns as possible- you never know what might be interesting later".

The remaining stages of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide will draw upon the development of one of the three aggregated dimensions that was devised during this research. The same structure was applied to the derivation of all three aggregated dimensions, yet in the interest of clarity, the following stages will be discussed with respect to the aggregated dimension of *Promoting Communication*. This will enable the author to clearly explain the journey process engaged in that ultimately resulted in the arrival at the final aggregated dimensions.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) third phase of conducting thematic analysis is searching for themes; computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) was introduced to this research here to assist the researcher in organising the data. NVivo was the CAQDAS package selected as a result of the University licensing agreement and also researcher training available. In the interest of searching for themes, the researcher collated the different codes and organised them into potential themes that were located at a more abstract level than the respective codes; adhering to this process resulted in the development of second order themes. Second order themes are comprised of multiple distinct yet related codes where the theme is holistically representative of the individual constituting codes, the theme can therefore be considered an umbrella term under which numerous codes are related.

The first order concepts that had been identified using pen and paper were then reviewed and input into NVivo according to unit of analysis under the participant's hierarchical status. As with any process of open coding (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017), this proved to be an iterative process as the review of the first order coding revealed new codes and patterns; the original transcripts were therefore reviewed, and codes revised in accordance with emerging concepts. This proved to be a rewarding process as deeper insights were garnered, and a more holistic interpretation of the data derived.

The fourth stage of Braun and Clarke's (2006: 91) guide involves reviewing the second order themes; they summarise the fourth stage by stating that the objective should be that "data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes". This is an important stage of the process as it is where the researcher casts a critical eye over their own researcher in order to assess whether the themes are substantially robust enough to be enlightening and informative. As self-critique can often be difficult (Schunk, 2003), colleagues were invited to review sections of the coding and theme development process. This is a robust method to increase the propensity for dependability and applicability of results (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006) as they have been subjected to critique by those not directly related to the research.

In addition to the identification and refinement of second order themes, the fourth stage also incorporated an additional level of analysis which resulted in the first proposal of the aggregated dimensions. The second order themes were insightful but could be aggregated at a more conceptual level, the aggregated dimensions that were devised therefore provided a more holistic overview of the insights garnered from the research and increased the abstract conceptuality at each level. The original codes, refined throughout the iterative analysis process, were still apparent and were used to inform the second order themes, the second order themes however were then further conceptually developed to create the aggregated dimensions. The resulting data structure therefore encompassed the first draft of the first order concepts, second order themes and aggregated dimension, a working draft of which can be seen in Figure 2.

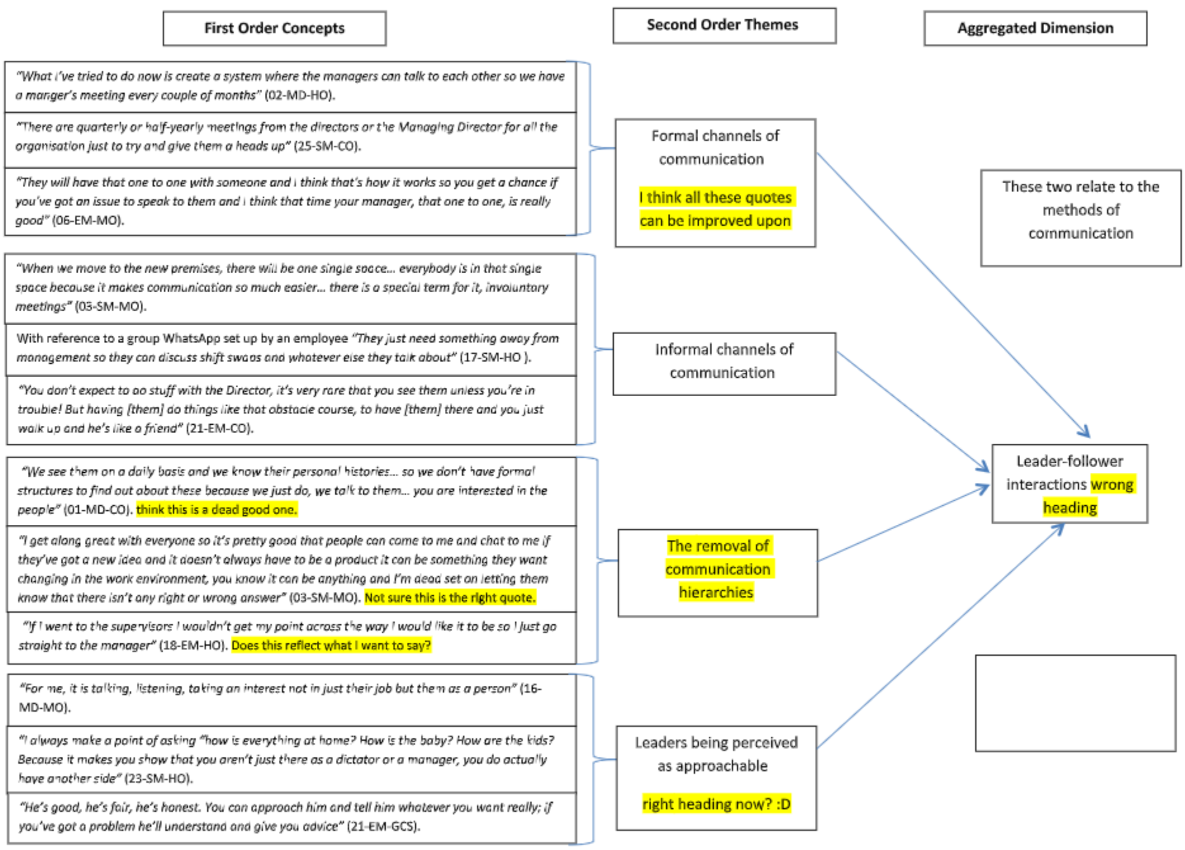


Figure 2: A working draft of the aggregated dimension for Promoting Communication

The initial draft of the aggregated dimension was titled "Leader-follower interactions" as the researcher was working towards a dimension that incorporated multiple aspects of interactions including both formal and informal channels, the influence of hierarchies within organisations, and perceptions of leaders. However, it was considered that the aggregated dimension required refinement as it was less representative of the data it was trying to represent than planned. As such, the second order themes were reduced from four to two, and the aggregated dimension was renamed (see Figure 3). The two second order themes at this iteration, "The platforms for communication" and "The nature of communication", operated at a more conceptual level than previous variations. The aggregated dimension was also renamed to "Communication" to incorporate a more holistic overview of the themes and concepts.

The fifth stage of Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide involves defining and naming one's themes and begins when one has satisfactory thematic maps of the data. This stage involves refining the themes to draw out its 'essence', carefully considering the extent to which each theme can contribute based upon the narrative it encapsulates, maintaining a careful watch to ensure that each theme is related yet distinguished from the others. Therefore, the researcher engaged in regular dialogues with their

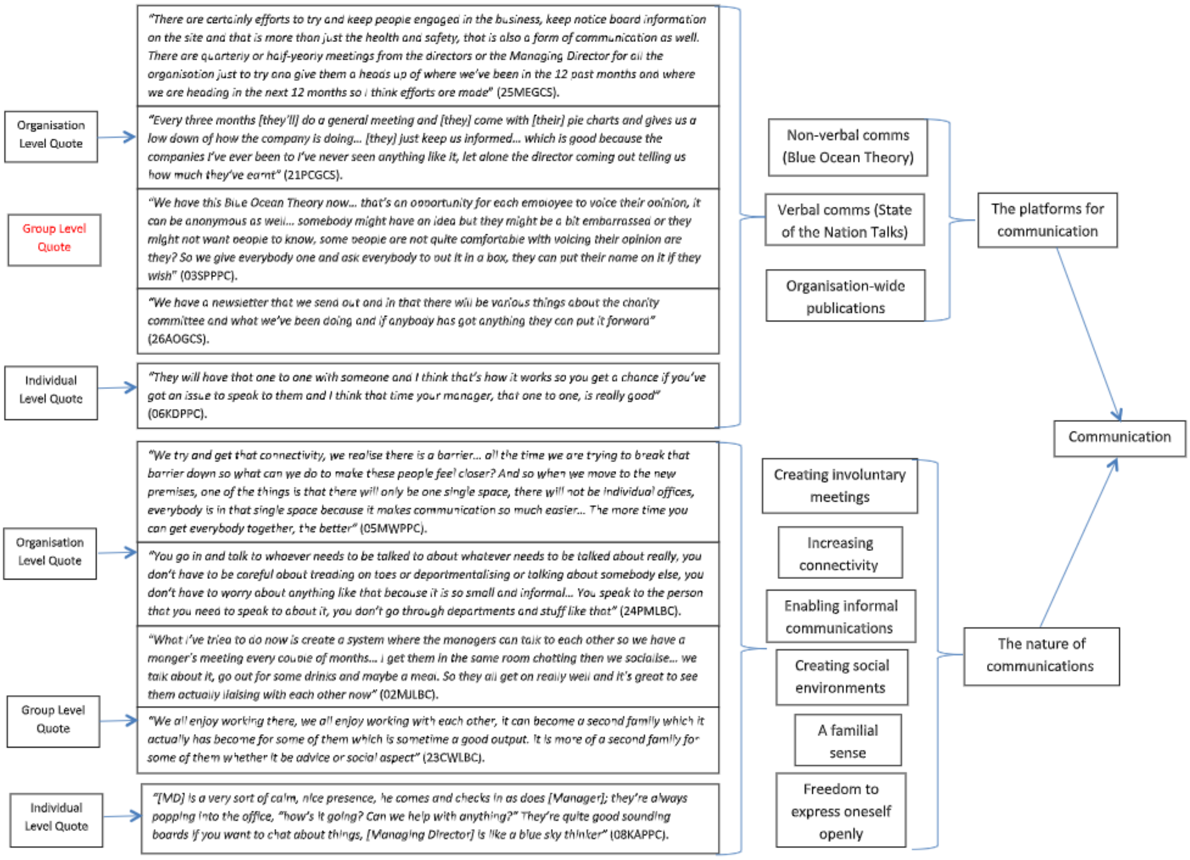


Figure 3: A *revised Promoting Communication aggregated dimension*

supervisors who provided guidance and suggestions as to areas where the 'essence' of the data structure was potentially misaligned and thus areas where further refinement was necessary.

As a result of obtaining a comprehensive, representative thematic map, the researcher was able to begin to compose a thorough analysis, not merely rephrasing the content of the data extracts but engaging with it in a critical manner so as to explicitly state the interesting and unique contributions of the findings. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that it is at this stage that the researcher is clear regarding the nature and the composition of their themes; in this research, this continued to be an iterative process whereby upon completion of this fifth stage, both the second order themes and the aggregated dimensions had been refined to accurately reflect the data they represent. Figure 4 provides the data structure pertaining to the aggregated dimension of *Promoting Communication*.

As Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, the process of delineating concepts, themes and aggregated dimensions was performed iteratively. Upon independent reviews by the researcher as well as collaborative critical reviews with supervisors and peers, developments can be observed between the data structures presented in Figures 2, 3 and 4. This process distinguished three aggregated dimensions (*Providing Opportunities, Promoting Communication, Empowering Employees*) that were informed by second order themes founded upon first order concepts, which formed the overall data structure within this research; this data structure is presented in Figure 5.

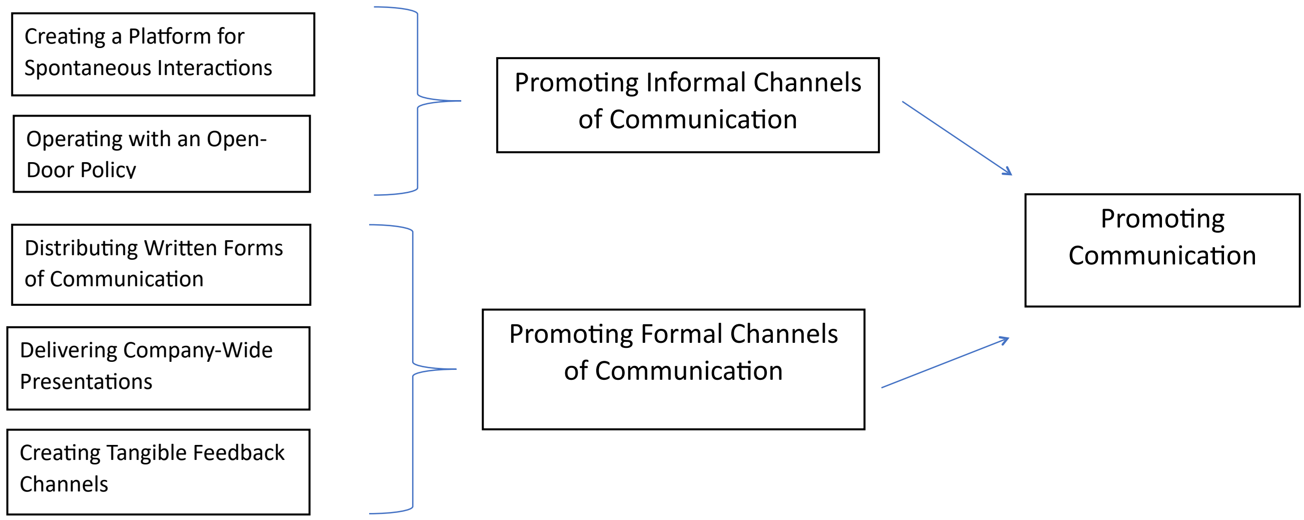


Figure 4: Promoting Communication aggregated dimension with second order themes and first order concepts

The final guideline provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) is that a document should be produced that presents the complicated story of the data in a manner that convinces the audience of a feasible and meritorious account of the analysis journey. In order to satisfy this guideline, the researcher presented evidence in the form of quotations and extracts from interviews to support the development of the codes, themes and aggregated dimensions; these were further supplemented by the use of observations, field notes, organisational documents, and additional data that enhanced the analytical narrative that makes positive contributions to the literary discussions within the fields of servant leadership and CSR respectively.

This section has comprehensively outlined the journey of thematic analysis that was undertaken as the primary data analysis technique adopted throughout this research. The analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, drawing upon Mergenthaler and Stinson's (1992) 7 principles for transcriptions. Adhering to these principles ensured that a coherent, logical process of analysis was engaged in, thus enhancing the robustness of the findings.

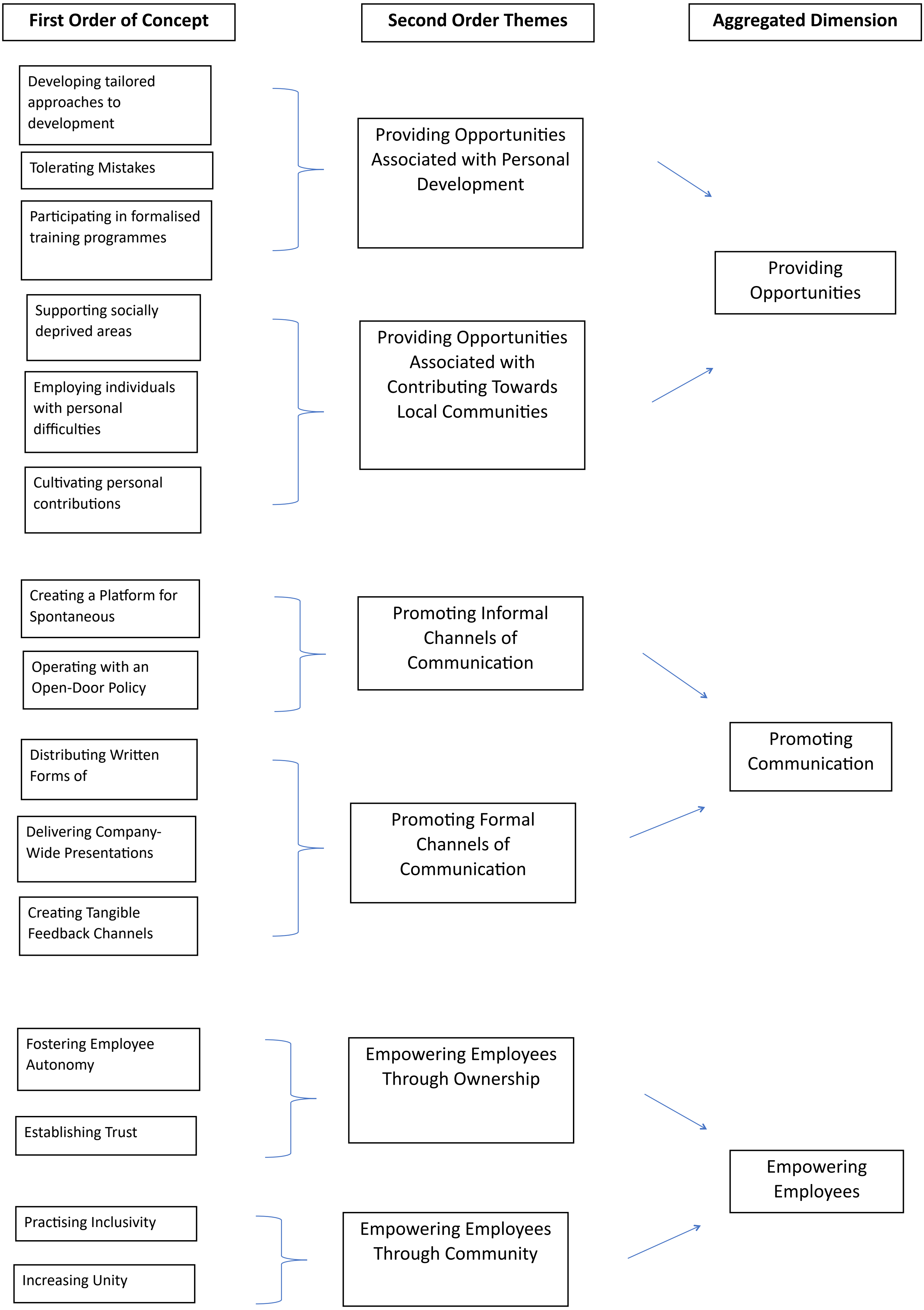


Figure 5: Thesis Data Structure

3.2.4.1. Crystallisation of Findings

Although the thematic analysis conducted on interview data explained in the previous section formed the primary data analysis method, this was supplemented through the process of crystallisation simultaneously. Thematic analysis extended beyond the interviews solely as it was also conducted on the field notes collected by the researcher. With no definitive practice with regard the analysis of field notes beyond the guiding principles associated with ethnographic and phenomenological approaches (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018), the field notes taken in this research were used to augment potential themes identified during the analysis of interview data, as the field notes provided rich contextual insights recorded at the time of data collection.

Document analysis was also conducted, primarily on organisational documents collected, on the understanding that it requires data to be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Bowen, 2009). Bowen (2009) confirms that documentary evidence can provide information and insights into the contextual background and makeup of research subjects and grounds and are thus well-placed to corroborate findings. Bowen (2009) further states that documents can be used to inform the necessities of potential other data collection methods, such as phenomena to focus on during observations. Merriam (1988) has also claimed that documents remain stable, they are not altered by the researcher's presence and are therefore a trusted and verified source. Within sociological studies in particular, the use of documents to provide a more holistic understanding of findings is frequent (Angrosino and Mays De Perez, 2000). Documentary analysis was therefore performed on newsletters, photographs, and posters collected within the course of this research.

The researcher followed O'Leary's (2014) precautions with regard two major potential issues associated with document analysis, namely the potential for bias both in terms of authorship of documents and researcher bias, and considerations relating to whether the document has been solicited, edited, and/or anonymised, condensed as the latent content. With respect to the former, the researcher continued to liaise with colleagues to negate the potential for researcher bias to arise as well as adopted a number of different data collection methods to increase the potential for an accurate interpretation to be drawn and thus a valid conclusion to be presented. Documents were analysed on the understanding that they were authored by employees of the organisations and they were therefore likely to be positive in nature, but asking follow-up questions in the interviews enabled contextualisation of the documents again in the interest of holistically understanding the situation rather than relying on individual pieces of information. This therefore also negated the potential for latent information to be misguiding. Photographs were also introduced into the findings in Braun and Clarke's (2006) sixth stage guideline in order to corroborate the findings derived from the thematic analysis and crystallisation process.

As the researcher utilised observations relating to signs and posters within participating organisations in the crystallisation process, semiotic analysis was also conducted to supplement the findings of the document analysis. Within the Saussurean tradition of semiotics,

> "the task of the semiotician is to look beyond the specific texts or practices to the systems of functional distinctions operating within them. The primary goal is to establish the underlying conventions, identifying significant differences and oppositions… the investigation of such practices involves trying to make explicit what is usually only implicit" (Chandler, 2017: 180).

Signs and posters can be placed somewhere for numerous reasons for example, such as to adhere to legal requirements in the case of health and safety or traffic signs, or to assist people such as in the case of directions. During the data collection phase of the present research, the researcher observed that signs and posters were strategically located within the organisational premises to convey messages and expectations beyond legal requirements, in the interest of establishing an organisational culture. Whereas the documentary analysis performed in the present research concentrated on crystallising the findings identified during the process of thematic coding by comparing the themes and dimensions present within the documents, semiotic analysis enabled the researcher to interpret implicit understandings derived from the "ideological functions of the signs" (Chandler, 2017); that is to say the motivations for the signs being designed and placed where they were. The use of semiotic analysis within servant leadership studies is sporadic at best; only Eicher-Catt's (2005) feminist interpretation of servant leadership and Han's (2010) semiotic cluster analysis explicitly state the use of semiotic analysis in their respective projects concerning servant leadership, rendering it feasible to consider that the approach can provide unique insights into the construct.

3.3. Ethical Considerations

Ethical implications can broadly be categorised in two main ways: protecting the interests of the research subject, and the protection of the integrity of the research community (Bell and Bryman, 2007). This research was conducted in accordance with Lancaster University's Research Ethics Code of Practice. Participants were provided with an information sheet (Appendix 2) and signed consent forms (Appendix 3) prior to participation in the research and were made aware of their rights as a participant (i.e. removal of consent prior to an agreed date). To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no ethical problems arose throughout the duration of this research.

The interviews were primarily conducted on organisational premises or via telephone, but one was also conducted at Lancaster University. Interviews were subsequently transcribed by the researcher and redacted accordingly so that no personal information remained. Adopting a candid approach to observations ensured that organisational members were aware of the purpose of the researcher's presence at the organisational premises and although participation was entirely voluntary, participants were afforded the opportunity to withdraw from the research within two weeks of their individual participation; none did so.

3.4. Summary

This chapter has described the choice of methodology in support of satisfying the research aim. Data collection methods have been presented and critically analysed in order to select the most appropriate techniques given the aim of the research ultimately deciding that semi-structured interviews would form the primary data collection method supported by observations, field notes, organisational documents and photographs. Data was analysed using a combination of thematic, semiotic and document analysis techniques respectively. Demographic data has been presented as to the composition of the interview participants and the organisations in which the data was collected. The chapter also presents the ethical considerations relating to the research, and the associated documentation supporting them. Chapter 4 will now present the findings and discussion of the first aggregated dimension discerned within this research, that of *Providing Opportunities*.

Chapter 4: Providing Opportunities

The first aggregated dimension that was identified that assisted in the development of understanding into the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested in an organisation's CSR-related activities was that of providing opportunities. The aggregated dimension consists of two second order themes, providing opportunities associated with personal development and providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities, each of which consists of three first order concepts. Section 4.1. will outline, evidence and relate the second order theme of providing opportunities associated with personal development and its first order concepts to current literature, before Section 4.1. will follow the same structure with regards to providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities and its respective first order concepts. Figure 6 offers a visual representation of the data structure relating to the aggregated dimension of providing opportunities.

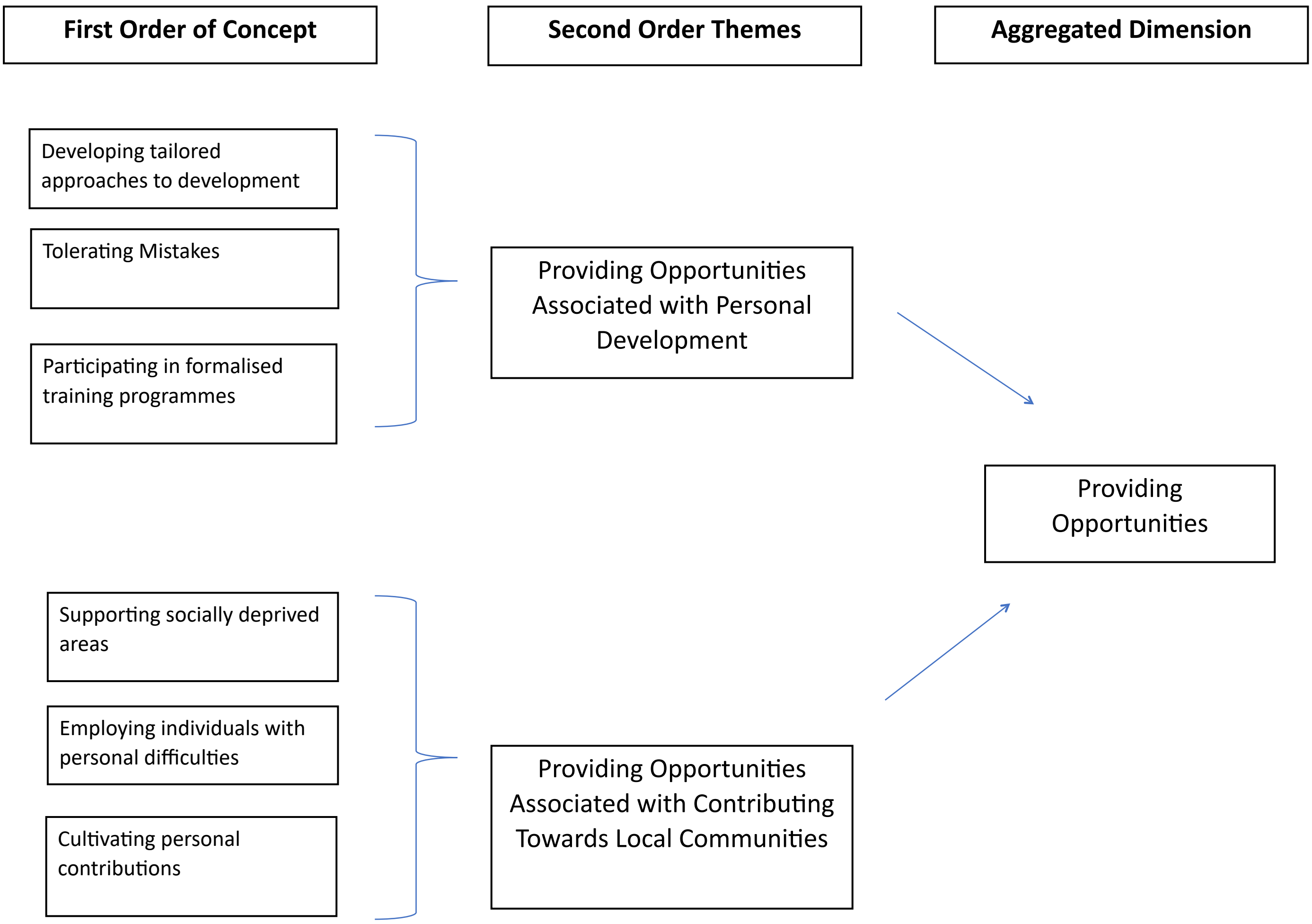


Figure 6: Providing Opportunities' Data Structure

4.1. Providing Opportunities Associated with Personal Development

The findings of this research suggest that there were three important characteristics associated with leaders' behaviours that enabled them to provide opportunities for their employees to experience personal development; they were that leaders attempt to develop an understanding into the individual needs of their employees so as to establish tailored approaches, leaders tolerate mistakes and understand their necessity for employees to develop, and leaders provide encouragement for employees to participate in formalised training programmes. Leaders focusing on the growth and personal development of individuals has not only formed a central component to servant leadership theory to date (Greenleaf, 1970; Van Dierendonck, 2011), but it has also been argued to be one of the differentiating factors between servant leadership and other approaches (Parolini et al, 2009). Despite the focus on personal development to date, the findings of this research contribute towards understanding in this area by suggesting potential ways in which leaders contribute towards the manifestation of employees' personal development, thus negating the prescriptive nature of current trends in the literature by providing descriptive nuances based on empirical evidence. Sections 4.1.1 through 4.1.3 will now present the findings of each of the three first order concepts relating to providing opportunities associated with personal development and relate these findings to the literature.

4.1.1. Developing Tailored Approaches to Development

Leaders recognising the important role that employees play in driving organisations forward has resulted in leaders considering the personal development needs of individual employees (Beausaert et al, 2011). The introduction and formalisation of tools such as personal development plans and personal portfolios in the context of personal development have been linked to increased employee motivation (Eisele et al, 2013) and the importance of dialogue between leaders and employees (Mittendorff et al, 2008). Developing tailored approaches to developmental needs of individual employees was identified as important for establishing development pathways in which individual employees could prosper. A senior manager representing Manufacturing Org for example, noted:

> *"We obviously get opportunities that they're propositioned us with but also they will ask us if there is anything we want to do or if we're happy; if we're not happy, where would we want to be?... In the kitchen there is a picture of a bus on the wall and it's about getting the right seat on the bus… it's just about finding where people belong in the company" (03-SM-MO)*.

Here, the senior manager recognises that individuals possess different strengths and weakness but that ultimately, there is a position and role for all people within the organisation. The senior manager appears to understand the need to find *"where people belong in the company"* so that both the individual and the organisation can prosper. Interestingly, the metaphor of the bus (see Image 1) apparent within Manufacturing Org appears to incorporate aspects at both individual and organisational levels and provides the leader with a tool to illustrate their perspective on this dichotomy. At the individual level, employees are encouraged to find *"the right seat"*, a personal journey for individuals which will encompass challenges and rewards that can only be completed by individual employees; the organisation can assist the individuals by offering training programmes and practising flexibility, but the journey must ultimately be pursued and completed by individuals. Employees appeared to be aware of the need to find *"the right seat"* and how the organisation was able to facilitate this; one senior manager for example, stated:

> *"Basically, I worked in sales, was sales for me? Maybe not. I love this job, I loved sales, but this job is much more suited to me. So, it's just about finding where people belong in the company really" (03-SM-MO).*

Image 1 Manufacturing Org's 'The Winning Cup' bus

This example illustrates how individuals that possess an innate desire to develop at the personal level are able to experience different aspects of the organisation until they find the role that they are most suited towards, opportunities being granted by the organisation as well as individuals having the opportunity to express avenues they would like to explore. This supports the notion that the leaders of Manufacturing Org recognise the importance of acknowledging differences between individuals and the potential necessity for individuals to experience different challenges before finding the role that is most suited to them. Utilising organisational practices originating out of the Managing Director's convictions towards providing opportunities for personal development, individual employees can tailor their personal journey until they realise what Greenleaf (1998) termed the realisation of each person's abilities. Having *The Winning Cup* bus painted on the wall in the kitchen of the organisational premises serves to remind employees to constantly strive to develop and undertake new challenges and training to develop and find where they belong. This example therefore appears to provide an empirical insight into how the nature of servant leadership can facilitate personal development in employees.

In addition to supporting the personal development of individual employees, the bus metaphor also features aspects of perceived and actual organisational outcomes. The destination written on the front of the bus, *"Global Success"*, explicitly states that the ultimate objective for the organisation is to strive for expansion and development so as to experience international growth, an organisational aspect to the metaphor existing independent to the individual opportunities mentioned previously. Through this metaphor therefore, we observe the recognition of Manufacturing Org's leaders that by focusing on, assisting and facilitating individual's personal development, the organisation will ultimately succeed and achieve "*Global Success"*. Awareness of this mindset appeared to permeate throughout all levels of the organisational hierarchy so that employees were aware of developmental opportunities available to them and potential benefits of this:

> *"[The organisation] is very keen on focusing on you and how they can develop you which is obviously only going to help the company grow as well" (03-SM-MO).*

This examples appears to strongly resonate with the foundational principle that "at the core of servant leadership is the leader's belief in the intrinsic value of each individual" (Van Dierendonck, 2011: 1246), a principle that differentiates servant leadership from a large proportion of other approaches to leadership. This belief results in a primary focus on individuals' personal growth and development (Russell and Stone, 2002; Harvey, 2001) which is in contrast to other leadership approaches, including transformational leadership, which promote follower growth in the interest of achieving organisational objectives (Burns, 1998; Yukl, 1998). When taking into consideration metaphors such as *The Winning Cup* bus above and the focusing of the organisation on each individual, these examples together illustrate how the process of servant leadership facilitates individuals' growth. It is also recognised that through achieving personal development at the individual level, the organisation also experiences positive growth, thereby satisfying the needs of multiple stakeholders simultaneously.

4.1.2. Tolerating Mistakes

A further aspect of opportunities associated with personal development identified in this research was that leaders appeared to understand the necessity for employees to make mistakes in the interest of facilitating their personal development. Individual employees were encouraged to embrace new challenges where they were trusted and supported to practice creativity and ingenuity to develop new skills in the interest of both personal and organisational enhancement; mistakes and errors were therefore anticipated and pardoned, and a collegial approach to resolving mistakes was often adopted. A Managing Director of Manufacturing Org for example identified potential in one employee, encouraged their adoption of a new role, and subsequently oversaw their flourishing:

> *"When I was responsible for accounts I took a girl on… she didn't know anything about accounts, so we were starting from scratch with her; she now basically runs the company financially… she emails me all the time but with my guidance and support and help, she is in a really good position" (16-MD-MO)*.

Of interest in this example is the clear identification on behalf of the leader that their employees will make mistakes along their developmental journey, but this is acknowledged and accepted. The participant understands that mistakes are going to happen and therefore offers *"guidance and support and help"* to overcome them; this resonates with several aspects of servant leadership theory such as providing direction (Van Dierendonck, 2011) and helping subordinates grow and succeed (Liden et al, 2008). As a result of the leader's actions and the commitment of the employee towards their own development, they have reached *"a really good position"* from both a personal and organisational perspective respectively. The notion of understanding that honest mistakes are a feature of organisational life was noted by employees throughout both Manufacturing and Construction Orgs' organisational hierarchies, yet there was an emphasis on how the mistakes could result in positive outcomes:

> *"We make mistakes like people do and you just learn from those mistakes and get on" (10-SM-MO)*.
>
> *"If you make an honest mistake, it is an honest mistake isn't it?... they say, "we'll try and work it out, thanks for letting me know" (12-EM-CO)*.

These examples suggest that mistakes are tolerated but there is a focus on honesty and collaboratively working towards a resolution. Utterances such as *"we make mistakes like people do"* and *"if you make an honest mistake, it is an honest mistake isn't it?"* appear to suggest a culture of openness and honesty where employees are expected to use the mistakes as a learning experience and therefore develop their skill set. Importantly however, this is not an isolated journey for the employees as leaders recognise a process must occur whereby they must provide support and assistance in sourcing a solution, as utterances such as *"we'll try and work it out"* suggest. The influence of the Managing Directors can be observed here; it is they who have initiated the process of tolerating mistakes which has been embraced by senior leaders that employees are subsequently benefitting from in their personal development.

This tolerance towards mistakes appears to be reflective of a current trend in literature associated with organisational culture in both large and small organisations. Many leading TNCs such as IBM and Accenture have promoted "strategically intelligent mistakes within a clearly understood governance framework" (Alon et al, 2018), recognising that mistakes form an integral feature of the innovation process. As such, an organisational culture is sought whereby creativity and intuition are promoted and supported. The leader's impact on influencing organisational culture is well-established (Warrick, 2017), yet there has been limited exploration of the need for leaders tolerating employee mistakes within servant leadership debates.

Coetzer et al (2017) cite Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) in claiming that forgiving others for their mistakes is encompassed within the characteristic of compassion prevalent within servant leadership theory but in his synthesis of the literature, Van Dierendonck (2011) conceptualises compassion as an element of interpersonal acceptance and not a feature in its own right; this lack of insight and subsuming under alternative concepts potentially trivialises the importance of tolerating mistakes. Eva et al (2019) limit their discussions of accepting mistakes to considerations of previous measurement tools of servant leadership, in particular Van Dierendonck and Nuijten's (2011) Servant Leadership Survey, and Van Dierendonck et al's (2014) behavioural descriptors of what constitutes a servant leader. Despite acknowledging just these two aspects of servant leadership theory, Eva et al (2019) include the notion of mistakes in their leader actions that could spur more experimental research into servant leadership theory.

The findings of the present research contribute towards these discussions by illustrating how leaders actively encourage employees to embrace new challenges and in doing so, negate potential fears of mistakes as mistakes are anticipated and collaboratively resolved. Appearing to tolerate mistakes also resonates with the characteristic of stewardship prevalent within servant leadership theory. Stewardship enables leaders to "stimulate others to act in the common interest" (Van Dierendonck, 2011, 1234) by setting the right example and taking responsibility for the larger institution. The leaders take responsibility for the wellbeing of the organisation (Beck, 2014) which thus enables employees to experience new opportunities in the interest of personal development. A fundamental component to learning and development is widely acknowledged to be that ability to make mistakes and learn from these in a guided fashion (Ericsson, 2006; Kolodner, 1983); this suggests that servant leadership is well-positioned in terms of facilitating the development of individual employees.

The notion of tolerating mistakes may also provide insights into the manifestation of power within the enactment of servant leadership, through the notion of stewardship. In this setting, the hierarchical leader maintains control over the wider organisation while simultaneously facilitating employee development at an individual level. Drawing upon Ryoma's (2020) ice hockey example, the coach guides the overall game plan and direction of the team (an organisation's strategy) but affords the freedom and empowerment of individual players to execute the game plan as they see fit in the heat of the game; the coach (leader) becomes relatively powerless once the match has started and the individual players (employees) embrace additional power. This translates to the notion of tolerating mistakes in an organisation whereby hierarchical leaders maintain overall strategy for the organisation whilst empowering individual employees to enact said strategy, tolerating mistakes and using them as learning experiences. At different stages therefore, individual agents adopt and/or relinquish power as necessary.

4.1.3. <u>Participation in Formalised Training Programmes</u>

Participation in formalised training programmes has long been established as an important aspect of organisations (Burke, 1995), be it to fulfil industry regulation such as health and safety considerations (Biggins et al, 2013) or for employees to develop new skills. Servant leadership theory prioritises individual development over organisational development (Russell and Stone, 2002), a feature which was manifested in the present research through participation in formalised training programmes designed to focus on individuals' needs first and foremost, as opposed to organisational needs. One senior manager representing Manufacturing Org for example, discussed the promotion and advocation of participating in training events and the subsequent effect this then has on individual employees within their organisation:

> *"Our Managing Director has had quite a good relationship with [name of local training company] in the past and [local college], so a lot of the time they will approach us and say "oh we've got this, would you be interested?" So, I think [Managing Director] has definitely developed a culture where people are keen to learn, people enjoy learning, and they're definitely given the time to go away and do it" (08-SM-MO).*

This example illustrates the value that the leaders within Manufacturing Org place on arranging formalised training programmes for their employees; employees are provided with the opportunity for *"time to go away and do it"* and thus fulfil an ambition of being *"keen to learn"*, an ambition premised upon one's own personal development. The focus on the needs of the individual employee are reflected in the core principles of servant leadership, such as Parolini et al's (2009) suggestion that the focus of the servant leader is on the growth and development of the individual follower first and foremost, so training must satisfy the requirements of the employee. One potential catalyst for the orientation towards training within the organisation could be the influence of the Managing Directors and their personal beliefs. One of Manufacturing Org's Managing Directors for example declared,

> *"As far as HR and training are concerned, I am very proactive, I have an education background; I always thought that training should be at the top of the agenda, not at the bottom. I am a Chair of Governors in the local secondary school, Vice-Chair at a primary school, and I still work at Lancaster University and in the local colleges" (16-MD-MO).*

From the participant's previous experiences and voluntary positions outlined here, an authentic commitment towards training and development can be inferred. This is supplemented by the organisational library (Image 2) affording the opportunity for employees to loan books across a variety of topics, free of charge. Some of the titles of the books that employees can take for example include "*Troubleshooting, Maintaining and Repairing PCs", "The Lean Strategy",* and "*The Innovation Secrets of Steve Jobs"* which demonstrates the varied nature of development available to employees, beyond their day-to-day operations facilitating more holistic personal development. This advocation for training enables employees to utilise their organisation's time and resources to participate in developmental opportunities which ultimately appear to benefit both individual employees and the organisation as a whole. This resonates with Spears' (2004) core characteristic of servant leadership, namely a commitment to the development of people. Based on the premise that each individual consists of intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers, Spears (2004: 9) noted the “tremendous responsibility to do everything possible to nurture the growth of employees”, responsibilities clearly identifiable in the intentions of these Managing Directors.

Image 2: Manufacturing Org’s Employee Library

The extent to which leaders value training and providing opportunities associated with personal development also extended beyond existing employees to the recruitment process of potential employees. Opportunities were identified where the organisation could expand creating an employment opportunity for an apprentice to develop:

> *“Training covers a multitude of things: it could be on site training, it could be external training, it could be anything, online training. I do a lot of online training myself. So, we have to look at the best method that suits that person of how they are trained. So, for example, [Employee M] who is a printer, he’s now finishing his 2nd year so 3 years ago, possibly 4 years ago, I wanted to take on an apprentice printer but in order for me to do that I had to find a college or a training provider that could do that. And the nearest one, it took me a year to find this by the way, was [College MC - approximately 50 miles away]. So, I had contact with hundreds by the way, [College MC], contacted them, they said they would provide the apprentice, they would do it, and the result is that [Employee M] has now almost finished his 2nd year here. And I’m very proud of that” (16-MD-MO).*

In this example, the Managing Director had a specific business desire that they required satisfying, to recruit and train an apprentice printer; however, the need was not immediate and they were therefore willing to spend time searching for an apprentice who they could develop and nurture, rather than hire an experienced printer for example. Utterances such as *“it took me a year to find by the way”* suggest finding the correct candidate was difficult and arduous, but they successfully achieved their aim which has resulted in employee personal development and growth. The Managing Director also notes their personal pride at the development of the individual which suggests the manifestation of stewardship within the Managing Director, drawing upon elements such as developing the apprentice providing meaning within a larger organisational and social picture for the Managing Director's efforts (de Sousa and Van Dierendonck, 2014). Similarly, Hospitality Org appeared to possess the desire to recruit individuals who had a focus on personal development and ambition in their career plans:

> *"On all my job adverts or anything like that, that's one of my main selling points: the supervisor or management team opportunities are there for the right candidates, because that's what we want" (17-SM-HO)*.

Here, the senior manager discusses how opportunities for progression and development form an integral aspect of their job adverts; they recognise that one of the differentiating factors between Hospitality Org and their competitors is the opportunity for personal development *"for the right candidate",* it is therefore a unique selling point to potential employees. The notion of providing opportunities for individuals to develop and ascend the hierarchical ladder was recognised by one young employee who identified it as the motivating factor for joining the organisation:

> *"I'm sort of looking forward to doing it* [management-level training] *because it looks like it is a structured thing and first role is to show you how to work the till and once you've done that a couple of times we'll go down to the safe and have a look at the safe and once you've got that sort of locked down we'll move onto this, and I can sort of see it happening with things that I'm doing as well… I can sort of see the circle that they're taking, the trail that I'm going on which sort of gives me confidence in that this company will be good to work for" (18-EM-HO)*.

This example also appears to illuminate the satisfaction that participation in formalised training programmes brings to employees. Outlining a set training plan provides an objective for the employee to work towards, an end goal to strive for which they *"look forward to doing"*. As such, the employee has *"confidence"* that the organisation will *"be good to work for"* as employees can follow a *"structured thing"* in order to realise personal development. These examples therefore illustrate how these leaders focus on the personal development of their employees and have initiated structures and plans (such as the books in Image 2 and the structured development pathway described in the latter example) for the employees to experience this development, as well as how this is achieved by establishing and striving for shared goals.

The development of shared visions within servant leadership theory remains largely theoretical and lacks empirical justifications; this has resulted in the aforementioned lack of conceptual clarity and multitude of measurement techniques (MacKensie, 2003). The creation of shared visions is an omnipresent feature of servant leadership theory, Russell and Stone (2002) for example suggesting that Greenleaf (1977) encapsulated the quality in characteristics that facilitate foresight and conceptualisation. Covey (1996) similarly recognises the leader's influence on establishing an organisation's strategic vision, but notes servant leadership's focus on the other as opposed to organisational objectives differentiates it from other approaches enabling servant leaders to maintain organisational integrity while encouraging "learning and adaptation" (Rowsell and Berry, 1993: 22).

The conceptual nature of establishing shared visions has developed and is now encompassed in Van Dierendonck's (2011) characteristic of providing direction. Providing direction is manifested in the first order concept of participating in formalised training programmes as the leader develops an understanding into the individual requirements of each employee and encourages their participation in such programmes by drawing upon the "good relationship" *(08-SM-MO)* that senior stakeholders have with local training establishments, as well as facilitating structures such as book loaning for employees to develop skills in areas of interest to them. The leaders and their employees therefore work together to establish programmes that will mutually benefit the individual and the organisation

It was also identified that in addition to the focus being on the needs of individual employees in terms of training and development, employees were encouraged to engage in peer-to-peer training and participate in group learning exercises, thus developing communities of learners. The development of communities of learners was built upon the foundations of leaders and senior figures understanding the needs of individual employees and adapting training opportunities accordingly. Peer-to-peer training was targeted towards those individuals who would relish the opportunity to train as a group as opposed to training in isolation. One Manufacturing Org employee for example, discussed the open invitations that were issued throughout the organisation to engage in training opportunities:

> *"[My manager] sat with me when I first started and there's areas that were mentioned that I wanted brushing up on, so she'll say, "if any of you girls want to sit in on this, I'm going to have an hour with X" and it's just like a brief run down" (06-EM-MO)*.

Developing informal, ad-hoc training opportunities such as these appeared to encourage individuals to engage and interact with one another as well as assist each other to develop on a personal level. The less-formalised structure enabled employees to *"brush up on"* areas that they personally felt weaker on and thus employees were able to develop self-confidence. The same employee noted that the opportunity to ask for assistance or more training *"is always there"* as the leaders of the organisation recognise that when their employees become more skilled and confident, *"they feel the love" (05-MD-MO)* with one another and begin to understand that *"invariably we are miles ahead of everyone else… what we do here is miles better" (05-MDMO)*. Through training opportunities therefore, employees appear to create better relationships with fellow employees, better relations towards the organisation as a whole, and enables the organisation itself to develop a competitive advantage.

Providing opportunities for personal development through communities of learners also featured prominently within Construction Org. One experienced employee for example who had not ascended the organisational hierarchy but had remained *"on the tools"*, described their desire to pass on their knowledge and expertise to younger generations through informal, on-the-job training delivered by experienced colleagues to new starters:

> *"You've got young lads and there should be a tradesman with that young person, perhaps doing the work four days a week and let the young lad have total responsibility the fifth day and watch and if they are going wrong, that type of thing. Like a little gang of two, a partnership or something… let the apprentice do the work for the Friday and then be the labourer or the operative and let them learn by watching and then Friday, "that's your day, I'll watch if you're doing anything wrong and point it out to you… on site is the best training and the best experience you can receive" (13-EM-CO)*.

Utterances such as *"like a little gang of two, a partnership"* suggest the experienced members of Construction Org understand that the best ways in which to train and develop as an apprentice in the sector that the organisation operates in is through *"on site"* training, by working closely with an experienced member of the established team. Creating a partnership of this nature also provides the opportunity for both parties to experience personal development, the junior colleague in terms of learning the role and skills necessary to complete the task and the senior colleague in terms of adopting an informal leadership role and thus developing their qualities in terms of leadership and its associated factors.

These findings also provide insights into the manifestation of servant leadership's cyclical nature. Having experienced servant leadership first-hand in the process of their own training, experienced employees reported recognising the importance of recreating the dynamic, inferences made based upon utterances such as "[it] *is the best training and the best experience you can receive" (13-EM-CO)*. Although servant leadership's cyclical nature has been conceptually negated thus far (Northouse, 2016), these insights support the notions of reciprocity and leaders acting as role models suggested by Liden et al (2014) and Van Dierendonck (2011). This example provides insights into the manifestation of the conceptual notion that servant leadership will produce ripple effects throughout those that experience it (Greenleaf, 1970), thus supporting the notion of the cyclical nature. The intrinsic value of stakeholders and their competing priorities is interesting here. From a shareholder perspective, it can be argued that task completion would take priority as the faster a task can be completed, the more tasks the organisation can complete, and so the greater financial results for shareholders. However, recognition of the importance of employee personal development reduces the importance granted to the shareholders in favour of employee development; senior colleagues are focused on developing the skills of the junior employees in the interest of their development which establishes foundations for the future to the detriment of immediate financial gain. It is interesting that the senior employees embrace the responsibility to train their junior colleagues, recognising the methods and processes that have previously resulted in positive outcomes.

This section has presented the three distinct entities that were identified as assisting leaders in their efforts to provide opportunities to their employees associated with personal development, namely creating tailored approaches based on understanding the personal needs of employees, the recognition of the necessity for mistakes to be made along the developmental cycle, and the creation of formalised training programmes that often led to peer-learning and communities of learners. These first order concepts provide insights into the nature of leader-employee relationships identified in the present research, such as senior leaders' intentions to enhance individual employees' personal development by providing tailored and formal approaches to engage in training opportunities and accepting the necessity for employees to make and learn from mistakes. This subsequently provides insights into conceptually negated aspects of servant leadership theory to date, such as the manifestation of stewardship and the cyclical nature of servant leadership. Section 4.2. will now proceed by looking at how servant leadership contributed to providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities.

4.2. Providing Opportunities Associated with Contributing Towards Local Communities

In addition to providing opportunities associated with personal development, the findings of this research also suggest that there were three important characteristics associated with leaders' behaviours that enabled them to provide opportunities for their employees associated with contributing towards local communities. These are that leaders focused on supporting socially deprived areas that their organisations operate in, that attempts are made to actively employ individuals who have previously or continue to experience personal difficulties, and that personal contributions are cultivated by individuals within the respective organisations based on knowledge of their local communities. In this instance, local communities are understood to be the areas in which the respective organisations conduct operations, perform duties, and generally conduct their day-to-day business, an understanding derived from insights provided by participants. Sections 4.2.1 through 4.2.3 will now present the findings of each of the three first order concepts relating to providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities and relate these findings to the literature.

4.2.1. Supporting Socially Deprived Areas

It was identified that leaders could facilitate employees' positive contributions towards local communities by supporting socially deprived areas through their own behaviours. What constitutes a socially deprived area can be rendered subjective and dependent upon one's personal beliefs, yet the researcher did not restrict the meaning of CSR within the research design and participants were invited to discuss what they perceived to be actions relating to CSR, of which supporting socially deprived areas was one. In the interest of garnering consistency, the researcher took the constituting variables of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (IoD) when considering what constitutes social deprivation. The components to the IoD are income deprivation; employment deprivation; education, skills, and employment deprivation; health deprivation and disability; crime; barriers to housing and services; and, living environment deprivation. These variables appear to resonate strongly with Greenleaf's (1970: 15) best-test of servant leadership in terms of addressing the "least privileged in society". These indicators are also consistent with the theoretical understandings of CSR that have developed in accordance with Carroll's (1991) portrayal of CSR; they therefore appear feasible conditions from which to understand social deprivation. Despite the researcher's understanding of these variables, participants were not guided to discuss these aspects and were instead at liberty to explore their own interpretations of CSR. As such, when explaining their use of the term socially deprived areas, one Managing Director for example suggested that *"operatives with no qualifications" (01-MD-CO)* can be deemed as heralding from socially deprived areas, as a lack of opportunities can be considered a constituting factor of social deprivation for said Managing Director. As a result, the Managing Director devised ways to provide opportunities to contribute to what they perceived as socially deprived areas:

> *"We generally take from the more deprived areas. Most of our employees initially come from socially deprived areas. We then see this as our engagement as we provide opportunities for them" (01-MD-CO).*

In this example, the Managing Director has identified what they perceive to be social deprivation in the area that their organisation operates and has initiated a recruitment system designed to address the needs of the local community, thus positively contributing towards the community and the individuals in it. Through their organisation, the Managing Director is able to provide *"extensive"* training opportunities for new (and existing) employees as well as opportunities to develop long-term careers. The primary opportunity available to individual employees of this nature therefore is contracted and full-time employment which provides a solid foundation from which to begin one's development both in terms of career and personal life. This can be considered a direct action to combat social deprivation on behalf of the Managing Director as one of the constituting factors of social deprivation according to the IoD is employment deprivation; the Managing Director's attempts to *"take from the more deprived areas… as we provide opportunities for them" (01-MD-CO)* is directly related to the lack of opportunities employment deprivation refers to.

The Managing Director's recognition for the social deprivation in their local communities is supported by the UK Government's publication of the most socially deprived areas of the UK. Construction Org primarily operates within the jurisdiction of the Local Authority with the third highest number of locally deprived areas nationally (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2020). The Managing Director therefore recognises the social needs of the area and adopts structures to positively contribute towards them. The appreciation of efforts akin to this were also noted by an employee of Manufacturing Org who stated,

> *"They* [the organisation] *provide people with their day-to-day tasks which a lot people sort of need" (04-EM-MO)*.

Of particular significance here are the utterances made by the employee in relation to people needing day-to-day tasks. During an informal conversation between this employee and the interviewer over lunch, the participant discussed their life prior to being employed by Manufacturing Org. The employee discussed how they were living off the benefits system and *"wasting their days"* drinking alcohol in front of the television. This lifestyle was leading to personal problems for the individual both financially and in terms of the relationship with their partner, and they were therefore highly appreciative of Manufacturing Org for affording them the opportunity to obtain employment and grant them *"their day-to-day"* tasks; Appendix 6 is of a page from the field notes the researcher collected while at the organisational premises. This field note serves as an accurate reminder of the exchanges that were held beyond the formal interview and provide additional insights into the *"day-to-day"* tasks required by the participant. There appears to be strong resonance within these examples to the secondary aspect of Greenleaf's initial test of servant leadership as a concept, specifically, "what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?" (Greenleaf, 1970: 15).

The Managing Directors in these instances have identified what they perceive to be some of the least privileged members of society and have utilised their prominence within said communities to benefit those in need, thus satisfying Greenleaf's best test. In addition to providing empirical support for an aspect of Greenleaf's initial conceptualisation that has thus far been somewhat neglected, this example also provides an insight into how servant leadership may influence an organisation's approach to CSR. The Managing Director perceives their actions as *"engagement"* with their local community, but it is interesting to relate these actions to Carroll's (1991) Pyramid Model of CSR. Identifying socially deprived areas and taking actions to reduce these using the resources and position of the organisation appear to go beyond the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with CSR and enter the philanthropic realm. Defined as the aspects of businesses that embrace "voluntary or discretionary activities" (Carroll, 2016: 4), the behaviours in the present example appear to strongly resonate with this definition; there are no expectations to provide opportunities for the least privileged members of society yet the Managing Directors have taken responsibility to do so, potentially informed by their nature reflecting the attributes of servant leadership. This finding also appears to provide empirical support to Christensen et al's (2014: 173) postulation that the servant leader's focus on disenfranchised people not only differentiates it from all other leadership approaches, but is also "likely to add explanatory power to the search for antecedents to CSR".

The process of servant leadership also appeared to support socially deprived areas by empowering employees to engage in CSR-related activities that focused upon those suffering from social deprivation, with the leaders' beliefs permeating through their respective organisations. One youthful employee of Manufacturing Org for example, recalled attending college previously but disliking the experience due to the theoretical nature of the learning; they therefore sought opportunities to develop on a personal level in the practical world, an opportunity made available to them by Manufacturing Org:

> *"I was at college last year and I didn't really like it and I wanted to get out working and I just want to tell people that it's not all about because you're not in a classroom, you're still learning" (09-EM-MO).*

The opportunity to continue learning in the practical realm was made available to this young individual and they have subsequently experienced a period of rapid personal development, developing important skills courtesy of Manufacturing Org such as obtaining a driving license and beginning to relish opportunities for public speaking when they would have previously shied away. The employee openly recalled the episodes that led to the enhancement of their public speaking ability specifically, where their leader instilled enough confidence in the employee to attend a local high school and speak to students about their experiences:

> *"I wasn't really sure because I'm not that confident at public speaking, but I've definitely improved, and I like it a lot" (09-EM-MO).*

The development of these personal skills can be attributed to the leaders of Manufacturing Org providing opportunities for an individual heralding from a socially deprived area. The leader has recognised and understood the needs of individual people and therefore established organisational practices that enable and enhance opportunities for individuals within their organisation to develop, both on a personal level as well as to positively contribute towards their local communities. Recognising the benefits that they have experienced from a personal perspective as a result of seizing the opportunities provided by Manufacturing Org, the young employee now possesses the desire to inform others within their local community of similar opportunities. The opportunity for the young employees' personal development can be attributed to the servant leaders' intention to develop individuals in the interest of themselves first and foremost (Laub, 1999), developing a relationship whereby the leader understands the developmental needs of the individual.

Similarly, this example illustrates how the characteristic of interpersonal acceptance prevalent within servant leadership theory can become manifested through providing opportunities for employees to support socially deprived areas. As defined by Van Dierendonck (2011: 1234), interpersonal acceptance contributes to the creation of "an atmosphere of trust where people feel accepted… and know that they will not be rejected". In this example, the leader recognises the lack of confidence possessed by the young employee and therefore utilises CSR as a mechanism through which to develop this skill, without fear of rejection or repercussion. The employee was therefore able to develop on a personal level, in terms of a heightened sense of confidence and ability in public speaking, as well as seizing the opportunity to positively contribute towards their local community. The cyclical nature of servant leadership similarly appears present here; the leader initiated a movement to employ an individual heralding from a socially deprived area and, as a result of the recognition of the benefits that this has drawn for them on an individual basis, subsequently possesses a desire to return to their community and raise awareness of opportunities for others.

Facilitating individual employees' ability to contribute towards their local communities also serves to demonstrate how the Managing Directors of these organisations exhibit care for their communities, a foundational principle inherent within servant leadership theory. There are large amounts of theorizing about the need for and impact of servant leadership with respect to building communities (Laub, 1999; Reinke, 2004; Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015); Barbuto and Wheeler (2006: 316) for example, suggesting that the development of communities is to "give back and leave things better than found". One way in which this manifests itself in the findings of this research is through supporting socially deprived areas, developing individuals heralding from these areas, and providing opportunities for future generations to benefit from these enhancements.

Liden et al. (2008: 162) suggest that "the theme of serving others before oneself extends from the workplace to home and community" which builds upon Greenleaf's (1977) inclusion of the impact on external communities in his initial outlining of servant leadership. Liden et al. (2008: 175) conducted confirmatory factor analysis to suggest that "leaders may inspire followers to take an active role in serving the community in which the organisation is embedded", yet knowledge relating to how this inspiration manifests itself remains limited. Drawing upon the notion of philanthropic responsibilities within Carroll's (1991) Pyramid Model of CSR provides insights here; the processes implemented within servant leadership incorporate philanthropic acts such as contributing to the least privileged in society by providing them with opportunities to experience personal development and subsequently contribute to others within the socially deprived areas to complete a cyclical process.

4.2.2. Employing Individuals with Personal Difficulties

In addition to supporting individuals emanating from socially deprived areas, Managing Directors also appeared to attempt to provide opportunities for people who had previously or were currently experiencing difficulties in their lives, providing flexible opportunities that satisfied the requirements of each situation. One of Manufacturing Org's Managing Director's for example, stated that:

> *"We have helped a lot of people in our business currently who have been through some really hard financial times and the company has helped them out, but you wouldn't know that unless you sat down and talked to them. " (16-MD-MO)*.

The Managing Director here appears to be demonstrating their altruistic nature whereby they have assisted and supported one of their employees, in this case financially, yet have done so without the desire for reciprocation or adulation; the leader has performed an act merely as a result of their concern for others and has utilised their privileged position within society (i.e. as a Managing Director of a successful organisation) to do so. This was also apparent within Construction Org:

> *"Unfortunately, my dad passed away 2 years ago so I was having quite a lot of stress at home prior to this actually happening and my manager called me into the office and we'd go through things and [they'd] ask me how I am? How things were going? And I do know that [they] would do that with all the staff that we have" (26-SM-CO).*

The selfless concern for the well-being of others exhibited in these examples resonates with the notion of altruism within servant leadership theory. Altruism not only distinguishes servant leadership from other approaches (Dingman and Stone, 2007) by increasing follower satisfaction with leaders (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006), but also reminds us of Greenleaf's (1970: 15) initial introduction to the construct, that it "begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*". These examples also provide insights into how the need to serve facilitates the manifestation of altruism. The desire to treat individuals respectfully (Whetstone, 2002), recognising the different types of love required by individual followers at any given moment and in particular when experiencing personal difficulties, resonates with the notion of prosocial action towards others (Singh and Krishnan, 2008), in that the needs of others are placed above and beyond those of the leader. In these examples, the leader acts empathetically towards their employees, offering the necessary love in the given context. This therefore illustrates how altruism can become manifested within the process of servant leadership, specifically with regards to leaders understanding the different needs and desires of individual employees.

Employees were similarly supportive of intentions to employ individuals who were experiencing difficult personal lives or had experienced personal difficulties previously. One senior manager representing Hospitality Org for example, recalled employing such individuals as well as potential motivations for doing so:

> *"We've certainly employed people who have had difficulties in their lives and made a conscious attempt to do that; sometimes where people need a new start for whatever reason, [Managing Director] has gone to a lot of trouble to do that… I think we are an organisation that is made up of decent people and therefore we want to do the right thing by people" (24-SM-HO)*.

It is important to note that the employee explicitly identifies the Managing Director as being the reason behind providing opportunities to such individuals, a clear demonstration and appreciation that the values of the senior leader permeate through the organisation and are at least partially responsible for establishing the organisation's culture; this is in accordance with previous research that suggests the importance of leadership in establishing an organisational culture (Warrick, 2017). With reference to the difficulties experienced by individuals, utterances such as *"whatever reason"* illustrate that there is not one specific social issue that the organisation seeks to assist; rather, the organisation recognises individuality and it is the focus on support and assistance that is important grounded in the recognition of the intrinsic value of individuals (Greenleaf, 1973; Spears, 2004). This belief in prioritising individuals appears to resonate strongly with the core principles of servant leadership theory, particularly the service-oriented mindset (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Liden et al, 2008; Eva et al, 2019). Drawing upon philanthropic responsibilities associated with CSR and its altruistic affiliations which differentiates philanthropic responsibilities from all other business activities (Christensen et al, 2014), within the specific context of employing individuals experiencing personal difficulties, resonates with the manifestation of the internal moral compass associated with servant leadership (Dodd et al, 2018). Utterances such as *"we want to do the right thing"* demonstrate the inherent intention to act according to a preconceived moral and altruistic code which includes positively contributing towards wider society. This therefore demonstrates how the process of servant leadership can positively contribute at both the individual level in terms of employing and maintaining in employment those that may otherwise find it difficult to hold a regular position as well as towards wider communities in terms of *"doing the right thing*" beyond the interests of the organisation.

Employing individuals experiencing difficulties in their lives occasionally resulted in conflict and problems related to the individuals' difficulties. One such example was provided by an employee within Construction Org who discussed their personal difficulties and the subsequent behaviours of their leaders:

> *"I have problems at home, my wife isn't too well… with my situation, a lot of them [senior managers] know it, so they do know about my personal situation. Sometimes I let it get on top me and I will say "I'm not coming in tomorrow, I've had enough" and they'll let me; I don't get paid obviously but it's one of those where it's better than phoning in sick but they know my problems and it's not a problem, and they are usually all right and they can work around it so I can't fault them on that" (12-EM-CO)*.

This example highlights the nature of the leader-employee relationship that has developed to the extent that the problems being encountered in the personal life of the individual are now recognised, understood, and *"worked around"* by the leaders; although there may be detrimental impacts upon the organisation in terms of resource and planning for example, these do not cascade towards the individual. In order for the leaders to understand the position of their employee, they have had to demonstrate empathy towards the individual, understanding their character and recognising that at times, they will *"let it get on top"* of them and as such, provide opportunities for them to operate in unconventional manners and adopt a flexible working strategy. The demonstration of empathy in this example appears to be an almost exact manifestation of Van Dierendonck's (2011: 1234) description of interpersonal acceptance:

> "Interpersonal acceptance includes the perspective-taking element of empathy that focuses on being able to cognitively adopt the psychological perspectives of other people and experience feelings of warmth, compassion, and forgiveness in terms of concern for others even when confronted with offences, arguments, and mistakes."

In addition to manifesting how the trait of interpersonal acceptance manifests itself in the context of CSR, demonstrating empathy, developing an understanding relationship with employees, and behaving in accordance with individual needs, appears to enable leaders to make positive contributions towards their local communities by employing individuals that other organisation may find difficult to employ, thus contributing towards reduced unemployment in the local area. This again therefore supports Christensen et al's (2014) postulation that the foundations of servant leadership support the enactment of CSR activities across organisations.

The notion of flexibility within working patterns was also identified across other participating organisations in this research, founded upon the personal beliefs of the respective organisation's Managing Directors. In the interest of providing employment opportunities for their local communities as a way to address the social issue of unemployment, the organisation's leaders appeared to maintain exceptionally high employment rates which required concerted efforts to maintain the workforce in the face of adversity. The high-retention rates were remarked upon by employees throughout the respective organisational hierarchies:

> *"I know they pride themselves on keeping the workforce in work, I know they do that" (13-EM-CO).*
>
> *"They're willing to give people that opportunity… they will send you on courses… hardly anybody ever leaves here, we don't get anybody who starts for a week or two weeks and then goes; I don't think I've ever seen that" (20-EM-CO)*.
>
> *"I don't lose many staff, so I don't annoy them; our retention is exceptionally high" (22-MD-HO).*
>
> *"When we've been quiet, usually at Christmas times, we've provided labour and materials to do the local hospital. We built a garden there, I was involved in doing that, just to keep the men busy. Rather than lay them off they've had them do community work which is a good thing" (14-EM-CO)*.

Utterances such as *"they pride themselves on keeping the workforce in work"* are evidenced and supported by colleagues' comments such as *"they're willing to give people that opportunity"* to try new things and develop. In addition to the internal focus on maintaining employment, these examples also illustrate the senior leaderships' intentions to contribute towards local communities, utilising quiet periods in work to do so. Carroll's (1991) philanthropic responsibilities dimension of CSR relates to acts of goodwill that promote human welfare; not only do the leader's actions of maintaining the workforce in the above examples demonstrate a concern for employees, but the nature of the acts that the leader instigates to maintain the workforce certainly appears to reflect their tendency to engage in philanthropic acts. This is an important synergy of the fields of servant leadership and CSR as it illustrates how through the responsibilities associated with CSR, servant leaders are able to facilitate the engagement of their employees in acts of CSR, namely by providing them with the opportunity to personally engage in acts as opposed to being made redundant.

Employing individuals who have or are experiencing personal difficulties in their lives therefore appears to present challenges to the respective organisations as well as an opportunity to contribute towards their local communities. The organisations that participated in this research often operated in socially deprived areas which enabled leaders to contribute towards their local communities by providing employment for the unemployed in those areas. Despite the potential difficulties that may arise as a result of employing individuals experiencing problems in their personal lives such as those expressed above, the leaders of the organisations unanimously *"pride themselves on keeping the workforce in work"* as a result of the commitment to *"giving people that opportunity"*. This would appear to support Van Dierendonck's (2011) interpersonal acceptance characteristic of servant leadership, where the position of others is understood and accepted; this facilitates the development of positive relationships between leaders and employees so that flexible working strategies can be devised that attend to the needs of individual employees. Through the behaviours of the leaders therefore, organisations are able to overcome potentially difficult situations. This flexibility in relation to its employees enables the leaders, through their influence over organisational processes, to make a positive contribution towards both individuals and their local communities.

4.2.3. Cultivating Personal Contributions

The third element of providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities identified in this research was that CSR-related activities conducted using organisational resources and equipment often entailed a personal element; that is to say that the activities were often pursued after individuals within the respective organisations had taken steps to understand the needs of local communities or that there were personal connections from employees with stakeholders in those communities; this therefore provides insights into the nature of existing relationships within the process of servant leadership in relation to CSR-related activities. Cultivating personal contributions often resulted in acts directed towards specific individuals or small groups, thereby generating the greatest impact possible:

> *"We do sort of smaller, unnoticeable things; we sponsor a number of local teams, kids' football, there's one I coach and they bought us a kit so there's little things like that… We get a pot of money and the people in the group are adamant: let's find places to spend this money because we don't want it sat there so we try and get rid of every penny whether it's something like this or just a lump sum donation to a local charity. We try and keep it local because obviously these are the areas that we work in, these are the people that we see" (15-SM-CO).*

There is a considerable amount of CSR-related literature that considers the impact that SMEs can have on stakeholders within their local vicinity, particularly with regards to the "least privileged in society", which links CSR to servant leadership. Carroll's (1991) Pyramid of CSR for example addresses the need for organisations to consider their philanthropic responsibilities which are those that relate to being a good corporate citizen; Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) and Patterson (2003) have previously alluded to the affiliation between altruistic tendencies in servant leadership theory and philanthropic responsibilities associated with CSR. Furthermore, Jenkins (2004) and Roberts et al (2006) have previously established major differences between larger and smaller organisations with regards to engagement in CSR-related activities, such as that SMEs often do not consider their actions as CSR at all whereas larger organisations develop and instigate formalised CSR structures and plans as a result of differing stakeholders; this can potentially be attributed to the differences in practices between larger organisations and SMEs so that SME activities are not merely scaled-down versions of those in larger organisations (Mustafa and Elliott, 2019). Peterson et al (2012) also suggested that an organisation's founders are more inclined to engage in CSR practices than individuals who have been promoted or recruited into senior positions, potentially as a result of Vives' (2006) suggestion that SME owners are more likely to sacrifice financial gains to serve a greater good. The nature of contributions made by the organisations that participated in the present research supports the notion that the nature of contributions made by smaller organisations are likely to be more localised than those of larger organisations. For example, the cultivation of personal contributions to local communities was particularly evident in one example discussed by multiple members of Construction Org, whereby the organisation contributed to enhancing the life of a person with disability within the vicinity of their organisation:

> *"There was a lad I think with disabilities who's garden was a state and he couldn't go out and enjoy his garden so we went in and blitzed the garden for them and I think for us wanting to do it in this group anyway, there are people with problems that we might not be able to have a big impact on but if we can do little things, especially the personal ones we like doing" (15-SM-CO)*.

> *"We've just done a job for a family who [employee] knew. We did their back-garden makeover like one of the TV programmes… we can lay some flags, we can put the machine in to strip and relay the garden and then we turf the garden for them. We had another donation from another landscaper who works for us, they donated the turf and a load of shrubs as well so that was an impact on them" (19-SM-CO)*.

Construction Org identified an opportunity where they could utilise their industry expertise, namely design and construction, to create a garden for an individual with disabilities, and therefore deliver a tailored, high-impact project within their local community. The influence of SMEs within their local communities continues to grow (George et al, 2016) with 72% of people believing that locally-owned businesses are more likely to be involved in enhancing their communities than larger organisations (Cresanti, 2019); given the influence SME owners have with regards increasing engagement of their organisation in CSR-related activities (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012), the internal values and guiding principles of the leader appear to be becoming ever-more important. The present example therefore provides an insight into how the foundational concept of altruism within servant leadership theory (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Parris and Peachey, 2013) can become manifested when considered in relation to CSR. The altruistic desire for the leader to provide resources and materials that can contribute towards increasing the quality of life for a specific member of the local community resonates with the core concepts associated with altruism such as the innate desire to assist and serve others (Eva et al, 2019) and importantly the lack of an expectation for returns (Schwartz et al, 2016). This manifestation of altruistic behaviours is conducted through the lens of philanthropic responsibilities as outlined in Carroll's Pyramid Model of CSR. Carroll (1991) suggested that philanthropic responsibilities are concerned with the promotion of human welfare or goodwill; the donation in the present example of resources, time and labour illustrate how the leader's altruistic tendencies are manifested in the enactment of a philanthropic responsibility associated to a CSR-related activity.

As a result of the size of Construction Org and the dispersed nature of operations, some employees suggested they did not know about all of the organisation's CSR activities; they did however recognise the continued encouragement and opportunities made available to them to engage in CSR:

> *"They might be doing other stuff that I'm unaware of but the activities we generally find out about… there could be [Site B] now and they are helping somebody which I won't know about or they could be on the other side of [Site S] so I don't know exactly but the examples I have given you, [resurfacing the school playground] and [fixing the church roof] what we've done, personally I was on it" (13-EM-CO)*.

This example illustrates how the organisation's commitment to assisting and making positive contributions towards areas of their local communities, driven by the Managing Directors and senior leaders, provides a platform from which individual employees can participate in aspects of CSR. The use of an organisation's time and resources, as well as their expertise and existing relationships within local communities, creates an environment where individuals are able to conduct CSR-related activities that they otherwise would not be able to. This was a consistent theme across all three organisations that participated in this research, as the following example from Hospitality Org demonstrates:

> *"The beer festival that has just been at the Town Hall, that is literally supported completely by [Hospitality Org] so we were the organisers, we were the ones who got it up to the stage now, but we've stepped back and given it to the high table to carry on but we obviously support them with the pumps, the storage, anything! We're behind that" (02-MD-HO)*.

Cultivating personal contributions also appeared to provide a context through which to empower employees. Employees were presented with the opportunity to promote what they perceive to be worthwhile causes that other employees could then also engage in:

> *"[The committee] get together and ask people in the workplace who actually live in the area and if there's say something that they've seen or I don't know, like a workshop at the weekend for kids that's doing really well and they need a bit of cash input to help them out, I think it's just stuff like that really" (11-EM-CO).*

> *"If anyone has got any ideas about what they want for that month for that money, then they'll put the ideas in [to the committee] and if it gets submitted and they agree on it, then it goes to that charity…. They ask every time if anyone has got any ideas for any charitable thing" (21-EM-CO).*

This example illustrates one way in which employees are invited to contribute towards the overall direction of the organisation's CSR endeavours as a result of being invited into the decision-making process. Employees are empowered to contribute towards CSR-related activities through the notion of cultivating personal contributions; formal structures such as the committee are established in the interest of increasing the propensity for personal contributions to be cultivated and actioned. Additionally, individual employees were also empowered to act autonomously in terms of deciding which CSR-related activities to pursue on an ad-hoc basis:

> *"I had a lady ring me up who had a little boy in preschool who needed some cups at Christmas time and they were having a stall to raise money, you know when you're five or six years old? So, I gave them some free cups and she sent me a picture of the kids. What they'd*

done was they'd made them into reindeers and each kid wrote me a personal letter to say thank you" (06-EM-MO).

As well as providing insights into the positive perception of Manufacturing Org within their local communities in terms of being seen as a generous organisation that will engage in charitable donations, these examples also provide insights into the distribution of power within Manufacturing Org. The examples highlight a number of different structures initiated by the Managing Directors across their respective organisations (such as establishing committees and seeking individual employee knowledge and opinions of the local area) that empower employees to positively contribute towards causes they have a personal connection with, utilising the prominent position of the organisations as the foundations from which to enact this empowerment. Contemporary leaders are expected to adopt contradictory positions simultaneously such as being in control but also relinquishing control (Parush and Koivunen, 2014), or leading and serving. These examples illustrate how through the notion of stewardship, that is leaders taking responsibility for the larger organisation while creating opportunities for employees (Beck, 2014), leaders are able to satisfy the requirement to maintain control while simultaneously creating opportunities for employees to contribute, develop personally and become empowered, through the initiation of empowering structures. These findings therefore contribute insights towards how servant leadership can satisfy the need for leaders to lead and serve simultaneously.

The three dimensions identified in this research that were utilised in the process of servant leadership to provide opportunities to employees associated with contributing towards local communities were that they support socially deprived areas in the regions that the organisation operates, they employ individuals who are experiencing personal difficulties in an effort to support them and provide them with the opportunity for a new beginning, and that they cultivate personal contributions by utilising their industry expertise to create meaningful and tailored contributions to local individuals and communities. These three dimensions assist in illustrating how servant leadership can become manifested within an organisation's CSR-related activities. The findings in the present section are to be taken in accordance with the findings presented in Section 4.1 to provide an insight into the dyadic relationship between individual and organisational factors associated with the relationship between servant leadership and CSR when considering the aggregated dimension of providing opportunities.

4.3. Summary

This chapter has presented and explored the two entities that were identified as contributing towards the aggregated dimension of providing opportunities, namely providing opportunities associated with individual employee personal development and providing opportunities associated with contributing towards local communities. These two concepts draw upon internal structures within the organisation, such as establishing formalised training programmes and providing the opportunity of employment to individuals who have previously experienced difficulties within their lives, to present findings that contribute towards the positioning of servant leadership theory within wider theoretical leadership debates. It is argued in the literature that one of the differentiating factors between servant leadership and all other approaches is servant leadership's primary focus on the development of individual followers and organisational objectives as secondary, yet knowledge pertaining to the manifestation of this remains limited (Graham, 1991; Eva et al, 2019). The internal structures presented in the course of this chapter suggest that servant leaders are able to illustrate their focus on the development of individuals as their primary intention which leads to a culture whereby mistakes are tolerated and turned into positive learning opportunities as opposed to negative and punishable. Similarly, findings also illustrate how the process of servant leadership enables individuals to demonstrate care and concern for the least privileged in society, such as through manifesting intentions to support socially deprived areas within the local communities, achieved by engaging in CSR-related activities. These findings support the notion that servant leadership is cyclical in nature as it appeared that once those who had experienced the positive associations of the approach were then likely to recreate the opportunities for others.

Chapter 5: Promoting Communication

The second aggregated dimension to be identified in this research that developed understanding into the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested when considered in relation to an organisation's CSR-related activities, was that leaders promoted the use of a combination of formal and informal communication methods. Two aspects of informal communication channels were identified, they were the creation of a platform through which spontaneous interactions such as *"involuntary meetings"* could occur, and the need to operate with an open-door policy; these first order concepts will be presented with evidence in Section 5.1. Aspects of formal communication identified as appearing to facilitate individual employees' engagement in CSR-related activities were the use of written communication channels such as notice boards and newsletters, the presentation of State of the Nation talks by Managing Directors and senior leaders, and the introduction of tangible feedback channels; these first order concepts will be presented with evidence in Section 5.2. Figure 7 offers a visual representation of the data structure relating to the aggregated dimension of promoting communication.

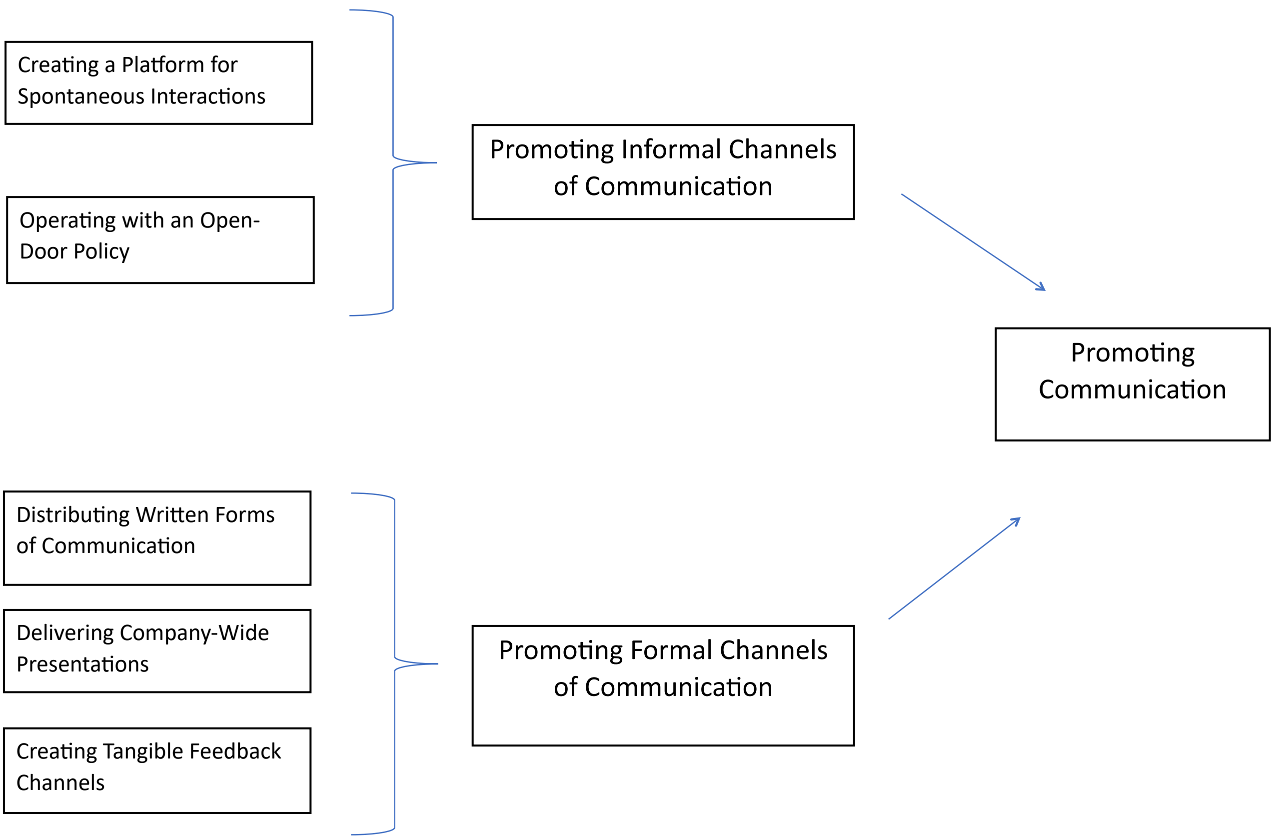


Figure 7: Promoting Communication's Data Structure

5.1. Promoting Informal Channels of Communication

The findings of the present research suggest that there were two primary ways that leaders created platforms within their organisations that increased the propensity of employees to utilise informal channels of communication, which appeared to subsequently increase both knowledge of and participation in CSR-related activities. Informal channels of communication also appeared to assist in the organic development of relationships between colleagues which also appeared to influence levels of engagement in CSR. In the context of this research, informal channels of communication refer to those that occur independently of any formal structure or process implemented in an organisation and tended to be spontaneous in nature. The two first order concepts were that leaders created platforms in which spontaneous interactions could occur, and leaders instilling an open-door policy across their organisations. Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 present the findings of each of these first order concepts, providing examples from the data collected, and relating these findings to the associated literature.

Discussions relating to informal and formal channels of communication are often initiated with a focus on formal channels of communication, followed by considerations relating to informal channels (Kandlousi et al, 2010). However, the majority of communications within organisations between employees are informal in nature (Oskamp and Spacepan, 1990), and the integral nature of informal channels of communication within an organisational setting has long been established (Kraut et al, 2002). Suggested to be the social glue of the workplace (Holmes and Marra, 2004) and the primary channel through which common ground is established between colleagues (Conrad and Poole, 1997), informal communication is widely understood as "voluntary talk that does not have to be solely work or task focused" (Fay, 2011: 213). This definition strongly resonates with the understanding of informal communication that emerged through the course of this research in that both recognise the unplanned nature of interactions as well as the varying topics that can be covered in interactions. Informal communications have been linked to flourishing social interactions that support information acquired through formal communications (Davis and O'Connor, 1977), thus enhancing knowledge sharing across an organisation (Ergen, 2011). Discussions relating to informal communications and social interactions are particularly relevant within the field of servant leadership given the servant leader's disposition to establish an understanding into each individual employee by building a relationship with them (Eva et al, 2019). The focus on social exchange within informal communications as opposed to formal communications therefore suggests that the use of informal communications may be more likely to assist servant leaders to develop such a relationship. As such, Sections 5.1.1 and 5.1.2 will present the findings relating to informal communications before Sections 5.2.1 through 5.2.3 present the findings relating to formal channels of communication.

5.1.1. Creating a Platform for Spontaneous Interactions

Identified as a particularly prominent method through which leaders promoted informal channels of communication in their organisations was the creation of platforms for spontaneous interactions to occur between employees.

> *"We try and get that connectivity, we realise there is a barrier… all the time we are trying to break that barrier down so what can we do to make these people feel closer…? The more time you get everybody together, the better; the more you separate them, the worse" (05-MD-MO)*.

The perception of this Managing Director appears to be that by increasing the time employees spend with one another the closer they will feel, it is therefore the responsibility of the leaders to reduce any barriers causing an obstruction to making *"these people feel closer"*. This belief was explained as being founded upon the Managing Director's personal experiences where *"involuntary meetings"* had facilitated the production and exchange of knowledge between employees in a previous role:

*"There's a smoker's group, because I was a smoker and I noticed this down at my old employers. We were in a sales meeting and we'd been in there for 2 hours, so we took a natural break down to the smoking room but in the smoking room you've got people from all departments in there. So, you get chatting with them and you find out what's going on and you go back up to the sales meeting, "eh boys, you'll never guess what's happening!" Well the sales would go "how the f**k do you know that?!" and so you can see how that stuff work and that's why I'm so keen to make that stuff work" (05-MD-MO)*.

This example provides an insight into how the Managing Director's previous experiences influence their approach to leading their organisation; they are aware that information can permeate organisational silos through informal, unregulated structures during spontaneous interactions between individuals and groups, irrespective of their respective hierarchical status, and therefore seek to implement strategies increasing the likelihood of such interactions. The example also illustrates how individuals can develop relationships with fellow employees beyond their prescribed working roles which results in both stakeholders becoming aware of activities and events that they may otherwise be unaware of; this is a notion that has featured prominently within literature relating to organisational communication to date.

Informal communication channels, such as those present in *"involuntary meetings"* and those with the *"smoker's group"*, help to reduce barriers to knowledge sharing between employees as they expand upon individual employees' social networks within organisations (Riege, 2005). Creating spaces for knowledge-exchange between employees has long been established as an important aspect of organisational research (Nonaka, 1994; Lubit, 2001) as the spaces encourage employees to use the knowledge of others, build an array of contacts, and learn from one another (Preuss and Cordoba-Pachon, 2009); creating a platform through which to increase the propensity of *"involuntary meetings"* appears to resonate strongly with the notion of space discussed here.

With regards to CSR, these spaces have also been seen as enablers "small group exchanges on CSR topics" (Preuss and Cordoba-Pachon, 2009: 522), where the opinions of stakeholders who may not normally be heard are provided with the opportunity to be raised. The notion of including the voices of those who would not normally be heard appears to hold connotations with the foundational principle of servant leadership, namely that there is a focus on the least privileged in society (Greenleaf, 1970). Although comparing the least privileged in society to those who rarely have their voice heard in an organisational context may seem extreme, the basis for Greenleaf's (1970) argument is the same: a semblance of altruistic calling (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) where a positive difference is made in the lives of others by putting the needs of others ahead of one's own self-interest. This can relate to empowering those individuals to contribute and perceive meaning in their lives. These findings therefore illustrate how creating platforms for spontaneous interactions provides a voice for those that may otherwise not have their voices heard, thus propagating the argument that servant leadership enhances the lives of the least privileged, insights garnered through engagement in CSR-related activities.

Further considerations relating to the language used by the Managing Director in their description of the *"smoker's group"* provides additional insights into the nature of the informal communications that they are trying to establish within their organisation. The Managing Director makes reference to *"chatting"* with other smokers as a result of sharing the same space. Chatting suggests colloquial oral communications built upon a foundation of recognition and mutual understanding between familiar individuals and groups (Groysberg and Slind, 2012) and it has been argued that 'chats' form the vast majority of interactions between individuals within organisations (Oskamp and Spacepan, 1990). Chats are particularly prevalent in organisations that operate with a flat organisational structure (Rishipal, 2014), in the interest of increasing approachability (Rishipal, 2014). As well as within the *"smoker's group"*, chatting between hierarchical levels also appeared to feature in the daily lives of employees of Construction Org, as the following example shows:

> *"I think with me, [Managing Director] and [senior manager] on the same floor, we tend to have a bit of a giggle between ourselves and a bit of a chat… so I think we have that relationship because of being on the same floor and I'm sure it is different in everybody's floors; maybe that's one of the reasons why we have such a good relationship" (26-SM-CO)*.

Although no explicit references are made to informal communications in this extract, they are alluded to. Utterances such as *"we tend to have a bit of a giggle"* and *"a bit of a chat"* suggest a more relaxed nature to conversations, potentially light-hearted in tone and on occasions humorous. The senior manager suggests this perceived informal nature of the interactions to be one potential reason for the development of a *"good relationship"* between themselves and the Managing Director, which suggests that leaders engaging in informal communications contributes to the development of positive relationships with employees.

The notion of 'chats' was also present in interviews with Construction Org employees who recalled the positive associations of 'chatting' with colleagues across the organisational hierarchy; interestingly, employees often recalled engaging in 'chats' with senior members of the organisational hierarchy during CSR-related activities, as well as in their day-to-day tasks. One employee for example, discussed completing the Tough Mudder assault course to raise charitable funds alongside colleagues representing all levels of the organisational hierarchy and the impact it had on them as an individual:

> *"You don't expect to do stuff with the Director… having [them] do things like that obstacle course, to have [them] there and you just walk up and [they're] like a friend, that's how he approaches you" (21-EM-CO*).

This example provides an interesting insight into the nature of communication between leaders and employees with regards to two important features; first, that the employee perceived their leader *"like a friend"* as opposed to manager or colleague, and second that the leader appears to seek opportunities to interact with their employees in informal settings where hierarchical positions become somewhat defunct, therefore eradicating hierarchical distinctions. Interacting with colleagues *"like a friend"* suggests the employee is comfortable in the presence of the leader as a result of the informal channels through which communication occurs; this provides a new insight into how informal communication channels such as 'chats' can be used within organisations to facilitate employee engagement in CSR-related activities.

With regards to the former, the informal nature of communications can be initiated by both leaders and employees as a result of the leader's endeavours to create settings whereby employees are comfortable and confident to approach their hierarchical seniors. Personal connections appeared to also develop between leaders and their employees within Hospitality Org, to the extent that employees would ring their leaders outside of contracted hours for the purpose of a social call; one Managing Director for example recalled:

> *"I have a chef in Barrow who will phone me to talk rugby results" (02-MD-HO)*.

This example illustrates the level of informality present within this leader-employee relationship whereby the employee is empowered to initiate interactions with their leaders to discuss matters external to the organisation as the leaders are perceived as friends and not just senior colleagues. Although an example of bottom-up communication, it would appear that this informal relationship is founded upon the behaviours of the leaders who make concerted efforts to interact with their employees in informal settings. One of Hospitality Org's Managing Directors for example, discussed the conscious effort that they make, an effort that the researcher observed when in the field collecting data:

> *"[I] go around and say hello to [employees]. I will make a point of saying hello" (02-MD-HO)*.

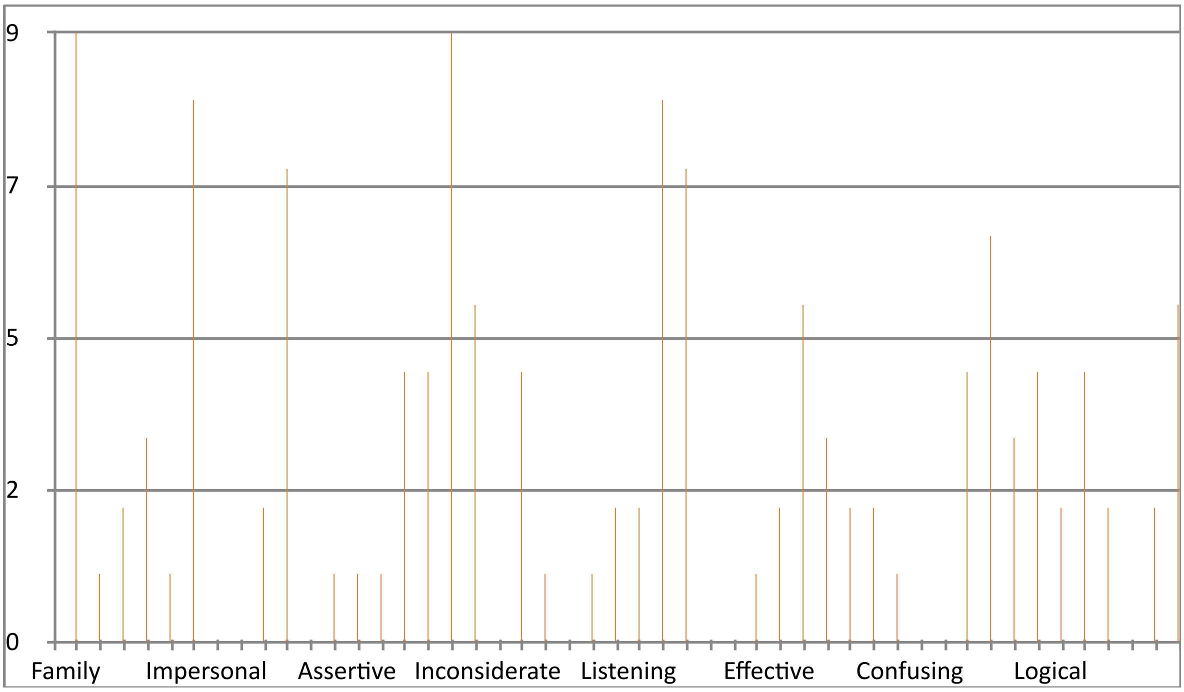
Behaviours and actions such as this enable leaders to diminish the potential for uncomfortable feelings to arise between leaders and employees; the Managing Director explained that something as simple as *"knowing their names" (02-MD-HO)* creates a familiar feel between leaders and employees. Conversely, when individuals do not know the names of others, they *"feel uncomfortable in the situation"* and will *"reverse and avoid the conversation" (02-MD-HO)* which appears to create an uncomfortable environment in which to operate. As with the leaders of Hospitality Org, Construction Org's Managing Director also recognised the importance of creating an environment in which employees feel comfortable and content, the use of informal communications was one approach adopted to achieve such an environment. Understanding their position as role-model for employees, Construction Org's Managing Director practised behaviours to reflect their desire for informal communications to arise organically:

> *"When you've said to other people when you wander around a job, "ah that's really good that" and it's come back to you via another route saying that it really gave them a lift and you're like "why? What did I say?" "Well you said it was really good." "Well it was." "Yeah, but you said it". So, it is the little things like that and the fact that you do get that coming back to you as a positive influence" (01-MD-CO)*.

Here, the Managing Director begins by stating that they *"wander around a job",* insinuating that they are engaged in an informal activity rather than a formalised check or process; this informal practice then acts as the catalyst for informal interactions to ensue between the leader and their employees as the leader has created a platform whereby interactions and communications can occur. The creation of such a platform is present within organisational research in terms of increasing intimacy between leaders and employees (Groysberg and Slind, 2012) which serves to increase bottom-up communication as a result of familiarity between leaders and employees. Leader-employee familiarity based on intimacy has long been linked with high levels of trust within the relationship (Rosh et al, 2012), the high levels of trust exhibited within this example acting as a foundation for spontaneous interactions to occur which facilitates the development of positive interactions between the leader and employee. As a result of the leader stating their honest opinion of their employees in an informal and spontaneous manner, stating that their work was *"really good"*, the employees experienced *"a lift"*, an increase in motivation and satisfaction. The leader appears surprised by their employees' reaction which suggests the leader was acting honestly and authentically as the aim of their communication was not to revoke a response but rather their authentic reaction to what they observed. Receiving feedback from other employees and colleagues as to the reactions illustrates how a leader's informal interactions with employees can influence the nature of communications within an organisation and the subsequent benefits that can be achieved as a result.

Considering all of these examples together elicits interesting insights with regards how servant leadership can overcome the inherent contradictory positions of leading and serving simultaneously, namely through the creation of platforms for spontaneous interactions. Utilising informal channels of communication to create informal structures whereby leaders and employees can interact, such as by engaging in activities external to organisational objectives such as charity initiatives and "wandering" around organisational premises to greet employees and enhance visibility, provides insights into the manifestation of Van Dierendonck's (2011) characteristic of providing direction. Behaviours such as these appear to create positive relationships between leaders and employees where leaders can influence organisational culture by demonstrating expected behaviours and attitudes which has a positive influence on their workforce. The positive outcomes are evident in terms of employees being comfortable and confident to approach hierarchical seniors to communicate further and the positive culture emerging as a result of leader behaviours.

This was further supplemented by an internal survey distributed to Construction Org employees who were asked to describe how they felt about their company (Graph 1). This survey was conducted independent to the present research but was brought to the attention of the researcher during an interview with the Managing Director; no other participants made reference to the survey. The inclusion of descriptions such as 'approachable' (n = 8) scoring second highest and 'impersonal' (n = 0) not receiving any votes supports the notion that informal communication methods assist in the development of creating relationships between leaders and employees whereby employees are comfortable initiating communications with their hierarchical seniors.



Graph 1: Internal Construction Org survey results

5.1.2. Operating with an Open-Door Policy

The notion of operating with an open-door policy appeared to be one approach towards informal communications that leaders initiated within their respective organisations that facilitated interactions between employees throughout their organisational hierarchy. Operating with an open-door policy has frequented organisational literature to date, and it is widely accepted to be understood as supervisors being open to communications with every employee (Heathfield, 2019). This general understanding was exemplified by the Managing Director of Hospitality Org who stated that:

> *"Nobody is not allowed to come and knock on my door or come and grab me, nobody, and everybody does" (22-MD-HO)*.

As well as the Managing Director perceiving that employees utilise the opportunity to interact with their seniors as a result of the open-door policy, operating in such a manner also appeared to contribute towards establishing open cultures within the respective organisations; this in turn appeared to positively influence employees' perception of personal empowerment:

> *"They've [senior leaders] always said they have an open-door policy: if you've got a problem, just go and see them" (12-EM-CO)*.

Senior leaders' efforts to establish a culture based on operating in a manner in which employees can approach their leaders to seek clarifications and raise concerns also afforded the leaders the opportunity to clarify their thought processes, provide more details as to why decisions had been made, or why processes had been introduced. One senior manager within Construction Org for example, explained the organisation's motives for operating with an open-door policy as well as the perceived benefits of doing so:

> *"It is that two-way communication: listening to them, understanding what they say but then actually if things can't be changed, being honest and open and saying "we can't change that because outside of your arena other things influence it", but understand them. And I think hopefully if there are negative things they experience, they may not like it, but they understand why things are done in that way" (25-SM-CO)*.

Of significance in this example is the senior manager's recognition of the necessity for *"two-way communication"* between leaders and employees. As well as affording leaders the opportunity to rationalise and explain their thought processes, operating with an open-door policy also enables the leaders to understand what their employees' value and take this into consideration in the decision-making process. This resonates with the notion of empathetic listening where leaders provide an outlet for employees to provide honest thoughts relating to potentially troubling topics (Billikopf, 2018). The undertones of empathetic listening apparent within operating with an open-door policy are perhaps unsurprising given the inclusion of empathy encompassed in many conceptualisations of servant leadership (Spears, 1995; Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006; Van Dierendonck, 2011). The notion of listening to and understanding employee voice has long been established as beneficial for organisations, for example in terms of providing a competitive advantage (Helms and Haynes, 1992), improving understanding between individuals (Shipley, 2010), improving employee and job satisfaction (Lloyd et al. 2015), increasing the likelihood of employees engaging in OCBs (Lloyd et al. 2015), and increasing employee organisational identification (Reed et al. 2014). Unsurprisingly therefore, the positive perspectives relating to operating with an open-door policy were unanimous among employees:

> *"I've worked with a company before and you always looked at CEOs as if "oh my God, he's the CEO" and you don't want to say anything and you're paranoid about it but he's not one of them, [they're] probably the best person in this company I would say to go and speak to if you have an issue; [they] would be the most understanding" (07-SM-MO)*.

As well as being supportive of the open-door policy, this example appears to suggest that leaders operating in such a way appears to reduce the impact of hierarchical status within organisations as employees appear empowered to initiate communication with senior colleagues. Comparing past experiences such as *""oh my God, [they're] the CEO" and you don't want to say anything and you're paranoid about it"* to the current situation where *"[they're] probably the best person in this company I would say to go and speak to if you have an issue"* illustrates the *"understanding"* nature of the Managing Director, and the subsequent positive influence that they have in being available for their employees.

These examples also offer additional insights into how two aspects of servant leadership theory can become manifested through the lens of informal communication channels. George (2000) suggests that interpersonal acceptance relates to understanding the feelings of others and it is thus akin to Spears' (2004) notion of empathy. Employees suggesting that the Managing Director is the best person to speak to if you have an issue necessitates an ability to understand the position of others; this ability it can be argued, is facilitated by leaders operating with an open-door policy as employees are not paranoid and are comfortable in approaching senior figures. Similarly, operating with an open-door policy enables leaders to provide direction to their employees, providing the opportunity to rationalise and discuss decisions in less-formal environments.

Despite the positive associations of employees possessing the ability to initiate interactions with leaders in a two-way fashion, one senior manager representing Manufacturing Org also stated that there continues to be a responsibility on behalf of the leaders to initiate communication with their employees. This belief appears to be premised upon the leader-employee relationship where leaders develop a relationship where they are able to understand the needs of individual employees and therefore attend to them accordingly:

> *"We had a chat and surprisingly he opened up to me a lot with issues he was having with staff and whatever and I think what I've realised from taking over from [Managing Director] in that role was that there wasn't any support there. As much as you might say "I'm here if you need me" you need to be out there, it's a really difficult balance" (10-SM-MO)*.

This example suggests leaders need to *"balance"* the requirements between stating that they operate with an open-door policy and actively seeking situations in which to physically interact with their employees, be that in a formal or informal context; a balance it can be argued from the findings of this research that is based upon the leader-employee relationship. When the leader and follower mutually understand one another, such as in the example relating to the leader being the most understanding person in the company, operating with an open-door policy appears to be an appropriate way to operate; when there is potential discord between leader and follower, such as in the example relating to striking the balance, the leader must actively seek opportunities to interact with their followers in order to establish understanding and fulfil their leadership responsibilities. As such, leaders are required to establish a number of different structures that increase the propensity for communication with employees that adhere to the needs of individual employees, structures that can be designed base upon knowledge derived out of the leader-employee relationship.

This is further evidenced in an example provided by one of Manufacturing Org's senior managers when they recalled an episode where their Managing Director sought interactions with their employees:

> *"Two of our members of staff were promoted to team leader and [Managing Director] went out into production and patted them on the back said well done and I think that has a big impact because when somebody new comes in and sees the CEO on the shop floor saying "well done guys, you're doing a really good job", I think that's a really big thing" (10-SM-MO)*.

This example provides an excellent insight into the nature of interactions between senior leaders and their employees. Recognising a personal achievement by their employees, the Managing Director took it upon themselves to interact with the employees and congratulate them by holding a physical, informal interaction. This example appears to illustrate that the Managing Director understands the needs of their employees and therefore enacts behaviours that reduce the power distance within the relationship. It also resonates with the notion of humility suggested by Van Dierendonck (2011), which relates to putting the interests of others before one's own self-interests. Humility also incorporates aspects of being able to put one's own accomplishments and talents into perspective, an aspect that appears to be manifested in this example; the leader understands the accomplishments of their employees and is therefore keen to pass on their congratulations. The participant also recognises the impact that these actions can have on an organisation's culture, suggesting it *"has a big impact"* on those both directly involved in the interaction as well as mere observers. It is *"a really big thing"* to see the Managing Director congratulating employees further down the organisational hierarchy and instils a sense of unity throughout the organisation, further illustrating the leader's impact on influencing organisational culture.

The notion of "balancing" informal communication styles between creating platforms for spontaneous interactions, operating with an open-door policy, and leaders initiating informal communication with employees and leaders simultaneously adopting these communication structures, reveals interesting power dynamics within the leader-employee relationship; it appears to resonate with the contradictory expectations of leaders in contemporary society (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014). As organisations continue to operate in an ever-more challenging world, Zhang et al (2015) suggest that leaders must embrace paradoxical stances, such as treating employees uniformly while satisfying their needs for individualism, which will ultimately result in increased employee proficiency, adaptivity and proactivity. The above examples reveal an expectation for leaders to simultaneously operate with an open-door policy and actively seek to initiate communication with employees rather than waiting for employees to approach leaders. This would suggest that leaders must be open to leading (i.e. initiating communications with employees) as well as serving (i.e. being approached by employees through the open-door policy) employees depending on employee preferences and needs. These examples therefore provide insights into how servant leadership is well-positioned to contend with contradictory expectations, based upon the development of personal leader-employee relationships as well as the implementation of a number of structures supporting informal communication channels, such as operating with an open door policy while simultaneously seeking opportunities to interact with employees.

5.2. Establishing Formal Channels of Communication

The important role of formal channels of communication with regards to understanding the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested was identified in this research, primarily as a result of their role in mediating knowledge exchanges across an organisation. Formal channels of communication are a well-established aspect of communication literature; they transmit information, convey messages, and generally inform employees of policies and regulations apparent to the organisation (Johnson et al, 1994). The findings of this research contribute to this body of literature as they provide insights into how formal channels of communication are used within the process of servant leadership to influence the nature of the organisational culture in which servant leadership is being exhibited as well as insights into relationships within servant leadership, in particular the notion of leaders acting as role models for employees. Formal channels of communication also provide insights into the distribution of power within servant leadership as a process when considered in relation to employee empowerment.

It is relatively well-established that formal channels of communication consist of information and messages being passed up and down channels (Anderson and Narus, 1984), often following the formal structure or hierarchy of an organisation (Guffy et al, 2005). Price (1997) offers a clear and succinct definition of formal channels of communication as the degree to which information about a job is transmitted by an organisation to its members and among the members of an organisation (Kandlousi et la, 2010). This is clearly in contrast to informal channels of communication, which focus on spontaneous and unplanned interactions between actors, often encompassing communications not recognised officially by the organisation.

Three prominent aspects of formal communication were identified in this research; they were distributing written forms of communication, delivering company-wide presentations, and creating tangible feedback channels. Each of these three first order concepts will now be presented in Sections 5.2.1 through 5.2.3 and related to existing literature.

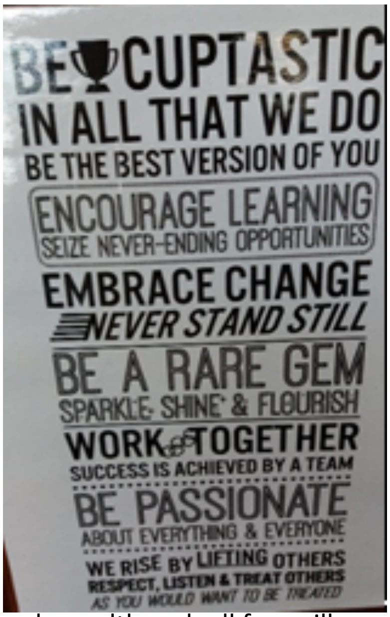
5.2.1. Distributing Written Forms of Communication

Articles concerning written forms of communication are plentiful across business forums and the Internet. Written forms of communication include bulletin boards, newsletters and memos (Underwood et al, 2001). Key associations of written communications include their authoritative nature, the ease of which they can generally be understood, the ease with which they can be widely distributed, and the reduction of risk and distortion when being passed on (Gilsdorf, 1987). Agarwal and Garg (2012) suggest that formal written communications can potentially be more effective than any method of informal communication in the context of conveying reliable information as a result of their authoritative nature. In this research, written communications were identified as an important structure implemented by Managing Directors to communicate with employees, supporting this existing literature. The important role of formal channels of communication with respect to the decision-making process and employee empowerment within the manifestation of servant leadership were also identified.

Posters and other images were strategically located throughout organisational premises serving to remind employees of the organisation's values and expectations, thus influencing organisational culture. Image 3 for example, is a photograph taken in the main entrance to Manufacturing Org and shows the company charter regarding expected behaviours and approaches at work. This form of written communication goes beyond legal obligations imposed upon organisations, such as displaying health and safety or building maintenance regulations, as it reflects the unique principles at the core of the organisation established by the organisation itself. It serves as a constant reminder to employees of their responsibilities with respect to themselves, their colleagues and *"everything and everyone",* including those beyond the organisation. Perhaps more interesting than the location of the poster is the content within it. The poster suggests the organisation advocates a concern for

Image 3: Manufacturing Org Company Charter

individuals both internal and external to the organisation and expects its employees to behave accordingly, thus fulfilling a commitment to social responsibility. This appears to strongly resonate with Carroll's (1991) foundational pillars of CSR, in particular behaving in an ethical and moral manner both within and external to the organisation. It appears to relate to the ethical/moral pillar



as opposed to the legal pillar for example as although all four pillars are connected and work in unison (Carroll, 2016), phrases such as *"be a rare gem"* and *"never stand still"* suggest going beyond behaviours and attitudes that are acceptable, which Carroll (2016) outlined as one of the primary distinctions between legal and ethical behaviours; these phrases therefore refer to expectations as opposed to necessary requirements and are therefore aimed at ethical and not legal responsibilities.

The poster in Image 3 provides an insight into the foundational beliefs of the Managing Director with regards to CSR and the organisational culture emerging thereafter. Phrases such as *"encourage learning", "embrace change",* and *"work together"* reflect the Managing Director's personal commitments to creating an enduring organisation that will *"support communities and families" (10-SM-MO)* beyond the tenure of the current leadership. These examples resonate strongly with some of the more-accepted tenets of servant leadership such as the traits of organisational stewardship, wisdom, and persuasive mapping presented by Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), the traits of conceptualisation, foresight and stewardship presented by Spears (2002), and providing direction, empowering and developing people, and stewardship presented by Van Dierendonck (2011). This example therefore suggests one way through which the Managing Director attempts to influence the thought processes and behaviours of their employees with regards to CSR is through the strategic location of posters; the poster serves as a method through which to remind employees of organisational expectations relating to responsibilities both within and external to the organisation.

The strategic placement of posters was also apparent within Construction Org. Whereas Manufacturing Org operate out of permanent sites, the different sectors the respective organisations operate in appeared to impact the physical location of employees, as one senior manager explained:

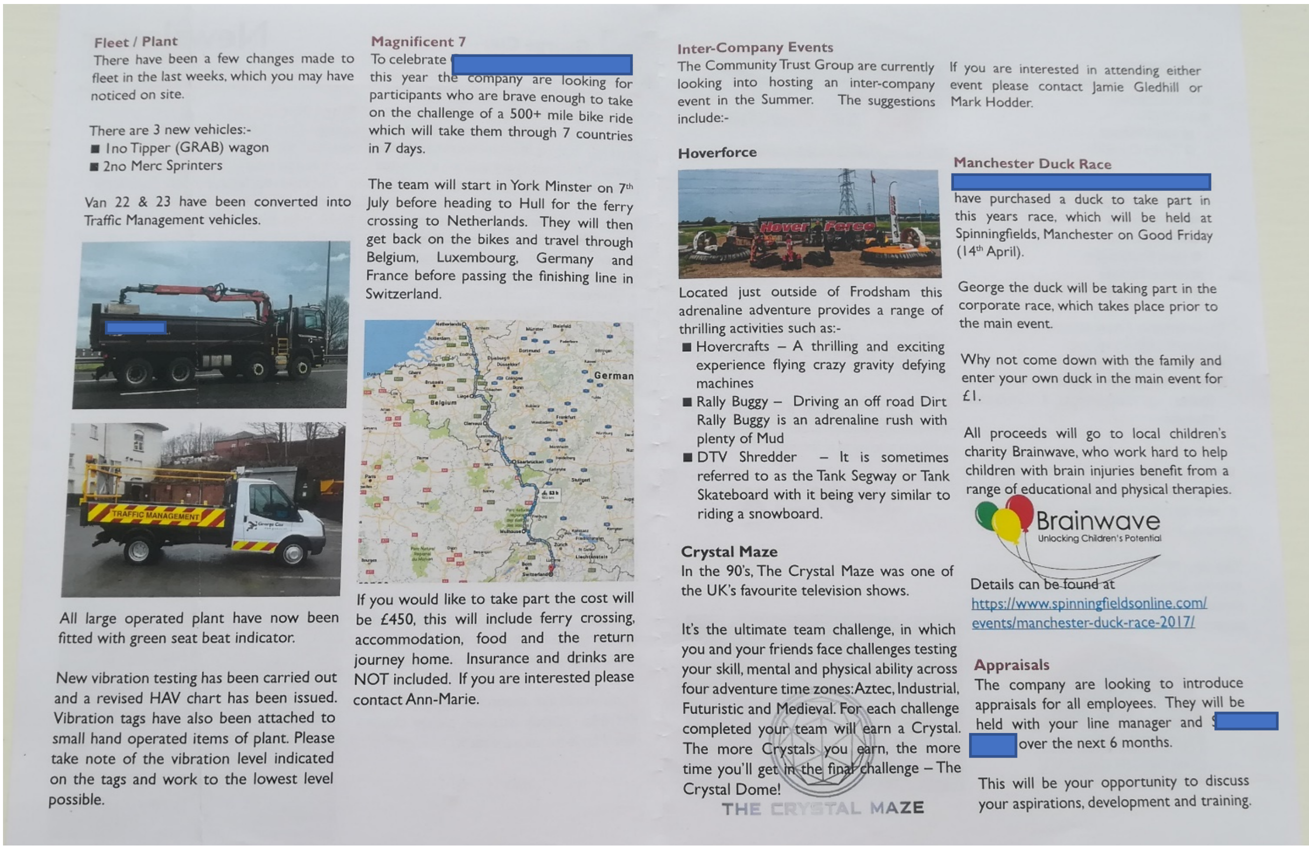
> *"The nature of the business is that a lot of the guys are dispersed" (25-SM-CO)*

As a result of the dispersed workforce, there is a necessity for temporary offices within Construction Org resulting in the requirement for additional efforts to maintain high levels of communication, one of which was through the use of notice boards:

> *"There are certainly efforts to try and keep people engaged in the business, keep notice board information on the site and that is more than just health and safety, that is also a form of communication as well" (25-SM-CO).*

Here, the senior manager recognises that as a result of the dispersed nature of the workforce, it is potentially difficult for employees to interact with one another and therefore utilises notice boards as a communication tool delivering information beyond legal requirements. The notice boards are used as *"a form of communication",* to maintain engagement and continually keep employees informed of the latest news within the organisation and upcoming events and activities. This use of notice boards satisfies Carroll's (1991) legal responsibility of CSR which relates to societies codification of acceptable and unacceptable endeavours. Beyond legal requirements, the effort to maintain up-to-date notice board information can be interpreted as a further method through which leaders attempt to influence the organisational culture of Construction Org. Due to limited opportunities for verbal interactions as a result of the dispersed workforce, formal channels of written communication are suggested as a way of *"keeping people engaged in the business"*. This appears to suggest the desire for an inclusive organisational culture where all employees are encouraged to be involved in the organisation and maintain an interest in ongoing activities. These findings therefore provide insights into how servant leadership can become manifested when observed in relation to CSR-related activities specifically. Written forms of communication assisted the Managing Directors to convey messages beyond legal requirements in the interest of increasing the propensity for employees to perceive an association with the organisation and engage with it.

As well as notice boards, Construction Org also utilised written publications in the form of newsletters to disseminate information throughout their organisation and maintain employee engagement. Through the distribution of organisational newsletters (see Image 4 for an example newsletter), attempts were made to negate potential difficulties arising as a result of a dispersed workforce with regards to employee relations, knowledge sharing, and creating a sense of unity throughout the organisation. Construction Org interviewees were particularly vocal in their



Fleet / Plant

There have been a few changes made to fleet in the last weeks, which you may have noticed on site.

There are 3 new vehicles:-

- 1no Tipper (GRAB) wagon
- 2no Merc Sprinters

Van 22 & 23 have been converted into Traffic Management vehicles.

All large operated plant have now been fitted with green seat beat indicator.

New vibration testing has been carried out and a revised HAV chart has been issued. Vibration tags have also been attached to small hand operated items of plant. Please take note of the vibration level indicated on the tags and work to the lowest level possible.

Magnificent 7

To celebrate [redacted] this year the company are looking for participants who are brave enough to take on the challenge of a 500+ mile bike ride which will take them through 7 countries in 7 days.

The team will start in York Minster on 7th July before heading to Hull for the ferry crossing to Netherlands. They will then get back on the bikes and travel through Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and France before passing the finishing line in Switzerland.

If you would like to take part the cost will be £450, this will include ferry crossing, accommodation, food and the return journey home. Insurance and drinks are NOT included. If you are interested please contact Ann-Marie.

Inter-Company Events

The Community Trust Group are currently looking into hosting an inter-company event in the Summer. The suggestions include:-

Hoverforce

Located just outside of Frodsham this adrenaline adventure provides a range of thrilling activities such as:-

- Hovercrafts – A thrilling and exciting experience flying crazy gravity defying machines
- Rally Buggy – Driving an off road Dirt Rally Buggy is an adrenaline rush with plenty of Mud
- DTV Shredder – It is sometimes referred to as the Tank Segway or Tank Skateboard with it being very similar to riding a snowboard.

Crystal Maze

In the 90's, The Crystal Maze was one of the UK's favourite television shows.

It's the ultimate team challenge, in which you and your friends face challenges testing your skill, mental and physical ability across four adventure time zones: Aztec, Industrial, Futuristic and Medieval. For each challenge completed your team will earn a Crystal. The more Crystals you earn, the more time you'll get in the final challenge – The Crystal Dome!

THE CRYSTAL MAZE

If you are interested in attending either event please contact Jamie Gledhill or Mark Hodder.

Manchester Duck Race

[redacted] have purchased a duck to take part in this years race, which will be held at Spinningfields, Manchester on Good Friday (14th April).

George the duck will be taking part in the corporate race, which takes place prior to the main event.

Why not come down with the family and enter your own duck in the main event for £1.

All proceeds will go to local children's charity Brainwave, who work hard to help children with brain injuries benefit from a range of educational and physical therapies.

Brainwave
Unlocking Children's Potential

Details can be found at https://www.spinningfieldsonline.com/events/manchester-duck-race-2017/

Appraisals

The company are looking to introduce appraisals for all employees. They will be held with your line manager and [redacted] over the next 6 months.

This will be your opportunity to discuss your aspirations, development and training.

Image 4: Construction Org example newsletter

awareness and support for such newsletters, many individuals identifying the newsletters as the primary method of remaining aware of the activities that both the organisation and fellow colleagues are engaged in:

> *"We have a newsletter that we send out and in that there will be various things about the charity committee and what we've been doing and if anybody has got anything they can put it forward" (26-SM-CO)*.
>
> *"I'm not everywhere* [working at every location the company operates] *so they might be doing other stuff that I'm unaware of but the* [CSR] *activities we generally find out about because we get a newsletter, so anyone can volunteer" (13-EM-CO)*.
>
> *"We get the newsletter which tells us what they've done but the community side of it is football kits for small children's football teams, not for major teams, but we're trying different ways and coming up with new ideas* [of engagement]*" (19-SM-CO)*.

Image 4 provides an excellent insight into the nature of the content included in Construction Org's newsletter, symbiotically contributed towards by all members of the organisation alike irrespective of hierarchical status. The newsletter appears to follow a clear and concise structure, which highlights the multi-purpose function of the formal communication channel. It serves to clearly disseminate information to the dispersed workforce, as illustrated by the *"Fleet/Plant"* section on the left-hand side; this supports the established school of thought that suggests formal channels of written communication are authoritative and serve to increase knowledge sharing across a dispersed workforce (Zakaria et al, 2004). Information pertaining to the personal development of individuals can be observed, primarily in the *"Appraisals"* section. Drawing upon this section provides further insights into the manifestation of the intention to enhance each employee within servant leadership as a process by providing a formalised platform through which employees can discuss *"aspirations, development and training"*. There are also clear attempts to increase unity across the organisation, as can be seen by the inclusion of the *"Inter-Company Events"* section. Again, this provides an insight into the manifestation of the notion of building communities within servant leadership theory.

Additionally, the newsletters also provide insights into how the Managing Director of Construction Org attempts to distribute power throughout their organisation, in the context of CSR. This formal channel of communication affords employees opportunities to take control of CSR-related activities, demonstrated by phrases such as *"if anybody has got anything they can put it forward"* to an organisation-wide audience; this is an interesting insight into the notion of employee empowerment, facilitated by a formal communication channel. Employees are empowered to promote social causes they have a personal affiliation towards, which subsequently affects the direction in which the organisation pursues CSR-related activities. By becoming involved in the newsletters therefore, individual employees are able to contribute towards guiding Construction Org's approach to CSR and take an active involvement in CSR activities; the newsletters are a formal structure implemented by the Managing Director not only conveying information to employees, but also empowering them to contribute. This example provides further insights into how servant leaders may be able to lead and serve simultaneously, thus satisfying contemporary society's expectations for leaders to adopt seemingly contradictory positions (Parush and Koivunen, 2014). By implementing a formal communication channel (i.e. newsletters) that promotes employee participation, the Managing Director has created a structure that enables the leader to serve the needs of their employees in terms of discovering which activities would be employees' preferred choice to pursue, while simultaneously leading the organisation in terms of encouraging employee participation to positively contribute towards local communities.

The nature of communication within servant leadership as a process, particularly with respect to employees, has thus far been severely neglected in research; this is despite communication studies featuring prominently within several conceptualisations of servant leadership. Communication rarely features as a characteristic or behaviour in its own right however and is often subsumed under alternative characteristics such as in listening (Spears, 2004), emotional healing (Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006) and communication as an accompanying attribute rather than a core attribute (Russell and Stone, 2002). The findings of the present research suggest that formal communication in the form of strategic placement of images and well-maintained notice boards are used within the servant leadership process as a way to establish an inclusive and engaging organisational culture by ensuring employees are aware of organisational activities and events, even when operating with a dispersed workforce.

5.2.2. Delivering Company-Wide Presentations

Oral communication channels were also identified as an important method of formal communications that provided insights into the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested within an organisation's approach towards CSR. The impacts of informal oral communication have already been presented Section 5.1, yet formal oral communications were also identified as important in this research. Agarwal and Garg (2012) suggest that while oral communication is primarily concerned with spoken verbal communications, visual aids and non-verbal elements can also be utilised to support the conveyance of messages. Oral communications can consist of "speeches, presentations, discussions, and aspects of interpersonal communication" (Agarwal and Garg, 2012: 40). With regards to CSR specifically, oral communication has been shown as important within the operationalising of CSR in SMEs as a result of the less-formalised nature of CSR practices (Vives, 2006). Nielsen and Thomsen (2009) further suggest that the lack of assigned responsibility for CSR-related activities in favour of workforce involvement, renders oral communication more important than documented writings. Like *Distributing Written Forms of Communication*, aspects of formal channels of oral communication were an additional structure utilised within servant leadership as a process that assisted the development of organisational cultures; insights were also derived into the distribution of power within servant leadership as a process through the notion of role modelling.

In the interest of increasing engagement in the organisation and in attempts to ensure employees were fully aware of the organisation's strategy moving forward, the Managing Director of Construction Org explained that they:

> *"I try to do maybe two or three presentations a year to the workforce and this is what I call a 'State of the Nation' talk. 'This is my view of the world', 'these are the jobs that we're trying', 'this is how busy we've been', 'this is how quiet we've been', 'this is what's going to happen in the future', 'these are the changes', 'this is what's going to happen'." (01-MD-CO).*

Across the organisation, there has been a concerted effort to communicate the purpose of the State of the Nation talks so employees throughout the organisational hierarchy recognise the importance of the speeches as well as the fact that the leaders are making a concerted effort to interact with the workforce. The following examples were provided by a senior manager and an employee with no managerial seniority and illustrate the coherent and consistent opinions relating to the talks:

> *"There are quarterly or half yearly meetings from the directors or the Managing Director for all the organisation just to try and give them a heads up" (25-SM-CO).*

> *"Every three months [they'll] do a general meeting and [they] come with pie charts and give us a low down of how the company is doing… it will be levels up, levels down, how much they are earning; so [they] just keep us informed of how the business is running, how it's going, future plans, which is good because the companies I've ever been to I've never seen anything like it! Let alone the director coming out telling us how much they've earnt and all that!" (21-EM-CO)*.

As this example illustrates, the State of the Nation talks are well received by employees irrespective of their personal hierarchical position as they *"give you a bit of confidence" (21-EM-CO)* in the organisation. With regards to the Managing Director's motivations for providing such meetings, they explained:

> *"[They are] more than a communication, it's an opportunity for [employees] to come and ask questions… they feel again engaged and involved" (01-MD-CO)*.

This explanation provides several interesting insights into the Managing Director's perspective relating to their perception of the leader-employee relationship, as well as the culture that the leaders desire within their organisation, both of which contribute towards the distribution of power within Construction Org. In stating that the State of the Nation talks are *"more than a communication, it's an opportunity for [employees] to come and ask questions"*, the Managing Director appears to use the formal talks as a further method to understand the concerns of their employees and provide assurances; this supports the findings presented in Section 5.1.2 where senior leaders noted the importance of "*balancing*" their communication styles in the interest of satisfying the needs of individual employees through a combination of formal and informal structures. This suggests that the leader therefore recognises the paradoxical positions of adhering to employee needs whilst remaining authoritative (Connaughton and Fairhurst, 2014) and has devised the structure of State of the Nation talks as a method to satisfy this contradiction; the leader remains in an authoritative position by overseeing the financial figures and strategy of the organisation for example, but increases the employees' sense of inclusion in this by affording them insights into *"an awful lot of confidential information" (01-MD-CO)*. This is an enlightening finding with regards servant leadership theory specifically as it provides insights into how formal and informal methods of communication can be combined to obtain an understanding into the needs of employees, and thus develop a more personal relationship emanating from the characteristic of stewardship.

Elements of listening that permeate much of the servant leadership literature, for example Spears (2002) and Barbuto and Wheeler (2006: 305), appear to be one of the motives for delivering the State of the Nation talks, such as "the active acceptance of employees' opinions, ideas, and suggestions". Furthermore, Liden et al (2008) conducted multi-level hierarchical linear modelling and found that servant leadership makes a unique contribution beyond transformational leadership and LMX in explaining employees' organisational commitment which builds upon Bass and Avolio's (1994) earlier work suggesting that listening to employees increases follower commitment. The findings of the present research provide empirical support for this in terms of establishing practical examples for how leaders can manifest their desires to listen to their employees through a combination of both formal and informal communication channels.

In addition to providing an insight into how the leader utilises formal communication channels to interact with their employees, the State of the Nation talks also provide an insight into how the senior leaders of Construction Org influence and attempt to direct the nature of their organisational culture, principally by appearing more visible to employees and communicating with them directly. The Managing Director for example, explained how they were aware of the impact of their behaviours and actions on employees and the associated position that was therefore bestowed upon them, sentiments that were echoed by one of Manufacturing Org's Managing Directors:

> *"I've become more of a figurehead as a figure they can see, sort of visible… it is the shadow you project upon your workforce" (01-MD-CO)*.
>
> *"You have to lead them by your own standards of behaviour because in a way they look up to you for guidance, they look up to you for leadership" (16-MD-MO)*.

The Managing Directors' comments here strongly resonate with the notion of role model-like behaviours, embodied within servant leadership theory in the characteristic of stewardship. When "setting the right example, leaders can stimulate others to act in the common interest" and therefore enact stewardship to their employees (Van Dierendonck, 2011: 1234). The importance of setting the right example mentioned here, manifested when acting as a *"figurehead"*, support the arguments of George et al (1999: 545) that "organisational leaders provide the primary impetus in defining, forming and shaping corporate culture". Schein (2004) then developed these arguments and stated that organisational culture arises from the beliefs, values and assumptions of founders; the learning experiences of group members; and beliefs, values and assumptions brought in by new members and leaders to the organisation. As founders of their respective organisations, the Managing Directors' utterances appear to support Schein's arguments as both senior figures were aware of *"the shadow"* that they project upon their workforce.

Insights relating to the distribution of power across the respective organisations can also be garnered from the notion of role modelling. Leaders and employees similarly recognise the position of leaders as role models, as expressed in examples such as leaders discussing *"the shadow that you project upon your workforce" (01-MD-CO)*, and the recognition that employees *"look up to you for guidance, they look up to you for leadership, they look up to you for help and support" (16-MD-MO)*. Existing literature supports the notion that role models are powerful and instrumental to followers (Warrell, 2020), particularly with regards to gender (Bettinger and Long, 2005) such as in the creation of leadership identity (Sealy and Singh, 2008), by establishing ways to behave, representing the possible, and providing inspiration (Morgenroth et al, 2015). This notion also appears to hold true with regards socially responsible actions as leaders influence employees' perceptions regarding initial beliefs and subsequent contributions (Gaechter and Renner, 2018). Considering the differences between Western and non-Western societies, and drawing upon the gendered depiction of leadership role models within Western societies particularly, demonstrates that role modelling is a socio-cultural phenomenon (Sealy and Singh, 2008).

The findings of the present research relating to the State of the Nation talks specifically and role modelling more holistically reflect current trends in leadership studies. As understanding develops beyond heroic leaders, often perceived as white, heterosexual and male, towards more post-heroic perspectives that dismiss the 'think manager, think male' stereotype (Sealy and Singh, 2008), power dynamics within the leader-employee relationship are drawn into question. Attempts by leaders to distribute responsibility throughout their organisations, examples from the present research including by inviting employees into the decision-making process and disseminating confidential information to employees, suggests that leaders recognise the power they possess; this is supported in the identification of leaders as role models as role-modelling is predicated upon the ability for role models to inspire others to achieve desired outcomes (Morgenroth et al, 2015). In their attempts to distribute responsibility throughout their organisations, leaders can be perceived to be behaving in accordance with the principles of post-heroic leadership, namely through a collectivist and relational approach to the decision-making process (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019). However, the critiques of Collinson (2014) and other CLS scholars such as Liu (2019) and Fairhurst (2001) appear to be relevant here: if leaders are seen as role models, omnipotent and in control of when to share knowledge, are the employees ever genuinely empowered as leaders appear to have more knowledge first and also decide which knowledge to cascade down. This would suggest that leaders retain their power and attempts to distribute and share knowledge are misaligned with power. As such, further research is required into the distribution of power within this dichotomy to establish the extent to which employees are empowered in the decision-making process beyond CSR-related activities. The findings of the present research appear to suggest that attempts are made to exhibit leadership processes akin to post-heroic ideals (such as having a relational approach) yet the manifestation of this within the decision-making process may merely serve to propagate existing power structures whereby leaders remain sole decision makers.

Further findings relating to the notion of role model-like behaviours were also identified with regards formal communication channels and organisational culture, an aspect of servant leadership theory that has thus far been neglected. Construction Org's Managing Director explained the necessity of maintaining one's composure when contending with disagreements in the organisation, a behavioural trait a senior manager of Manufacturing Org also used to describe their Managing Director:

> *"We are coming from a testosterone drive, aggressive industry where blokes are blokes basically, it's just aggression… and I did develop the technique of quietening my voice which really, really annoyed people because if they're getting madder and madder and you're getting quieter and quieter, they have to stop shouting because they can't hear you… I'm not sure how much it is a case of they saw 'oh, that works' or whether they saw that as a 'this is how we do things, we are not confrontational, we talk it through'" (01-MD-CO)*.

> *"[Managing Director] being in the business, I don't know what [they] do, but [them] just being there and [they'll] go and talk to everybody and [they] will calm everybody down. [They] will never ever get angry, ever! You will never see [them] angry" (10-SM-MO)*.

These examples appear to illustrate the expectations of behaviour emanating from the role model-like behaviours exhibited from the Managing Directors. Building upon the notion of casting a shadow mentioned previously, Construction Org' Managing Director also recognises that the approach of *"quietening my voice"* has influenced the culture of the organisation in terms of reducing confrontation arising as a result of the testosterone-driven industry towards a more rational approach. Although not as testosterone-driven, this calm approach to business also appears to be replicated across Manufacturing Org. Interestingly, employees were aware of the influence of their senior leaders on both them as individual employees and their influence on the organisation:

> *"[Senior Manager is] actually trying to make you better at your job and help you, trying to make you better as a person… [they] seem to be a good person to learn from" (18-EM-HO)*.

> *"In every case you're going to get people who are sort of negative and they are just negative to be around, just a negative atmosphere, sort of such the life out of you in a small way. With [Managing Director] being the boss and with [them] being the way [they are], and [them] having the personality [they] do and [their] overall behaviour, sort of rubs off onto everybody else… it's just relaxed and creates that sort of environment" (04-EM-MO)*.

These examples provide insights into how the positive actions of the leaders, both in terms of how to perform a task and in possessing a positive attitude, motivates and inspires their employees to replicate such behaviours. The example from Manufacturing Org notes the positive *"environment"* that the leaders are able to create through their actions thus suggesting some mechanisms through which leaders are able to influence their employees as well as their organisational culture. The notion of leader behaviours *"rubbing off"* onto employees was also referenced by an employee of Manufacturing Org in terms of activities related to CSR specifically. When employees observed the positive contributions that their leaders were having on their local communities and the benefits that this has on both the leaders as individuals and to those in the communities affected, the employees appeared to be more likely to engage in such activities for themselves. One employee for example stated:

> *"[The two Managing Directors] are the type of people to engage* [with local communities] *and they are giving people and it's not all about selling stuff. They like to get involved with things and it does rub off on everyone" (06-EM-MO).*

This example provides a clear insight into how leaders can act as role models with regards to encouraging employees to participate in CSR-related activities. Employees observe the positive impacts of their leaders and are therefore motivated to replicate these behaviours as the behaviours *"rub off on everyone"*; this would suggest that the stewardship fundamental characteristic of servant leadership according to Van Dierendonck (2011) can become manifested through the advocation of CSR-related activities. There also appeared to be a reciprocal nature to the socially responsible behaviours of employees towards other employees, as was discussed by one of Manufacturing Org's Managing Directors. The Managing Director explained how some employees had been granted permission to provide expertise to a local charity during regular working hours and the impact these individuals had on other employees upon their return:

> *"Those guys came back and felt really good, they came back and spoke to people in the office who felt good because we* [the company] *are doing stuff" (05-MD-MO).*

Although this example primarily focuses on employee-to-employee exchanges, it is important to note the impact of the leader. The leader has facilitated the engagement in the socially responsible behaviour by granting the employees time away from work to participate in the activities, has influenced the nature of the expertise that the employee possesses that is being used by the charity through the training and development opportunities provided by the organisation, and has created a collaborative culture within the organisation whereby employees openly interact with one another and are therefore able to influence the thought processes amongst each other; this has then facilitated communication between employees with regards to the nature of CSR-related activities within the organisation. As a result of these examples therefore, we can observe unique insights into the notion of philanthropy within Carroll's Pyramid Model of CSR. Carroll (1991) suggests that philanthropic acts are often seen as goodwill gestures as defined by the population that are performed at the discretion of the organisation or its members, and there are therefore no obligations to engage. The focus on the other within servant leadership theory, as is present in the above example, as well as the characteristic of stewardship, are manifested in the enactment of philanthropic acts where no repayments are expected. Within servant leadership theory, the notion of stewardship relates to encouraging others to act towards a common interest, particularly with regards sociable actions (Van Dierendonck, 2011); this is manifested in this example as the leader facilitates engagement in CSR-related activities which is then discussed and supported across the organisation. This therefore provides insights into the manifestation of stewardship within the context of socially responsible actions of employees and CSR.

5.2.3. <u>Tangible Feedback Channels</u>

The third element of establishing formal channels of communication that developed understanding into the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested was the introduction and formalisation of tangible feedback channels. This dimension extends the findings of the previous two sections as it relates to both written and oral communication channels and therefore draws upon aspects of both simultaneously. Feedback channels were identified as organisational practices that provide employees with the opportunity to seek clarifications, promote ideas, and receive feedback within a controlled environment. It is important to note in this portrayal of tangible feedback channels the notion of a controlled environment, arising as a result of the relationship that develops between leaders and employees so that leaders are able to create an environment in which employees are comfortable and confident in. The notion of the controlled environment is also important as it contributes to differentiating between informal communications (such as holding a conversation over the water fountain), and formal communications. Members of Manufacturing Org for example, identified the necessity to provide individual employees with the platform to spend time with their line managers in one-on-one scenarios so that both parties could formally communicate with one another in a controlled setting:

> *"They have that one to one with someone… so you get a chance if you've got an issue to speak to them and I think that time with your manager, that one to one, is really good" (06-EM-MO).*
>
> *"I think it takes time to really understand how to communicate with different people. So, a lot of emails, just quick updates and things like that, "can we set up a meeting?" Meeting-wise we are good, we have KPIs once a month as well which are always really useful" (10-SM-MO).*
>
> *"I think [my line manager] is pretty good like if I need something [they'll] come over and be like "oh yeah this is what you do or whatever", and generally our conversations are about my KPIs at the end of the month… I think it's a working relationship really because I come to work and I think my mindset is "I'm here to work and I'm here to get my job done" whereas in my personal life I don't think they've impacted as much, I wouldn't expect them to, to be honest" (07-SM-MO).*

Arising in these examples is the way that servant leadership as a process facilitates the development of relationships between individual leaders and employees so that leaders are able to adjust the nature of their interactions to meet the needs of individual employees. Leaders appear aware that certain employees are more willing to openly discuss their personal lives than others and as such, leaders recognise and respect this, focusing communication on work-related topics for those that prefer privacy and separation between working life and personal life. This is another example of leaders in contemporary society being expected to adopt contradictory positions simultaneously (Parush and Koivunen, 2014), in this instance understanding employees who maintain separation between personal and work lives and those who blur these distinctions. The examples highlight the numerous methods of communication operating within the respective organisation, designed to present the greatest opportunities for employees to communicate with others in environments where they are comfortable.

Whereas the leaders of Manufacturing Org appeared to utilise meetings as the primary formal communication channel through which to garner the opinions of its employees and provide feedback, Construction Org adopted an alternative method to develop understanding into its employees, particularly with regards to employees' opinions relating to CSR. Construction Org had previously been conducting CSR with no structure or pattern which potentially negated the impact of some actions. One senior manager who had spent much of their career with the organisation noted:

> *"we were doing things [related to CSR] but it was sort of drip-fed and it was an as and when thing, 'oh somebody wants a kit, ok we'll do that, let's put something together', and there was no real structure to it" (15-SM-CO).*

Having identified the *"drip-fed"*, ad-hoc nature of CSR within the organisation, the Managing Director created a more structured approach; they *"initiated"* and subsequently *"pulled away from" (01-MD-*

CO) a committee designed solely for the purpose of CSR-related activities, including to enhance the propensity for employees to provide feedback and input into CSR activities. The senior manager explained that,

> *"now there is a set committee, set fund, set meeting dates, and there's an approval by the committee" (15-SM-CO)*.

The formalisation of the committee provides several interesting insights regarding leadership within Construction Org, derived in the context of CSR. First, the senior manager references the need for *"approval"* from the committee for an activity to be pursued and it is interesting to observe both where the decision-making process for the committee has its foundations, and how decisions are eventually made. The committee *"is run by the employees, [and] they decide whom we are supporting" (01-MD-CO)* which suggests genuine distribution of responsibility for decision-making relating to CSR. This distributed decision-making is supported by the fact that the Managing Director *"initiated"* and subsequently *"pulled away from" (01-MD-CO)* the committee as they believed that as a result of the power that they possess because of their hierarchical position, decisions would not be made democratically but rather *"deferred"* to the Managing Director which would be *"detrimental to its success" (01-MD-CO)*. The democratic approach to decision making was confirmed by the senior manager who stated decisions were made by voting:

> *"It's a raise of hands type of thing and we do seem to agree because we do want to get this money spent… obviously it's fair in that respect that it's not everyone saying "yes" and it's not everyone saying "no" to keep the money in the company, so it's good to have that mix" (15-SM-CO)*.

The democratic process appears to empower all employs participating in the committee as individuals possess equal authority, irrespective of one's hierarchical position within the organisation ordinarily; this therefore contributes towards developing understanding into servant leadership as a post-heroic or CLS approach to leadership. The collectivist focus whereby multiple stakeholders are invited into a tangible feedback channel where the decision-making process involves group-consensus suggests servant leadership can be considered a post-heroic approach, based on the collective and relational nature of the group (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019). However, further exploration reveals insights into the nature of power dynamics within the decision-making process. Upon recognition of the perceived power they possess, the Managing Director withdrew themselves from the decision-making process, ensuring a democratic process could be followed. Although inviting employees into the decision-making process appears to highlight the collectivist and participatory nature of post-heroic leadership (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019), the withdrawal of the Managing Director fully empowers employees to be responsible for decisions. Although this seems positive, it raises the concern that the leader retains power and if they were there then employees would not be empowered which suggests a favouritism towards followers that Collinson (2005) warned about in terms of romanticism in leadership. Servant leadership could however resonate with CLS in this example given the co-constructed aspect of leadership (Collinson, 2005); the leader initiates a structure whereby decisions are arrived at democratically and are co-constructed by a diverse group of employees as opposed the leader dictatorially stating decisions, for example. Elements of both post-heroic and CLS approaches are therefore present in this example, and further research is encouraged into these dynamics.

Considering Construction's Org CSR-related committee as a tangible feedback channel also resonates with and provides additional insights into many of the foundational principles of servant leadership theory, including characteristics such as humility, providing direction, and stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011); humility and stewardship are often cited as characteristics that differentiate servant leadership from alternative leadership approaches. CSR is important in this instance as the leader is demonstrating their propensity to enact the aforementioned characteristics in the context of CSR, which provides support for Christensen et al's (2014) postulation that servant leadership and CSR as constructs are theoretically linked and that when merged, they can do so in a beneficial manner. Although the committee was initiated as a method to bring structure to Construction Org's CSR practices as alluded to above, it also resulted in the personal development of individuals who were less accustomed to office meetings and more accustomed to "working the tools":

> *"There were people coming from site like myself who were maybe not knowing of the structure of how things should work about raising things, about bringing things forward… I think [Manging Director] was just getting the structure in place so us people who maybe weren't used to situations like that… everyone gets a say" (15-SM-CO).*

Two interesting insights can be derived from this example. First, the impact of the leader with regards to initiating a platform through which to facilitate employees' participation in CSR-related activities is clear; a formal structure through which to participate and engage in CSR endeavours of which each employee is fully aware of and can volunteer to contribute towards. Second, the committee also serves as a permanent structure to which individuals can become associated with and generate a sense of belonging from. The senior manager references those *"coming from site like myself who were maybe not knowing of the structure of how things should work about raising things, about bringing things forward"* and therefore the committee supports the presentation of these ideas as there is a group specifically arranged to discuss such ideas. The notion of structures being implemented, in this case a formal channel of communication, in the interest of less-confident employees being afforded the opportunity to contribute and develop confidence, was also present within Manufacturing Org:

> *"Somebody might have an idea but they might be a bit embarrassed or they might not want people to know, some people are not quite comfortable with voicing their opinion are they?"" (03-SM-MO).*

These examples reference the heterogeneous nature of the workforce and the different needs and desires of individual employees therefore arising, the awareness of this from the perspective of the leaders, and the structures that can be implemented in attempts to satisfy these differences. Employees are afforded opportunities to develop confidence in a formal setting by developing the skills and attributes necessary which facilitates their personal development which the organisation ultimately benefits from. A fundamental principle of servant leadership is the inherent value of individuals regardless of skills or competencies and for others to alter their behaviours accordingly (Greenleaf, 1970); these examples therefore illustrate how formal channels of communication can be utilised to manifest the foundational characteristics of humility, stewardship, and providing direction in practice.

5.3. <u>Summary</u>

This chapter has presented findings relating to the second aggregated dimension identified during this research, promoting communication. Both formal and informal channels of communication were identified as important in relation to illustrating developing understanding into the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested through an organisation's CSR-related activities. Informal channels of communication included creating a scenarios and platforms for spontaneous interactions to occur as well as leaders operating with an open-door policy; these concepts enabled high-quality leader-employee and employee-employee relationships to develop. This served to enhance knowledge sharing through informal channels between employees, including with regards CSR-related activities. Formal channels of communication were employed simultaneously to supplement this knowledge sharing, particularly when communicating with a dispersed workforce, as well as to satisfy individual employee preferences in terms of communication. Informal and formal channels of communication appeared to support and complement one another so that employees were made aware of CSR-related activities through multiple communication channels. Utilising both formal and informal channels of communication simultaneously enabled leaders to influence the nature of their organisational culture to incorporate aspects such as inclusivity and engagement with the organisation. Insights were also garnered into the nature of power dynamics within the respective organisations as a result of the communication channels utilised, specifically with regards to how leaders attempted to include employees in the decision-making process.

Chapter 6: Empowering Employees

The third aggregated dimension identified in this research that assisted in the development of understanding pertaining to the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested through an organisation's CSR-related activities was the empowerment of employees. Empowering employees manifested itself in two primary second order themes, firstly empowering employees through ownership and secondly, empowering employees through community. Two aspects of empowering employees through ownership were identified, they were fostering employee autonomy and establishing trust, particularly in the leader-employee relationship; these first order concepts will be presented with evidence from the collected data in Section 6.1. Aspects of empowering employees through community included leaders behaving in a manner so as to practice inclusivity, and that leaders adopted strategies and techniques intended to increase the perception of unity between employees throughout their respective organisations; these first order concepts will be presented with their associated evidence in Section 6.2. Figure 8 provides a visual representation of the data structure relating to the aggregated dimension of empowering employees.

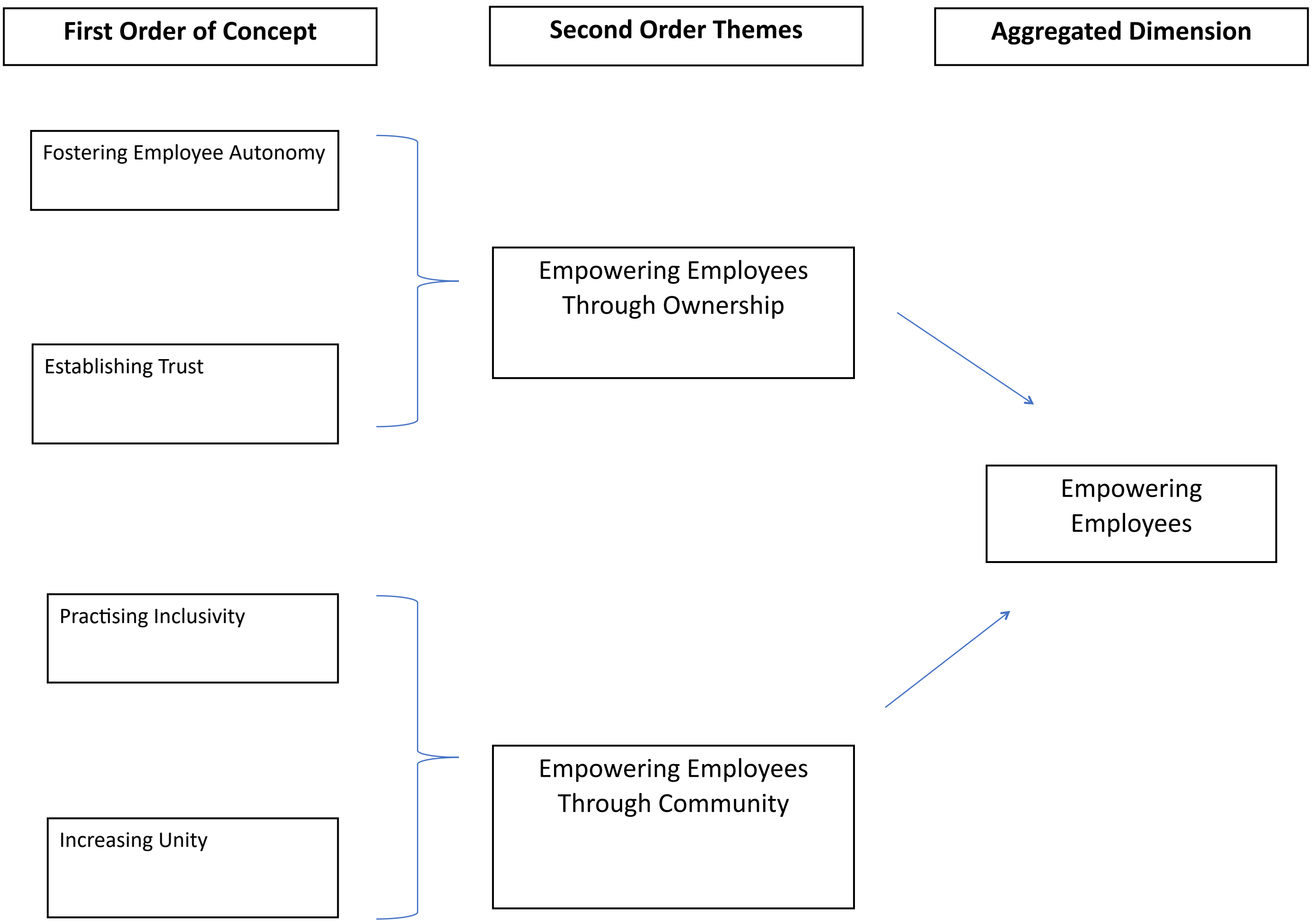


Figure 8: Empowering Employees' Data Structure

The notion of empowerment forms a central tenet of servant leadership theory, such as in the writings of Sendjaya and Sarros (2002), Van Dierendonck (2011), and Liden et al (2015). It is concerned with the enablement of individuals to realise their potential (Konczak et al, 2000) by fostering a self-confidence and sense of personal power in individuals (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). Despite the importance granted to the notion of empowerment however, understanding into the structures and impact of leadership that enable employee empowerment to become manifested remain somewhat scarce and is therefore an area that this research contributes towards. Explorations into the manifestation of empowerment within servant leadership may also provide insights into how servant leadership is positioned with respect to other post-heroic approaches to leadership or indeed if the notion of empowerment conceptually extends servant leadership beyond post-heroic approaches into the realm of CLS.

6.1. Empowering Employees Through Ownership

Two important aspects were identified that facilitated employee empowerment through the notion of ownership; they were leaders fostering employee autonomy and leaders establishing trust throughout their organisations. Although related, autonomy differs from empowerment as autonomy refers to the dispositional tendency "to be self-regulating and orient toward the interest value and contextual supports for self-initiation" (Baard et al, 2004: 2048); empowerment on the other hand, as discussed above, is establishing a setting in which individuals are able to flourish and realise for themselves their goals and desires. As such, autonomy is a constituting factor of empowerment (Liu et al, 2011). It was identified in this research that the behaviours associated with servant leadership could foster employee autonomy through various means such as instilling confidence in employees to perform a task without prescribed supervision and a fear of rebuke which contributes to the creation of a relaxed environment in which to operate.

6.1.1. Fostering Employee Autonomy

Identified as a particularly prominent method through which leaders appeared to empower employees was through the fostering of employee autonomy with respect to both aspects of organisational life and active participation in CSR-related activities. Autonomy was regularly instilled in the leader-employee relationship from a very early stage and was often task-focused in nature:

> *"[Managing Director] said to me when I first started that if I see something that needs doing, don't need to go back to him every time, just get it done" (24-SM-HO).*

> *"Sometimes when we get larger orders, I'd always panic, and I'd email [Managing Director] and [they'd] say to me "have a go at doing it because you're just lacking a bit of confidence, you know you can do it", and [they were] right! I had a go at it and I could bloody do it so [they] just take that time because [they] know you're more than capable of doing it" (06-SM-MO).*

On the understanding that autonomy relates to the ability for one to engage in independent thought processes and decision-making (Baard et al, 2004; Stevenson, 2018), these two examples appear to provide a clear intention from the Managing Directors to facilitate autonomy through believing in their employees and instilling a sense of confidence in them. Focusing on the second quotation, the Managing Director understands the competency of their employee, developed as a result of a close working relationship with them. They are therefore able to instil confidence in their employee to perform a task by encouraging them to *"have a go"* understanding that they will be able to perform said task; this therefore develops the employees' autonomy as they engage in a process whereby they complete a task using their own methods and independent thoughts. Although these two examples were provided by senior managers, employees further down the organisational hierarchy were also aware of the autonomy that was granted to them through the development of a relationship between leader and employee:

> *"[We talk] relatively openly about topics and it's good and [they're] sort of one of them leaders, one of them bosses, that don't just tell you what to do and try and treat you like a robot" (04-EM-MO).*

Collectively, these examples illustrate how employees are encouraged to be proactive and self-confident, two of the foundational characteristics of empowerment. Employees are encouraged to perform their duties without the requirement to seek assurances from their Managing Director, but when one of the employees does seek assistance, the Managing Director is present to provide encouragement that instils the confidence in the employee to successfully complete the task. This supports Collinson's (2005) suggestion that followers should be reconsidered in terms of 'knowledgeable agents', with the capacity to contribute to the leadership process both in accordance with and contrary to leader perspectives. The belief in encouraging employees to act autonomously permeated throughout the organisational hierarchy, as the example provided by the employee who states that they are not treated *"like a robot"* implies. This sense of confidence building and encouraging employees to have self-belief is further encapsulated in a poster displayed on Manufacturing Org's premises (Image 5), specifically *"our remarkable people make us proud"*. Referring to employees as "*remarkable*" positively influences organisational culture and ensures through non-verbal communications that employees are constantly reminded of the high-esteem in which they are held. Image 5 is a further illustration of the impact of written communications comprehensively explored in Section 5.2.1 with regards employee empowerment.

Image 5: A poster in Manufacturing Org's organisational premises

Managing Directors also appeared to enable their employees to act in an autonomous manner by empowering them to promote, support and engage in CSR-related activities that are important to employees from an individual perspective. The organisation could be used by employees as a support mechanism and a platform through which to facilitate engagement such as by providing materials, time to engage, and financial support.

> *"It's quite relaxed, you're not like "you must not do this, and you must not do this", it's not like that. And we always say 'if in doubt, just ask', because they are approachable people so [Managing Director] is quite direct so will always say "yes we can do it" or "no we can't" or "it's up to you, it's your call"; that's what [they'd] normally say" (06-SM-MO).*

> *"Lately there's been me and this other young lad who's an apprentice, we've been going to [a local high school] and we'll do speeches in front of children about apprenticeships: what our*

apprenticeships are to try and get people into it, and careers and everything like that" (09-EM-MO).

> *"The company is a member of the Rotary, [Managing Directors work closely with a local university], we sponsor various individuals and clubs so for example we sponsor a young golfer, we sponsor the local rugby club, and we sponsor a carriage driver. We work raising money for a local charity, [Managing Director] raised about £1000 two years ago for them… so we do a lot in the community" (16-MD-MO).*

These examples provide an insight into the varied nature of CSR-related activities that both the employees of Manufacturing Org and Manufacturing Org itself, pursue. In the first example, a senior manager recalls the "*relaxed*" nature of deciding which causes to support and how "*normally*", the employee is empowered to make the decision regarding whether to pursue an activity or not, therefore manifesting the notion of ownership. This example illustrates how using CSR as a vehicle, leaders are able to promote autonomous decision-making, here by facilitating employees to support causes they have a personal affiliation towards. This is supported by the second example where the young employee possesses a desire to educate children in the local area as to the options available to them upon the completion of compulsory education. By utilising the networks established by their leaders, such as the organisation's membership to the Rotary, the young employee is empowered to manifest their desire.

The findings identified here also resonate with current understandings of motives for engaging in CSR. Motives for engaging in CSR have been explored from numerous perspectives but perhaps the most prominent division has occurred between motives at the organisational and individual levels respectively. Aguinis and Glavas (2012) state that at the organisational level, instrumental motives relating to organisational theories such as Stakeholder Theory or Institutional Theory are one of the key drivers for engagement. This is important as the actions and influences of stakeholders can therefore be used as predictors of an organisation's CSR policy rendering it as externally driven. This appears closely related to the notion of strategic CSR which McWilliams (2011: 1480) defined as "any 'responsible' activity that allows a firm to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, regardless of motive". The notion of strategic CSR has however faced criticism in terms of it being a publicity tool whereby strategies are employed to increase revenue rather than focus on the philanthropic and virtuous nature at the foundations of CSR (Carroll, 1979; Ven de Ven, 2008). It can be inferred from the examples provided above that the organisations that participated in this research are not engaged in CSR for organisational reasons therefore, as participants discuss their empowerment and ownership to pursue CSR-related activities that have meaning on a personal level.

At the individual level, motives for engaging in CSR-related activities appear to be more instrumental, that is to say that "personal values, commitment, and awareness of CSR" (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012: 952) are the guiding principles which as opposed to organisational theories present at the organisational level, can be considered psychological theories of motivation. Individual motives for engagement in CSR have received limited attention in the literature (Petrenko et al, 2016) and the findings of this research can therefore provide insights to this field. Aguilera et al (2006) suggest that "employees' perceptions of the firm's external CSR are a special aspect of their more general justice perceptions and that there CSR perceptions shape the employees' subsequent attitudes and behaviours toward their firm" (Aguilera et al, 2006: 840); this suggests that organisations can inform employees' attitudes and motives towards CSR based on how (un)justly the organisation treats others. This argument is supported by Brown et al (2010) who suggest that an organisation's executives' personal beliefs and values influence the values, beliefs and behaviours of their subordinates.

The impact of an organisation's senior leaders as a motivating factor for engaging in CSR is receiving increased attention. There are clear cases in large organisations were CEOs and Managing Directors drive CSR such as in South West Airlines (Makovsky, 2013), but Peterson et al (2012) suggest that company founders are more inclined to engage in CSR practices than individuals who have been promoted or drafted into a position; this suggests disparity in the motives for engagement between larger and smaller organisations as smaller organisations are far more likely to be led by founders than external candidates. Taking into consideration the findings of Vives (2006) who stated that SME owners are more likely to sacrifice financial gains in order to serve a greater good, and the numerous scholars who proclaim that SMEs often unknowingly conduct CSR-related activities (Jenkins, 2004; Perrini, 2006; Roberts et al, 2006), there appears to be somewhat of a lack of understanding into the motives of SMEs and their respective leaders for engaging in CSR. This argument is supported by the findings of Chen and Hung-Baesecke (2014: 211) who identified a wealth of studies focusing on external stakeholders as motivators to engage in CSR, and significant disparity focusing internally, rendering CSR "a formality requested externally rather than a virtue rooted internally". The findings of the present research contribute to discussions relating to individual motives for engaging in CSR-related activities by illustrating how Managing Directors can satisfy their personal desires as well as employees' desires to contribute towards CSR-related activities.

> *"I think [the Managing Directors] when they set the business up, I think they have always had that approach that they want to do more than just selling cups really and I think they've kind of just passed it down all the way through the company really, that these things [CSR] matter" (07-SM-MO).*

> *"[Managing Director] is keen for us to do it, so I think [they] want a few people to get involved" (13-EM-CO).*

By establishing a sense of autonomy and ownership in their employees, the Managing Directors create a culture whereby employees are encouraged to pursue activities that resonate with them, such as delivering speeches to local students regarding additional opportunities; this inverts traditional notions of power with regards leaders dictating CSR activities as the employee is now afforded the opportunity to pursue their own endeavours, using the organisation to do so. Considering this in accordance with the additional evidence provided in this section provides insights into the notions of stewardship and providing direction within servant leadership theory. With regards stewardship, the Managing Director attempts to create a culture that facilitates CSR activities, yet through the promotion of employee autonomy in terms of decision-making, employees are encouraged to take ownership of CSR-related activities and positively contribute towards communities in a manner that resonates with them personally. This appears to be the manifestation of stewardship within servant leadership as a process with respect to aspects of stewardship such as setting the right example for followers to then act in the common interest (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

The notion of fostering employee autonomy also provides insights into how servant leadership as a process contends with expectations of leaders to provide direction. Within servant leadership theory specifically, providing direction encompasses the leader understanding the correct amount of responsibility to afford to employees while ensuring that people know what is expected of them and that work is "tailor made" to individual needs and competencies (Van Dierendonck, 2011). It can be argued that providing direction is a foundational aspect to any leadership approach (Northouse, 2010), in particular traditional views of leadership whereby leaders set goals and visions, yet leading from a position of servility draws into question the ability of leaders to provide direction as service has traditionally been affiliated with the absence of power (Van Dierendonck, 2011). In these examples understanding is developed into followers as individual agents, this instils confidence in employees to perform tasks as well as enables leaders to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their employees. In this research and in the context of CSR-related activities, it was identified therefore that leaders can draw upon knowledge developed as a result of understanding individual needs and requirements so that employees are provided with the opportunity to grow in confidence and take ownership for the nature of their participation in CSR-related activities.

Despite the apparent autonomy of employees to engage in CSR, the Managing Directors appear to guide and influence this participation. The innate sense to act morally and contribute beyond economic responsibilities within society, inferred through utterances such as *"I think they have always had that that approach that they want to do more than just selling cups"*, appears to directly relate to the notion of building community within servant leadership theory; this also resonates with the philanthropic responsibility present within CSR. Spears and Lawrence (2004) suggest that organisations are particularly well-placed to assist in the development and growth of communities as they are intricately embedded within existing communities already; the process of servant leadership appears to be the catalyst for these positive contributions, drawing upon the innate desire to serve the least privileged in society, demonstrated here in the sense that they *"want to do more"*. This resonates with Van Dierendonck's (2011) notion of providing direction whereby the correct amount of responsibility is granted to individuals. The intrinsic desire to contribute to stakeholders beyond shareholders present within servant leadership theory therefore facilitates the fostering of employee autonomy to contribute towards local communities.

6.1.2. <u>Establishing Trust</u>

As with leadership studies generally, the notion of trust has featured prominently within both conceptualisations and measurement tools associated with servant leadership (Laub, 1999; Patterson, 2003; Van Dierendonck, 2011). For example, Jaramillo et al (2009) demonstrated that through the mediating process of trust, servant leadership often creates positive work climates, which have been linked to enhanced collaboration among team members (Garber et al, 2009). Shim et al (2016) also established that servant leadership increases employees' trust in leadership as well as procedural justice and the propensity for employees to engage in OCBs. Chan and Mak (2014) similarly established that trust mediates the relationship between servant leadership and job satisfaction when considered in relation to leader tenure. Despite the positive associations that trust appears to share with servant leadership however, there are no studies to this researcher's knowledge that explore the nature of the manifestation of trust within servant leadership or the subsequent implications of this from the perspective of either leader or employee. The identification within this research therefore of trust as a channel for employees to embrace ownership and subsequently experience empowerment provides insights into both the leader-employee relationship as well as manifestation of servant leadership in practice.

The development of a trusting reciprocal relationship was identified as important to developing understanding into the leader-employee relationship within this research. For example, the following extract illustrates that although trust is important to develop, it can often take time depending on individual needs and desires:

> *"I think it takes time for people to trust you and to open up. Like [Colleague] has worked here for 18 months now and it's only really in the past six months that [they've] really told me about [their] personal life. And it's not that I've pushed or prodded or anything, [they've] just felt comfortable to do that" (10-SM-MO).*

The senior manager in this extract appears to be proud that their employees are willing to discuss their personal lives without being "*pushed*" or "*prodded"*, which appear to be used in this example as negative, intrusive terms. Rather, utterances such as "*trust you"* and "*open up"* suggest that it has taken time for a trusting relationship to develop between leader and employee, ultimately resulting in a relationship where the employee is *"comfortable"* in the presence of the leader and willing to "*open up"*. Identifying the importance of trust, leaders consciously implemented both formal and informal structures in the interest of enhancing trust between colleagues; one such way leaders did this was through the decision-making process:

> *"We try to foster an element of trust in the fact that we bring them into decisions and future activities by saying "it's confidential you know? But we are letting in on this". And we see that as when you are bringing people into confidentiality there's a reciprocal trust there" (01-MD-CO)*.

In this example, the Managing Director highlights attempts that are made to foster trust within their organisation by including employees in the decision-making process. Focusing on *"future activities"* also suggests investment in individual employees that they will be present and contributing towards shared visions over a prolonged period of time rather than just the immediacy, supplementing increased levels of employee ownership and empowerment, and trusting employees to make rational decisions informed by confidential information. The Managing Director's hint at *"reciprocal trust"* in this example is also interesting. It suggests that divulging confidential information to employees necessitates an expectation for employees to return the trust to the leaders, therefore enhancing the leader-employee relationship. Reciprocal trust has been demonstrated to have positive effects at the individual level such as by facilitating greater learning opportunities (Juvina et al, 2013), as well as at the organisational level in terms of increased affiliation towards organisations (Park and Kim, 2012); reciprocal trust can also occur at the team level (Server et al, 2005). Developing reciprocal trust is therefore desirable for leaders and the findings of the present research suggest that one way in which this can be developed is by including employees in the decision-making process and planning for future activities.

Employees were also invited into the decision-making process within Hospitality Org, albeit often for different purposes. Senior leaders recognised their limitations with regard knowledge of day-to-day tasks and therefore invited employees further down the hierarchy into the decision-making process relating to organisational strategy:

> *"Quite often what you find is that actually people at the top level don't realise that there are implications further down and it is quite important to get down to the people who are doing the day to day because they go "actually that doesn't work because of such a thing and you need to go back to the drawing board"" (24-SM-HO)*.

This example illustrates that the senior leaders of Hospitality Org value and trust the opinions of their employees which in turn empowers employees to contribute towards the decision-making process. The recognition of the senior leaders that *"it is quite important"* to include lower levels of the organisational hierarchy in decisions illustrates the characteristic of humility so essential to servant leadership theory, whereby servant leaders recognise the need to put their personal talents in perspective (Patterson, 2003) and demonstrates modesty towards the appreciation of others (Van Dierendonck, 2011) which encourages employee empowerment. The notion of feeling valued as a result of being invited into meetings with senior leaders, and perceiving to have equal voice in such a setting, was discussed by a relatively new employee of Manufacturing Org:

> *"I've been in a couple of meetings myself and I've only been here four months and I'm an apprentice. We had a meeting the other week discussing a mobile app which was sort of fairly even share of argument on opposite sides and it was like a discussion… I think employees do have involvement which is good" (04-EM-MO)*.

This example provides an excellent insight into the attempts of senior leaders to empower individuals by inviting them into the decision-making process and the subsequent positivity that arises. Despite only having been at the company for four months and holding apprentice status, this young employee is empowered to contribute towards decisions with senior managers, is given a *"fairly even share of argument"*, and feels *"involved"* in the organisation, which results in increased satisfaction as demonstrated by utterances such as *"I think employees do have involvement which is good"*. This example therefore appears to illustrate the effective ability of servant leadership as a process to develop a sense of ownership in employees which results in employee empowerment; leaders encourage employees to participate in the decision-making process by inviting them into the formal processes which appears to increase the employees' sense of trust in the leader, illustrated by the positive sentiments presented above; employees appreciate and embrace their involvement in the decision-making process, suggesting that it develops a sense of value in them.

This section has thus far illustrated that leaders can develop trust with employees by inviting them into the decision-making process but that the development of trust can take time. It was also identified in this research that establishing the perception that leaders and senior figures appear to trust employees was important in the development of the leader-employee relationship. One senior manager representing Manufacturing Org for example, stated that employees have convinced their Managing Director that they could be trusted resulting in the leader having faith in their employees to complete their tasks:

> *"[Managing Director] has the trust of [their] employees to get on with the job; [they] have a lot of faith in me and [Colleague] that we know what to do. We bleed the company, we'd never do anything on purpose to the detriment" (10-SM-MO)*.

The use of emotive language in this example, such as "*we bleed the company*", suggests that an affective relationship has developed between employees and the organisation whereby employees can be trusted to make rationalised decisions that are in the organisation's best interests. The use of the emotive language suggests this extends beyond performing one's duties to the extent that both positive and negative results have a genuine and meaningful impact on individual employees. The employees' emotive language also suggests that they perceive a sense of ownership and responsibility both for and towards the organisation, to the extent that outcome emanating from the organisation personally affected them. The development of this relationship appears to have emerged as a result of the employees being trusted *"to get on with the job"* as the leaders have faith in their employees. Employees are trusted to perform in the organisation's best interests which has developed a mutually trusting relationship. The notion of leaders trusting employees to act in accordance with the organisation's interests was also discussed by one senior manager who discussed employees being empowered to take ownership of their annual leave allowance:

> *"[They] really do think outside the box. So [they've] introduced flexibility and responsibility to the business which is like an American model but I think a lot of the tech start-ups do where it's holidays: you can take whatever holidays you think are appropriate within reason, you've got to make sure it's not impacting the business, and they don't for example record holidays or track it… in a conversation where [they were] telling me about it, it's an exciting idea and it gives people responsibility and encourages communication when my perspective was 'we actually do also need to be recording that information' so we see things differently… [they] just want to create an environment where people are happy and definitely decisions reflect that" (08-SM-MO)*.

This example illustrates the trusting nature of the leader in the interest of developing employee ownership, compared to the tentative approach that other employees may prefer. Here, the Managing Director adopts an informal approach towards annual leave that promotes trust in their employees to act responsibly and take ownership for their actions; this therefore develops employee empowerment with respect to managing one's own time. In collaboration with employees being invited into the decision-making process, this example provides interesting insights into the distribution of power within the manifestation of trust within servant leadership.

From a traditional leadership perspective, decision-making has been centralised in the hands of a few who take sole responsibility for decisions (Tourish, 2014), reflecting heroic perspectives to leadership; power therefore would be monopolised by these individuals. This has often been a masculinised process conducted by males (Fletcher, 2004; Elliott and Stead, 2017). More recent approaches to leadership however, such as post-heroic approaches, recognise the benefits of relational, collectivist, and participatory aspects (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019), of which including employees in the decision-making process is incorporated (Crevani et al, 2007). Instilling ownership in employees to make decisions would therefore suggest that the enactment of servant leadership observed here resonates with post-heroic approaches, based upon the relational and collectivist attitudes towards decision-making; leaders recognise the time it takes for trust to develop within the leader-employee relationship but similarly the importance for structures to be implemented to increase the propensity for trust to emerge. However, there are suggestions that post-heroic leadership approaches do not consider the distribution of power within collective processes (Collinson, 2014; Fletcher, 2004) and that they may reinforce the existing white, Western, male-dominated status quo. The examples presented here however suggest that employees experience empowerment through the development of ownership by means of trust, so that employees are afforded the power to be responsible for decisions. This would therefore suggest that servant leadership is related to post-heroic approaches to leadership by way of recognising the benefits of adopting relational and collectivist approaches to decision-making but extends beyond the critiques that they reinforce existing structures by illustrating how trust between leader and employee can develop employee ownership and ultimately employee empowerment. There is also evidence that this approach was successful in terms of enhancing employee responsibility, as well as increasing employees' personal development:

> *"I've been through the holiday and absence data and we've got a very good, very health absence rate, so it seems to be working very well. It's definitely made me think outside the box as well which is good" (08-SM-MO)*.

In their efforts to empower employees through developing a sense of ownership by trusting individuals to take responsibility for their own actions, the Managing Director in this example has instigated the personal development of the senior manager. The senior manager has been able to learn from the trusting behaviours of the servant leader and develop an alternative mindset to problem solving in which they will *"think outside the box"*. Establishing trust may also therefore lead to the personal development of employees.

6.2. <u>Empowering Employees Through Community</u>

The notion of community was identified in this research as instrumental to the empowerment of employees. Community was manifested in two ways, each of which formed a respective first order concept of the second order theme, empowering employees through community. First, leaders promoted inclusivity across their organisations and second, leaders practised unity within their organisations, identified in the context of CSR-related activities. Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 present the findings of each of these first order concepts.

It is important to briefly differentiate between the notions of inclusivity and unity and the interpretations of these respective terms, understandings of which are derived from the data collected; the notions will be explored more comprehensively in their respective sections below. Inclusivity was understood as the processes and structures present within an organisation initiated with the intention to draw people together in order to negate potential differences between individuals and groups and ensure that CSR-related practices were representative of the entire organisation. Unity on the other hand, was identified as relating to attempts to establish a shared vision to which all employees can strive to achieve. In addition to organisational objectives, this practising of unity extended into the CSR domain whereby employees are empowered to direct and contribute towards establishing the shared vision.

6.2.1. Practising Inclusivity

In this research, inclusivity with regard CSR-related activities was identified as a channel through which leaders could empower employees. The notion of promoting inclusivity was identified as referring to behaviours that involved employees in a range of organisational processes and practices in both formal and informal capacities, such as promoting employees' adoption of responsibility beyond contractual obligations and volunteering. This understanding appears to be synonymous with existing definitions of inclusivity in organisational culture literature, which suggest that inclusivity is where environments are established that acknowledge, welcome and accept different approaches, styles, perspectives and experiences in the interest of employees achieving their potential and achieving more desirable outcomes (Winters, 2014). The notion of inclusivity therefore appears to have a degree of theoretical similarities with regards the foundational principles of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011), such as in terms of accepting differences in individuals and attempting to assist individuals to achieve their maximum potential (Eva et al, 2019). Furthermore, scholars such as Echols (2009) have stated that servant leadership as a construct is by its very nature inclusive, arguments founded upon Greenleaf's (1970) initial detailing of servant leaders as "primus inter pares" (first among equals). The most explicit example of a leader facilitating employee inclusivity identified during this research was with regards to Construction Org's CSR committee.

Construction Org's CSR committee enabled employees throughout the organisational hierarchy to collaborate with one another in the interest of deciding upon and subsequently organising projects and events aimed at making positive contributions towards local communities. Interestingly, the committee was formed by Construction Org's Managing Director as a means of including employees in decisions relating to which CSR activities to pursue, potentially as a result of the Managing Director's commitment to creating an inclusive culture within their organisation:

> *"Rather than being a benevolent benefactor or benevolent dictator in saying how we should do things, we feel it is important that we identify through our employees what is important to them" (01-MD-CO).*
>
> *"They will get people, workers, that run these meetings and try and organise things" (12-EM-CO).*
>
> *"It is the people involved in the meeting because they are the ones who bring the ideas forward. Whether you know somebody who is involved, it is people within the company that say "actually there is a family I know that need help". It can be somebody goes to scouts and it is the scout hut that needs a new roof, various things" (26-SM-CO).*

The Managing Director's objection towards the oxymoronic position of "*benevolent dictator"* in favour of an inclusive mindset where the aim is to *"identify through our employees what is important to them"*, illustrates the Managing Director's personal convictions towards establishing an inclusive culture, particularly in relation to CSR. In establishing a committee orientated towards enabling employees to contribute towards community involvement, the leader has realised one of their personal convictions, namely promoting inclusivity.

This example also provides insights into the notion of community within servant leadership theory, in particular how the foundational concept of community can be manifested within internal groups. Community has been considered an antecedent to servant leadership in conceptualisations including those of Laub (1999) and Liden et al (2008). Laub (1999: 25) for example draws upon Greenleaf's

(1970) notion of leader as *primus inter pares* to suggest that "leaders are part of the community, not separated from it" and are therefore partners as opposed to controlling entities. This strongly resonates with the notion of CLS whereby leadership is a co-constructed entity founded upon relationships (Collinson, 2005). The Managing Director establishing a formal structure with the aim of practising inclusivity by including employees across the organisational hierarchy provides one illustration as to how the foundational concept of community within servant leadership theory can be manifested within internal groups.

In addition to establishing the committee, the Managing Director also appeared intent on ensuring that decisions emanating from the committee were democratically arrived at as well as representative of all employees:

> *"I initiated it and then deliberately pulled away from it because I feel as though my presence is too, I suppose overwhelming is the wrong word, influential. Therefore, any decisions would always be deferred to me and therefore I felt as though that was detrimental to its success" (01-MD-CO)*.

Employees were also aware that the Managing Director took a step away from the committee in order to ensure democratic decision-making occurred:

> *"[They have] taken a step back and [they] leave it pretty much to the committee to run itself… I think everyone does get a say" (15-SM-CO).*

This democratic process therefore appears to empower all employs participating in the committee as each individual possesses as much authority as the next, irrespective of one's hierarchical position within the organisation ordinarily. Considering post-heroic leadership styles dismiss the unilateral distribution of power associated with heroic approaches in favour of the benefits of group decision-making and shared ownership (McCrimmon, 2010), the creation of Construction Org's CSR committee appears to firmly establish servant leadership as a post-heroic approach. The committee has been established to "*identify through our employees what is important to them" (01-MD-CO)* and therefore facilitate employee empowerment. However, drawing upon Tao et al's (2018) suggestion that involving employees in CSR decision-making develops autonomy within employees which is a characteristic more closely assimilated with CLS (Collinson, 2005), the creation of Construction Org's CSR committee may indeed provide insights into how servant leadership can be considered within the CLS approach when considering the manifestation of power within the committee.

A feature of all the Managing Directors that participated in this research was their intrinsic belief in positively contributing to wider society as opposed to solely striving to maximise profits:

> *"Local social responsibility - we have lots of that going on so that might be a few more drips so as you change your mentality around from 'let's try and make money' to 'let's try and create love with our colleagues and let's try and create love with the customer', and out of these two lumps of love suddenly we are making money!" (05-MD-MO).*
>
> *"Our anaerobic digestion system, we were the first in the country to do that and it was done poorly but we really tried to spearhead the green credentials" (02-MD-HO).*
>
> *"It's not about take, take, take, it's about giving something back. I like to think that I have experience and expertise that we can give to people" (16-MD-MO).*

In order to positively contribute towards wider society, the Managing Directors initiated a number of different structures within their organisations, often resulting in the development of employee empowerment. Manufacturing Org's Managing Director for example, developed a greater sense of autonomy in their employees by providing opportunities to take ownership (comprehensively explored in Section 6.1.1.) and Construction Org's Managing Director established the CSR committee; this appeared to promote inclusivity within their organisation, whereby individual employees became involved in activities beyond their day-to-day tasks and empowered to contribute towards decisions:

> *"The MD was in [the CSR committee] for the first year or first few of them but I think it was because there were people coming from site like myself who were maybe not knowing of the structure of how things should work about raising things, about bringing things forward… I think [Manging Director] was just getting the structure in place so us people who maybe weren't used to situations like that… everyone gets a say" (15-SM-CO).*

Two interesting insights can be derived from this example. First, the committee can be considered a formal structure initiated by the Managing Director that promotes inclusivity. This permanent structure is highly visible across the organisation, featuring in the State of the Nation talks introduced in Section 5.2.2 of this research, as well as updates in the newsletters, an example of which can be seen in Image 4 (page 103). Individuals are encouraged to become part of this group, thus generating a sense of belonging in individuals and a sense of inclusion across the organisation as a whole. Employees also understand how they can contribute, particularly with regards CSR.

Second, this example provides insights into the empowerment of individuals to both contribute ideas as well as guide the strategy, in the context of CSR. The senior manager references those *"coming from site like myself who were maybe not knowing of the structure of how things should work about raising things, about bringing things forward"* which illustrates the Managing Director's understanding that employees across the organisation possess different skill-sets that require consideration if an inclusive culture is to be achieved. The committee serves as a structure whereby those who engage in physical labour as part of their day-to-day tasks can interact and engage equally with the office-based staff, thus instilling confidence in all employees and empowering them to contribute, as well as build relationships with colleagues whom may not otherwise interact. This is further enhanced during the decision-making process. Rather than the Managing Director presiding over the committee and decisions which *"would be detrimental to its success" (01-MD-CO)*, a democratic process is adhered to in which *"everyone gets a say" (15-SM-CO)*.

The decision-making process here provides further insights into the distribution of power within servant leadership as a process, in the context of CSR-related activities. The collectivist, participatory nature of the decision-making process strongly resonates with the foundational principles of post-heroic leadership approaches (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019); irrespective of hierarchical status, individuals are invited to contribute towards decisions which are agreed upon democratically. The leader similarly recognises their potential to influence decisions based on their presence alone and therefore withdraws from the process to ensure employees *"get a say".* This provides robust insights into the desire for personal development within servant leadership as a process. The Managing Director establishes a formal structure whereby employees are granted equal status and learn how to operate in unfamiliar contexts. Simultaneously, they are encouraged to contribute towards decisions and also experience empowerment. Practising inclusivity within their respective organisations in the context of CSR-related activities therefore provides insights into both power distribution and employee empowerment.

In addition to insights regarding the distribution of power and insights relating to servant leadership's positioning as a post-heroic approach to leadership, Construction Org's CSR committee also provides insights into the nature of relationships within servant leadership as a process. The inclusive mindset cultivated through the establishment of the CSR committee appeared to facilitate employee interactions with colleagues throughout the organisational hierarchy which served to develop relationships between both leaders and employees as well as employees who do not directly operate with one another on a regular basis. The relationships developed to such an extent that one employee lower down Construction Org's organisational hierarchy explained the informal nature of the relationship they now share with the Managing Director:

> *"I don't see him as a boss, he's just like a mate" (11-EM-CO)*.

Engaging with colleagues throughout the organisational hierarchy, as opposed to merely with the colleagues associated with one's day-to-day tasks, facilitated the development of relationships between leaders and employees where employees perceived their leaders as friends and "*mates"* as opposed to bosses or superiors. This was a common theme throughout the interviews, as the following example illustrates:

> *"[Managing Director] seems more laid back like you can talk to [them] whereas some supervisors you think "oh fuck, he's here!" so some you like hide and run whereas with [Managing Director] you've got no qualms to walk up to [them] and chat with [them] about the football or about how their weekend has been" (11-EM-CO).*

In turn, this close relationship enabled leaders to act as role models for their employees which enhanced and facilitated the inclusive mindset permeating through the organisation. With leaders appearing to aspire to achieve an inclusive culture relating to both work and non-work-related activities, employees appeared inspired to embrace this culture and enhance it within their respective organisations:

> *"They [*Managing Directors*] want you to be part of it* [the organisation]. *They accept that you are here and working, so 'this is what we are, we want you to be part of that'" (23-SM-HO)*.

Not only does this example illustrate the employee's recognition of the influence of the leader on the organisation, but it also alludes to the levels of responsibility that are expected of employees as a result of the inclusive nature of the organisational culture. Employees throughout the respective organisational hierarchies appeared receptive to this responsibility and often utilised events outside of work commitments to achieve and subsequently enhance inclusivity:

> *"We actually have a group that are sociable, they will go for coffee or go for a drink when they are not working which I do quite like, I like to see it… I like to know that it's happening" (17-SM-HO)*.

> *"Everyone has their team spirit, they are not just going to leave someone out… we will text each other out of work, go for a coffee or something to eat… I think that is quite apparent" (18-EM-HO)*.

Taken into consideration with the findings relating to Construction Org's CSR committee, these examples appear to illustrate the shared desires of leaders and employees to operate with an inclusive organisational culture, in which individual employees adopt the responsibility to maintain and enhance inclusion. It would appear that the leaders of the organisations illustrated their desire for an inclusive culture through actions such as initiating the CSR committee, and the notion of inclusion is then embraced by employees who assume responsibility for maintaining it, as is seen in the case of the employees managing the committee or employees taking the responsibility to organise social events with colleagues. The findings presented here relate to and expand upon existing literature in several interesting ways.

The notion of inclusivity has acted as the central tenet for an approach to leadership in its own right, namely inclusive leadership (Echols, 2009). There are a number of similarities between inclusive and servant leadership theories respectively, comprehensively explored in the literature review within this thesis, yet the two approaches remain distinct. The findings of this research develop understanding into the notion of employee empowerment within servant leadership theory by suggesting that leaders attempt to create a sense of inclusion in their organisational cultures by actively encouraging employees to develop relationships with other colleagues throughout the organisational hierarchy as well as assume positions of responsibility beyond those expected through contractual obligations. One way in which relationships can develop and responsibility be assumed appears to be through engagement in CSR-related activities; activities relating to CSR appear to provide a foundation from which leaders can initiate the empowerment of individual employees in controlled environments through formalised processes, providing a context from which relationships can flourish and individuals experience personal development.

Gotsis and Girmani (2016) argue that servant leadership embodies an inclusive philosophy which facilitates feelings of belongingness and uniqueness in employees yet there remains a scant amount of research into how this inclusive philosophy manifests itself; this is an area of understanding that the findings of the present research contribute towards. The implementation of formal structures where traditional hierarchical status becomes negated, such as Construction Org's CSR committee, creates an inclusive environment where employees are empowered to participate and subsequently gain confidence in their own abilities. Not only does this result in positive outcomes at an individual level in terms of personal development such as increased confidence levels and perceived belongingness, the organisation also benefits as they accrue a strategy towards CSR that is representative of their whole organisation.

These examples therefore illustrate how the creation of formal structures such as Construction Org's CSR committee promotes inclusivity within the organisation by providing a platform through which employees to engage with colleagues they may otherwise not engage with, thus enhancing relationships across the organisation. Employees are empowered to promote inclusivity and guide the nature of CSR-related activities through distributed decision-making processes. This therefore suggests that servant leadership can be considered a post-heroic approach to leadership that embraces authentic employee empowerment.

6.2.2. Increasing Unity

Related to practising inclusivity yet remaining a distinct first order concept identified in this research, was the recognition of the importance of establishing and promoting unity throughout one's organisation. It was identified that generating a sense of unity included striving to achieve a shared vision for the organisation and its employees where all members collaborate with one another to achieve a desired outcome, both with regards obtaining organisational objectives and in relation to CSR practices. Discussions of unity therefore provide insights into how servant leadership as a process can contribute towards the formulation of an organisational culture as well as its positioning with regards post-heroic approaches and CLS. Insights are also discussed relating to the notion of community.

Northouse (2016: 229) summarizes Spears' (2004) conceptualisation of community as "a collection of individuals who have shared interests and pursuits and feel a sense of unity and relatedness. Community allows followers to identify with something greater than themselves that they value". The inclusion of the term "unity" within this understanding of community appears to render unity a constituting factor of community as a construct; the findings of the present research therefore contribute to the understanding of community, one of the ten core conceptual characteristics of servant leadership (Spears, 2004) by illustrating how servant leadership contributes towards developing and growing unity within their organisations, observed in the present research through the practising of CSR. The understanding of unity associated with the present research was summarised well by an employee of Construction Org, who explained the philosophy underpinning their organisation:

> *"[The Managing Director] wants to make it a whole company rather than a top/bottom divide but I think the lads want it as well" (15-SM-CO)*.

This utterance appears to exemplify the notion of unity experienced across the three organisations that participated in this research; attempts were made to assimilate people towards a common goal resulting in *"a whole company"* rather than having a *"divide"*. It is interesting to note that the employee refers to the Managing Director as the inspiration and subsequent catalyst for promoting the notion of unity throughout their organisation, a perspective identified as synonymous with utterances made during interviews with Managing Directors themselves:

> *"I'm no different to them, I'm just a person, I happen to have the title of Director but I'm the same person as them and I think working alongside them shows that actually I'm a human being like everybody else. And it gives you time to talk about their job, whether they have got suggestions on how to make it better" (16-MD-MO)*.

> *"All the while you make the staff feel as though they are part of the company, it is their company, and it is what [Managing Director] terms 'we feel the love'" (16-MD-MO).*

These examples provide insights into the nature of servant leadership and it's positioning within leadership theory. Emerging from these examples are the Managing Directors' efforts to reduce the perceived disparity between those in senior positions within the organisational hierarchy and other employees. The recognition that Managing Directors are *"no different to them"* appears to support the foundational characteristic of humility prevalent within servant leadership theory (Graham, 1991; Wong and Davey, 2007; Dennis and Bocarnea, 2005); this resonates with CLS's perspective that current leadership theories are over-dichotomised (Collinson, 2005) and agents are actually both leader and follower (Fairhurst, 2001). As such, servant leadership resonates with elements of CLS, in particular perspective that leadership studies to date have over-dichotomised agents as either leaders or followers.

Humility in the context of servant leadership refers to the ability of leaders to understand that they can benefit from the expertise of others (Van Dierendonck, 2011) arising as a result of understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). Utterances such as *"I'm no different to them, I'm just a person"* illustrate the Managing Director's recognition that although they may have elevated status in the organisational hierarchy, they are no different to their employees at a fundamental level, and they therefore enact behaviours in an attempt to convey this to their employees. One such behaviour exhibited in an attempt to convey this is *"working alongside them"*, demonstrating that senior figures understand the need to negate hierarchical differences in order to achieve tasks. The Managing Director then suggests that this is a method of developing a relationship with each individual employee as working alongside and engaging with employees on a working level *"gives you time to talk about their job"* and thus develop an understanding into the motivations and desires of employees. Again, this appears to resonate with CLS's interpretation of leadership whereby leaders are not heroic individuals on a pedestal, and they are in fact "*just a person"*, who can adopt the role of leader and/or follower depending on the context.

However, talking to individuals about their respective jobs, and leaders developing a relationship with followers subsequently appears to empower employees as they can raise *"suggestions on how to make it better"*. This would appear to resonate with a more distributed and shared approach towards decision-making whereby the leader canvasses the opinions of employees as opposed to dictatorially enacting decisions as within heroic perspectives, for example. As several authors suggest (Bass and Bass, 2009; Galinsky et al, 2003), a 'power-with' approach advocates "the concept of empowerment and a collective action of the group to achieve a common goal embedded in solidarity, shared decision-making, dialogue and negotiation" (Krauter, 2020: 109). The reduction in distance between leaders and followers (overlooking the over-dichotomisation in this instance) observable in this example whereby the opinions of employees are directly canvassed by leaders, empowers employees to contribute towards decision-making and establishing a common goal. Despite this appearing to resonate with post-heroic notions of leadership however, the writings of Collinson (2014) suggest that the considerable influence of the leader in making the ultimate decision has been overlooked, perceived understanding is therefore naïve.

Collinson (2014) suggests that further examination into the power dynamics would be required to fully understand this situation, something achieved within CLS with its focus on the distribution of power in the co-construction of leadership as a process. Although the opinions of employees are canvassed and included in the decision-making process, power to make the decision appears to be retained by the leader, a fallacy that resonates with notion of stealth power (O'Connor et al, 2019) whereby leaders obscure the centralisation of power. As power is retained by the leader, reservations remain as to whether post-heroic leadership approaches genuinely and authentically empower employees. As was observed in State of the Nation talks previously, employees are empowered to contribute towards the decision-making process which suggests a post-heroic leadership approach is being followed (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019), but the leader ultimately retains the power to make the decision. Further research would therefore be welcomed into the explicit nature of power dynamics within this dichotomy.

The notion of community was identified as an important perception through which to increase unity across one's organisation within this research. There is a paucity of research relating to the notion of communities within servant leadership theory (Margolis et al, 2009; Kincaid, 2012; Christensen et al, 2014), with respect to both internal and external communities. This research contributes insights regarding the emergence and development of internal communities within organisations, specifically through generating a sense of family; this appeared to result in a sense of unity among colleagues as well as an increase in employee engagement in both internally- and externally-focused activities.

Two of the three organisations that participated in this research are family owned businesses, that is the organisations are owned and managed within a family (Arregle et al, 2007; Harrison and Leitch, 2012). Despite ownership being retained within the family, the Managing Directors sought to create a familial culture with all employees. Referring back to Graph 1 (page 96), when asked to describe how they felt about their company, the modal option selected by Construction Org employees was 'family', demonstrating the nature of the organisational culture developed. Interestingly, there was evidence suggesting that the none-family owned organisation also made efforts to generate a sense of family across their organisation. It was identified for example, that when leaders attempted to promote unity throughout their organisations, the notion of the organisation becoming a second family to employees arose:

> *"I think that's what creates the atmosphere: we all enjoy working here, we all enjoy working with each other, it can become a second family which it actually has become for some of them which is sometimes a good output. It is more of a second family for some [employees] whether it be advice or social aspect; it's more of another outlook really" (23-SM-HO)*.

The term *"atmosphere"* can be interpreted as a feature of organisational culture (Maull et al, 2001; Denison, 1996) in that it relates to the standards and norms in which the employees are operating. It can be inferred that the shared goal in this example is that a supportive network is established between employees which can be used for *"advice or social"* reasons, all with the intention of generating more content and satisfied employees.

Despite shared attempts to establish a familial sense within their organisations in an effort to promote unity and by extension internal communities, different approaches were adopted between organisations. The Managing Directors of Manufacturing Org for example, one of the two family-owned organisations, referenced providing additional benefits such as attending events or providing free food in the office as one way through which they attempted to create a familial sense; for example, Image 6 is of complimentary food available to all colleagues. Manufacturing Org's Managing Directors beliefs were supported by their senior managers who noted the intention of *"going above and beyond" (08-SM-MO)* legal requirements ensuring that employees considered themselves as part of the organisational family:

> It is *"providing them with fruit, golfing days twice a month, I don't know, opportunities to go and watch the rugby with lunch thrown in; it's all sorts of little things that make them feel part of that family and that's really important" (16-MD-MO)*.
>
> *"To my mind, it is my job that as an employer we are doing the right thing by our employees and not just the legal minimum, but I think we should be going above and beyond and offering a greater reward package, making sure that people are happy here and that they feel as though it is a family based business and we want everybody to feel as part of that family" (08-SM-MO).*

Image 6: Complimentary food and drink within Manufacturing Org

These examples illustrate how the personal convictions of the Managing Director, to *"make them* [employees] *feel part of that family"*, permeate through the organisational hierarchy to senior management level who then share these convictions, *"we want everybody to feel as part of that family"*. The use of the word *"family"* infers unity throughout the organisation, and behaviours such as providing nutrition, attending events together, and generally *"going above and beyond"* are the methods through which the senior leaders attempt to create this familial sense.

Adopting an anthropological perspective, communities often develop when there is a centrality of interest (Amit and Rapport, 2002) which generates a sense of belonging (Walkerdine and Studdert, *Connected Communities*); the sociological perspective similarly argues for the importance of a centrality of interest. The attempts of the Managing Directors in this example appear to be founded upon a centrality of interest, where activities are engaged in that meet the interests of employees, providing the platform for relationships to flourish and therefore communities to develop. This therefore resonates with a post-heroic approach to leadership, whereby a shared goal is aimed towards and individuals are invited into negotiations and discussions (Day, 2013; Sobral and Furtado, 2019); the shared goal discussed within post-heroic leadership theories resonates with the notion of centralities of interest discussed within community-related research. As such, this would suggest that servant leadership may be associated with post-heroic traditions, based on the leader's intentions to create a shared goal/centrality of interest.

Although a shared goal can be considered a characteristic of any 'good' or 'effective' leadership approach (Cote, 2017; Northouse, 2016), the motives for establishing a familial culture in this instance are important, and arguably differentiate servant leadership from alternative approaches. The familial organisational culture develops as a result of the process of servant leadership implementing structures such as group events to increase unity and *"going above and beyond"* to ensure that all employees feel part of the family. Although not explicitly stated in these examples, subtle references such as "*making sure that people are happy here"* suggest the focus is on individuals and ensuring they are part of the unified collective, as well as the entire collective more broadly. This resonates with the foundational principle of servant leadership relating to recognising the value of each individual person (Greenleaf, 1998; Laub, 1999).

Although not a family owned business, leaders within Hospitality Org also attempted to develop a sense of family. Rather than providing free food for example, one Managing Director recalled attempting to create a sense of unity by increasing knowledge sharing between employees, this could then be the catalyst from which relationships could develop. The Managing Director provided the following example where they were discussing their approach to problem solving:

> *""You want some advice? Well guess what? I don't know about the tills, I just don't know anymore. The generation I was on was sort of three, they are now on 14! The same till company, how on earth will I be able to programme that till now? I'm not in that scene any more. [Site B] can do it, [Site L] can do it", "OK, I'll ask them". And then they love it because they feel important, so they say "I'll tell you what, come tomorrow afternoon and I'll come and redo that with you", "oh great!" and then just chatting and getting on, it's a family! That's what I'm trying to do anyway!" (02-MD-HO).*

This example illustrates how the Managing Director's convictions to create a unified organisation where employees collaborate in the interest of achieving a shared vision, in this example how to work a till, appears to increase employee satisfaction and motivation levels; when employees are encouraged to communicate with one another in the interest of achieving a specified task, they will often begin to intuitively diversify the topic of conversation and begin to converse informally and on topics unrelated to the original task. This therefore develops communities whereby individuals have more diverse personal networks upon which they can call upon, and the organisation experiences greater unity. The development of these internal communities appears to generate increased levels of employee motivation and satisfaction, inferences made based upon utterances such as *"they love it because they feel important"*. This example therefore illustrates the importance of empowering employees in the interest of developing internal communities; by the Managing Director directing employees towards collaboration and team-work, they have initiated a process whereby communities can develop, and employees experience personal benefits, such as greater levels of satisfaction in the workplace.

In addition to the Managing Director's attempts, employees also recognised the necessity to take responsibility for establishing unity at a group level. Social gatherings and non-work-related activities were organised in all three participating organisations and received favourable comments from employees; individuals appeared to enjoy opportunities to interact with colleagues in informal, social settings:

> *"They do have a few social gatherings… we all went out and everybody gets on… you've got at the end of the table me a senior manager, you've got him who hurt his thumb and his wife,*

and then on the end you've got the junior who drives the forklift, so we're all mixed and sat together and it's really good" (06-SM-MO).

As the senior manager continued, the informal events are often performance-based or reliant upon individuals to take the initiative and responsibility for creating a sense of unity:

"We've got a whiteboard [in the kitchen] *so if we think it's about time we went out for a drink or a bite to eat or the company every so often if we hit a certain amount will take us all out and treat us all" (03-SM-MO)*.

Of significance here are the structures in place within the organisation to facilitate and empower employees to take responsibility for creating a sense of unity and internal communities. Senior figures have provided the tools and equipment, in this example the whiteboard in the communal area, so that any employee can take responsibility to organise an event as and when they choose to. It also appears that the employees recognise the generosity of the organisation who provide *"treats"* for employees for high performance. Although highly transactional in nature, this appears to be one method employed by the organisation to unify colleagues, utilising group rewards as a motivational tool to enhance productivity within the organisation and assist in the development of relationships between colleagues. A further element to note from these examples is the recognition of the leaders that employees operate within a network that includes both work and family life and what occurs in one place, can impact upon the other. The extension of an invitation to significant others, such as the Christmas Party or other social events, illustrates the recognition that the leaders possess with regards to understanding the different needs and desires of employees, a foundational attribute of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

With regards the impact of servant leadership on communities external to the organisation, attempts to create a shared vision within the organisation, a foundational concept with regards promoting unity (Liden et al, 2008), often entailed a focus on creating value for external communities; this was often manifested through CSR-related activities, rendering community development a consequence of servant leadership. The following example illustrates how the promotion of unity internally within an organisation ultimately resulted in positive contributions to wider communities:

"[Employee A] had a heart problem and he's back fit now so we raised money for that foundation; [Employee B] who is one of the best workers this firm has ever had, he died of a brain tumour so we've raised money, so there's reasons like that and I'm not saying that's entirely brought it on but that definitely helps, to do something for children as well, disadvantaged children" (13-EM-CO).

This extract provides an insight into how the sense of unity established within an organisation, the sense of 'we are all in this together', can result in positive contributions with regards external communities in the form of CSR. The example suggests that when respected employees suffer ill-health, the organisation comes together to engage in philanthropic acts to support both the individual as well as other people who may also be suffering in the wider community. Van Dierendonck (2011) suggests that authenticity in the domain of servant leadership relates to leaders expressing their true selves, acting with integrity and upholding a generally perceived moral code. On the understanding that integrity relates to honesty and ethics, this provides an insight into the manifestation of Carroll's (1991) ethical responsibility. The leader's authentic actions manifest themselves in the present example by adhering to ethical responsibilities of the organisation, in this case by doing what is perceived as right and fair above legal requirements; the employee was a servant to the organisation and therefore the leader took the unfortunate circumstances and created some good out of it for the local community, involving other employees in the process, thus facilitating their engagement in CSR-related activities simultaneously.

Understanding the organisations' operating as part of a wider collective and subsequent attempts to increase unity with local communities presented further opportunities from which to observe how servant leadership as a process can empower individual employees. Where employees are recruited from has already been illustrated as one method of engagement in CSR, but the demographic makeup of the organisations also appeared to unify the respective organisations with their local communities. The following extract for example illustrates the desire for employees to remain involved and active within their local communities as this is where they herald from, and the desire to make positive contributions towards these communities:

> *"Everyone who works for our company is not from far away, we are all local and I think it is supporting your local community to make the difference; and knowing that this business, we're not just here to make money, yes every business is about making money, but there's more to it, and looking outside the box and thinking 'how are we going to make a difference to everybody?'" (07-SM-MO)*.

These utterances provide several interesting insights with regards employees' perceptions of the relationship between their respective organisations and their local communities. As a result of being employed out of local communities, many employees possess the desire to support their local community *"to make a difference"*; there appears to be no financial incentive to make these positive contributions as the participant reports that the organisation believes in more than simply making money. This finding therefore appears to support Spears' (2004), Barbuto and Wheeler's (2006) and Liden et al's (2008) suggestion that servant leadership can build communities both within and external to an organisation. Until now, these theoretical postulations have remained largely neglected and exist as concepts as opposed to empirically confirmed. The findings of the present research however illustrate how through the empowerment of employees to engage in CSR-related activities, a consequence of servant leadership is the development and building of local communities. This also supports Carroll's (1991) basic principles of CSR such as organisations adhering to philanthropic responsibilities, and the requirement to develop a positive relationship between organisations and communities.

6.3. Summary

This section has descriptively presented the two distinct entities that were identified as assisting leaders in their efforts to empower employees through the notion of community, namely practising inclusivity and increasing unity. These two concepts are primarily focused on internal processes and structures present within the three organisations that participated in this research, and provide insights into the leader-employee relationship as well as how leaders attempt to create communities within their organisations that can ultimately benefit communities external to the organisation. By operating with an inclusive mindset, the process of servant leadership appeared to reduce perceived disparity across organisational hierarchies by facilitating the identification of CSR-related activities representative of the range of employees. Attempts to increase unity across the respective organisations appeared to result in the development of internal communities whereby colleagues were able to develop personal relationships with one another, as well as provide a platform through which to also engage in positive contributions towards external communities. Insights were also presented in relation to the nature of servant leadership's positioning within post-heroic approaches and CLS perspectives, drawing upon characteristics such as humility and the decision-making process.

Chapter 7: Integrative Analysis

Interest has grown in leadership approaches that consider a wider variety of stakeholders in their actions (Elliott and Stead, 2017; Dinh et al, 2014; Brown and Trevino, 2006), including stakeholders external to the organisation, potentially as a result of corporate irresponsibility and increased interest in the notion of CSR (Sheehy, 2015). One potential reason for corporate irresponsibility is individuals exhibiting unethical behaviours, stemming from charismatic, self-interested leaders (Tourish, 2014). One such leadership approach postulated to be able to transcend these unethical acts is servant leadership, as a result of its focus on the other (Patterson, 2003), its concern for community (Reinke, 2004), and its intrinsic moral dimension (Russell and Stone, 2002). Servant leadership has emerged as a distinguishable and desirable leadership approach in contemporary society (Liden et al, 2015) with interest continuing to increase in both the theoretical and practical realms; this however has led to the identification of areas lacking in understanding and requiring further exploration. A comprehensive literature review conducted at the outset of this research facilitated the recognition of three primary limitations within existing servant leadership literature; they were limitations associated with the different conceptualisations that exist, limitations associated with measurement tools and techniques, and issues pertaining to power and influence, such as how one can lead and serve simultaneously.

After Greenleaf's (1970) introduction of servant leadership, limited exploration into the concept occurred until the latter stages of the twentieth century (Northouse, 2016). Potentially as a result of a commonly agreed upon definition, multiple scholars offered individual considerations regarding their conceptualisations of servant leadership, a potential catalyst for the conceptual plurality that currently shrouds the concept (Eva et al, 2019). Conceptual plurality can be responsible for definitional incoherency (MacKenzie, 2003) which contributes to the second major limitation associated with servant leadership, namely that there are a number of measurement tools and techniques plaguing the field (Parris and Peachey, 2013). Multiple measurement instruments can significantly reduce the validity of a construct, how can one be sure that the same construct is at the centre of discussions for example, a weakness alluded to by Van Dierendonck (2011). The third critique arising out of the literature review relates to the distribution of power within servant leadership as a process, encapsulated by the way that leaders lead from a position of servility (Greenleaf, 1973; Crippen, 2017). Although suggested to be a primary distinguishing factor between servant leadership and alternative approaches to leadership (Grisaffe et al, 2016), there remain concerns regarding the contradictory nature of leading and serving simultaneously (Van and Patterson, 2015), that reflect apparently contradictory paradoxical expectations of leaders in contemporary society (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014).

By drawing upon the fields of CSR and Stakeholder Theory however, several of the limitations identified in the servant leadership literature can be at worst mitigated, and some potentially eradicated. The apparent shared foundational principles of servant leadership and CSR provide one avenue into the manifestation of the behaviours associated with servant leadership (Christensen et al, 2014), that is to say that engaging in CSR provides the contextual background in which to display the behaviours associated with servant leadership that distinguish it from other leadership approaches. Prevalent behaviours perceived to be foundational to servant leadership such as displaying altruism (which distinguishes servant leadership from transactional leadership approaches for example) (Patterson, 2003; Van Dierendonck, 2011), treating followers as ends in themselves as opposed to as a means to an end such as in virtually all other leadership approaches (Graham, 1991; Eva et al, 2019), and inherently possessing a concern for the community (again not present in virtually all other leadership approaches) (Liden et al, 2008), are example behaviours that are reportedly fundamental to the concept of CSR and by synergising the two fields, understanding can therefore be developed into both servant leadership and CSR. The present research was therefore conducted in accordance with the following research aim:

To develop understanding into the ways in which servant leadership is manifested in an organisation's CSR-related activities.

Considering the existing limitations to understanding in relation to servant leadership that were identified during the formative stages of this research and that gave rise to the present research aim, three research questions were designed in the interest of satisfying the research aim. They were:

RQ1: In what ways does servant leadership influence formal and informal organisational structures in relation to CSR?

RQ2: In what ways do relationships associated with servant leadership impact the nature of CSR-related activities within organisations?

RQ3: In what ways does servant leadership facilitate employee empowerment in the context of CSR-related activities?

Adopting an interpretive approach, 26 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with Managing Directors, managers, and non-managers of three SMEs located in North West England were conducted and analysed using a combination of thematic, semiotic and document analysis. This revealed three aggregated dimensions, *Providing Opportunities, Promoting Communication,* and *Empowering Employees*. This chapter begins with the presentation of a conceptual model that draws upon the three research questions which ultimately satisfy the research aim, providing theoretical insights into servant leadership through the lens of CSR. The chapter proceeds by affirming the main findings of the research with respect to each of the research questions.

7.1. <u>An Integrated Conceptual Model</u>

The three aggregated dimensions identified in the course of this research do not operate independently from one another. In accordance with contemporary leadership theory (Northouse, 2016), many different variables interact on the understanding of leadership as a process (as opposed to being inherent to an individual, for example), including situational factors (Stogdill, 1948; Zaccaro, 2007), the emergence of followership (Kellerman, 2012), and external pressures such as from societies and governments (Schwartz and Carroll, 2003). Emerging from this research however, was both the importance of the three aggregated dimensions as individual behaviours associated with servant leadership, as well as how they related to one another. Figure 9 provides a visual representation of the conceptual model.

The model recognises and incorporates the primary influences that were identified in this research with regards to developing understanding into the ways in which servant leadership could become manifested when observed in an organisation's CSR-related activities. The model comprises three primary variables, namely servant leadership which represents the role, behaviours and impacts of leaders within the leadership process, employees, and CSR; CSR is included in the model as this research was conducted into servant leadership in relation to CSR and it is therefore important to recognise the influence of CSR on the processes observed in this research. The model reflects the importance of relationships within servant leadership, the double-ended arrow reflecting the symbiotic nature of the leader-employee relationship whereby each variable (i.e. leader and employee) possess the capacity to influence one another. Recognition of this relationship reflets the findings of this research with regards servant leadership's resonance with post-heroic approaches to leadership as opposed to unidirectional, heroic approaches. The aggregated dimensions identified (providing opportunities, promoting communication, and empowering employees) incorporate structures which can be utilised both independently and collaboratively depending on the needs and desires of individual employees in accordance with the focus on individuals present within servant leadership theory.

The double-ended arrows are an important feature of this model as they reflect the nature of power and influence identified within the process of servant leadership in this research. One of the primary challenges for leaders within contemporary organisations is the desire for leaders to adopt seemingly contradictory positions simultaneously (Parush and Koivunen, 2014), such as providing direction while relinquishing control. At a conceptual level, servant leadership has been similarly challenged as embodying these oxymoronic expectations, primarily when considering how one is expected to lead and serve simultaneously (Van Dierendonck and Patterson, 2015). The present research however contributes to these discussions by drawing upon the aggregated dimensions to illustrate how servant leadership can incorporate structures that enable leaders to lead from a position of servility, thereby satisfying the requirement to simultaneously adopt apparently oxymoronic positions. The leader-employee relationship is important in this regard as the contradictory positions emerge as a result of the differing requirements of individual employees. The development of high-quality dyadic relationships between leaders and followers (over-looking the over-dichotomisation between leader and follower in this instance) enables understanding to develop so that leaders are able to adopt behaviours and actions in accordance with the needs of individual employees.

The three research questions discerned as part of this research can be located within the conceptual model. The first research question pertains to the formal and informal structures influenced by servant leadership in the interest of developing understanding into the manifestation of servant leadership. The formal and informal structures primarily sit within the aggregated dimensions identified as part of this research; the structures are mutually dependent upon additional aspects explored in this research however, such as the nature of relationships within servant leadership as a process or how power is distributed across an organisation. For example, behaviours associated with *Promoting Communication* such as increasing the propensity for involuntary meetings to occur or establishing formal committees through which to develop personal responsibility in individual employees, provide insights into the structures influenced by servant leadership and therefore provide insights into how servant leadership can become manifested within CSR-related activities.

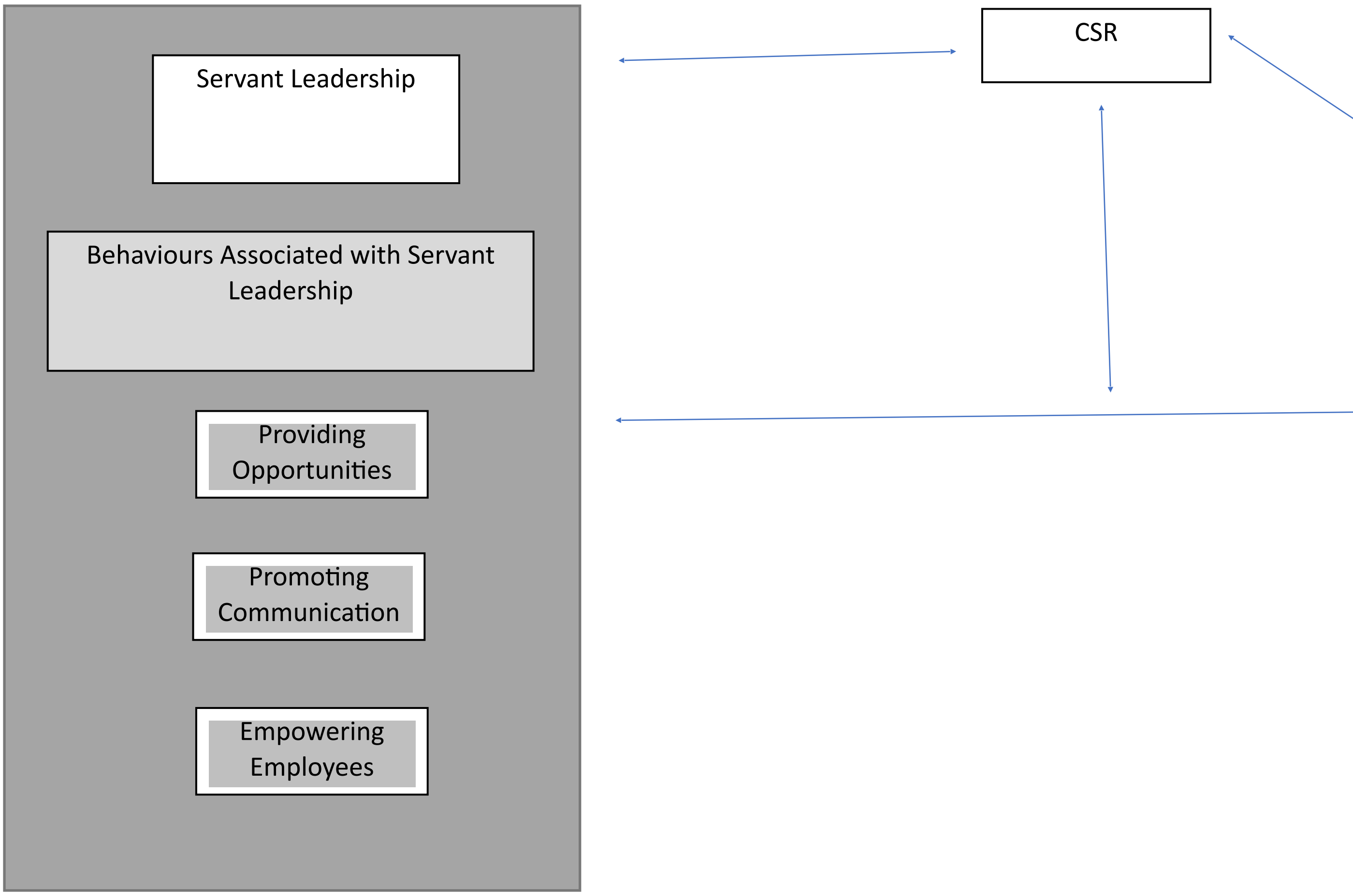


Figure 9: An integrative model illustrating the process of servant leadership in relation to employees and CSR.

The second research question pertains to the ways in which the leader-employee relationship impacts the nature of CSR-related activities an organisation pursues; it is represented in the conceptual model (Figure 9) by the two-way arrow linking servant leadership to employees. The findings of this research suggest that the three aggregated dimensions assist servant leadership in the process of creating high-quality dyadic relationships, unique to the individual agents involved in them. Understanding the different needs of individual employees is an important aspect of creating a high-quality dyadic relationship (Liden et al, 2016) which enables leaders to positively influence followers (Park, 2017); the findings of the present research imply that different communication methods facilitate this development in understanding into the needs of individual followers. As a result, leaders were able to enact appropriate behaviours with regards individual employees, such as tolerating mistakes when occurring in the interest of personal development or cultivating personal contributions such as redesigning a garden for a local individual with disabilities, as they use a combination of structures (both formal and informal) to develop knowledge and understanding into the needs and desires of individual people. The influence of employees in determining the leader-employee relationship was also observed in this research, a finding that is in accordance with contemporary understandings of leadership as a process beyond heroic leadership (Kellerman, 2012).

The third research question relates to the notion of employee empowerment in the context of CSR-related activities and is therefore primarily observable in the *Empowering Employees* aggregated dimension. It is important to note however that empowerment is not limited to this aggregated dimension and it was observed across the structures utilised within servant leadership as a process as well as in the relationships associated with servant leadership. Empowerment can be considered a foundational tenet of leadership (Van Dierendonck, 2011); irrespective of one's approach to servant leadership, empowerment appears to feature heavily in the discussions, be it through a virtuous approach such as Patterson's (2003), attempts to measure the construct such as Liden et al's (2008), or attempting to conceptualise servant leadership such as Russell and Stone (2002). Empowerment manifesting itself in the present research across the different structures identified as well as within the leader-employee relationship ensures the present research contributes to knowledge pertaining to the notion of empowerment within servant leadership theory by illustrating how induvial employee empowerment can be achieved in light of the discussions between post-heroic approaches to leadership and CLS. The collective and participatory nature of post-heroic approaches (Sobral and Furtado, 2019) resonates with some of the formal structures observed in the present research whereby employees were empowered to contribute towards strategy and decision-making in the context of CSR-related activities. Similarly, authentic autonomy and ownership were instilled within employees to achieve shared visions through additional structures and communication channels that further supplemented the development of employee empowerment. Employees were therefore empowered to contribute personal and meaningful additions towards CSR-related activities.

The theoretical framework guiding this research was informed by Van Dierendonck's (2011) conceptualisation of servant leadership. It is important to reiterate that although based upon the understanding that servant leadership remains an equivocal concept that lacks an agreed upon definition (Eva et al, 2019), it was important to establish a basis from which to explore the construct grounded in the writings of others. The present research develops understanding beyond the theoretical framework by enhancing understanding into conceptually negated areas of servant leadership theory within the enactment of CSR-related activities, such as how servant leadership can negate difficulties associated with leading from a position of servility, the cyclical nature of servant leadership, and the notion of empowerment within leadership as a process. The findings are now explored further in the following three sub-sections where the three research questions are considered, and answers provided.

7.2. Returning to the Research Questions

This section discusses the most significant findings that were identified during the course of this research, in order to answer the three questions and ultimately satisfy the overarching research aim associated with this study.

7.2.1. RQ1: In what ways does servant leadership influence formal and informal organisational structures in relation to CSR?

In response to the first research question (RQ1), this research establishes the requirement for leaders to adopt a combination of both formal (i.e. committees) and informal (i.e. spaces for involuntary meetings) structures throughout their organisations and the need for these structures to operate simultaneously. This is in accordance with the inherent necessity within servant leadership for leaders to illustrate adaptability by adhering to the different needs and requirements of individual employees in order for both leader and follower to realise their maximum potential. Establishing formal and informal structures affords leaders the opportunity to develop high-quality relationships with employees whereby they can develop personal relationships which provides an insight into each employees' personal needs and desires. Employees are also assisted in developing relationships with fellow employees which creates a more inclusive, familial organisational culture.

Within contemporary organisations, leaders are expected to simultaneously adopt contradictory positions (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014), such as being in control and also relinquishing control, and being able to plan while surrendering to unknown and unforeseen events (Parush and Koivunen, 2014). This resonates with one of the primary critiques of servant leadership, specifically how one is expected to lead from a position of servility (Hale and Fields, 2007) as servility contravenes traditional understandings of leading, such as how can one provide direction while serving? The present research however identified that the process of servant leadership can facilitate leading from a position of servility when considered in relation to CSR-related activities, drawing upon both formal and informal structures to achieve this.

When leaders establish formal structures such as the CSR Committee within Construction Org, they are leading their organisation's CSR endeavours; they maintain control and direction with regards to which CSR-related activities their organisation engages in. However, by subsequently relinquishing responsibility for the formal structures by continuing to engage in the committee but only as a member and not the head of the committee, the servant leaders are able to establish a culture in which employees are afforded the opportunity to take responsibility for the direction of future CSR activities without fear of formal repercussions. Employees are provided with the opportunity to engage with senior stakeholders and build relationships, focus on personal development by enhancing their leadership credentials, and be part of a collective unit which focuses on the betterment of society. Examples such as these also illustrate how servant leaders ensure they serve the needs of other committee members ahead of their own as ultimate decisions may contravene their desires.

Similarly, informal structures such as creating spaces for involuntary meetings to occur by having one kitchenette area or having employees all enter and exit the building through one door for example, increases the propensity for employees to interact with one another spontaneously. This serves to increase knowledge sharing between employees, both concerning and not concerning CSR-related activities, and facilitates the development of relationships between employees. Figure 10 shows the relationship between how the process of servant leadership promotes the use of both formal and informal structures to provide direction to employees, with the structures operating simultaneously, whereby employees are able to seek their direction from the channels they prefer at the individual level.

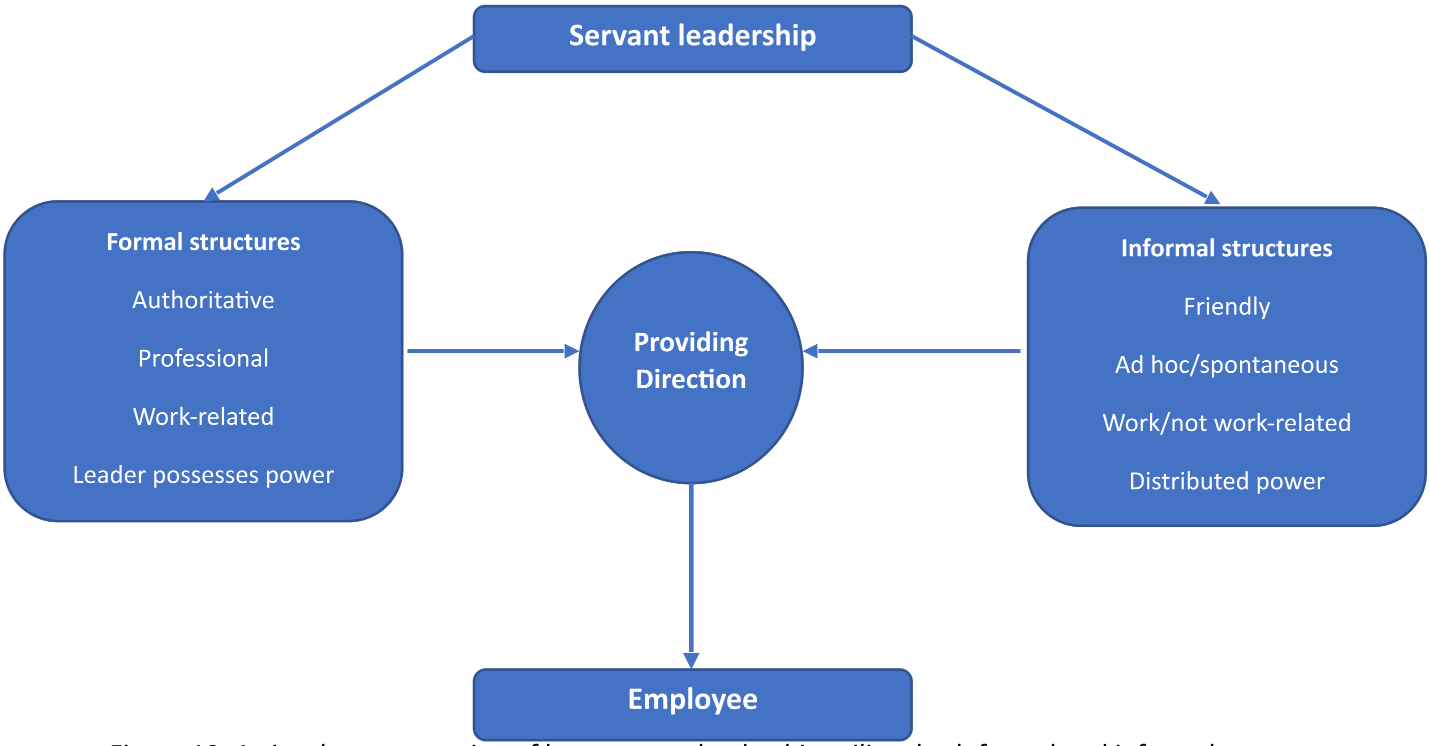


Figure 10: A visual representation of how servant leadership utilises both formal and informal structures in the manifestation of providing direction

Studies concerning the formalised structures initiated within an organisation with respect to CSR-related activities have predominantly occurred within large organisations (Perrini et al, 2007). CSR is traditionally understood as a prerogative of larger organisations as a result of additional resources, time and influence compared to smaller companies (Compapiano et al, 2012). However, the importance of SMEs within the realm of CSR has increasingly been acknowledged (Duman et al, 2016), perhaps unsurprisingly given that 99.9% of all businesses in the UK are considered SMEs (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2019). SMEs primarily operate with less rigid, less formalised structures than larger organisations (Spence, 2002), which potentially explains why SMEs often unknowingly engage in CSR (Jenkins, 2004; Perrini, 2006); a lack of formal structure and guidance leads to ad-hoc CSR activities. The findings of this research therefore provide interesting insights into how the behaviours associated with servant leadership can be manifested through formal structures associated with CSR-related activities and in particular the notion of leading from a position of servility within servant leadership theory.

Perhaps the fundamental component of servant leadership with respect to traditional notions of leadership is encapsulated in Van Dierendonck's (2011) foundational characteristic of providing direction. Van Dierendonck (2011: 1234) suggests that providing direction includes ensuring that "people know what is expected of them… [and] providing the right degree of accountability"; this has been suggested to be a salient dimension of high-quality dyadic personal interpersonal relations (Ferris et al, 2009). As such, establishing formal structures such as the varied formal channels of communication utilised across the three organisations that participated in this research, facilitated the leaders' abilities to outline expectations, provide a context in which to enable employees to embrace such expectations as taking ownership and responsibility, and subsequently permit leaders to lead from of a position of servility by illustrating their intent to develop individual employees. Formal communication channels such as the strategic placement of posters around organisational premises, and empowering employees through the notion of community by practising inclusivity and increasing unity, ensured leaders were able to set expectations for employees as well as promote any voluntary or additional engagement if employees were so inclined.

Other formal channels of communication, such as the State of the Nation talks, enabled leaders to engage with employees in a professional context where interactions were organisation-centric, that is to say that interactions primarily focused on organisation-related activities. Employees were then able to embrace the degree of responsibility to which they felt comfortable and develop in both a personal and professional capacity. This is in accordance with previous literature relating to formal structures within organisations, particularly with regards formal channels of communication. Formal channels of communication have been illustrated to transmit information, convey messages, and generally inform employees of policies and regulations apparent to the organisation (Johnson et al, 1994). As well as acting in accordance with previous understandings, the findings of the present research suggest that when adopted within the process of servant leadership, formal channels of communication are used to provide opportunities to employees as well as enable leaders to further understand the needs and desires of individual employees, thus increasing the propensity to establish high-quality leader-employee relations.

In addition to formal structures, informal structures were also established across all three participating organisations that enabled leaders to lead from a position of servility. Leaders actively encouraged employees to take the initiative and pursue CSR-related activities that they had a personal interest in, offering support through informal channels such as operating with an open-door policy and operating in a manner in which employees were encouraged to take responsibility for decisions relating to which CSR activities to pursue. Informal structures were identified as resonating with current understandings of informal channels within present literature, such as the ad-hoc nature of chats being utilised by leaders to reduce the perceived distance between leader and employee (Erskine, 2012); unique understandings are however presented in the present research with regards to how informal structures were utilised by the leaders to develop high-quality dyadic relationships with employees where leaders were perceived to be humble to the extent that they were employees' equals, thus satisfying servant leadership's premise that leaders are *primus inter pares* (first among equals) (Crippen, 2017).

In this research, it was identified that the process of servant leadership included establishing informal structures which assisted in the development of high-quality dyadic relationships across the respective organisational hierarchies. Informal structures were implemented in the interest of increasing the propensity for colleagues to interact with one another on an informal basis, such as engaging in *involuntary meetings* as a result of having one kitchenette area; this appeared to assist knowledge transfers throughout organisations, including enhancing awareness of CSR-related activities. Spontaneous interactions of an informal nature have previously been shown to be linked to increased knowledge sharing within organisations (Lubit, 2001) as the spaces in which this knowledge sharing occurs enables colleagues to use new knowledge to their advantage, build an array of contacts, and learn more than previously possible. This study supports these findings as well as enhances them by suggesting that increasing the propensity for employees to engage in informal communications through the realisation of informal structures assisted in the development of both leader-employee and employee-employee social networks, particularly when the behaviours associated with servant leadership are exhibited.

By utilising a combination of both formal and informal structures therefore, the process of servant leadership appears to overcome the difficulties associated with leading and serving simultaneously. As is demonstrated by Figure 10, the formal and informal structures influenced by the manifestation of servant leadership in the context of CSR-related activities satisfies the differing requirements of individual employees; those that prefer traditional notions of the workplace can engage in the formal practices and structures and those more inclined towards spontaneity can engage in more ad-hoc, informal structures while the leader maintains an ability to provide direction. It is important to note that formal and informal structures do not operate independently to one another, rather they operate in collaboration with one another so that one supports the other. This finding therefore contributes to servant leadership literature by enhancing understanding into how the process of servant leadership establishes and utilises both formal and informal structures to achieve the ability to lead from a position of servility, when considered in the context of CSR.

7.2.2. RQ2: In what ways do relationships associated with servant leadership impact the nature of CSR-related activities within organisations?

RQ2 is reflective of the shift within leadership studies that recognises the importance of relationships within leadership as a process, both in terms the leader-employee relationship and leader-stakeholder relationship more broadly. The study of leadership has spanned multiple millennia (Grint, 2011) and therefore encompasses a multitude of factors such as contexts, processes and behaviours (Northouse, 2016). The importance of relationships within leadership as a process have emerged over time in accordance with developments of leadership approaches from heroic through to post-heroic and CLS (Collinson, 2014), and is an area of servant leadership theory that requires further exploration (Eva et al, 2019).

Emerging interest in the field of servant leadership has revealed areas currently lacking in understanding, such as the cyclical nature of the construct (Crocker and Canevello, 2008) whereby once one is exposed to servant leadership, they then embrace the approach themselves. The findings of this study contribute to developing understandings relating to conceptual limitations regarding the cyclical nature of servant leadership by drawing upon the positive impact that employees experience when engaging in CSR and how the employees are therefore more likely to encourage others to similarly participate, arising as a result of the relationships associated with servant leadership. This research identified two conceptual features of servant leadership theory to be particularly related to its cyclical nature, namely interpersonal acceptance and stewardship. Both aspects feature prominently within existing servant leadership literature (Spears, 2004; Sendjaya et al, 2008; Murari and Gupta, 2012; Van Dierendonck, 2011) suggesting its centrality to the concept.

Van Dierendonck's (2011) interpretation of interpersonal acceptance encompasses an ability to empathetically adopt the psychological perspectives of others and relate to these in a warm, compassionate manner, irrespective of the potential for conflict, an understanding unanimously supported by later scholars (Reddy, 2019). Interpersonal acceptance was identified in the course of this research as closely related to philanthropic acts of CSR. For example, opportunities were provided to individuals who had experienced difficult periods in their lives on the understanding that this may lead to conflict or difficult situations within the workplace; these difficult moments were anticipated and accepted by the servant leaders however and overcome through the development of relationships and understanding the positions from which employees herald. Furthermore, leaders also demonstrated their interpersonal acceptance when tolerating mistakes, providing that employees used the mistakes to develop and learn. When observing behaviours such as these, employees appeared to recognise the opportunities they had been provided with and subsequently sought opportunities to provide similar opportunities for others within their local communities, thus appearing to evidence the cyclical nature of servant leadership. Employees appearing to have reflected upon the positive impact of servant leadership as a process from a personal perspective resulted in the manifestation of the cyclical aspect of servant leadership as the employees subsequently sought opportunities to benefit others, just as they had benefited themselves.

The foundational characteristic of stewardship (Van Dierendonck, 2011) also appeared to contribute towards the manifestation of servant leadership's cyclical nature in practice. Encompassing taking control for the larger organisation while simultaneously aiming towards service instead of control and self-interest (Block, 1993; Spears, 1995), stewardship has formed a central tenet of servant leadership theory. Spears (2002 and 2010), Russell and Stone (2002) Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) have all expressed the importance of the notion of stewardship within their writings. Furthermore, Eva et al (2019) suggest that through the mechanism of social learning theory, enacting stewardship promotes role model-like behaviours, which further enhances the cyclical nature of servant leadership. Drawing upon discussions in the field of social psychology reveals the close assimilation between role models and motivating others to behave in accordance with oneself (Morgenroth et al, 2015); this therefore suggests that the manifestation of the cyclical nature of servant leadership can be located in the role model-like behaviours exhibited within servant leadership.

Behaviours relating to stewardship were manifested in the present research in examples such as when leaders facilitated employees' cultivation of personal contributions towards CSR-related activities. Leaders were able to establish cultures across their organisations that provided opportunities to employees to contribute towards CSR activities that resonated with them and that they had personal convictions towards, as well as promoting the notion of reciprocal trust whereby leaders and followers were mutually trusting of one another. Leaders were able to develop personal relationships with employees through a number of different methods including both formal (i.e. committees) and informal (i.e. engaging in chats) structures that enabled employees to take ownership and responsibility to cultivate personal contributions towards causes employees were affiliated towards with leaders trusting their employees to be involved in the decision-making process. Leaders were able to act as role models towards their employees by providing resources and a contextual backdrop from which employees were encouraged to engage in CSR, leaders illustrating the benefits of engaging to employees through their own behaviours. The servant leaders were therefore able to maintain control over the wider organisation enabling them to "act as caretakers" (Van Dierendonck, 2011: 1234) while simultaneously acting as a role model for employees to follow and re-enact in terms of behaviour.

The simultaneous adoption of both formal and informal communication channels also appeared to heavily influence the leader-employee relationship, both in relation to CSR-related activities as well as wider commitments. This research illustrates the importance of using formal channels of communication, particularly with regards conveying information and enabling employees to seek information when necessary; informal channels of communication on the other hand served to reduce the distance between leaders and employees arising as a result of the organisational hierarchy, which when considered collectively appeared to create a more familial culture throughout the respective organisations. Alternative informal channels of communication, such as walking around sites and engaging with employees on a one-to-one basis, also further enabled leaders to illustrate their role model-like behaviours as this appeared to motivate the workforce and increase individual employees' satisfaction levels. The leaders' understanding of their position as role models was reflected in the metaphor of a shadow by one Managing Director, which demonstrates the impact of leaders on their employees. As with formal and informal structures, formal and informal channels of communication were utilised within the leader-employee relationship to establish high-quality, dyadic relationships between agents so that leaders were in a position to understand the individual needs and desires of employees. Drawing upon this knowledge enables leaders to adopt appropriate behaviours that satisfy individual follower preferences which further propagates the high-quality relationship.

In addition to internal relationships between leaders, employees and colleagues, the relationship between servant leadership and external communities has also been identified as important. Two influential studies relating to servant leadership, those of Spears (1995) and Liden et al (2008) both propose that servant leadership results in creating value for the community and local areas.

Exhibiting concern for others, both internal and external to the organisation, is a foundational construct of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1979; Eva et al, 2019) and one which it can be argued forms the foundation of CSR as an explicit consequence of servant leadership. Servant leadership theory includes a natural disposition to positively contribute towards local communities (Spears, 2004; Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006), a desire manifested in the present research through philanthropic responsibilities associated with CSR. Formal channels of communication such as newsletters and strategically located posters communicated the leaders' intentions to positively contribute towards local communities external to the organisation; this contributed towards the development of an organisational culture which similarly encouraged employee participation in CSR-related activities. The utilisation of employees' existing relationships such as coaches of junior football teams, members of charitable organisations such as the Rotary, or the reputation of the organisation within local communities as a positive influence, all contributed towards positive contributions towards local communities located within philanthropic acts associated with CSR. Existing relationships with external stakeholders provided a context through which organisations could facilitate employees' participation in CSR-related activities, such as delivering presentations relating to employment opportunities within local schools. There is evidence to suggest in the present research therefore that servant leadership positively contributes towards both internal and external communities, although there remains scope to explore CSR as an explicit consequence of servant leadership taking into consideration additional variables such as regulatory requirements and stakeholder pressures.

Although the notion of power is explored more comprehensively in the following section, it is important to note its importance to the leader-employee relationship here. Findings of this research support previous research that suggests the importance of including employees in the decision-making process in the interest of creating a high-quality dyadic relationship (Murari and Gupta, 2012); this study extends these findings however by drawing upon the field of CSR to apply knowledge of the decision-making process to servant leadership, which results in developments in understanding relating to how servant leaders lead and serve simultaneously. Behaviours associated with fostering a sense of autonomy in employees in the interest of establishing a sense of ownership for both internal and external consequences of one's own actions, such as leaders instilling confidence in their employees to be able to complete a given task independently or to make a decision independently, appeared to assist in establishing leader-employee relationships founded upon support, direction and personal development. Trusting relationships were therefore developed whereby both stakeholders understood the position of the other and employees were thus encouraged to follow their leaders, particularly with regards to emulating their CSR activities. Servant leaders acting as role models for employees therefore appeared to influence how they can lead from a position of servility, guiding both the direction of the organisation and employees without having to relinquish overall responsibility. This would therefore support Spears (1995), Barbuto and Wheeler (2006), and Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) who suggest that the notion of stewardship is central to servant leadership, and a feature of the approach that differentiates it from alternative approaches.

7.2.3. RQ3: In what ways does servant leadership facilitate employee empowerment in the context of CSR-related activities?

Although considered a foundational component of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011; Schneider and George, 2011), the present research contributes to understanding the ways in which servant leadership encourages employee empowerment in practice. Hoch et al (2018) suggest that servant leadership adds incremental variance compared to transformational leadership (as well as ethical and altruistic leaderships respectively), but further research is required into how this is achieved (Schneider and George, 2011). The findings of the present research demonstrate how servant leadership facilitates individual employee empowerment in the context of CSR-related activities. Utilising a number of formal and informal structures and communication channels within the relationships associated within servant leadership, leaders were able to invite employees into decision-making processes, where employees subsequently took ownership and responsibility for CSR-related decisions. This therefore illustrated how servant leadership can develop employee empowerment when considered in relation to CSR.

Empowerment forms a fundamental aspect of servant leadership literature. As well as featuring as the first characteristic suggested by Van Dierendonck (2011) in his much-cited synthesis of the literature, it also features heavily in the works of Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), Liden et al (2015), and Eva et al (2019); Eva et al (2019) however suggest in their recent review that empowerment is one behaviour associated with servant leadership that requires further examination. One potential reason for the omnipresent nature of empowerment across conceptualisations is because it is unconditional upon other variables, that is it is a more general approach to encouraging followers to achieve their maximum potential than the characteristic of forgiveness for example, which would be predicated upon followers making a mistake or doing something wrong (Van Dierendonck et al, 2017). Interestingly, Liden et al (2015) suggest that empowering individuals encompasses leaders trusting followers with responsibility, autonomy, and decision-making influence; despite this, there are no practical examples of how leaders provide responsibility or establish employee autonomy beyond the decision-making process. The present research therefore contributes to this by illustrating how leaders grant employees responsibility, autonomy and decision-making influence, all within the context of CSR, therefore contributing towards understanding relating to the manifestation of servant leadership. This also contributes towards discussions pertaining towards the distribution of power within the manifestation of servant leadership.

Through the process of servant leadership an organisational culture is created that incorporates both formal and informal channels of communication within both formal and informal organisational structures, such as committees or enhancing the propensity to engage in involuntary meetings. Structures such as these often resulted in the provision of opportunities for employees, which they were supported and encouraged to take without fear of repercussions. The notion of tolerating mistakes here is important as it differentiates servant leadership from alternative leadership approaches, based upon the notion of forgiveness and understanding. The desire to grant responsibility to employees, evident in examples such as invitations to participate in decision-making processes to pursue CSR activities or not, supports the findings of Liden et al (2015) and Van Dierendonck et al (2017) by illustrating how through the channel of CSR, servant leaders are able to manifest their intentions to empower individuals. Qiu and Dooley (2019: 205) suggest that "empowering people seems to be a skill that fosters a pro-active, self-confident attitude among employees and encourages others to solve problems at their own discretion".

The decision-making process is foundational to many conceptualisations of empowerment (Van Dierendonck, 2011, Konczak et al, 2000); exploring how decisions are made in relation to CSR-related activities in the course of this research provides insights into the empowerment of individual employees as a result of servant leadership as a process. On the understanding that power "is the capacity or potential to influence… others' beliefs, attitudes, and courses of action" (Northouse, 2016: 10), those invited into the decision-making process are afforded at least a form of power and thus empowerment; further investigations are therefore required into the distribution of power within the decision-making processes in decisions relating to CSR to understand the empowerment of individual employees within servant leadership as a process. The implementation of both formal and informal structures within the present research, in the context of making decisions relating to

CSR-related activities, is enlightening in terms of highlighting how the decision-making process can be used within servant leadership to empower employees.

Formal structures such as Construction Org's Committee were initiated for several reasons as explored in previous chapters, but amongst the motivations are two which relate to the empowerment of individual employees directly, namely at the individual level as a mechanism to include individuals from diverse areas of the business to assist in their personal development, and secondly at the organisational level as a mechanism to ensure CSR-related activities were representative of the whole organisation. At the individual level, employees who were not necessarily aware of how to conduct themselves in a formal meeting as they were more comfortable 'on the tools' were provided with the opportunity to engage in these new environments and contribute in a meaningful manner, thereby being empowered to experience personal development.

With regards ensuring CSR-related activities were representative of the whole organisation, the servant leader initiated a formal structure through which to canvass the opinions of their entire organisation and subsequently relinquished control of the decision-making process to ensure a democratic process was followed when deciding on which CSR-related activities to pursue. Employees were not only invited to contribute towards discussions and provide opinions but empowered with responsibility for overall decision-making. This strongly resonates with notions of distributed responsibility within post-heroic traditions whereby leadership is distributed among a set of individuals rather than being centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts as a superior (Pearce & Conger, 2003) and would be reflective of more traditional heroic approaches to leadership. However, critics of post-heroic traditions (Collinson, 2014; Fletcher, 2004) would suggest that the power dynamics are not considered in this distributed model of decision-making and there may be additional variables influencing the decision-making process (Sagi, 2015), potentially based upon the archetypes of power derived historically incorporating aspects such as gender, race, and sex (Elliott and Stead, 2008). This therefore necessitates considerations relating to CLS.

Lumby (2013: 584) suggests that "what is not fully acknowledged or theorized [specifically within distributed leadership but also within post-heroic approaches generally] is the relationship between power and inequalities, and the degree of tension that may lie submerged beneath the dominant normative narrative". In the case of Construction Org's Committee, the Managing Director was aware that it could be perceived that their opinion solely could be taken as "the dominant normative narrative", and if not the Managing Director's then an employees' similar to them in terms of being a white, heterosexual male atop the organisational hierarchy. However, their implementation of the committee, incorporating employees from across the organisational hierarchy, was done so to negate the regular "dominant normative narrative" for decision-making from prevailing. The personal retraction by the Managing Director further supports attempts to ensure the committee was representative of the workforce and illustrates the nature of the structures initiated to ensure that CSR-related activities were bespoke and representative of the wider organisation. Considering attempts to realise employee empowerment therefore brings into question whether servant leadership adheres to the principles of post-heroic leadership approaches or CLS.

In terms of post-heroic approaches, servant leadership promotes collaboration and diversity of opinion (Pearce and Conger, 2003; Sobral and Furtado, 2019) demonstrated by inclusivity and ensuring decisions are representative of the workforce. The power dynamics that CLS suggests post-heroic approaches overlook (Collinson, 2014) are considered by the Managing Director, demonstrated by their removal from the decision-making process as a result of their recognition of their personal power. The findings of this research would therefore suggest that servant leadership embraces the collaborative and participatory (Crevani et al, 2007; Sobral and Furtado, 2019) characteristics of post-heroic approaches but extends beyond this by considering power dynamics in these distributed decision-making processes, therefore encompassing elements of CLS as well. CLS would suggest that agents in the leader-follower relationship are over-dichotomised (Collinson, 2005) and that either agent can at any given time adopt either role (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014); the withdrawal of the Managing Director in favour of achieving a decision representative of the wider organisation provides insights into how servant leadership incorporates aspects of both post-heroic leadership and CLS.

In addition to formal structures such as the CSR committee discussed above, informal structures implemented across the respective organisations also empowered employees regarding decisions relating to CSR. The opportunity to autonomously decide on whether to pursue a CSR-related request such as within Manufacturing Org empowered employees to take ownership and responsibility for causes they had a personal affiliation towards. Accumulated research suggests that leadership is unequally available to all, particularly in relation to gender and those in minority groups (Blackmore, 2006; Bush et al, 2006); the findings of this research however suggest that the process of servant leadership negates this closing of opportunities and ensures leadership opportunities are available to all, specifically in the context of CSR. Employees across the organisational hierarchy are empowered to lead their personal CSR-related activities as a result of being trusted to act autonomously with regard to deciding which activities to pursue, examples including donating resources to worthwhile causes or engaging with local children to promote opportunities to enhance their prospects. Distributing ownership and responsibility through informal channels in examples such as these provide further insights into the nature of servant leadership with respect to post-heroic approaches to leadership and CLS.

Critics of post-heroic approaches have suggested that leaders cannot grant individuals within a group holistic autonomy while maintaining a shared goal that all work towards (Murphy et al, 2009; Bolden et al, 2009). However, by establishing a serving culture through the process of servant leadership, the leaders have established a shared goal of assisting others and therefore implementing structures that facilitate employees' ability to work towards these goals in a manner that suits them. Overall, the same goal is being worked towards (i.e. service of others) but there are numerous structures and methods through which to achieve this. The analogy of climbing a mountain resonates here: the ultimate objective remains reaching the summit (service of others) but there are multiple paths through which to achieve this aim (the different structures implemented). Employees therefore experience empowerment through autonomy to decide on which activities to pursue which contribute to the shared goal of positively contributing to wider society in service of others.

7.3. Summary

This chapter has presented an integrated analysis of the findings identified throughout this research. It began with the presentation and explanation of the conceptual model derived as a result of the identification of three aggregated dimensions, namely Providing Opportunities, Promoting Communication, and Empowering Employees. The conceptual model incorporates the primary findings of this research, including the structures that support the manifestation of servant leadership specifically within the context of CSR-related activities, the importance of promoting both formal and informal communication channels in the interest of developing high-quality, dyadic relationships, and the notion of empowerment. Each of the three research questions were then considered and an answered provided.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This chapter draws upon the previous 7 chapters, holistically drawing them together to satisfy the over-arching research aim of this thesis, to develop understanding into the ways in which servant leadership can become manifested in an organisation's CSR-related activities. The chapter will present both theoretical and practical contributes discerned from this research as well as address potential avenues for future research and limitations.

With regards the first research question (RQ1), it was identified that formal structures facilitated the ability to lead from a position of servility in the context of CSR, a foundational concept of servant leadership. Formal structures such as committees and formal channels of communication such as written documentations and posters contributed towards the development of organisational cultures practising unity and promoting inclusivity where all employees irrespective of hierarchical status were engaged with the organisation. Informal structures that increased the propensity for informal conversation to occur such as in the case of involuntary meetings facilitated the development of high-quality, dyadic relationships between both leaders and employees as well as between employees; this enabled leaders to act in accordance with the different needs and desires of each employee. Significantly, it was identified that formal and informal structures should operate simultaneously so that the needs of individuals could be met. This facilitated the ability for leaders to lead from a position of servility within servant leadership as a process, therefore satisfying expectations of leaders within contemporary society.

The notion of relationships, both within and external to the organisation in the context of leadership as a process, were explored within the second research question (RQ2). Specifically, this research identified the leader-follower relationship as a vehicle through which to explore the cyclical nature of servant leadership. Although postulated in its formative stages (Greenleaf, 1970), the cyclical nature of servant leadership remains theoretically neglected (Northouse, 2016). The present research contributes to these discussions by illustrating how the characteristics of interpersonal acceptance and stewardship associated with servant leadership are affiliated to leaders being perceived as role models, and employees therefore more likely to embrace similar practices and values. This research identifies how incorporating formal structures such as delivering company-wide presentations as well as informal structures such as operating with an open-door policy or encouraging employees to engage in spontaneous interactions with one another by increasing the propensity for chats for example, demonstrates how servant leadership as a process can result in employees perceiving their leaders to be role models, aspiring to emulate their actions having observed the positive contributions that arise as a result. These structures similarly facilitate positive contributions towards communities external to the organisation as they enhance the propensity for employee participation in CSR-related activities. Employees perceive their leaders as role models and embrace similar principles which increases the propensity for employees to similarly contribute towards their local communities. Employees are encouraged to take ownership and responsibility for CSR-related activities which thus entails a personal element to contributions. As with formal and informal structures in RQ1, it was important for formal and informal channels of communication to be practised simultaneously in the interest of developing the highest quality relationships, dependent upon the needs of individual agents within the relationships.

The third research question (RQ3) focuses on the notion of empowerment within servant leadership theory in the context of CSR-related activities. Findings suggest that the notion of empowerment provides insights into how the process of servant leadership facilitates the simultaneous adoption of seemingly contradictory positions, such as leading from a position of servility, which draws into question servant leadership's positioning within contemporary understandings of post-heroic leadership. Establishing formal structures such as committees and informal structures such as granting employees autonomy to cultivate personal contributions towards CSR-related activities facilitates employee empowerment by including employees in the decision-making process. Employees were ultimately responsible for deciding which CSR-related activities to pursue, which demonstrates ownership and responsibility, and ultimately empowerment. Invitations into the decision-making process suggest servant leadership is affiliated to post-heroic leadership approaches, grounded in the participatory and collaborative nature of activities, yet the granting of autonomy to pursue activities which may act in a contrary manner to the hierarchical leaders' desired course of action, suggests power dimensions more closely aligned with those of CLS traditions. Facilitating employee empowerment supports Collinson's (2005) reconsideration of followers as 'knowledgeable agents' with the capacity to contribute to the leadership process both in accordance with and contrary to leader perspectives. As such, further research is encouraged into the power dynamics within leadership approaches, such as servant leadership, where employees are granted autonomy and ownership to define strategies and pursue actions that potentially act in a contradictory manner to the perspectives of formal leaders.

8.1. Theoretical Contributions

This thesis drew upon existing literature pertaining to servant leadership to identify limitations in understanding, notable mentions must be extended here to the extensive reviews conducted by Van Dierendonck (2011) and Eva et al (2019) which served to guide the present research. By introducing Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1983; 1984; 1994) as well as theory associated with CSR, most notably Carroll's (1991) Pyramid Model of CSR, this research makes three theoretical contributions. The contributions have largely been drawn from the conceptual limitations that were comprehensively considered in Chapter 2, such as how servant leadership has been conceptualised in a multitude of different ways, potentially as a result of Greenleaf's (1970) lack of an objective definition of the construct, which has resulted in conceptual plurality plaguing the field (Eva et al, 2019). It was beyond the scope of the present research to negate all conceptual plurality, but by developing conceptual understandings into the core characteristics of servant leadership when considered in relation to CSR-related activities, this thesis enhances understanding into servant leadership as a process in the context of CSR-related activities. Exploring the manifestation of the core characteristics of servant leadership in relation to the enactment of CSR enhances conceptual understanding of servant leadership as a construct, providing insights into how behaviours associated with servant leadership such as providing opportunities, promoting communication, and empowering employees facilitate the manifestation of the core characteristics of servant leadership such as its cyclical nature, the notion of community, and leading from a position of servility.

The first theoretical contribution of this research is that it develops conceptual understanding into servant leadership as a process, specifically in relation to its cyclical nature and the notion of community. The cyclical nature of servant leadership was introduced in its inception by Greenleaf (1970) where it was suggested that servant leadership would produce a ripple effect throughout those that observed it; this postulation has remained largely neglected since however (Northouse, 2016). The present research theoretically contributes to these discussions by illustrating that when observed in the context of CSR-related activities, formal structures such as committees and informal structures such as leaders engaging in chats with employees, enables employees to observe the positive consequences of servant leadership. Recognising the positive shadow that is cast upon them, employees perceive their leaders as role models and therefore embrace and replicate behaviours. In the context of CSR-related activities in this research, servant leadership's cyclical nature was manifested in the foundational concept of stewardship.

Existing literature suggests that the notion of stewardship within servant leadership theory is related to leaders acting as role models as well as encapsulating the socially responsible actions of servant leaders (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Liden et al (2008) consider socially responsible actions within their characteristic of creating value for the community, but Liden et al's (2008) approach negates to consider the importance of accountability within socially responsible actions (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). Servant leadership has thus far only been postulated to increase the propensity for leaders to be seen as role models (Schwartz et al, 2016), drawing upon social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) as an explanation for this as well as the importance of leaders within organisations (Hunter et al, 2013), particularly with regards establishing organisational cultures (Warrick, 2017). The present research suggests that leaders are seen as role models by employees when they observe their leaders engaging in CSR-related activities and therefore adopt similar behavioural patterns. Employees are afforded the opportunity to embrace the practice of CSR, having observed the positive consequences emerging when their role model leaders have acted in certain ways. Employees are encouraged to participate in CSR-related activities and leaders facilitate this engagement through a number of formal and informal structures such as formal committees and increasing the propensity for informal chats between employees which propagates understanding of ongoing events as well as encourages additional participation.

Conceptual understanding is also developed in this research into the notion of community within servant leadership theory. Despite constituting a foundational characteristic in prominent conceptualisations such as Spears (1995), Laub (1999), and Liden et al (2008), the notion of community has experienced theoretical neglect since servant leadership's inception (Northouse, 2016). The present research satisfies Christensen et al's (2014) suggestion that understanding can be enhanced into the conceptual foundations of community within servant leadership theory by drawing upon CSR by providing insights into communities both internal and external to organisations; contributions are developed by drawing upon both Stakeholder Theory and Carroll's (1991) Pyramid Model of CSR. With regards to internal communities, formal structures such as invitations to attend sporting events contribute towards the development of a familial organisational culture whereby colleagues and leaders are considered extended family as opposed to merely work associates. Informal structures such as providing free food and having one kitchenette area for all employees to use increases the propensity for informal communications and chats to occur which similarly contributes towards this sense of unity and inclusivity, ensuring that employees are encouraged to communicate with colleagues they may otherwise not engage with. These spontaneous interactions then facilitate dialogues between employees whereby personal relationships can develop.

With regards communities external to the organisation, this research drew upon the philanthropic responsibilities associated with CSR (Carroll, 1991) and stakeholder perspective towards the decision-making process (Freeman, 1983) to illustrate how servant leadership positively contributes towards communities within the areas that they operate. Findings within the present research such as Manging Directors sacrificing financial profits to perform socially responsible acts including when maintaining employees to perform CSR-related projects when there was limited amounts of regular wok available, and by instilling ownership and responsibility in individual employees to contribute towards the projects and causes that they are personally affiliated with, demonstrates how servant leadership positively contributes towards communities external to organisations. The present research therefore theoretically contributes towards the notion of community within servant leadership theory by illustrating ways through which servant leadership builds communities within organisations as well as positively contributes towards communities external to the organisation, thereby contributing towards reducing the theoretical neglect the notion of community has experienced within servant leadership theory to date.

The second theoretical contribution of this research relates to one of the core principles of leadership theory, power and influence. Northouse (2016: 6) suggests "influence is the sine qua non of leadership" as without influence, leadership fails to exist; the contributions pertaining to power and influence identified within the present research are therefore not only important to servant leadership theory but also leadership studies more holistically. Contemporary leaders are expected to adopt seemingly contradictory positions simultaneously (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014) such as being in control and also relinquishing control, and being able to plan while surrendering to unknown and unforeseen events (Parush and Koivunen, 2014). This paradox is similarly at the foundations of servant leadership; Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) for example discuss the difficulties associated with simultaneously leading and serving as the two appear diametrically opposed. Traditional understandings of leadership within an organisational context correlate leading with power and responsibility (Coetzer et al, 2017) and serving as related to amongst other constructs, low self-esteem and powerlessness (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The present research however contributes to understanding how servant leadership as a process facilitates the ability for leaders to lead from a position of servility, specifically by adopting a number of formal and informal structures and communication channels that increase the propensity for employee empowerment.

Scholars such as Hannay (2009) and Van Dierendonck and Patterson (2015) have briefly considered how the contradictory positions of leading and serving do not necessitate the relinquishing of power but rather demonstrating virtues such as humility and empathy renders employees following through choice as opposed to hierarchical dictation. The second theoretical contribution of this research extends conceptual understanding here by illustrating how servant leadership contends with the issue of providing direction when leaders lead from a position of servility, within the context of CSR-related activities. Initiating formal structures such as committees that embrace a participatory and collaborative approach to decision-making akin to that of post-heroic leadership approaches, and then subsequently removing oneself from the committee as a result of the recognition of power dynamics, which resonates with CLS debates, illustrates a process through which servant leadership facilitates leading from a position of servility. A foundational concept across definitions of leadership pertains to the ability for leaders to influence others to achieve a shared or common objective (Northouse, 2016; Grint 2010); this is encapsulated within the characteristic of providing direction within servant leadership theory (Van Dierendonck, 2011). This second theoretical contribution therefore also provides insights into the foundational concept of providing direction within servant leadership theory by enhancing understanding into power dynamics within the process of servant leadership that facilitate the ability to lead and serve simultaneously and therefore concurrently adopt seemingly contradictory positions (Fairhurst and Connaughton, 2014).

Power is important to discussions of leadership because power is fundamental to the influence process (Northouse, 2016); it is arguably the notion of power that has resulted in major developments within leadership theories such as from heroic to post-heroic approaches and CLS. Sobral and Furtado (2019) suggest that post-heroic approaches are founded upon relational, collectivist and participatory values that promote the value of individuals. Eicher (2006) similarly suggests that post-heroic approaches seek input and consensus in the decision-making process which facilitates follower growth, even if this renders the leader's position indispensable. This resonates with the processes observed in the present research, such as the implementation of a committee with a specific aim of including employees across the organisational hierarchy in the decision-making process for CSR-related activities. The committee also acted as a vehicle through which to increase collaboration between employees, an additional feature of post-heroic approaches (Lumby, 2013).

However, CLS challenges post-heroic approaches in terms of "over-simplifying the complex, inter-connected, and shifting relationships that characterise leadership dynamics" (Collinson, 2020: 39) resulting in over-dichotomisation between leaders and followers (Elliott and Stead, 2017; Collinson, 2014); from the perspective of CLS, agents should be considered leader and follower depending on situation and context (Ryoma, 2020). This over-dichotomisation was observed in the present research but attempts were made to negate it, such as drawing upon the expertise of employees lower down the organisational hierarchy in the decision-making process as well as recognising the needs of employees as individuals; there are therefore elements of CLS within servant leadership as well as post-heroic elements. As such, the present research contributes to enhancing understanding into the nature of empowerment of individual employees with the process of servant leadership but further research is required with respect to understanding the position of servant leadership within post-heroic approaches and the nature of power dynamics within the manifestation of servant leadership to understand the notions of power and empowerment further. Further explorations into the empowerment of individual employees will provide additional insights into the manifestation of servant leadership's theoretical concept of providing direction.

The third theoretical contribution of this research relates to relationships within servant leadership and in particular the leader-employee relationship. As leadership studies have developed and begun to recognise additional variables within the context of leadership as a process (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2016), the importance of the leader-follower relationship has been increasingly recognised; this has continued with developments towards post-heroic approaches to leadership which are "relational, collectivist, and participatory" (Sobral and Furtdao, 2019) by nature. CLS scholars similarly recognise the importance of stakeholders within relationships concerned with leadership as a process, but are concerned by the over-dichotomisation between leader and follower (Cameron et al, 2006; Collinson, 2020) as well the distribution of power within the manifestation of leadership, such as the concealment of power to maintain its centralised nature (O'Connor et al, 2019; Collinson, 2020). A foundational concept within servant leadership theory is that leaders develop personal relationships with followers (Ferris et al, 2009) in the interest of enhancing the propensity for both leaders and followers to respectively realise their maximum potentials (Van Dierendonck, 2011). By exploring how servant leadership can become manifested within CSR-related activities, this research illustrates that processes associated with servant leadership that provide opportunities, promote communication, and empower employees, serve to establish the high-quality, dyadic relationships experienced within servant leadership.

The third theoretical contribution of the present research therefore draws upon the conceptual insights into servant leadership associated with the first theoretical contribution as well as the notion of power and influence explored in RQ3 to provide insights into the leader-follower relationship within servant leadership as a process in the context of CSR-related activities. The formally appointed hierarchical leaders that participated in this research demonstrated humility and understanding, encapsulated in the characteristics of interpersonal acceptance and stewardship within servant leadership theory (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Barbuto and Wheeler, 2006; Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011), to ensure that the distance between appointed leaders and other employees was reduced; this led to the development of high-quality, dyadic relationships whereby leaders were considered friends and confidents as opposed to bosses or colleagues, reflecting a more distributed approach to power within relationships. This also facilitated the development of a familial culture founded upon unity and inclusivity whereby all employees were perceived of equally and granted opportunities to contribute. Employees were also afforded the opportunity to experience personal development without fear of rebuke when mistakes were made, an additional aspect of interpersonal acceptance (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

The implantation of formal structures such as State of the Nation talks as well as informal structures such as operating with an open-door policy facilitates interactions between leaders and employees so that leaders are able to develop high-quality, dyadic relationships with individuals, an important feature of servant leadership theory (Ferris et al, 2009). Formal structures such as employing individuals who had experienced personal difficulties in their lives and informal structures such as engaging in spontaneous interactions and chats with employees throughout the organisational hierarchy enable leaders to understand the different needs and requirements of individual employees and act accordingly thereafter (Greenleaf, 1977; Laub, 1999; Patterson, 2003). Employees were empowered to initiate interactions with members throughout the organisational hierarchy, demonstrating a multidirectional distribution of power whereby followers co-construct leadership (Collinson, 2005), supporting the notion that servant leadership is affiliated to CLS. The implantation of formal structures such as State of the Nation talks as well as informal structures such as operating with an open-door policy facilitated interactions between members of the organisation throughout the hierarchy so that employees were empowered to initiate interactions, thereby satisfying the needs of individual employees.

Formal and informal communication channels were also utilised concurrently in the interest of developing high-quality, dyadic relationships. Formal channels of communication such as organisational newsletters and informal channels such as increasing the propensity for spontaneous chats to occur further supplement the foundational concept within servant leadership theory for the ability of leaders to understand the needs and requirements of individual employees (Greenleaf, 1977; Laub, 1999; Patterson, 2003) and subsequently provide opportunities for personal development (Van Dierendonck, 2011; Greenleaf, 1998), grounded in a high-quality, dyadic leader-employee relationship. The high-quality relationships that developed often resulted in employees perceiving leaders as role models and therefore more likely to embrace similar behaviours, practices and attitudes (Van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011), therefore providing insights into the manifestation of stewardship within the processes of servant leadership.

The process of servant leadership also drew upon existing, personal relationships that both hierarchical leaders and employees were part of and used these as a foundation from which to build relationships internal to the organisation as well as positively contribute towards local communities. Formal structures such as CSR-related committees and informal structures such as increasing the propensity for employees to engage in chats were established in the interest of providing employees with a platform from which to promote socially responsible causes that they were personally affiliated towards; colleagues were therefore more aware of the CSR-related activities and encouraged to participate, which similarly developed internal communities within their respective organisations. Laub (1999) and Hu and Liden (2011) suggest that servant leadership builds communities, a theoretical postulation that the present research contributes towards by illustrating how existing relationships contribute to the development of communities with organisations. Similarly, the process of servant leadership facilitated individual employee empowerment with respect to contributing towards the structure of CSR-related activities as well as the personal autonomy to pursue sociable causes by leaders developing a personal relationship with their employees (Crocker and Canevello, 2008; Ferris et al, 2009). Employees were encouraged to promote socially responsible causes they were affiliated towards within existing personal relationships in the interest of enabling the organisation to positively contribute towards them, which manifests the focus on employee empowerment within servant leadership theory (Van Dierendonck, 2011). The notion of employee empowerment has been identified in the present research as contributing towards understanding servant leadership with regards to CLS, in particular how the processes encompassed within servant leadership consider the notions of power and influence (Collinson, 2005). The encouragement of employees to be proactive and self-confident in contributing towards the decision-making process with regards CSR-related activities, two of the foundational characteristics of empowerment (Van Dierendonck, 2011), supports the notion that servant leadership includes processes through which to overcome the difficulties associated with the over-dichotomisation of traditional leadership approaches (Fairhurst, 2001; Harter, 2006). Employees are considered ‘knowledgeable agents’ (Collinson, 2005) who co-construct leadership as a process (Collinson, 2020) within the context of CSR-related activities.

As well as utilising existing relationships, the process of servant leadership also assisted in the development of communities external to the organisation. It is theoretically conceived that servant leadership builds communities (Laub, 1999; Spears, 2004) and creates value for external communities (Liden et al, 2008) yet this remains theoretical (Christensen et al, 2014). Greenleaf's (1970) best test of servant leadership directly considers servant leadership's impact on "the least privileged in society", which suggests communities including any stakeholders are significant within servant leadership theory yet Greenleaf (1970) did not position servant leadership as contributing towards external communities and it is therefore a negated aspect of the construct. The present research identifies the consequences to the adherence of philanthropic responsibilities associated with CSR (Carroll, 1991; Carroll, 2016) to provide insights into the ways in which servant leadership as a process positively contributes towards external communities to the organisations in which servant leadership was observed. Specifically, the inherent desire to positively contribute towards external communities was manifested in examples such as sacrificing financial profits when maintaining employment of individuals to engage solely in CSR-related projects when available work was limited, and by instilling ownership and responsibility in individual employees to contribute towards the projects and causes that they are personally affiliated with. This research therefore contributes towards developing understanding into the notion of community within servant leadership theory by illustrating processes and structures affiliated to servant leadership that result in community development beyond the boundaries of the organisation in which servant leadership is practised.

8.2. Practical Contributions

This thesis also makes two practical contributions. With regards leadership studies generally and servant leadership in particular, the developments in conceptual understandings can be drawn upon in leadership development courses in the interest of increasing the propensity for individuals to adopt the characteristics associated with servant leadership, particularly when individuals are focused on contributing towards CSR-related activities. This has benefits at the individual level for both those with a desire to contribute towards CSR-related activities as they are provided with tools and mechanisms through which to encourage others to participate in socially responsible acts, as well as at the organisational level in terms of the organisation becoming advocates for socially responsible causes and enhancing the lives of those within the communities they operate; this resonates strongly with the notions of philanthropy within CSR responsibilities as well as Stakeholder Theory.

Leadership development courses are continuing to increase in popularity (Rubens et al, 2018), as the importance of leadership continues to be recognised within different sectors such as the healthcare profession (Stead, 2005) and across the private sector (Moldoveanu and Narayandas, 2019). Although multiple factors can contribute towards participation in CSR-related activities from both individual and organisational levels such as motivations, satisfaction at work, and relationships in the workplace (Lee et al, 2014; Kim and Scullion, 2013; Lewin and Sabater, 1996) as well as legal requirements and legislation, this research identifies structures and mechanisms that can be adapted to meet the needs of individual employees in the interest of developing personal relationships so that both leader and follower can experience personal development. Further research may explore whether the structures identified in this research are transferable beyond the decision-making process pertaining to CSR into contexts that have potentially larger financial risks.

The different challenges and opportunities for leadership within smaller organisations compared to larger organisations are well-documented, reasons include available resources (Amah and Oyetuunde, 2020; Aguinis and Glavas, 2012) and nature of processes within one's organisation (Hahn, 2012). Some of the more popular case studies focusing on the positive associations of servant leadership, such as that of Herb Kelleher in Southwest Airlines, may not be transferable to individuals within smaller organisations. The second practical contribution of this thesis therefore is that the findings can be of interest to individuals with a desire to practice servant leadership in smaller organisations. For example, positive implications that can be derived from the current research and implemented within alternative small organisations include the structures and processes that may facilitate the development of high-quality, dyadic relationships across one's respective organisation. This may include increasing visibility and access to senior leaders in the interest of reducing the perceived differences between individuals as a result of hierarchical status or increasing the use formal communication channels to enhance knowledge sharing across dispersed workforces.

8.3. Future Research Directions and Study Limitations

This section reflexively considers all that has come before to address potential avenues for future research as well as the limitations associated with this research. First, although the positive associations of combining formal and informal channels of communication so that leaders can understand the personal requirements of individual employees are presented in this thesis in the interest of establishing robust leader-employee relationships, this remains a formative motion towards understanding the communication channels used within servant leadership as a process. Studies relating to communication have frequented many academic disciplines, and the importance of communication within organisations is well-established (Johnson et al, 1994; Kraut et al, 2002); further research into the communication channels adopted within servant leadership however may yield interesting insights with regards understanding additional ways in which power is distributed within servant leadership, particularly with respect to foundational conceptual aspects such as providing direction and leading from servility. Future studies may also focus on establishing whether servant leadership can be further distinguished from alternative approaches to leadership, both in terms of post-heroic approaches as well as within CLS traditions, through the lens of communication techniques adopted in the leadership process.

Second, the present research focused on the ways in which servant leadership became manifested when considered in relation to CSR-related activities; further research is required however into the transferability of these findings beyond the context of activities affiliated with CSR. Although developments have been made with regards the cross-contextual validity of servant leadership (Van Dierendonck et al, 2017), it remains an area identified for future research. Future research could therefore focus on the findings of this research, specifically in the domains of finance and the private sector, to further understand the transferability of servant leadership beyond CSR. For example, the lack of financial implications with regards including employees in the decision-making process observed in the present research may or may not be transferable when considered in relation to highly valued financial transactions in the banking sector. Exploring both the formal and informal structures utilised within leadership processes within alternative sectors may prove insightful with regards the transferability of the findings of the present research in the manifestation of servant leadership. Exploring the transferability of these findings may also therefore provide insights into whether servant leadership facilitates leading from a position of servility when financial pressures are applied.

Third, the importance of the notions of power and influence continue to permeate contemporary leadership studies, unsurprising considering their foundational status within leadership as a process (Northouse, 2016; Grint, 2011). As understanding continues to develop within post-heroic traditions and the assimilations with and criticisms from CLS towards post-heroic approaches, the findings of the present research can be drawn upon to position servant leadership within contemporary leadership studies and utilised to develop further understandings into the post-heroic-CLS debate. In particular, the notion of empowerment within servant leadership offers an avenue through which to explore this dialogue. The findings of the present research support the notion that servant leadership is affiliated to post-heroic approaches, drawing specifically upon "relational, collectivist, and participatory" (Sobral and Furtdao, 2019) aspects. However, insights regarding the notion of empowerment are worthy of further exploration, particularly with regards processes and vehicles that develop employee autonomy, grant employee ownership and entrust employees with responsibility. Future research should explore power dynamics within these dialogues to understand power relations between leaders, followers and processes, potentially through the notion of stewardship and providing employees with the correct amount of responsibility in various situations.

Future research could also explore the assimilation between the characteristics associated with servant leadership that were observed in the present research, such as providing direction, stewardship, and the notion of empowerment, and their relationship with CSR, in particular whether a stronger conviction towards certain characteristics infers higher levels of CSR across an organisation. It was beyond the scope of this research to measure variables and characteristics, this would not have been in accordance with the non-positivist methodological assumptions adopted, so would have been logically inconsistent. Future research into this relationship however could enhance understanding into these foundational characteristics of servant leadership theory which would also build upon previous calls for research such as those of Christensen et al (2014) who also suggested research should focus on exploring motivations for engagement in CSR.

As with all research, this study is not without its limitations. One point of caution for example is participants' understanding of the topic and their ability to accurately reflect upon the questions so as to provide answers that accurately represent the nature of their reality. Understanding of potentially complex terms that are subject to interpretation, such as 'corporate social responsibility', could facilitate participants' desires to provide socially desirable answers as opposed to offering genuine responses. In an attempt to negate the potential for this to occur, participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (Appendix 2) informing them of the purpose of the study and their rights as participants. Further aspects of the research were also designed to negate this potential negative aspect such as conducting semi-structured interviews so that the researcher was able to ask follow-up questions and clarify any concerns or areas of uncertainty, and collecting responses from multiple sources in the interest of identifying patterns and themes as opposed to relying upon one source. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of aspects of the research necessitated the acquisition of employees' understanding of the constructs being studied, such as participants' understanding of social responsibility; as such, the potential for different interpretations was a necessary condition.

A second limitation to this research relates to the research design and the susceptibility for researcher bias, a limitation propagated by the inexperience of the researcher (Easterby-Smith et al, 2008). Although foundational to an interpretivist approach, accepting the researcher's prerogative to select the most appropriate research methods that best fit the purpose of the research from an array of styles and formats (Sandelowski, 1998) leaves potential for researcher bias. Interviews, the most common type of qualitative data collection methods within leadership studies (Pless et al, 2012) were utilised in this research, and findings crystallised through the collection and analysis of observations, photographs, organisational documentation, and field notes, in an attempt to negate the potential for researcher bias. Engaging in constant interactions with supervisors and colleagues also mitigated the potential for researcher bias.

8.4. <u>Concluding Thoughts</u>

The convergence of organisations and society shows no signs of slowing. As such, the emergence of corporate scandals continues to be highlighted, explored and analysed such as the cases of Enron and Arthur Andersen. Leadership is an omnipresent influencing factor in these scandals, in particular the 'dark' side of leadership, where interest in personal gain overrides moral, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities associated with leadership as a process. There are calls from both scholars and practitioners to deliver responsible business driven by individuals who care, support, and develop others within a paradigm of positivity. One such approach that satisfies these conditions is servant leadership.

Leadership is an inherently complex vortex of variables, each of which dynamically alters perceptions and processes of stakeholders; contemporary understandings of power and influence within the leadership process further contribute towards this web of complexity. This thesis has explored the process of servant leadership including the structures that constitute it, the relationships that influence it, and the stakeholders within it. Insights into the potential ways in which servant leadership overcomes contradictory positions expected of leaders in contemporary society such as simultaneously utilising both formal and informal structures and communication channels based on the needs and desires of individual employees, highlights the potential for servant leadership as society continues to strive towards more-inclusive, post-heroic approaches to leadership.

The notion of leaders as singular, heroic individuals operating in siloed dimensions continues to dwindle; interpretations continue towards understanding leadership as a process incorporating context, stakeholders and the ability to influence. As understanding develops, so to does the necessity to understand leadership beyond white, heterosexual males displaying ‘masculine’ characteristics. Leadership in contemporary society demands flexibility, empathy towards others, and a relationship with others founded upon mutual needs and desires. This research provides insights into how the process of servant leadership can positively contribute towards both individuals and communities and therefore establishes servant leadership as an approach to leadership with potential for the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Participant Information Sheet

Dear <Organisation Name>

My name is Nathan O'Connor and I am a PhD student from Lancaster University Management School. I am interested in developing understanding into how the behaviours of leaders influence and empower followers to engage in corporate social responsibility through their relationships at work. I am particularly interested in the impact of servant leadership.

Can you help?

I believe your organisation has recently engaged in corporate social responsibility practices due to reading about your initiatives in <name of publication>. I would like to find out how your employees were engaged in these activities and in particular how the leaders of employees impacted them to engage.

What do you have to do?

I would like your employees to fill in a short questionnaire assessing whether or not they perceive to be engaged in servant leadership. If the results of this questionnaire suggest that they are, I would like to conduct one-on-one interviews with both leaders and their followers. Interviews are scheduled for approximately one hour and can be conducted at a mutually convenient time. The interviews aim to provide me as a researcher with an understanding into the motives and perceptions of both leaders and followers in relation to corporate social responsibility.

What's in it for you?

First and foremost, I hope you will find this topic interesting and informative. From a theoretical perspective, I hope to build upon existing knowledge relating to the leader/follower relationship so that people can form the most prosperous relationships possible from both a personal and organisational perspective. From a practical perspective, building prosperous relationships with your colleagues has been proven to increase an organisation's profits and reputation as well as employees' motivation and self-worth!

Are you interested?

If you would like to know more about this research or would like to register an interest in participating in this study, please do get in touch:

Nathan O'Connor: n.oconnor1@lancaster.ac.uk

If you would prefer to contact a member of staff regarding this research then please feel free to contact either of my project supervisors:

Professor Claire Leitch: c.leitch@lancaster.ac.uk

Dr Haina Zhang: h.zhang3@lancaster.ac.uk

Appendix 2: Sample Participant Information Sheet

My name is Nathan O'Connor and I am a PhD student from Lancaster University Management School. I am interested in developing understanding into how the behaviours of leaders influence and empower followers to engage in corporate social responsibility through their relationships at work. I am particularly interested in the impact of servant leadership- a leadership approach based on leaders valuing the intrinsic worth of each individual as opposed to using individuals to achieve organisational objectives.

Please take time to read the following information carefully before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in my study.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without providing a reason. If you withdraw within two weeks of participating, your data shall be destroyed according to legal requirements and you shall not feature in the findings. After two weeks however, your data will have been analysed and cannot therefore be removed. If you decide not to take part in this study, this will not affect your position in your organisation.

What will you have to do?

I would like to present you with a short survey (less than 5 minutes) in order to establish the perceptions of leadership that you experience. If your perceptions of leadership are compatible with my study, I would like to subsequently conduct a one-on-one interview with you. Interviews are scheduled for approximately one hour and can be conducted at your convenience. The questionnaire has been designed to ensure that you perceive aspects of servant leadership to be present in your organisation and merely acts as a prelude to discussions during the interviews.

Will your responses be identifiable?

Only myself as the researcher and my project supervisors will have access to your answers:

- Audio recordings and hard copies of any data will be anonymised. All hard copies shall be stored in a locked filing cabinet. All electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer.
- In accordance with Lancaster University guidelines, some data may be kept for up to 10 years. All electronic data however will be deleted upon completion of the research.
- All identifiable information (names of individuals, organisation names etc.) will be removed from the data.
- Anonymised direct quotations may be used in both academic and institutional publications including, but not limited to: my doctoral thesis, journal publications, and conference papers.
- All your personal information will be confidential and will be kept separately from your interview responses.

What will happen to the results?

Your data will be analysed to establish common themes shared with other participants' responses. The results may be presented at academic or institutional conferences and submitted for publication via journals and my doctoral thesis. After the data has been anonymised and your participation is unidentifiable, the data will be made available for open access through Lancaster University.

How do I benefit from taking part?

First and foremost, I hope you will find this topic interesting and informative. From a theoretical perspective, I hope to build upon existing knowledge relating to the leader/follower relationship so that people can form the most prosperous relationships possible. From a practical perspective, building prosperous relationships with your colleagues has been proven to increase an organisation's profits and reputation as well as employees' motivation and self-worth! If nothing else, my research will provide you with the opportunity to reflect on a few things such as how you interact with your leaders and subordinates, the impact of your organisation on society, and the impact you personally have within the organisation. Your organisation will also be provided with a short report upon completion of my research outlining how my findings may influence positive change within your organisation.

Are there any risks?

There are no physical or psychological risks anticipated to be induced by this research. However, if at any time you become concerned by this project, you are free to withdraw up until two weeks after your interview without providing a reason. Should you want to, there is also the option to get in touch with any of the listed contacts at the end of this document should you want any advice.

Who has reviewed the project?

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster University Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please contact either myself or my research supervisors:

Nathan O'Connor- n.oconnor1@lancaster.ac.uk

Supervisors:

Professor Claire Leitch

Email: c.leitch@lancaster.ac.uk

Postal Address: C12, Charles Carter Building, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA14YX

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Dr. Haina Zhang

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Postal Address: C39, Charles Carter Building, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA14YX

Phone Number: +44(0)1524 510765

Thank you for considering your participation in this project.

Appendix 3: Participant Consent Form

Project Title: CSR and Servant Leadership: An Exploratory Study into the Mutually Beneficial Relationship.

Name of Researcher: Nathan O'Connor Email: n.oconnor1@lancaster.ac.uk

Please tick each box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily ☐

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any ☐

   reason. If I withdraw within 2 weeks of commencement of the study my data will be removed.

3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications ☐

   or presentations by the researcher, but my personal information will not be included and I will not be identifiable.

4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation ☐

   without my consent.

5. I understand that interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will ☐

   be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.

6. I understand that data will be kept according to University guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the ☐

   end of the study and will be made available under open access guidelines.

7. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

__________________________ ________________ _________________

Name of Participant Date Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent__________________________ Date ___________ Day/month/ year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University

Appendix 4: Servant Leader Questionnaire

To what extent do you agree with the following statements (where 1 is strongly disagree and 7 is strongly agree):

1. It is the leader's responsibility to attempt to help their colleagues' personal development
2. The focus of the leader should be on completing the task as opposed to working with the other people involved in the task
3. As a leader, it is important to seek guidance from colleagues particularly during the decision-making process
4. Being in the leadership role allows the leader to dictate decisions regardless of collegiate input
5. It is important for the leader to express themselves honestly in all situations
6. It is the leader's responsibility to decide what knowledge employees have access to
7. The leader should make a concerted effort to understand the position of others
8. The leader has no responsibility to engage in the lives of employees outside of the organisation
9. The role of the leader is complete when they have delegated tasks in an explicit and comprehendible manner
10. Leader behaviours are important to the growth and development of employees
11. The leader should remain separate and distinct from employees
12. Mistakes occur. It is therefore important to forgive employees and move forward
13. It is the responsibility of the leader to bring people together in the workplace
14. The leader has a greater responsibility to their individual employees than the organisation

Appendix 5: Sample Interview Guide

Introduction

As part of my research I would like to understand the effect you have had on your employees and organisation.

This is an opportunity for you to share your experiences and opinions in an entirely confidential environment. Nothing that is said here today will be attributed to you. The findings from the conversation will be used within my research to enhance knowledge relating to the subjects of corporate social responsibility and leadership for both theory and practice.

If you have no objections, I would like to record our conversation to ensure the accuracy of my notes. I will not however be able to trace anything you say back to you by recording it. Are you comfortable to proceed with the interview?

Contextual Details

Gender	
Male	
Female	

Age	
18-24	
25-31	
32-38	
38-44	
45+	

Length of time in current role (in years)	
0-1	
1-3	
3-5	
5-7	
7+	

1. Please can you outline the history of your organisation and your role in it?

Understanding of Organisation's Engagement in CSR

There are many different opinions about the role of a business in relation to society. Some people for example, think that the only responsibility of a business is to make money whereas others think businesses have other responsibilities. Your organisation has been identified as being positively engaged with society and I would like to get your thoughts on this. So,

2. Could you please explain to the ways in which your organisation has engaged with society?
    - What was the engagement?
    - Who was responsible for initiating it?
    - What was your role in it?
3. What inspires your organisation to engage with society?
    - Why?
    - Are you happy with the current situation or would you change it if you could? Why? How?
    - Why do you think your organisation is successful at engaging with society?
4. In your opinion, who does your organisation have an effect on and why?
    - To what extent do you control this effect and have a say in it?

<u>Society and the Community</u>

Fostering a community feel within an organisation has been demonstrated to act as the catalyst for positive engagement within wider society; the leader's role in fostering this community feel has also been well documented. I am therefore interested in both formal groups and teams such as work unites or project teams, as well as informal groups such as 5-a-side teams, Breakfast Club members, or people who car-pool etc. With this in mind,

5. Can you tell me about different groups within your organisation?
    - What/who are the main reasons for the formation of these groups?
    - To what extent do the different groups interact?
    - In what ways do the different groups affect the organisation?
6. People often feel part of a community due to interactions that provide them with a sense of belonging. To what extent therefore does your organisation help with the personal development of individual employees?
    - Who was the 'driving force' behind the employee achieving their potential? Leaders or self-motivated?
    - What are the factors surrounding employees' developmental opportunities? For example, if training is encouraged is this for necessary continued professional development or in the pursuit of individual desires? Or another example: are multiple stakeholders considered when making a decision, for example so that all

employees are aware of why decisions are being made and thus develop their understanding?

7. Speaking hypothetically, if you were to leave the organisation, what impact would this have on a) the organisation and b) the relationship between your organisation and society?

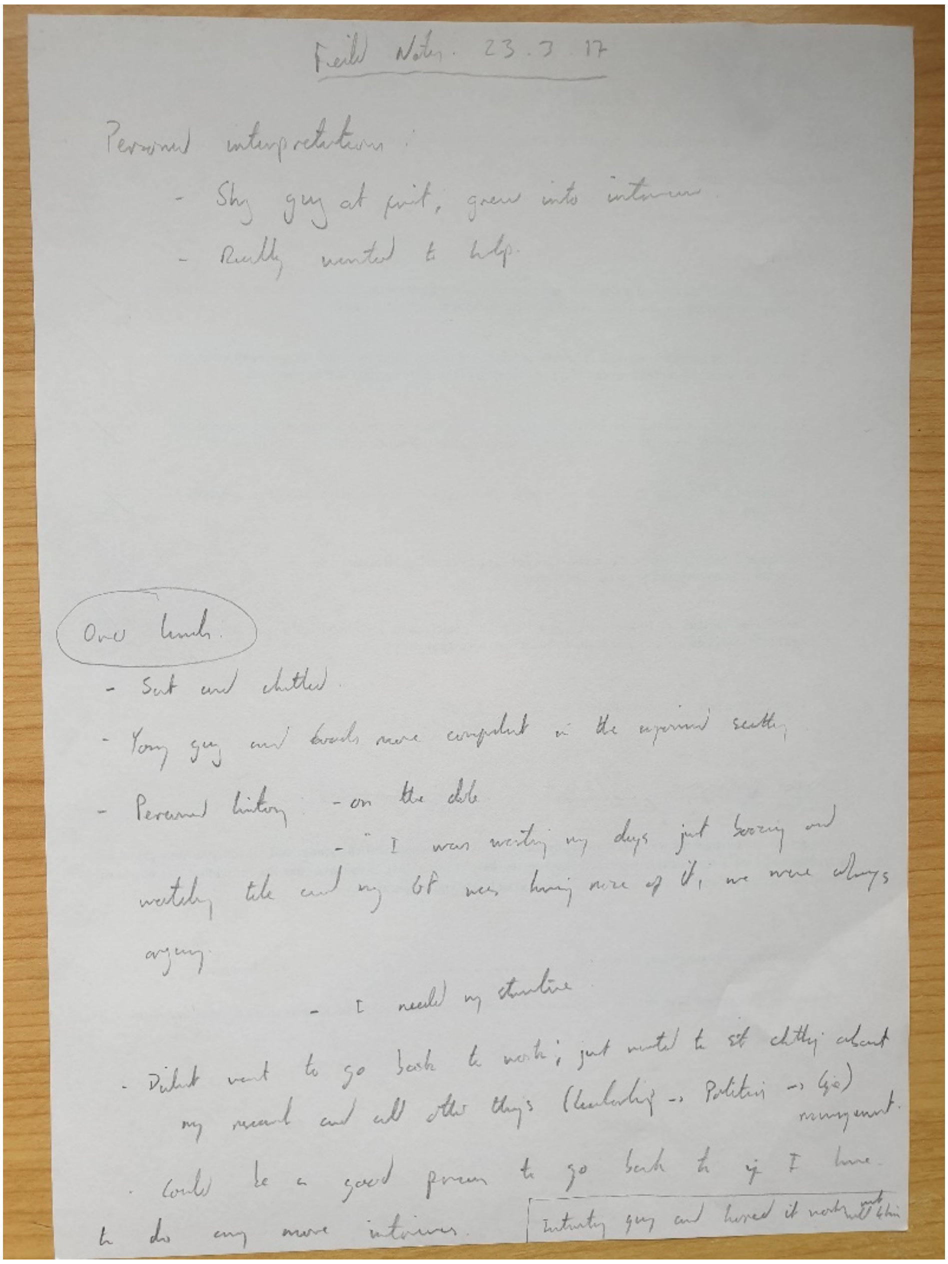
The Leader-Follower Relationship

A focal point of my research is on the relationship between leadership and employees in your organisation. Therefore,

8. Please could you describe what your daily work routine consists of?
    - Who do you interact with? How? Why?
9. Please can you tell me about your relationship with people in the organisation?
    - To what extent do you behave differently in front of employees to members of the senior management team for example? Why?
    - How do different people within the organisation interact with you?
    - To what extent do you think it is important for employees to interact with colleagues at different levels of the organisation (both above and below)? Can you give me some examples as to why?

Before we conclude this interview, is there anything we have not covered in the course of this conversation that you think is important for me to understand with regards to the relationship you share with your employees in relation your organisation's commitments to CSR practices?

Appendix 6: Example Field Note Page



Field Notes. 23.3.17

Personal interpretations:

- Shy guy at first, grew into interview.
- Really wanted to help.

Over lunch.

- Sat and chatted.
- Young guy and sounds more competent in the informal setting
- Personal history - on the dole
  - "I was wasting my days just boozing and watching tele and my GF was having none of it, we were always arguing.
  - I needed my structure.
- Didn't want to go back to work; just wanted to sit chatting about my research and all other things (Leadership → Politics → Gio) management.
- Could be a good person to go back to if I have to do any more interviews.

Interesting guy and hired it not until then

Appendix 7: Example Coding Sheet