RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:
A RELATIONAL SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST LEADERSHIP LENS

by

Stanley Sixolile Ntakumba
27423850

Submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
Philosophiae Doctor with specialisation in Leadership (PhD in Leadership)
in the

FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Supervisor:
Professor Derick de Jongh

Date of submission:
July 2023

DECLARATION

I declare that the doctoral thesis, which I hereby submit for the degree PhD (Leadership) at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Stanley Sixolile Ntakumba
Pretoria, South Africa
July, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A word of gratitude goes to my supervisor, Professor Derick de Jongh (Director: Albert Luthuli Leadership Institute), for his insights, constructive critique and patient guidance throughout my journey of PhD research.

I enjoyed engagements with the lecturers and fellow PhD candidates during the pre-doctoral coursework which laid a foundation for my better understanding of the academic expectations of the University of Pretoria.

I am greatly indebted to the research participants who were willing to adjust their diaries and willingly participated in my focus group discussions and interviews. Your openness and insights enriched the content of the data that were generated and analysed as part of this study.

Many thanks to the three anonymous external examiners who shared their own perspectives and provided useful independent criticism of various aspects of this thesis. Such inputs were invaluable in terms of improving the quality and depth of this thesis. Prof Edwin Hees commented on the earlier versions of one of the literature review chapters. I thank Ms Kim Smit for her professional editing of this thesis (Annexure 4). However, all content errors in this thesis remain my own.

Lastly, but not least, I sincerely appreciate continuous support, encouragement and motivation from my wife and kids – who generously allowed me to use family time and resources to pursue this PhD study under very trying circumstances.

DEDICATION

La Familia

ABSTRACT

Interorganisational partnerships are organisational forms in which multiple stakeholders work as a collective towards common objectives, and yet little empirical evidence exists on how the leadership construct occurs in such settings. Moreover, the heroic leadership discourse that focuses on the individual leader versus followers is deemed not to provide adequate answers to the relational dynamics that take place at non-hierarchical interorganisational partnerships.

The main research question is: *How do relational leadership practices (RLPs) occur in interorganisational partnerships (IoPs) and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory (RLT)*?

In the literature it became clear that the 'relationality' construct is at the centre of how leadership could be understood in IoPs. As such, this study adopted the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) lens as its ontology and epistemology. It employed the practice approach as its methodology, which is underlined by the abductive logic of inquiry. The research was based on two samples, namely: an international (African continent) IoP and a national (South Africa) IoP.

The research findings yielded eleven themes (RLPs of interest) and seventy-seven sub-themes (intersecting RLPs) based on data generated through dialogic interviews and focus groups which was analysed via coding processes using Atlas.ti 22 software. The set of findings that were presented via a word-cloud confirmed the centrality of the leadership construct in the data. The findings on RLPs demonstrated various perspectives of the research participants on how the leadership phenomenon is socially constructed intersubjectively in the two IoPs.

The findings were discussed in terms of: (1) the social construction of leadership using the 'RSCL Model' (Endres & Weibler, 2017); (2) outcomes of social construction in terms of the 'Direction, Alignment and Commitment (DAC) Framework' (Drath, McCauley, Palus, van Velsor, O'Connor & McGuire, 2008); (3) the core tenets of RLT, namely: ethics, relationality and purpose; and (4) *Ubuntu* relational philosophy, which was deployed abductively to examine the RLPs under the theme of 'agreeing' in order to contextualise the understanding of the RLPs in the African milieu.

This thesis makes the following contributions to leadership research and practice: (1) RLT has been advanced through the application of the RSCL lens and the practice approach in IoPs. The findings show that over two-thirds of the identified RLPs are not adequately represented in extant RLT.   (2) RLT's individualist-orientation (heroic) has been complemented with the relational and

collective (post-heroic) orientations in terms of understanding how leadership responsibilities unfold in IoPs as RLPs. (3) It was found that there is a close alignment between the *Ubuntu* worldview and RLT in terms of moral, ethical and relational orientations, but the *Ubuntu* perspective adds a nuanced appreciation of the African context via its core intersubjective values of humaneness and harmony. (4) Relational leadership scholarship has been advanced through the application and subsequent modification of the RSCL Model and the DAC Framework informed by empirical analysis. (5) The thesis enunciates a new Responsible-Leadership-As-Practice theoretical framework. (6) In practice, insights from this thesis could inform the (re)design of leadership curriculum and research activities to emphasise social-relationality and praxeology of leadership in IoPs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACRONYMS

AfREA	African Evaluation Association
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Direction, Alignment and Commitment
DCF-ECOSOC	Development Corporation Forum-United Nations Economic and Social Council
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
IDEV-AfDB	Independent Evaluation Group-African Development Bank
FSSD	Framework for strategic sustainable development
IoPs	Interorganisational partnerships
LAP	Leadership-As-Practice
LMX	Leader-Member-Exchange theory
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
ManComm	Management Committee
NACAC	National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council
NACS	National Anti-Corruption Strategy
NDP	National Development Plan
NES	National Evaluation Systems
OMT	Organisation and management theory
PM	Programme Manager
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
R&D	Research and Development
RLPs	Relational leadership practices
RLT	Responsible leadership theory
RSCL	Relational Social Constructionist Leadership
SA	South Africa
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SNA	Social Network Analysis

TM	*Twende Mbele*
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UP	University of Pretoria

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   RESEARCH CONTEXT

The purpose of this thesis is to understand how leadership occurs in practice in interorganisational partnerships through the lens of relational social constructionism and how responsible leadership theory can be used to evaluate such relational leadership practices. Chapter 1 presents the foundational elements of the research and the outline of the thesis, as depicted in Figure 1.1.
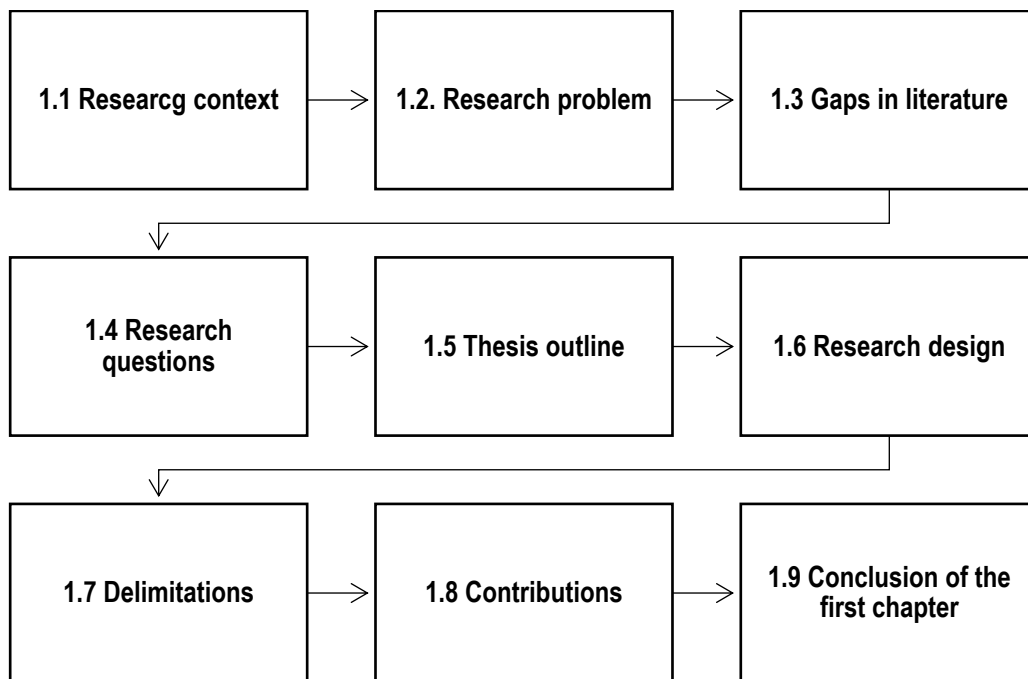
Figure 1.1: Outline of Chapter 1

1.1.1   Context

The importance of 'partnerships' and 'leadership' are high on the agendas of global platforms preoccupied with socio-political matters, economic progress and sustainable development. For instance, at a global level, goal seventeen of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is about partnerships. The motivation for this goal is that "partnerships matter", as evidenced by the successful multiple stakeholder engagements during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are seen as crucial for addressing other global challenges, as demonstrated by the following statement: "We need everyone to come together – governments, civil society, scientists, academia and the private sector." (United Nations, 2023). At the level of the African continent, goal nineteen of the Africa

Agenda 2063 envisions: "Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence". Under this goal there are two priorities, namely: "Africa's place in global affairs" and "partnerships." (African Union Commission, 2015). Both the SDGs and Africa Agenda 2063 are translated into sub-regional and national development plans, as well as related indicator systems. The concept of leadership cuts across all these international goals and aspirations as an enabler for sustainable development and inclusive socio-economic growth. At a national level, the National Development Plan (NDP) and Vision 2030 of South Africa views "strong leadership" as a crucial enabler for the "virtuous cycle of development", which is about the achievement of the various goals and actions contained in the NDP (South Africa, 2012:37).

This thesis uses a sample of an international interorganisational partnership and a national interorganisational partnership to explore empirically how relational leadership practices occur in these settings and to assess the implications for responsible leadership theory. As such, the 'leadership' construct is the phenomenon of interest for this thesis, while 'relational leadership practices' serve as the "unit of analysis" and the 'interorganisational partnerships' serve as the "unit of observation". (DeCarlo, 2018:183).

1.1.2 Leadership

The construct of leadership has been the subject of scholarly debate since time immemorial (Yukl, 2010; Hernandez, Eberly, Avolio & Johnson, 2011; Markham, 2012; Mango, 2018). Views on the meaning of leadership and the role of leaders differ significantly between ancient times and the modern era (Markham, 2012). Ford, Harding and Gilmore (2023:809) observe the emergence of the discipline of leadership studies in the nineteenth century and provide a critique of the scholarship from the view of cycles of dominance of certain leadership theories at certain periods and the replacement of those theories by new ones in subsequent periods. This study uses the understanding of the leadership construct in extant literature as a starting point by presenting the literature review on leadership studies in Chapter 2, with a specific focus on responsible leadership literature.

While there is a degree of consensus in mainstream leadership research regarding the broad thrust of what the leadership construct entails; there are a range of emerging philosophical paradigms and leadership theories that diverge from the mainstream. After tracing the evolution of the leadership construct, Olley (2021:7) concludes that, the definition of the leadership construct entails, the "ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute

to the organisation's effectiveness and success". Mainstream leadership research defines leadership as comprising of the following elements: a leader and followers who influence each other for the purposes of achieving common goals. The relational, influence and change factors are deemed central in most conceptualisations of the leadership construct (Drath, McCauley, Palus, van Velsor, O'Connor, McGuire, 2008; Yukl, 2010; Hernandez *et al.*, 2011; Markham, 2012; Mango, 2018; Vivier, 2019; Olley, 2021; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

The new and emerging theories of leadership are characterised by combining ideas from mainstream leadership research with ideas drawn from other disciplines as a response to a range of theoretical and practical concerns. For instance, the transformational and charismatic leadership theories emphasise the visionary, motivational and inspirational characteristics of an individual leader, whilst the ethical and authentic leadership theories emphasise morality, values and ethics. The collective forms of leadership, such as distributed, collaborative, shared, networked and relational leadership theories emphasise relational dynamics within dyads and groups and how the leadership phenomenon emerges and is enacted in practice (Hernandez *et al.*, 2011; Pearce, Wassenaar & Manz, 2014; Dione, Gupta, Sotak, Shirreffs, Serban, Hao, Kim & Yamarino, 2014; Friedrich, Griffith & Mumford, 2016; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Scott, Jian, Wildman & Griffith, 2018; Campion & Wang, 2019; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

Olley (2021) and Wilson (2013) group phases of leadership theory development into great-man theories, trait theories, contingency or situational theories, power and influence theories or new leadership theories. Hibbert, Sillince, Diefenbach and Cunliffe (2014:281) are, however, critical of the foregoing outline of the evolutionary history of leadership studies since it assumes "that theoretical development matures and develops in a consistent serially constructed direction". They then argue that in leadership research "different foci [are] changing over time in line with management trends and paradigmatic shifts such as critical… and social constructionist approaches" (Hibbert, *et al.,* 2014:281). Ford *et al.* (2023:811) contend that, "this is a history of futility: each successive body of theory emerges to much acclaim, much time and energy is invested in its development and refinement, but then it fades after proving unable to live up to its initial promise". In spite of this criticism, as a nuanced view of leadership theories that emerged in the past three decades, "power and influence leadership theories hold at their core that the relationship between a leader, the followers, and the process of influence, enablement, and motivation determines the leader's success" (Olley (2021:7). Based on Olley's (2021) grouping framework, responsible leadership and relational leadership theories could be categorised as

power and influence leadership theories alongside ethical leadership and authentic leadership theories.

1.1.3 Responsible leadership

Responsible leadership theory contributes to the leadership scholarship by emphasising the purpose of leadership as the moral and ethical responsibilities of leaders towards their internal and external organisational stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006; Maak, 2007, Miska & Mendenhall, 2018; Enslin, Wolfswinkel & Terblanche-Smit, 2023). As a "purpose-driven" leadership theory (Pless, Sengupta, Wheeler & Maak, 2022:314), responsible leadership "suggests that there is a purpose in the act of leading, that there is a 'what for' beyond the 'how to'." (Muff, Delacoste & Dyllick, 2022).

Responsible leadership is inspired by research on corporate social responsibility (CSR), sustainable development and stakeholder theory, as well as advances in leadership research focusing on morality, values and ethics (Marques, Reis & Gomez, 2018; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). A bibliometric review of literature covering the period 1994 to 2020 found that ninety percent of the articles on the intersection between CSR and leadership were published between 2011 and 2020 and the construct of responsible leadership appeared in the top two out of the seven clusters as the most common term on the interface between CSR and leadership (Zhao, Yang, Wang & Michelson, 2023:144). Therefore, the core tenets of responsible leadership theory are the two foundational principles of relationships between a responsible leader with both internal and external stakeholders (relationality), and a focus on morality, values and ethics (ethics orientation) (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023:2). Since the early 2000s the preoccupation of responsible leadership scholars since the early 2000s has been around exploring how these two principles occur in different settings (micro, meso and macro levels) and the various articulations, drivers and consequences of the responsible leadership construct (antecedents and outcomes) (Fisher, 2004; Maak & Pless, 2006; Maak, 2007; Pless, Maak & De Jongh, 2011; Waldman, 2011; Kempster & Caroll, 2016; Marques *et al.*, 2018; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018, Waldman, Siegel & Stahl, 2020; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). As such, in this thesis the core tenets of responsible leadership theory are employed to evaluate the relationality and purpose of the relational leadership practices in interorganisational partnership contexts (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023:9).

1.1.4   Relational leadership

Relational leadership theory has two paradigms within itself (Uhl-Bien, 2006). The first paradigm of relational leadership is about focusing on the individual leaders and their followers, and individuality within collective forms of leading. The individual-centric paradigm is also referred to as heroic or entity relational leadership scholarship and an example is Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) theory. The non-individualistic paradigm is referred to as social constructionist or process-based relational leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Endres & Weibler, 2017).   The entity and social constructionist paradigms of relational leadership theory have developed parallel to each other and there are emerging attempts that seek to reconcile their incommensurability via "paradigm interplay" and application as a theoretical lens (Sánchez, Ospina & Salgado, 2020:8; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023:2). These two relational leadership paradigms also differ fundamentally in terms of their conceptualisations of the nature of reality (ontology) and knowledge claims (epistemology) about the leadership phenomenon, as briefly presented in this chapter and discussed extensively in Chapter 4 (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Sánchez *et al.*, 2020). In this research, the Relational Social Constructionist Lens (RSCL) is adopted as a lens on which all the empirical processes and interpretations in this thesis are based (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Cunliffe, 2011; Hersted & Gregen, 2013; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Endres & Weibler, 2020; Ntakumba & De Jongh 2023). In sum, the RSCL lens "draws on an intersubjective view of the world to offer a way of thinking about who leaders are in relation to others (human beings, partners) and how they might work with others within the complexity of experience…. [Therefore, RSCL] …means recognising the entwined nature of our relationships with others." (Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011:1434). The next section expatiates on the concept of relationality.

1.1.5   Relationality

The concept of relationality is about analytical attention given to the primacy of relations in the "space between people and phenomena" in organisations and in society rather than "focusing on discrete, abstracted phenomena" (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000:551). In agreement, Carroll and Simpson (2012:1286) argue that, "as long as leadership continues to be perceived as the mere aggregation of individual leaders and their acts, the omission of relationality and its implications from any serious consideration will limit theory-building and practice". The relationality construct is well-articulated in the relational leadership theory as part of the "relational turn" in social, organisational and management sciences (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). The *Ubuntu* perspective shares the ontological foundations with the RSCL model

and practice approach in terms of focusing on the cultural and socio-material realities. It also shares the relational orientation and intersubjective knowing that is contextual and sensitive to the African context (De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023). The three approaches prioritise relational ethics and the *Ubuntu* perspective adds intentionality in terms of highlighting certain positive values of doing the right thing and caring for others and the environment (Tutu, 1999; Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019, De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023).

Through the RSCL lens, leadership and its context are intertwined and mutually constituted. Hence, in this study the interorganisational partnership context is situated within the principles of the collective leadership theories, specifically with regard to relationality, interdependence, emergence, practices, processes and other post-heroic conceptualisations of the leadership phenomenon. The RSCL lens serves as a theoretical framework that incorporates the core understanding of relational leading or relational leadership practices (unit of analysis) in interorganisational partnerships (unit of observation) and their implications for the advancement of the leadership scholarship (Drath *et al.,* 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018; Endres & Weibler, 2017; DeCarlo, 2017; Sánchez *et al.,* 2020).

The next section discusses the relational construct of *Ubuntu*.

1.1.6   *Ubuntu*

In addition to the discussion of the relationality construct as it connects responsible leadership and relational leadership theories, this thesis explores the *Ubuntu* perspective as an African relational, moral and ethical worldview (West, 2014). Pless *et al.* (2022:318), argue that, "moral and ethical concepts of leadership are criticised for either reflecting a Western-based perspective … or being conceptually vague without articulating specific norms that moral leaders can refer to…". Therefore, this discussion serves to ensure a better understanding of relationality and responsible leadership theory in interorganisational partnerships that operate in the African cultural milieu.

From the *Ubuntu* perspective, an organisation has "a moral responsibility to affirm and enhance the humanity of those it relates to" …, which should be "characterised by compassion, caring, and responsiveness." (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:31). These scholars further contend that, "the moral value of social relations is often neglected (or regarded as secondary) in Western philosophies, which tend to be either individualist or holist" (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:32).

According to Molose, Goldman and Thomas (2018:193), "*Ubuntu* collective values (compassion, survival, group solidarity, respect and dignity), which relate affirmatively with a workplace sense of collectivism, were identified as unique elements of cultural management philosophy for directing personal interactions, workplace commitment and performance management improvements".   From these arguments, it is apparent that the *Ubuntu* perspective has certain distinctive elements that complement the responsible leadership theory's set of relational values, morals and ethics. Hence this thesis has, in the context of abductive logic, applied the *Ubuntu* perspective in the examination of the relational leadership practices of 'agreeing' (De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023).

The next section unpacks the research problem.

1.2   RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem that this study explores is concerned with the limited understanding in responsible leadership theory and practice regarding how relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnership contexts (Endres & Weibler, 2020) and how does such understanding contribute to responsible leadership theorising (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). This problem happens in spite of the long history of scholarship in leadership research and research on interorganisational partnerships (participative systems literature), which have developed in parallel without necessarily intersecting over the past decades (Connelly, 2007; Endres & Weibler, 2020).

On the one hand, the problem in leadership science arises out of the apparent inadequacy of the dominant approach to mainstream leadership research that focuses on the attributes of individual leaders and their followers in an individualistic manner irrespective of whether studies are about distributed forms of leadership or not. This heroic paradigm does not provide evidence of how leadership processes manifest in practice in non-hierarchical settings like the interorganisational partnerships where leadership is more likely to be practiced in a collective and relational manner (Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Endres & Webler 2020). On the other hand, there is a problem in participative systems literature in terms of lack of proper characterisation of the leadership phenomenon (Huxham & Vangen, 2001; Müller-Seitz, 2012; Worley & Mirvis, 2013; Endres & Weibler, 2020). These problems exist despite the common recognition that leadership is one of the key success factors for interorganisational partnerships (Selky & Parker, 2005; Voegtlin &

Pless, 2014), which are notorious for being very complex organisational forms that are characterised by high failure rates in, for example, public-private partnerships (Dentoni, Bitzer & Schouten, 2018; Osei-Kyei, Chan, Yu & Dansoh, 2019); Xiao & Lam, 2020).

In practice, interorganisational partnerships are usually established to address wicked problems of common concern among groups of stakeholders from different sectors of society (Dentoni *et al.,* 2018). Similarly, there is significant faith placed on leaders and the leadership phenomenon that they will magically solve all the problems of society without empirically understanding how leadership is enacted in practice and how it contributes to interorganisational partnership success or failure (Endres & Weibler, 2020).

In this thesis, this research problem is approached using the RSCL lens (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017). The thesis employs the practice approach methodology, especially its leadership-as-practice variant that is normally used by scholars to analyse relational leadership practices in interorganisational partnership contexts (Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Raelin, 2020, Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). By attending to this problem, it is believed that this thesis advances relational leadership and responsible leadership theories and practice.

The next section discusses gaps in scholarly literature that are aligned to the research problem.

1.3   GAPS IN LITERATURE

Firstly, there is a gap in leadership research regarding an empirical understanding of how the leadership construct is understood in interorganisational partnership contexts since there is limited research that examines leadership in such contexts or the "collaborative domain" (Connelly, 2007:1253), since in interorganisational partnerships leadership is "mentioned but rarely studied empirically" (Huxham & Vangen, 2001:1160; Endres & Weibler, 2020:276). Secondly, there is a gap in literature in terms of understanding the outcomes of leadership, since the RSCL lens primarily pays attention to the processual onto-epistemological questions of how the leadership phenomenon emerges and is enacted (Drath *et al.*, 2008). Hence, in this thesis, there is a special focus on analysing the outcomes of leadership using the leadership outcomes ontology proposed by Drath *et al.* (2008). Thirdly, there is a gap in literature that analyses relational leadership practices based on the practice approach in terms of understanding the

purpose of the identified practices. Chapter 2 will discuss the core tenets of the responsible leadership theory and how those tenets could be employed to understand the relationality and purpose of the relational leadership practices as "social-relational and ethical" phenomena (Maak & Pless, 2006:99; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:130; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). Fourthly, there is a gap in literature in terms of linking responsible leadership theory to the *Ubuntu* perspective as an African moral and ethical relational worldview. This gap arises out of a lack of appreciation for the cultural context and the complex dynamics that this has for leaders and organisations (De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023).

The next section presents the main research questions and guiding questions.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The above problems and gaps in literature informed the formulation of the main research question for this thesis as follows:

> *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?*

Each chapter of this thesis contributes to answering the main research question by responding to specific guiding questions, as depicted in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1: Research questions

QUESTION NUMBER	NAME OF THE CHAPTER AND LIST OF THE GUIDING QUESTIONS
**MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:** *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?*
#	**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON LEADERSHIP RESEARCH, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND RELATIONALITY**
1	What is leadership and how has it been studied over the years?
2	What are the various perspectives on responsible leadership?
3	What are other key relationality constructs that are related to responsible leadership and are relevant to this thesis?
#	**CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND THE INTERFACE WITH LEADERSHIP RESEARCH**
1	What are interorganisational partnerships?
2	What are the different ways in which scholars have studied interorganisational partnerships in literature?
3	How does research on interorganisational partnership interface with leadership research?
#	**CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN**
1	What does the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) epistemology and ontology entail? (theoretical framing)

QUESTION NUMBER	NAME OF THE CHAPTER AND LIST OF THE GUIDING QUESTIONS
2	How can the RSCL lens be operationalised through the practice approach? (methodological framing)
3	What were the research methods and techniques that were employed to generate, analyse and interpret the data? (empirical framing)
4	What are the ethical considerations that were taken into consideration when conducting this study? (ethical framing)
#	**CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS**
1	How is the leadership construct understood in interorganisational partnerships?
2	How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships?
#	**CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**
1	How is leadership socially constructed in interorganisational partnership contexts?
2	What are the outcomes of socially constructed RLPs?
3	How can we evaluate relationality and purpose of RLPs using responsible leadership theory and *Ubuntu* perspective?
4	What is the contribution of this thesis to knowledge and practice?
#	**CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**
1	What are the reflections on the occurrence of RPLs in interorganisational partnerships?
2	How has the study answered the main research question?
3	How has the study addressed the identified gaps in literature?
4	What were the limitations of this study?
5	What are the conclusions and recommendations of this study?
6	What are the key contributions of this research to leadership theory and practice?

The main research question serves as an anchor for all the arguments presented in this thesis. The guiding questions serve as heuristic pointers for the content covered in each of the next six chapters of this thesis, which are outlined in the next section.

1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

The outline of this thesis is depicted in Figure 1.2:
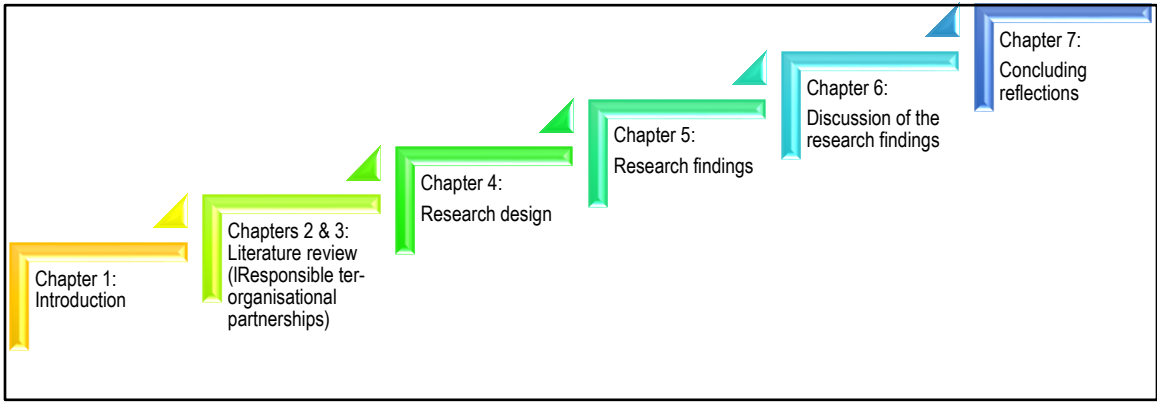
Figure 1.2: Outline of the thesis

Chapter 1 introduces the core elements of this thesis and discusses the context of the research. The review of existing literature in Chapter 2 and 3 forms the theoretical foundation of this thesis, which in turn influences choices made for the research design and methodology presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the findings in two parts: analysis of the leadership construct and description of the relational leadership practices. Chapter 6 discusses the research findings and draws implications for advancement of responsible leadership and relational leadership theorising. Chapter 7 presents concluding reflections, recommendations for future research and summarises the key contributions of this thesis towards the advancement of leadership knowledge and practice.

The next section summarises the key elements of the research design.

1.6   RESEARCH DESIGN

The first element of the research design is the RSCL ontology. The RSCL ontological assumptions are that reality is socially constructed in the intersubjective processes of people interacting during their normal encounters. This processual and intersubjective reality also views individuals as relational beings, whose existence is connected to the existence of other people and their worlds. In other words, people are who they are in relation to other people, cultures, history, space and time. Socially constructed realities are constantly in the process of emerging in responsive and spontaneous ways (Cunliffe, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

The second element of the research design is the RSCL epistemology, which assumes that knowledge of the known socially constructed multiple realities is influenced by individual cultural and historical contexts. Such knowledge and meaning-making are accomplished through the interpretation (interpretivist/postmodernist instead of objectivist/positivist or subjectivist/constructivist) of the intersubjective socially constructed ontologies. As such, the ontological and epistemological assumptions are mutually implicated and intertwined in the evolving process of meaning-making, hence it is better to view them as an onto-epistemology (Cunliffe, 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Cunliffe, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

The third element of the research design is the practice approach used to operationalise the RSCL onto-epistemology. According to Carroll and Simpson (2012:1284), "organizational scholarship is

increasingly turning to questions of practice as a way of engaging with the complexity and messiness that characterise organisational life and experience". Influenced by the "practice turn" in social, organisational and management sciences, the practice approach is also central to the emerging view of leadership-as-practice (L-A-P) approach (Raelin, 2020). In fact, over the past two decades the field of organisational and management studies has seen an emergence and rapid increase in the application of the practice approach, resulting in the birth of scholarly work on ethics-as-practice, strategy-as-practice, entrepreneurship-as-practice, marketing-as-practice and leadership-as-practice (Gherardi & Laasch, 2022:269). The value-add of the practice approach is that it is founded on processual onto-epistemology aligned to the RSCL lens and accommodates other worldviews in terms of framing practices as the unit of analysis (Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). Hence in this research relational leadership practices are the unit of analysis. The concept of relationality is at the core of both the RSCL onto-epistemology and the practice approach, as well as relational and responsible leadership theories. The power of the practice approach is the extent to which it sets parameters for isolating practices as forms of embodiment, cognition, materiality and knowledge activities (Schatzki, 1996; Reckwitz, 2002; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Chreim, 2015; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Clifton *et al.* 2020; Raelin, 2020). The study adopts the abductive logic of inquiry, which combines both theory-testing (deductive logic) and theory-development (induction logic) in an iterative manner (Hesse-Bibber & Leavy, 2006; Cunliffe, 2011; Raelin, 2020; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

The fourth element of the research design is the research methods employed for data generation, analysis and interpretation. The development of the interview and focus group schedule is inspired by themes from extant relational leadership literature, particularly RSCL studies. The dialogic interviews were conducted on both international and national interorganisational partnership samples. The generated data was coded following the bottom-up processes such as initial coding, focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding practices (Charmaz, 2006). The research findings comprise of both the definition of the leadership construct and the actual relational leadership practices presented from the perspective of the participants as thick descriptions in line with the phenomenological school upon which the practice approach draws its inspiration (Charmaz, 2006; Connelly, 2007; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Cunliffe, 2011; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Raelin, 2020, Sánchez, *et al.*, 2020; Küpers, 2020). The research design is summarised in Table 1.2:

Table 1.2: Outline of the research design

RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THIS STUDY		MOTIVATION
Research topic		Responsible leadership and interorganisational partnerships: a relational social constructionist lens
Theoretical framework		
Ontology	RSCL ontology	The self and reality are socially constructed, intersubjective and inextricably interwoven (relational worldview) (Endres & Weibler, 2017; Sánchez, *et al.,* 2020).
Epistemology	RSCL epistemology	Intersubjective and socially constructed knowledge that is historically, culturally, socially and linguistically influenced. Knowledge about reality is neither subjective nor purely objective (Endres & Weibler, 2017; Sánchez, *et al.,* 2020).
Research methodology		
Research approach	Practice approach	Use of relational leadership practices as the unit of analysis and how these occur in interorganisational settings. Methodological situationalism, wherein leadership practices rather than individual leaders nor context are the focus of research (Schatzki, 1996; Reckwitz, 2002; Heidenstrøm, 2022).
Research logic	Abductive mode of inquiry	The study was also conducted in an iterative manner via continuous data generation and analysis in line with abductive logic, including reflection about extant literature and its implications for the emerging recommendations done in line with the RSCL lens (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).
Research methods	Intersubjective dialogic interviews and focus groups	To elucidate in-depth understanding and views of the research participants about how leadership occurs in their interorganisational partnership in a relational manner (Cunliffe, 2011).
Data Collection and Analysis		
	Sample selection	Sampling was done from two interorganisational partnerships as follows: (a) An international interorganisational partnership called *Twende Mbele* African Partnership for Monitoring and Evaluation. In this case, nine research participants were interviewed first, followed by a focus group discussion. (b) A national interorganisational partnership about the development of South Africa's National Anti-Corruption

RESEARCH DESIGN FOR THIS STUDY		MOTIVATION
		Strategy. In this case, a focus group was conducted first, followed by a single interview of a research participant who did not participate in the focus group discussion.
		Principles of data saturation were the guiding factor when selecting and conducting the interviews and focus group discussions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Mwita, 2022).
	Data analysis	Use of Atlas.ti 22, initial coding, focused coding, axial coding
	Ethical considerations	Anonymity/confidentiality through the use of consent forms

The next section discusses the delimitations of this thesis.

1.7   DELIMITATIONS

This research focuses on two samples, namely: the international interorganisational partnership called *Twende Mbele* and the national interorganisational partnership related to the development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy of South Africa. The study does not make assumptions about other configurations of interorganisational partnerships beyond these cases. In other words, no generalisations are made about the applicability of the research findings to other settings in line with the RSCL theoretical framework and practice approach methodology. Responsible leadership theory is presented in Chapter 2 and its core tenets of relationality and ethics orientation are employed to evaluate the purpose of the relational leadership practices. Therefore, the study did not aim to use other leadership theories to evaluate the relationality and purpose of the findings, except for the abductive application of the *Ubuntu* perspective on the relational practices of agreeing in order to demonstrate contextualisation of the findings in the African milieu.

The interpretation of the findings is limited to the empirical dataset collected via the dialogic interviews and focus groups. The research did not analyse additional data in the form of grey literature such as documents and administrative data from the two interorganisational partnerships. Principles of data saturation were considered when generating the data, including the fact that the practice approach requires a detailed presentation of the findings from the perspectives of the research participants. The next section summarises the contributions of this thesis to knowledge and practice.

1.8 CONTRIBUTIONS

This thesis makes the following contributions to leadership research and practice:

(a) Responsible leadership theory has been advanced through the application of the RSCL lens and the practice approach in interorganisational partnerships. The findings show that over two-thirds of the identified RLPs are not adequately represented in extant RLT.

(b) Responsible leadership's individualist-orientation (heroic) has been complemented with the relational and collective (post-heroic) orientations in terms of understanding how leadership responsibilities unfold in interorganisational partnerships as relational leadership practices.

(c) It was found that there is close alignment between the *Ubuntu* worldview and relational leadership practices in terms of moral, ethical and relational orientations, but the *Ubuntu* perspective adds a nuanced appreciation of the African context via its core intersubjective values of humaneness and harmony.

(d) Relational leadership scholarship has been advanced through the application and subsequent modification of the RSCL Model originally put forward by Endres and Weibler (2017) and the Direction, Alignment and Commitment (DAC) Framework originally put forward by Drath *et al.* (2008) informed by empirical analysis.

(e) This thesis articulates a new comprehensive theoretical framework on Responsible-Leadership-As-Practice based on the insights from the literature review and empirical findings of this study.

(f) In practice, insights from this thesis could inform the (re)design of leadership curriculum and research activities to emphasise social-relationality and praxeology of leadership in interorganisational partnerships.

1.9 CONCLUSION OF THE FIRST CHAPTER

Chapter 1 focused on the introduction and background of the study in terms research context, problem statement, gaps in literature, research questions, thesis outline, research design, delimitations and contributions to knowledge and practice. This chapter also summarised key insights into Chapter 2 to 7. The next Chapter presents the review of literature on leadership studies, responsible leadership theory and the relationality construct.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON LEADERSHIP RESEARCH, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND RELATIONALITY

2.1   INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND CHAPTER

This is the first of two literature review chapters, and is focused on leadership studies and the responsible leadership theory/approach. The main research question for this thesis is: *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory*?

Chapter 2 contributes to answering the research question through addressing the following guiding questions:

(1) What is leadership and how has it been studied over the years?

(2) What are the various perspectives on responsible leadership?

(3) What are other key relationality constructs that are related to responsible leadership and are relevant to this thesis?

2.1 Introduction to the second chapter	2.2 Approaches to leadership research	2.3 Responsible leadership	2.4 Various approaches on responsible leadership

2.5 Summary of the key arguments of the various approaches to responsible leadershp and exploration of the relational construct as a common thread among them	2.6 Using relationality to compare responsible leadership theory with relational leadership theory	2.7 Using the relationality construct to link responsible leadership and the *Ubuntu* perspective	2.8 Conslusion of the second chapter
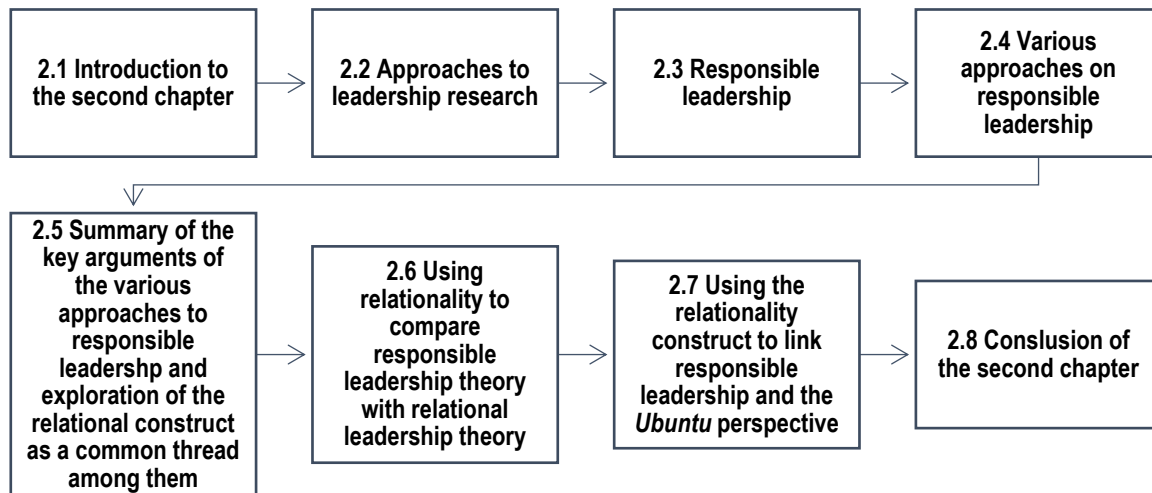
Figure 2.1:   Outline of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 begins by briefly discussing the evolution of leadership research. It then notes various approaches that have been proposed by a variety of scholars over the years. Definitions of a responsible leadership approach are presented and analysed. The majority of this chapter focuses on reviewing a number of perspectives on responsible leadership. The relational

leadership approach and the *Ubuntu* perspective are introduced because they share the 'relationality construct' with the ethics and stakeholder perspective of the responsible leadership approach. The social constructionist lens of the relational leadership approach also serves as a theoretical framework for this study, as discussed under the research design in Chapter 4.

2.2   APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

2.2.1   Background

Most definitions and approaches to leadership concur that the construct of leadership in organisational contexts is conceptualised as the ability of an individual leader to influence followers, who are most often members of the organisation, towards the fulfilment of common goals (Yukl, 2010:26). This definition posits that followers are viewed as subordinates and the role of leaders is to influence followers with the sole purpose of pursuing organisational effectiveness. After tracing the evolution of the leadership construct, Olley, (2021:7) concludes that, the definition of the leadership construct entails the "ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute to the organisation's effectiveness and success". In agreement, Vivier (2019: 39) notes two dominant trends in the definitions of leadership in leadership literature, namely definitions that emphasise the influence of leaders on followers and those that focus on change that leaders seek to enact as the main purpose of leadership. This dominant view in mainstream leadership literature characterises the leadership construct as comprised of a leader and followers, and their common objectives (Bennis, 2007:3; Drath *et al.*, 2008:635; Olley, 2021).

While many leadership researchers normally note the diversity and lack of integration of leadership theories and related definitions, there is a high degree of consensus regarding the "underlying ontology that is virtually beyond question within the field" (Drath *et al.*, 2008:625). These scholars refer to such a consensus as the tripod ontology and "is an expression of commitment to the entities (leaders, followers, common goals)" (Bennis, 2007:3; Drath *et al.,* 2008:625). Moreover, Drath *et al.* (2008:636) propose an alternative "ontology in which the essential entities are three leadership outcomes: (1) direction: widespread agreement in a collective on overall goals, aims and mission; (2) alignment: the organisation and coordination of knowledge and work in a collective; and (3) commitment: the willingness of members of a collective to subsume their own interests and benefit within the collective interest and benefit".

The DAC framework is one of the analytical tools that are employed in the discussion of the findings of this research in Chapter 6, since it is about understanding the leadership construct in collective partnership settings.

The study of leadership is a vast and fast-growing field (Hernandez *et al.*, 2011:1175; Dione *et al*, 2014:6-35; Wilson, 2013:20; Mango, 2018:57-88). Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm and McKee (2014:63) observe that "leadership theory and research" has been investigated for more than a hundred years. Markham (2012:1134-1151) covers a longer view of leadership research from the ancient world to the modern age and found that there are significant differences between the way that leadership is conceptualised currently compared to ancient times. Chee and Zainal (2022) found that the leadership construct has changed significantly over the decades and they added the "paradoxical ying-yang leadership" approach as meaningful in the context of Malaysia. The context-specific leadership approach aligns with views on *Ubuntu* as a uniquely African moral and ethical philosophy that is also applied to leadership research (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019; De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023).

Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1176) employ a loci and mechanisms framework to study leadership theories over the last century and observe that they have evolved from merely focusing on the leader as the centre of leadership and the relationship between leaders and their followers, as well as the situation/context and the collective dimensions. This evolution has also taken place within trait, behavioural, cognition and affect theories as well as the more integrated theories of leadership. Dionne *et al.* (2011:6-35) apply the multi-levels framework to review 25 years of leadership research published in *The Leadership Quarterly* and conclude that leadership studies have contributed immensely to the advancement of organisational science. Applying the followership lens to the study of leadership, Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe and Carsten (2014:84-85) categorise a list of leadership approaches and theories into "leader-centric", "follower-centric" and "relational view" approaches.

Wilson (2013:65) chronologically lists four dominant paradigms of leadership research (Table 2.1):

Table 2.1:   Major theoretical paradigms in leadership science

TIME PERIOD	DOMINANT THEORETICAL PARADIGM
ca 1840 – late 1940s	Great man / Trait theory

TIME PERIOD	DOMINANT THEORETICAL PARADIGM
ca Late 1940s – late 1960s	Leader behaviour
ca late 1960s – 1978	Situational / contingency models
ca 1978 – present day	'New leadership' (charismatic, visionary and transformational theories)

Source: After Wilson (2013:65).

Table 2.1 depicts the four dominant paradigms of leadership research as trait theory, behavioural theory, situational models and new leadership approaches. In agreement, Olley (2021:7) groups phases of leadership theory development as comprising of great man theories, trait theories, contingency theories, and power and influence theories. As a nuanced view of leadership theories that emerged in the past three decades such as authentic and ethical leadership, Olley (2021:7) argues that "power and influence leadership theories hold at their core that the relationship between a leader, the followers, and the process of influence, enablement, and motivation determines the leader's success." The primary focus of the power and influence leadership theories on the constructs of a leader, followers and their aspirations anchor them on the tripod ontology put forward by Drath *et al.* (2008).

Hibbert *et al.* (2014:281) are, however, critical of the foregoing outline of the evolutionary history of leadership studies since it assumes "that theoretical development mature and develop in a consistent serially constructed direction". They then argue that in leadership research "different foci [are] changing over time in line with management trends and paradigmatic shifts such as critical… and social constructionist approaches" (Hibbert, *et al.,* 2014:281). Ford *et al.* (2023:811) contend that, "this is a history of futility: each successive body of theory emerges to much acclaim, much time and energy is invested in its development and refinement, but then it fades after proving unable to live up to its initial promise". The next section will discuss the various leadership approaches in terms of their definitions, main influencers, key contributions and criticisms based on scholarly literature.

2.2.2   Trait approach to leadership research

Trait approaches to leadership, also known as the great man theories, were dominant in the early twentieth century (Hernandez *et al.*, 2011; Wilson, 2013, Chee & Zainal, 2022*).* Uhl-bien *et al.* (2014:84) define these theories as "leader-centric" approaches to leadership where psychologists sought to identify key traits that identified leaders and how these could influence their followers. Wilson (2013:75-77) notes that the trait approach emphasises the superiority of the leader as a birth-right or is genetically determined or hereditary, similar to notions of traditional (cultural)

leadership. Chee and Zainal (2022:1607) observe that psychologists posited that personality traits determined behaviour which in turn informed leadership styles. Recently, Jackson (2020:1-5) conducted an empirical analysis of the gravitas trait against other known leadership traits from the times of ancient imperial Rome and imperialist Britain. This study concludes that the trait approach is still relevant in the context of transformational leadership. Contrary to Markham (2012:1149), the study concludes that "our knowledge of leadership is not so different from how it was 2000 years ago" (Jackson, 2020:5).

2.2.3 Behavioural approaches to leadership research

The behavioural approaches to leadership research focus on the behaviours of leaders (leader-centric) in terms of dichotomies such as democratic versus laissez-faire, performance/production focused versus people/employee-oriented, task-oriented versus socially-oriented leaders (Hernandez *et al.,* 2011:1169;). Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1169) and Uhl-Bien *et al.* (2014:85) further state that the main influencers of the behavioural approach are studies conducted by American universities such as Ohio State University (on "Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire"), the University of Michigan (on "employee-centred versus production-focused leadership") and Harvard University (on "co-leadership"). Later on, behavioural leadership researchers started to acknowledge the influence of situational factors on how leadership is enacted (Hernandez *et al.,* 2011:1169), as discussed under contingency leadership approaches below, which served as a critique of the behavioural and trait approaches to leadership.

2.2.4 Situational or contingency models of leadership research

The key tenets of the contingency model or situational approaches to leadership research were that there was "no single best way" to leadership since leadership was dependent on the situation where it occurs (Wilson, 2013:90). Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1170-1171) provide a description of some of the influential theories under the umbrella of situational leadership such as Fiedler's Contingency Model ("situational favourableness"), House's Path-Goal Theory ("situational moderators upon which leadership effectiveness is contingent"), and Hersey and Blanchard's "practitioner-oriented situational leadership theory" (matching leadership style with follower maturity level). The contingency paradigm was criticised for viewing followers as a problem to be closely managed or influenced by leaders, as well as for presenting many competing theories that led to the questioning of the credibility of leadership research among social science scholars (Wilson, 2013:91-93). This led to the emergence of new approaches to leadership research that are discussed in the next paragraphs.

2.2.5 Power and influence approaches to leadership research

Wilson (2013:98-109) characterises new leadership as a paradigm of leadership research that was stimulated by the book by Burns (1978) which introduced transformational and visionary leadership, as well as "House's (1977) theory of charismatic leadership". In agreement, Olley (2021) views the new leadership paradigm as power and influence and he lists the following forms of power, namely: legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power and referent power. Similarly, Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1171) contend that this paradigm of leadership research emerged in 1978 when "Kerr and Jermier's work moved away from focusing on the leader as the locus of leadership, but instead emphasised followers and context" – similar to "Lord's Implicit Leadership Theory". It is important then, to distinguish between charismatic and transformational leadership as dominant schools of thought under the power and influence paradigm of leadership scholarship.

Lovelace, Neely, Allen and Hunter (2019:97) define charismatic leadership as a leadership style whereby a leader uses his or her vision to appeal to the emotions of a large number of followers to motivate them to a higher level of commitment towards the envisaged social change. Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that emphasises the characteristics of a leader that influence "follower values, needs, morals and aspirations such that they put organisational success above self-interest" (Jackson, 2020:1). According to Wilson (2013:98-109), the key tenets of the power and influence approach to leadership research are pursuit of constant change, moving leadership discourse beyond workplaces to include society, follower motivation, articulation of vision, focus on the good characteristics of a leader, and contrasting leadership as "doing the right things" versus management, which was seen as "doing things right". These key tenets of the power and influence approaches to leadership are foundational to responsible leadership, as will be discussed later.

2.2.6 Emerging approaches to leadership research

According to Chee and Zainal (2022:1609), "value-based leadership" approaches emerged as a reaction to the prevalence of "toxic leadership" in organisations. Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1174-1176) state that the emerging approaches to leadership research include a set of theories that is introduced or adapted from other fields, such as complexity theory, identity theory and social network theory. Leadership approaches include ethical leadership, values-based leadership, authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, and various forms of collective leadership. The

collective leadership approaches such as shared leadership, collaborative leadership, distributed leadership, participative leadership and network leadership, are discussed in Chapter 3 as some of the leadership frameworks that are usually employed to study the leadership phenomenon in interorganisational partnerships. Olley (2021) combines this category of 'emerging approaches' with 'power and influence leadership theories'. As such, the new and emerging leadership approaches, as power and influence theories, will be discussed in more detail below by comparing and contrasting them with responsible leadership as the main subject matter of this chapter since they are not just contemporaneous, but also complementary to each other.

2.3   RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

2.3.1   Understanding responsible leadership

A responsible leadership approach could be regarded as one of the emerging or values-based or power and influence approaches in leadership research. A bibliometric review of literature by Zhao *et al.*, (2023:144) covered the period 1994 to 2020 and found that ninety percent of the articles on the intersection between CSR and leadership were published between 2011 and 2020 and the construct of responsible leadership appeared in the top two out of the seven clusters as the most common term on the interface between CSR and leadership, as depicted in Table 2.2:

Table 2.2:   Top two clusters out of the seven found in the bibliometric review of literature

MAIN THEME	TOP TEN TERMS IN THE CLUSTER
Cluster 1: *Board characteristics*	Responsible leadership, board gender diversity, stakeholder engagement, integrated reporting, gender diversity, female director, social performance, CSR strategy, environmental disclosure, renewed perspective.
Cluster 2: *Responsible leadership*	Board characteristics, board gender diversity, CSR, stakeholder engagement, corporate identity, integrated reporting, gender diversity, female director, form performance, environmental disclosure.

Source: After Zhao, *et al.* (2023).

Furthermore, Table 2.2. demonstrates constructs that are closely associated with responsible leadership and the fact that it is viewed as an integral part of good governance at the board-level of organisations.

According to Miska and Mendenhall (2018:117), responsible leadership theory has demonstrated significant growth and opportunities for new conceptualisations since its emergence from CSR and business ethics scholarship. In their editorial summarising key insights that emanated from

an international conference hosted by the Albert Luthuli Centre for Responsible Leadership at the University of Pretoria in May 2010, Pless, Maak and De Jongh (2011:1) assert that responsible leadership calls for a new way of analysing and practising leadership at individual, business and societal levels. Responsible leadership is a multi-level approach to leadership which can be applied to micro, meso and macro levels (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:124), as well as the global dimension (Voegtlin, Patzer & Scherer, 2012:2; Berger, Choi & Kim, 2011). Global organisations have both a local variable identity and their home-country fixed identity, which must be managed with sensitivity to local circumstances if such organisations want to practise genuine "responsible leadership citizenship" (Berger *et al.,* 2011:558-559).

There appears to be points of convergence and consensus among scholars of leadership research regarding the key tenets of responsible leadership, as Voegtlin, Frisch, Walther and Schwab (2019:2) observe that the stakeholder focus is the main thread that links all conceptualisations of the responsible leadership construct. This resonates well with a definition of responsible leadership as "the art of building and sustaining good relationships to all relevant stakeholders" (Maak & Pless 2006:100).

The following definition of responsible leadership is frequently cited in literature (Blakeley, 2016:109; Maak, 2007:334; Pless & Maak, 2011:5; Mirvis, De Jongh, Goodins, Quinn & Velsor, 2010:10), namely that responsible leadership is:

> *"A value-based and thoroughly ethical principles-driven relationship between leaders and stakeholders who are connected through a shared sense of meaning and purpose through which they raise one another to higher levels of motivation and commitment for achieving sustainable values creation and social change" (Pless, 2007:438).*

The relationship between leaders and stakeholders lies at the core of this definition and has very important conceptualisations in terms of clarifying the quality of such a relationship and its purpose. Qualitatively the definition posits responsible leadership as anchored in values, principles and ethics. In terms of purpose, it views responsible leadership as advancing values-based, mutual inspiration, societal transformation and sustainability enabled by leaders and stakeholders acting in concert. In this context, responsible leadership is not only conceptualised as a stakeholder relationship-building leadership practice, but also as a values-based and ethics-driven phenomenon (Pless, 2007:438). As such, the two core tenets of responsible leadership

theory in terms of moral values and ethics orientation and relationality (stakeholder focus) are used to evaluate the findings of this research in order to answer the main research question.

Carroll (2016:45-49) problematised the concept of responsibility, as she viewed it, as normally used in much of the literature as a mere slogan without a thorough and in-depth understanding of its full significance. She recognised a contestation between "causal, legal and moral responsibility", on the one hand, and "backward- and forward-looking responsibility", on the other hand. She then proposed a concept of "co-responsibility" that emphasises the relational posture of a responsible leader with organisational stakeholders (Carroll, 2016:45-49). The relational characteristic of responsible leadership will be discussed later, since it is similar to the relational leadership approach as proposed by Uhl-Bien (2006). Having defined responsible leadership theory, the following sections analyse the characteristics of responsible leadership in relation to other new and emerging leadership approaches.

2.3.2 Responsible leadership as one of the 'power and influence' leadership approaches

A responsible leadership approach could be viewed as building on the power and influence (Olley, 2021) or values-based approaches to leadership since it emerged in the mid-2000s from research in CSR, stakeholder theory and ethics theory (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:117). As indicated above, power and influence leadership approaches (Olley, 2021) are dominated by notions of charismatic and transformational leadership, and emerging leadership approaches include values-based, ethical, spiritual, servant, authentic and cross-cultural leadership approaches (Hernandez *et al.*, 2011:1174-1176). Responsible leadership theory "has been conceptualised as an emerging concept at the intersection between studies in ethics, leadership, and CSR" and as a leadership approach it has been found to enhance employee organisational commitment (Haque, Fernando, Caputi, 2019:761).

There are many similarities and differences between responsible leadership theory and other new and emerging leadership approaches. In order to understand such comparisons and contrasts between responsible leadership and other leadership approaches, Iszatt-White (2016:27-28) applies the 'loci and mechanisms' framework put forward by Hernández *et al.* (2011). They argue that responsible leadership needed the addition of a stakeholders' locus and values mechanism, which resulted in responsible leadership cutting across all other emerging leadership approaches, such as ethical, authentic and transformational leadership theories (Iszatt-White, 2016:28).

24

Besides the loci and mechanisms framework, Miska and Mendenhall (2018:119) use the "leadership interactions" or scope of followers and "thematic focus" or definitional emphasis to compare and contrast responsible leadership to other emerging leadership approaches (Table 2.3).

Table 2.3: **Responsible leadership theory in comparison with other contemporary leadership theories**

LEADERSHIP APPROACH	LEADERSHIP INTERACTIONS FOCUS ON	THEMATIC FOCUS
Transformational leadership	Group of followers within the organisation	…the process in which "leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (Burns, 1978: 20)
Servant leadership	Group of followers within organisations	…the prioritisation of fulfilling followers' needs which is the primary concern, with organisational concerns being peripheral (Greenleaf, 1970; Peterson, 2003)
Authentic leadership	Group of followers within an organisation	"…a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and highly developed organisational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development" (Brown, Treviño & Harrison, 2005:120)
Ethical leadership	Group of followers within organisations	"…the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making" (Brown *et al.*, 2005:120).
Shared leadership	Group of followers within organisations	"…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 & Conger, 2002:1).
Global leadership	Stakeholders across organisational, national and cultural boundaries	"…positive change in organisations by building communities through the development of trust and the arrangement of organisational structures and processes in a context involving multiple cross-boundary stakeholders, multiple sources of external cross-boundary authority, and multiple cultures under conditions of temporal, geographical, and cultural complexity (Mendenhall, 2013:20).
Responsible leadership	A multitude of stakeholders inside and outside the organisation	"…social-relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction" (Maak & Pless, 2006:99) in order to achieve societal and environmental targets and objectives of sustainable value creation and positive change on a global scale.

Source: After Miska and Mendenhall, (2018:119) and related scholars as cited in the third column

Table 2.3 indicates that responsible leadership does not only build on historical and contemporary leadership theories, but is an integral part of them. In fact, other scholars view the relational leadership theory as an "umbrella construct" from which the other leadership approaches mentioned in Table 2.3 emerged (Jaén, Refcco, Berger, 2021:470). Some theorists, such as Blakeley (2016), Mirvis, de Jongh, Googins, Quinn and van Velsor (2010), Doh and Quigley (2014), Cameron (2011) and Pless and Maak (2011) locate responsible leadership theory within the broader scope of stakeholder theory. Its orientation is derivative and integrative since it builds on a number of previous leadership theories. It then emphasises the need for leaders to be ethical and moral in their character and seek to achieve both organisational effectiveness and meet the expectations of legitimate stakeholders. By placing a humanitarian focus on matters such as inequality, social justice, poverty, peace-building and other developmental issues, responsible leadership expands the roles and responsibilities of business leaders beyond the traditional scope of internal managerial leadership and its accountability to the shareholders (Maak & Pless, 2006:99). It locates itself among the trans-disciplinary theories or cross-cutting constructs that draw from many other scientific fields such as management science, social sciences, humanities and environmental sciences.

Responsible leadership theory is maturing and some scholars have already produced extensive reviews and conceptual analyses of its various aspects and how it differs from other leadership and management theories (Pless, 2007; Waldman & Balven, 2014; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018; Marques *et al.,* 2018; Voegtlin, Frisch, Walther & Schwab, 2019). Pless and Maak (2011:6) also compare and contrast responsible leadership with ethical leadership, servant leadership, and authentic and transformational leadership approaches. With regards to ethical leadership, for instance, they note that it is similar to responsible leadership in so far as it advocates for leaders to be "role models" to their followers within an organisation, but differs significantly from ethical leadership theory by broadening the scope of followers to include both internal and external stakeholders. Yehuda (2018:2344) examines the application of responsible leadership behaviours in service industries and formulates the construct of a "responsible transformational leadership style". Lips-Wiersma, Haar, and Wright (2020) view responsible leadership as one of ethics alongside fairness and worthy-work, and they operationalise it on an empirical scale comprising of various leadership styles (authentic, transformational, ethical and shared leadership styles) that were deemed as integral components of the responsible leadership construct. Miska and Mendenhall (2018:130) conclude that the core mission of responsible leadership theory is to infuse stakeholder and ethical perspectives into leadership theory.

The next section deepens the discussion on responsible leadership by presenting its various perspectives as observed in the leadership literature in general.

2.4   VARIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

2.4.1   The context of a multi-perspectives' framework on a responsible leadership

Building on the above frameworks of comparing and contrasting a responsible leadership approach with other leadership approaches, scholars such as Waldman and Galvin (2008), Pless, Maak and Waldman (2012:51-65), Kempster and Carroll (2016), and Miska and Mendenhall (2018) use a multi-perspective approach to analyse and understand responsible leadership theory.

Recently, Waldman *et al.* (2020:5) resuscitated and extended the debate on multi-perspectives on responsible leadership via an exchange of letters (as reflected in Waldman & Galvin, 2008). They argue that: "While the strategist orientation implies the planning and use of CSR initiatives for the direct targeting of return on investment, the integrator orientation involves senior leaders' use of CSR to serve the interests of a range of corporate stakeholders" (Waldman *et al.*, 2020:5). In this part of the literature review the key perspectives discussed are based on the above definitions and key tenets of responsible leadership, namely CSR perspective, ethical perspective, stakeholder theory perspective, economic perspectives, and behavioural perspectives. They are analysed in terms of (1) their definitions, (2) main scholars and their ideas on each perspective, (3) the way each perspective fits into responsible leadership, (4) the main criticisms of linking responsible leadership to each perspective, and (5) summary of the importance of each perspective to scholars' attempt to understand the responsible leadership approach.

2.4.2   The CSR perspective

2.4.2.1 Definition of CSR

This section provides basic definitions of CSR and related conceptualisations. According to Aravind and Aravelo (2015:60), CSR is defined as entailing intentional initiatives by organisations to ensure sustainable development and it covers legal, economic/financial, ethical/moral and humanitarian responsibilities towards internal and external stakeholders of an organisation for the public good. The definition of CSR sometimes acknowledges explicit and implicit aspects, as

noted by Matten and Moon (2020:20), who argue that "expliciticisation" refers to the implementation of CSR by businesses based on societal norms and standards, whereas "implicitisation" refers to the way that businesses influence the adoption of CSR in the wider society through their actions (Matten & Moon, 2020:20).

Meynhardt and Gomez (2019:404-438) recognise "Archie Carrol's three-dimensional model of CSR" as pioneering, since it provides a widely used definition of CSR, comprising of legal, ethical, philanthropic and economic responsibilities. They, however, criticise the three-dimensional conceptualisation as too economically biased and instead propose a four-dimensional model of CSR that "builds on the public value concept" (Meynhardt & Gomez, 2019:404).

CSR sometimes goes with a qualification in order to demonstrate emphasis sought by a particular author such as "corporate social performance" (Pless, Maak & Waldman, 2012:52), "CSR implementation" as reviewed by Fatima and Elbanna (2023:105) and "political CSR" (PCSR) as discussed by Scherer, Rasche, Palazzo and Spicer (2016:273-298). Scherer *et al.* (2016:276) define PCSR as the contribution of business leaders to society through active participation in stakeholder deliberations, partnerships in public service provision, joint decision-making with other stakeholders, and active responses to wider moral and humanitarian issues in society, which causes business leaders to become explicitly political actors. The PCSR is complemented by an examination of power in relation to the application of responsible leadership in domains such as human resources management (Blakeley & Higgs, 2014). Maak, Pless and Voegtlin (2016:465) provide an analysis of the relationship between "CEO's responsible leadership style" and organisation's "engagement in PCSR" on the one hand and results of engaging with "PCSR challenges in a global world" on the other hand, in which they found that "integrative responsible leadership style" is more effective.

The discussion on CSR is important for this thesis because it makes explicit the responsibilities of businesses and their leaders towards society and how these have implications for multiple stakeholders. The multi-stakeholder partnership phenomenon is thus central to the conceptualisation of political social responsibility as will be demonstrated later. The only challenge is that viewing corporations as political or social actors does not necessarily refer explicitly to leadership. This is where the responsible leadership theory becomes relevant as the link between CSR and leadership research, is explained below.

2.4.2.2 Review of the CSR perspective on responsible leadership

An early contribution that links CSR with leadership was presented by Maak and Pless (2006:100), who posit what they view as a "new leadership mandate." They regarded such a mandate as one that responds to observed challenges in society and makes certain strategic shifts, namely a shift towards responsible action by business leaders on social, political and economic issues; a shift from an internal organisational focus to an external organisational focus; and a shift from shareholder orientation to broader stakeholder orientation. They then describe the responsibilities of leaders towards specific stakeholders and propose the "roles model of responsible leadership", which combines CSR, stakeholder theory and leadership scholarship (Maak & Pless, 2006:107). Mirvis *et al.,* (2010:26) point out that the view of responsible leadership in terms of CSR, leaders are responsible for value creation in economic terms, legitimacy to stakeholders in socio-political terms, impacts in environmental terms, and balancing of stakeholder interests and values in moral terms. Mirvis and Googins (2017) advance the concept of corporate social innovation wherein interorganisational partnerships are highlighted as one of the key building blocks.

Waldman, Siegel and Javidan (2006:1703-1725) conduct an empirical study that investigates the link between transformation and charismatic leadership with CSR; they find a high propensity for business leaders who have high intellectual stimulation (i.e. exciting followers to be innovative and creative) to incorporate CSR into their organisational strategies. Waldman and Seigel (2008:117-131) wrote a follow-up paper which was presented in the form of a dialogue between the two authors on the characteristics of a "socially responsible leader", which served to demonstrate the importance of approaching responsible leadership from different perspectives. The multi-perspectives approach was also pursued by Pless *et al.* (2012:51), who proposed a "matrix of responsible leader orientations" as a model that could be applied to understand how business leaders implement CSR. Subsequent outputs by responsible leadership scholars explicitly recognise CSR as the key tenet of responsible leadership theory, as summarised by Miska and Mendenhall (2018). Other influencers, in terms of linking CSR to responsible leadership, include Ketola (2010:123); Blakeley (2016:110); Lee and Higgs (2016:62); Voegtlin and Pless (2014:189); and Patzer *et al.* (2018:334).

Another dimension of the linkage between the two concepts is at the level of the definition and understanding of the construct of "responsibility". Responsible leadership is often viewed as a bridge between two primary responsibilities, namely the individual-level responsibility of the leader

and the corporate responsibility at an organisational level (Voegtlin *et al.*, 2012:2). The former micro-level understanding remains the major preoccupation of classic leadership theories (Pless, 2007:438). The latter brings a new dimension of CSR which calls for triple-bottom-line concerns at meso and macro levels (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:121). Blakeley (2016:117) advocates for "radical" responsible leadership that makes a shift towards "CSR 2.0", which is not about mere compliance with triple-bottom-line principles, but a more robust and proactive approach to accountability, morality and partnerships with various stakeholders on a global scale. This radical stance by Blakeley (2016:111-117) further posits that corporate leaders must respond to the following three sets of questions: the obvious contribution of multinational corporations to irresponsible behaviour, their inherent power to resolve such problems, and the failure of their CSR initiatives to make any significant impact.

The linking of global responsible leadership to CSR resonates with the above definition of political social responsibility put forward by Scherer *et al.* (2016:276). Voegtlin, Pater and Scherer (2012:1-6) propose a conceptual model of responsible leadership that views businesses as political actors whose leaders, imbued with principles of CSR, should actively participate in "deliberative practices and discursive conflict resolution." The UN Global Compact serves as one of the examples of global CSR multi-stakeholder partnerships that are used to advance the global stakeholder engagement imperative of responsible leadership as posited by Voegtlin and Pless (2014:179-191). Building on this normative lens (specifically Harbermasian communicative theory), Patzer *et al.* (2018:325-354) locate responsible leadership within the historical evolution of society by arguing that the literature on CSR and business ethics has identified the end of modernity and the beginning of the postmodern society. One of the characteristics of the postmodern society is that organisations are required to collaborate and partner with many other stakeholders in order to thrive as part of providing stakeholder value creation and enacting responsibilities towards various constituencies as well as stakeholder concerns for environmental sustainability, climate change and cultural sensitivity (Patzer *et al.,* 2008:326).

In their analysis of symposium papers that discuss the topic of UN Global Compact, Voegtlin and Pless (2014:187) identify the following as the three main stances that were adopted by scholars to conduct their analysis of its implementation, namely, economic, socio-historical and normative orientation. They identify lack of explicit engagement with the concept of leadership in the CSR literature as a gap in the literature that could be addressed through a research agenda that investigates questions about the interface between the UN Global Compact as a partnership and

responsible leadership (Voegtlin & Pless, 2014:189). The linking of responsible leadership theory and interorganisational partnerships in this thesis builds on the recommendations made by the above scholars, among others.

2.4.2.3 Main criticisms of the CSR perspective on the responsible leadership

There are concerns among scholars that there is no clear consensus regarding the definition and core elements of CSR, as was demonstrated in Waldman and Siegel's (2008) dialogue. The instrumental view of CSR limits it only to the shareholder bottom-line and, as per Siegel's argument, "responsible leadership that encourages the non-instrumental use of CSR can only constitute a waste of resources – and thus, is not really responsible" (Waldman & Siegel, 2008:119). Furthermore, Waldman *et al.* (2020:12) argue that CSR should not serve to divert the attention of organisational leaders from prioritising the bottom-line performance objectives (profitability) since "a firm cannot advance societal goals if it declares bankruptcy". The proponents of PCSR seek to move CSR away from an instrumental economic focus to corporate citizenship. Criticisms of this approach are that it over-emphasises globalisation, it serves to politicise businesses and its research agenda is exclusively normative in character (Scherer *et al.,* 2016:274).

Other criticisms of the CSR perspective relate to the definition of the construct of responsibility both within the responsible leadership discourse (Carroll, 2016:40-57) and in the CSR literature (Meynard & Gomez, 2019:408). Waldman (2011:82) cautions that organisational-level responsibility, as per CSR, must not be confused with responsible leadership, since leaders are the ones charged with decision-making. Fisher (2004:395) notes the ambiguity of the concept of social responsibility and concludes that its vagueness is due to a lack of consensus among scholars regarding the "purpose of business nor who has legitimate claims on it." Carroll (2016:40-57) also acknowledges the lack of consensus regarding the definition of responsibility and then recommends the use of the term "co-responsibility" to capture the multi-stakeholder nature of responsible leadership theory, drawing from responsibility theory in sociological and philosophical literature.

2.4.2.4 Summary of the CSR perspective to leadership

The above literature review demonstrates that a CSR perspective is central to the understanding of responsible leadership. As a field of study in its own right, CSR scholarship continues to advance, as shown by the emergence of various definitions and conceptualisations. Similarly, as

an emerging field of leadership research, responsible leadership still draws from CSR to define the roles of leaders and their responsibilities towards stakeholders. The review highlighted contributions made by scholars in terms of linking leadership research to the scholarship on CSR. These include, among others, the mandate of leaders to shift away from focusing on shareholders to stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006:107); empirical analysis of transformational leadership and CSR (Waldman *et al.* 2006:1703-1725); and analysis of the role of business leaders in multi-stakeholder CSR partnerships leadership, like the UN Global Compact (Voegtlin & Pless, 2014:189). The next section will discuss the ethics perspective of responsible leadership.

2.4.3   Ethics perspective on responsible leadership

2.4.3.1 Definition of ethics in the context of responsible leadership

Fisher (2004:398) distinguishes between descriptive ethics (the behaviour of individuals in terms of their beliefs, values and attitudes) and normative ethics or moral philosophy (the norms and values that are used to evaluate behaviour). This normative perspective will be the focus of this section, whilst descriptive ethics will be the focus of the behavioural perspective on responsible leadership. This is in line with Maak and Pless's (2006:102) view that, "Instead of understanding leadership as values-free", they posit that it should be understood "as moral, values-based and thus an [ethical] normative phenomenon". The normative perspective defines ethics as "a code of moral principles that sets standards as to what is good or bad, right or wrong in one's conduct and thereby guides the behaviour of a person or group" (Fisher, 2004:398, citing Shermerhorn, 2002:146). Correspondingly, Gherardi and Laasch (2022:270), argue that, "the study of ethical management can be subdivided into the three fields of normative ethics concerned with what the 'right' behaviour is; descriptive ethics concerned with explaining why people engage in right or wrong behaviours; and ethics management concerned with the application of tools to facilitate right behaviour (citing Laasch & Conaway, 2015)." This section, therefore, discusses the normative ethics perspective.

Additionally, Greenwood and Freeman (2018:3) argue that ethics seeks to pose complex questions about organisations and the manner in which people live and relate to each other. Such questions evolve from generation to generation, since what a previous civilisation took for granted is problematised and interrogated by a future generation. Ethics are therefore not static, but dynamic – hence the associated definitions will also vary according to the question that a particular author seeks to answer. In the context of this research, ethics are conceptualised in the context of leadership research in general and responsible leadership theory in particular.

2.4.3.1 Review of the ethics perspective on responsible leadership

Maak and Pless (2006:99) view responsible leadership as "a social-relational and ethical phenomenon" and apply an "ethical lens" in terms of discussing "leadership responsibilities in a stakeholder society." This aspect of the literature review has thus far discussed the ethical lens or perspective on responsible leadership, while the social-relational perspective will be discussed later as part of stakeholder theory and the relational leadership approach. These dimensions are not seen as mutually exclusive, but could be viewed as various angles that scholars adopt when conceptualising and studying the responsible leadership approach. The *Journal of Business Ethics* published two special issues in 2018 focusing on philosophical approaches to leadership ethics research. There Ciulla, Knights, Mabey and Tomkins (2018:246) argue that "leadership and ethics are intertwined" after reviewing the ethical challenges linked to issues such as self-interest, spirituality, sexuality, moral luck and moral responsibility as moral dilemmas.

It is important to first understand the link between ethics, as defined above, and CSR before expanding on the link between ethics and responsible leadership. Fisher (2004:392-394) compares and contrasts the concepts of ethics and social responsibility and notes that they are at times used interchangeably, or sometimes one is viewed as an aspect of the other. It is not the intention of this literature review to delve into such debates, except to adopt what Fisher (2004:394) regards as the predominant and most common view in the literature, that "social responsibility has various dimensions, one of which is ethics." Based on this view, it goes without saying that if social responsibility is one of the key elements of responsible leadership, ethics becomes an integral part of this approach to leadership. The view that ethics is part and parcel of CSR was also confirmed by the three-dimensional and four-dimensional models of CSR discussed by Meynhardt and Gomez (2016:404-438).

The normative ethical perspective to responsible leadership, as initially propounded by Maak and Pless (2006:99-103), can be summarised as having articulated the next practical ethical considerations for five groups of organisational stakeholders. First, for staff: responsible leaders guide employees to behave ethically towards other stakeholders. They promote channels for whistleblowing by staff, uphold labour rights and freedoms, enhance employee wellbeing, ensure safe and humane workplaces, among other ethical standards. Second, for customers: responsible leaders produce safe products and services produced under transparent conditions that ensure good risk management practices. Third, for business partners: responsible leaders ensure mutual

respect for ethical standards, fairness and promotion of environmentally sustainable business practices. Fourth, for society and nature: they promote charitable giving, community empowerment, green business practices, production of environmentally friendly products and assessment of the impact of one's own business on society and nature. Fifth, for owners and investors: responsible leaders "proactively prevent any moral wrong-doing" by implementing good corporate governance ethical practices that also seek to ensure the long-term sustainability of the business (Maak & Pless, 2006:99-103).

Some responsible leadership scholars adopt an ethical perspective through researching a specific type of ethical conduct or set of values at organisational or societal level. For example, Freeman and Auster (2011:15-23) make a deliberate link between the ethical perspective adopted by Maak and Pless (2006) and the value of authenticity as an aspect of ethics, or a "necessary starting point for ethics" that responsible leaders should aspire to achieve in their businesses. Cameron (2011:32) discusses the ethical value of "virtuousness" whereby he argues that responsible leadership "implies the pursuit of ultimate best or eudemonism." Lee and Higgs (2016:66) advocate for responsible leadership to strive for the alignment between leaders' and employees' personal values with organisational values, as well as the management of value conflicts through fostering integrity. Steyn and Sewchurran (2021:) put forward "managerial phronesis", which they define "as the capacity for values-based sense-making and morally-imbued, relevant behaviour aimed at virtuous outcomes".

Voegtlin (2011:57) pursues scholarship that combines leadership with the macro perspective of an organisation as a political actor in his research on the development of an "empirical scale to measure discursive responsible leadership" as a normative ethical perspective. One of the findings of his research was that responsible leaders, "as positive role models", engage staff through inclusive decision-making and deliberations on complex ethical challenges in order to reach mutually acceptable solutions and prevent unethical conduct (Voegtlin, 2011:68). Similarly, Patzer *et al.* (2018:343) adopt the ethical normative perspective on responsible leadership in terms of analysing societal problems whereby they argue for an ethically informed orientation on the part of responsible leaders when engaging in deliberation with stakeholders to resolve conflicts, sustain ethical principles and promote "values work" within organisations and society at large. Pless *et al.* (2022:313) employ the "moral imagination" framework to analyse a stakeholder conflict in India against the application of "different responsible leadership mindsets". Their study found that the "integrative responsible leadership approach" is effective in terms of analysing such

conflictual situations and coming up with evidence-based practical solutions (Pless *et al.*, 2022:313).

The ethics perspective views responsible leadership as including a moral reaction to corporate scandals and corrupt practices in society, and the public calls for responsible business leadership partnerships that will lead moral regeneration in society (Pless, 2007:438; Waldman & Galvin, 2008:327, Kempster & Carroll, 2016:1). In the literature, specific corporate scandals in Parmalat, WorldCom, Nike, the Exxon Valdez spill in Alaska, Shell's Brent Spar and failures in Nigeria, the demise of Enron and Arthur Anderson, as well as the root causes of the 2008 global financial crisis, are seen as triggers for academic initiatives to understand the "phenomenon of irresponsible leadership" (Pless & Maak, 2011:3; Pless, 2007:438; Stahl & De Luque, 2014:235). Pearce, Wassenaar and Manz (2014:278) coined the concept of "corporate socially irresponsible leadership" to characterise leadership that pursues personal nefarious agendas at the expense of the interests of their organisation and broader stakeholders. Maak and Pless (2006:4) further advocate for balancing the negative view (reactionary stance against irresponsible behaviour) with the positive orientation by arguing that the role of a responsible leader is to actively promote and foster a responsible organisational culture and CSR in society.

2.4.3.2 Main criticisms of the ethics perspective to responsible leadership

The emphasis made by the responsible leadership approach on ethics is sometimes viewed as an overlap with the ethics leadership approach (Pless & Maak, 2011:6; Voegtlin, 2011:60). Pless and Maak (2011:6) attempt to clear this potential confusion by arguing that responsible leadership is similar to ethical leadership in so far as it advocates for leaders to be "role-models" to their followers within an organisation, but it differs significantly from ethical leadership by devoting attention to the ethical responsibilities of leaders to external stakeholders as well. Voegtlin (2011:60) argues that ethical concerns such as integrity are treated as antecedents and that the ethical normative outcomes of discursive responsible leadership are determined by the norms and rules of deliberative discourse rather than by virtues per se.

The dialogue between Waldman and Siegel (2008:121) raises concerns such as the fact that challenges would arise if some leaders started enforcing their own personal religious dispositions as ethical moral standards in their secular organisations at the expense of diversity and profit-making. Another criticism of the ethics perspective, according to Waldman and Galvin (2008:330), emerges from the "instrumental economic perspective" which rejects the notion of the ethical

obligations of leaders to external stakeholders other than maintaining good corporate governance exclusively in the interests of owners and investors. In short, the orthodox economic perspective is quite at odds with the ethical pillar of responsible leadership, since it advocates for the intentional exploitation of certain stakeholders for the benefit of the organisation (Waldman, *et al.* 2020:13).

2.4.3.3 Summary of the ethics perspective on responsible leadership

The ethical perspective on responsible leadership, in its normative sense, addresses the role of leaders in influencing their followers and stakeholders to apply ethical norms and moral values in distinguishing between good and bad, and right and wrong (Fisher, 2004:398). At the centre of this conceptualisation of responsible leadership is the emphasis on good governance, ethics and good moral behaviour on the part of individual leaders as role models to their internal and external stakeholders (Maak & Pless, 2006:99-103). In other words, the stance of characterising responsible leadership as an essentially normative ethical, moral and value-based phenomenon sets the conditions for changing behaviours within organisations and for their stakeholders, as discussed under the behavioural perspective below.

2.4.4   Stakeholder theory perspective

2.4.4.1 Definition of stakeholder theory

According to Barney and Harrison (2018:203), the stakeholder theory perspective of organisations has been discussed in literature for more than fifty years. After acknowledging certain tensions and debates among stakeholder theorists, they argue that stakeholder theory is about cooperative and collaborative value creation, while moral values and ethics serve as mechanisms for organisational performance. Businesses must intentionally balance their short and long-term roles and socio-economic impacts (Barney & Harrison, 2018:203). In agreement, Doh and Quigley (2014:257) argue that, on the one hand, the normative stakeholder theory perspective "assumes that the interests of all (legitimate) stakeholders have intrinsic value"; and from a practical perspective, stakeholder theory assumes that as a theory it should be easily applied in organisational management processes. According to Zhoa *et al.*, (2023:150), "stakeholder theory is the most popular in the domain of CSR and leadership, with 171 [out of 1432] papers citing this approach or relevant keywords related to the theory". It does appear that, if read in conjunction with the definitions of CSR and a normative ethics perspective, stakeholder theory plays an integrative role, which forms the basis for understanding responsible leadership as discussed below.

2.4.4.2 Review of literature that links the stakeholder theory perspective to responsible leadership

This section will elaborate on the relationship between responsible leadership and the stakeholder theory perspective by identifying the main influencers and summarising their research. Maak and Pless (2006:99-115) are among the first researchers to link stakeholder theory to responsible leadership in order to explain the "social-relational" nature of the responsible leadership approach. From the perspective of stakeholder theory, according to Maak and Pless (2006:102-104), responsible leadership has the following characteristics: (a) the aim of leadership is to build stakeholder relationships towards the attainment of the public good; (b) unlike classic leadership approaches where followers are subordinates, in responsible leadership followers are stakeholders who might have the same status as the leader; (c) the role of the responsible leader is to facilitate stakeholder relations; (d) and they uphold high ethical principles, values and moral standards in their engagement with stakeholders. They then apply the stakeholder theory to develop the "roles model of responsible leadership" (Maak & Pless, 2006:107). The roles model was later adapted in the analysis of the "inner theatre of a responsible leader" called Anita Roddick (Pless, 2007: 437&439) and by Jaén *et al.* (2021) in the analysis of the role of responsible leaders in inclusive supply chains.

Strategic leadership research mainly focuses on the influence of positional leaders such as Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and their top management teams (upper echelons) on organisational performance and processes. The "role theory" posits that "individuals behave in accordance with the functional, relational and structural features of the social unit in which they co-exist" (Georgakakis, Heyden, Oehmichenc, Ekanayake, 2022:3). These are the three common perspectives within role theory, namely: functionalist perspective (roles are defined *a priori* and static), structuralist perspective (roles are structurally determined by power distribution) and social-interactionist perspective (roles are social-relationally constructed, evolving and negotiated (Georgakakis, *et al.,* 2022).

Maak (2007:329-343) built on the above work and extended the use of the stakeholder theory to analyse the contribution of responsible leadership towards building social capital as the glue that holds people together in their social relations. Accordingly, Maak (2007:340) proposes a conceptual framework that links stakeholder theory with responsible leadership and the creation of social capital, whereby the various roles of a responsible leader are articulated "as a weaver of

stakeholder relationships and broker of social capital in pursuit of responsible change." The main contribution of Maak's research is clarifying the role of a responsible leader in terms of driving stakeholder legitimacy and adding goodwill for the organisation through sustainable and ethical stakeholder engagement (Maak, 2007).

Waldman and Galvin (2008:330) view stakeholder theory as indicating an alternative approach to responsible leadership in contrast to the instrumental economic perspective. These scholars use real-life examples of responsible leaders to demonstrate the usefulness of the stakeholder theory perspective as part of CSR. The core argument of the study is that, from a stakeholder perspective, ethical and moral concerns for balancing stakeholder interests trump calculative bottom-line issues in favour of the long-term sustainability of the organisation; they also provide further evidence of how this perspective could be applied in practice by responsible leaders (Waldman & Galvin, 2008:330-335). According to Zhao *et al.*, (2023) "stakeholder theory is the most popular in the domain of CSR–leadership, with 171 papers citing this approach or relevant keywords related to the theory".

A review of leadership research and responsible leadership scholarship that applies the stakeholder theory is provided by Doh and Quigley (2014:257-259), who demonstrate how responsible leadership influences processes in organisations and consequent outcomes. They make the following observations: (a) stakeholder theory is used to demonstrate the corporate responsibility of leaders to society as a measure to mitigate corporate malfeasance; (b) the inclusive approach to stakeholder engagement; (c) the importance of responsible leaders empowered with regard to intercultural sensitivity; (b) and the need for responsible leaders to deal with the complexity of managing various stakeholder interests and how this affects their own orientation and impact (Doh & Quigley, 2014:257-259).

A review of responsible leadership research by Miska and Mendenhall (2018:127,130) concludes that "stakeholder theory has been an important foundation and guiding agenda" for the responsible leadership approach, and responsible leadership's contribution to leadership studies is primarily from a multi-stakeholder perspective. Correspondingly, Voegtlin *et al.* (2019) apply the classification of stakeholders as primary and secondary to empirically delineate the various roles of responsible leaders towards different organisational constituencies. Finally, a bibliometric analysis of responsible leadership research by Marques, Reis and Gomes (2018:19) notes that, whilst the field of responsible leadership is still emerging based on the sixty publications that they

used, it has been dominated by the use of stakeholder theory. They then advocate for responsible leadership research to actively inform the further development of stakeholder theory rather than merely relying on the application of its classic sources (Marques *et al.,* 2018)

2.4.4.3 Main criticisms against the stakeholder theory perspective in the context of a responsible leadership approach

As a theory in its own right, according to Barney and Harrison (2020:203-212), stakeholder theory is criticised for being too broad, and there are inequalities in terms of power among the various stakeholders which can result in a lack of inclusivity in stakeholder engagement. Freeman, Phillips and Sisondia (2018:217-225) attempt to address a number of challenges implicit in stakeholder theory and they conclude that, rather than viewing stakeholder theory in a normative sense, it would be more productive to treat it as pragmatic in philosophical terms.

Within responsible leadership discourse, the instrumental economic perspective that champions a focus on the bottom line is consistently being put forward as the major criticism of the stakeholder theory perspective (Maak & Pless, 2006:100; Waldman & Galvin, 2008:328-330; Doh & Quigley, 2014:258; Marques *et al.* 2018:2-25). According to Waldman and Galvin (2008:332), "the stakeholder perspective has been criticised for taking a pollyannaish stance with regard to human nature", which is deemed unrealistic from an economic view of a business as comprised of individuals who are driven by "self-interest and opportunism" and whose conduct must always be kept in check. Maak (2007:330) recognises the challenge of the need for a responsible leader to balance the contradictory and competing needs and interests of various stakeholders – hence he views inclusive stakeholder engagement as a panacea. Similarly, Patzer *et al.* (2018) recognise the challenge of stakeholder management, that in the new global environment, business leaders "frequently have to cater to complex and often contradictory demands that reflect a multitude of conflicting political, economic and institutional rationalities", and as a solution they propose the application of Harbermas's critical social theory to develop an "integrative responsible leadership" approach.

2.4.4.4 Summary of the importance of the stakeholder theory for responsible leadership

In spite of its limitations, stakeholder theory remains the main conceptual framework for understanding responsible leadership (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:127). It provides a template to integrate the previous two perspectives. In terms of the CSR perspective, stakeholder theory attends to the needs of multiple stakeholders beyond shareholders (triple-bottom-line). In relation

to the ethical perspective, stakeholder theory views ethics as a mechanism (Barney & Harrison, 2018:203) through which responsible leaders relate to stakeholders in a trustful manner (Maak, 2007:340) and with integrity (Maak & Pless, 2006:102). The instrumental or orthodox economic perspective is the main critique (Waldman & Galvin, 2008:332) of the stakeholder theory perspective due to its lack of prioritising shareholder interests above all else, as will be demonstrated below.

2.4.5   Instrumental economic perspective to responsible leadership

2.4.5.1 Definition of the economic perspective

The instrumental economic perspective on responsible leadership is based on the disciplines of economics and strategic management, with the main emphasis being on the responsibility of organisational management and leadership to achieve profit maximisation and competitiveness (Waldman & Siegel, 2008:118; Pless *et al.,* 2012:52; Waldman *et al.,* 2020). Pless *et al.* (2012:53) observe that the economic perspective is the most "prevalent in the business world" and is based on agency theory and an instrumental mindset, which leaders should adopt in CSR initiatives only if they can demonstrate the benefits to the shareholders.

2.4.5.2 Review of literature that links economic perspective to responsible leadership

Miska, Hilbe and Mayer (2014:349) developed a mathematical model for responsible leadership theory whereby they found that "non-monetary and non-instrumental incentives, such as leaders' values and authenticity, as well as their planning horizons, counterbalance pure monetary and instrumental orientations." Waldman and Galvin (2008:328) compare and contrast the economic perspective with the stakeholder perspective, and put forward the following three principles that guide the economic perspective. The first principle promotes the almost exclusive responsibility of organisational leaders to the owners and shareholders of the organisation. This stance is suspicious of any view that advocates for the incorporation of views, concerns and values of other stakeholders into the strategy of their own organisation. The second principle emphasises the need to take into consideration other stakeholders in so far as they bring about economic benefits for the organisation. The third principle has to do with rewards and sanctions that must be put in place to ensure that organisational leaders are incentivised to maximise shareholder value (Waldman & Galvin, 2008:329; Waldman, *et al.,* 2019). In essence, the instrumental economic perspective on a responsible leadership approach, whilst it recognises the need to map various stakeholders of the organisation, is unapologetic in terms of viewing the role of a responsible leader as devoting their undivided attention to enhancing economic benefits for their own

organisational shareholders and owners. Varma (2021) applies responsible leadership principles in the examination of responsible behaviours during crises situations in the airline industry, with a special focus on reputational management, which demonstrates how the economic perspective could be operationalised empirically.

Maritz, Pretorius and Plant (2011:103) provide insights into the consensual definition of strategic management as viewing organisational management as agents of the owners' interests, and that empirical study had no explicit recognition of ethics and CSR as roles of responsible leaders. Correspondingly, research by Pless *et al.* (2012:53-57) recognises the prevalence of the instrumental economic perspective and their empirical study confirms the prevalence of business leaders who have a narrow focus, whom they classify as either "traditional economists" or "opportunity seekers". The "traditional economist" leaders have the following characteristics: exclusive focus on profit maximisation, risk aversion, tendency to emphasise cost-benefit analyses, dictatorial leadership style, and focus on mere compliance to institutional norms and standards in relation to the application of ethics and CSR. The "opportunity seekers" implement CSR in an instrumental way, since they view it as beneficial for business effectiveness and sustainability such as reputation-building, brand recognition and competitive advantage in the market (Pless *et al.,* 2012:57).

In his dialogue with David Waldman, Donald Siegel made the following key arguments in favour of the instrumental economic perspective on responsible leadership. First, in relation to agency theory, his view is that leaders are agents of the shareholders whose task it is to ensure returns on investment from social corporate responsibility projects, including reducing the costs related to employee capacity building. Second, a social responsibility project should not be implemented unless there has been a clear analysis of costs against benefits, including opportunity costs. Third, "when modelling human behaviour, economists assume *homo economus* – the notion that human beings are perfectly rational economic agents who always choose the best options" when making decisions – which justifies the assumption that leaders must be calculative when making decisions and that rationality does not make them amoral persons. Fourthly, and lastly, the motive behind business leaders' compliance with industry rules is based on strategic choices such as building competitive advantage, cost saving and enhancement of reputation with external stakeholders, rather than on their being inherently good people (Waldman & Siegel, 2008:124-125).

Patzer *et al.* (2018:325) view adoption of the economic perspective as part of the historical evolution of responsible leadership in the sense that it is a reaction to modernism, since in the 1950s a responsible leader was viewed as someone who makes profits for shareholders, complies with rules and regulations, and makes philanthropic donations to the community. The 'radical view' of responsible leadership theory departs from this compliance-based view to incorporate ideas of advocacy for social justice and global change, as articulated by Blakeley (2016:108-130). Patzer *et al.* (2018:339) employ Habermas's critical social theory to propose what they refer to as the "reconstructed integrating responsible leadership" theory that seeks to reconcile business in the economic sphere with striving to achieve societal goals, as depicted in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4:   Responsible leaders as mediators between life-world and economic system

SOCIETAL SPHERE	LIFE-WORLD	ECONOMIC SYSTEM
Contribution to society	Social integration by reproduction of a shared base of norms and values.	Efficient distribution of goods and services.
Action orientation	Communicative action.	Strategic action.
Mode of interaction	Deliberative/discourse.	Bargaining/negotiation.
Leader's responsibility	Contribute to the process of (re)producing a shared foundation of norms and values.	Contribute to organisational efficiency.
Role of leadership as mediator between life-world and economic system	Leader as citizen. Initiate and moderate stakeholder discourse. Facilitate discourse on values.	Leader as a strategist. Motivate and commit employees to organisational goals.

Source: After Patzer *et al.* (2018:339)

As depicted in the third column of Table 2.4, the responsibility of a leader from the economic perspective remains instrumental, since it primarily focuses on efficiency and strategic delivery against the bottom-line goals. Instrumental responsible leadership is valid in so far as it ensures that businesses remain commercially viable economic entities in terms of achieving the bottom-line imperatives, but it is unsustainable when it downplays ethics and the importance of external stakeholder engagement by a responsible "leader as citizen" (Patzer *et al.,* 2018:339).

2.4.5.3 *Main criticisms of linking responsible leadership to the instrumental economic perspective*

While most of the literature cited above does not exclusively propose the instrumental economic perspective as the focus of responsible leadership theory, it is imperative to note some of the counter arguments against this perspective. Maak and Pless (2006:103) explicitly reject the

instrumental economic perspective by arguing that the core aim of responsible leaders is no longer merely about shareholder bottom-line demands, but ethical stakeholder engagement for the purposes of achieving the triple-bottom-line, sustainability and the broader public good. Maak (2007:329) argues that given the many problems in society, responsible leaders are now held accountable and expected by stakeholders to leverage the power and influence of their businesses to make a difference in the world. The shift from modern to postmodern society, as articulated by Patzer *et al.* (2018:335), implies that businesses that are run by leaders who operate in terms of the instrumental economic orientation face the risk of extinction. Being affected by the multi-stakeholder expectations and constraints in a globalising world characterised by "integration of value creation through collaboration that transcends national boundaries" is unavoidable (Patzer *et al.,* 2018:335). The study by Vangen and Huxham (2003:75) found the "highlighting and legitimising of simultaneous enactment of both the facilitative (spirit of collaboration) and directive (collaborative thuggery) [or instrumental behaviour] roles" are the two dominant categories of leadership practices in interorganisational settings. This argument is pertinent to the relationality principle that is core to this research.

2.4.5.4 Summary of the economic perspective on responsible leadership approach

The instrumental economic approach to responsible leadership seems to not be well supported by recent literature on responsible leadership theory, maybe due to the fact that economic considerations are already part and parcel of social corporate responsibility's triple-bottom-line imperative (Maak & Pless, 2006; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). The importance of CSR is linked to strengthening the understanding of the economic contribution of businesses to society and the need to ensure their sustainability as viable commercial entities. However, the unabated pursuit of profit maximisation as propounded by the instrumental economic perspective does not fit well with developments in the responsible leadership approach (Waldman & Siegel, 2008). The main discourse of the responsible leadership approach is about building a better world through sustainable organisations that promote CSR, ethics, social justice and humanitarian considerations, even if these factors do not necessarily contribute to short-term profit maximisation, which is the hallmark of the instrumental economic perspective (Maak & Pless, 2006:103, Waldman & Galvin, 2008:332; Waldman & Siegel, 2008:120; Patzer *et al.*, 2018:339; Waldman *et al.,* 2020).

In order to mitigate the risks of the predominant instrumental economic thinking in organisations, Maritz *et al.* (2011:111) propose that responsible leadership training should expose students to

strategy-making and the imperative of taking on board multi-stakeholder interests "(and not just to a few risk-seeking individuals)" and ensure the development of holistic thinking in line with the core tenets of a responsible leadership approach.

2.4.6 Behavioural perspective on a responsible leadership approach

2.4.6.1 Definition of a behavioural perspective

Under the ethics perspective to responsible leadership, a distinction has been made between descriptive and normative ethics. Descriptive ethics is about describing the behaviour of individuals in terms of their beliefs, values, attitudes as influenced by social norms, ethics and practices and other psycho-social factors (Fisher, 2004:398). Pless (2007:439) adopts a similar stance when she draws from psychology and ethics in terms of differentiating between "intrapsychic drivers, also called motivational needs systems … and moral drivers" of behaviour as the basis of her analysis of Anita Roddick's notion of an "inner theatre" as an example of the behaviour of a responsible leader. Against this background, the definition by Stahl and de Luque (2014:238) states that the behavioural perspective on responsible leadership refers to practical actions implemented by business leaders to prevent negative outcomes and derive benefits for both the organisation, its stakeholders and society at large.

2.4.6.2 Review of literature that links the behavioural perspective to responsible leadership

The behavioural approach to responsible leadership theory is closely tied to its normative justification (Patzer *et al.* 2018:1), since values and ethics are viewed as "key driver[s] for pro-social behaviour and responsible decision-making" (Maak, 2016: xvi). In addition to pro-social behaviour, there are studies that focus on pro-environmental behaviour or sustainability (Kurucz, Colbert, Lüdeke-Freund, Upward, & Willard, 2017; He, Morisson & Zhang, 2020). Sustainability is an integral part of responsible leadership concerns, and "pro-environmental behaviour reflects an individual's ethical belief and their effort to balance the relationship between human society and nature while enhancing sustainable management" (Afsar, Maqsoom, Shahjehan, Afridi, Nawaz, Fazliani, 2020:300).

Drawing from the literature on development psychology and neurobiology, Pless (2007:440) posits that values and ethical norms are antecedents of responsible leadership behaviours. She identifies the need for a sense of recognition, justice and care as the three key normative drivers of behaviour. She then uses the behavioural perspective to analyse the inner theatre of Anita

Roddick's biography as a widely recognised individual who embodies responsible leadership behaviour (Pless, 2007:437). The findings of this clinical analysis confirm the importance of alignment between what the leader says and what he or she does in practice from an ethical behavioural perspective (Pless, 2007:451). Another biographical analysis by Castillo, Sánchez and Dueñas-Ocampo (2020:343) puts forward a proposition that, "Formative and significant experiences are valuable in the development of the moral conscience of the future responsible leader, when these are coherent with his or her immediate environment".

Furthermore, an empirical study of determinants and effects of roles of responsible leadership by Voegtlin *et al.* (2019) employs the concept of behavioural complexity, which draws on theories of paradox and ambidexterity. Using this line of thought, these scholars conceptualise responsible leadership as characterised by complex behaviours that seek to balance the interests and views of stakeholders who have contradictory values and worldviews. They cite CSR studies that make a compelling argument that highly effective and successful organisations are characterised by ambidextrous behaviours. Such complex behaviours seek a balance between the instrumental goals of bottom-line concerns and the competing ethical interests of various stakeholders (Voegtlin *et al.,* 2019). This study provides a shortlist of key behaviours that are antecedents of responsible leadership, namely empathy, self-transcendence, positive affect and holistic thinking. It also found that the outcomes of responsible leadership are effectiveness, employees' commitment, duty towards other members, community citizenship, leader-as-role-model, and attractiveness of the organisation to external stakeholders (Voegtlin *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, Haque, Fernando, Caputi (2019:771) found that responsible leadership has a positive influence on employees' commitment, since employees who perceive their leader to be responsible are likely to remain committed to the organisation and their leader.

The leadership studies conducted by Ohio State University, Michigan State University and Harvard University Laboratory Observations after the Second World War are often seen as major contributors to the behavioural school to leadership, which posits that leadership can be learned through imparting certain behaviours, skills and competencies rather than innate traits (Hernandez *et al.,* 2011:1169). Responsible leadership builds on the mainstream leadership behavioural school in so far as it acknowledges the influence of ethics and values on behaviours of leaders and their influence on organisational culture in the traditional "do no harm" and "do good" behaviours (Doh & Quigley, 2014:256). It differs from the mainstream leadership behavioural school of thought, however, by bringing in the stakeholder orientation as done by Doh

and Quigley (2014:255) in their analysis of psychological and knowledge-based pathways along which responsible leaders behave. This framework of psychological versus knowledge-based pathways was applied in an empirical analysis, which demonstrated that membership of sectors that are not well defined, called "lenient categories … with ambiguity and unclear boundaries", present opportunities for responsible leaders in terms of the integration of multiple stakeholder concerns and the promotion of good stakeholder relationships with the organisation (Jiang, Prokopovych & DiStefano, 2021).

The behavioural element manifests itself in the way that leaders make decisions in a careful and measured manner for the benefit of wider constituencies rather than just shareholders, as Voegtlin *et al.* (2011:59) state: "responsible leaders strive to weigh and balance the interests of the forwarded claims." The balancing act requires intentional behaviour and competency on the part of the leader to take on board all stakeholder inputs and come up with decisions that balance these competing interests in terms of finding a common ground for the greater good. Stahl and De Luque (2014:239) propose a matrix that compares different types of socially responsible behaviours for leaders as depicted in Table 2.5 below:

Table 2.5:   Examples of socially responsible and irresponsible behaviours

	DIMENSION OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR	
Leader's behavioural choice	*"Avoiding harm" (proscriptive morality)*	*"Doing good" (prescriptive morality).*
Socially responsible behaviour	Refrains from behaviours that have harmful consequences for others (e.g. strictly enforces safety regulations)	Engages in activities that are aimed at enhancing social welfare (e.g. goes beyond minimum legal requirements to provide employment opportunities for disabled workers)
Socially irresponsible behaviour	Engages in activities that have harmful consequences for others (e.g. participates in a price-fixing scheme)	Refrains from engaging in activities that are aimed at enhancing societal welfare (e.g. decides against supporting a community development project)

Source: After Stahl and De Luque (2014:236)

The behavioural approach is promoted by practitioners who seek to develop responsible leaders through training and education in order to impart specific competencies and attitudes through discourse ethics for example (Kempster, Gregory & Watton, 2016:164-182), human resource management practices (Blakely & Higgs, 2014; Gustafson & Hailey, 2016:133) and by training leaders through business schools (Parry & Jackson, 2016:153-162). In essence, the behavioural

perspective posits that responsible leaders are not born but are made through developing their ethical compass and moral values directed towards their followers within their organisations and their external stakeholders.

A formative sub-discipline of leadership science called leadership and leader development is gaining momentum in terms of grappling with issues of how to link research to theory and practice. Some of the gaps in literature that require further research include: empirical examination of leadership identity, authenticity and detrimental aspects of leadership development (Vogel, Reichard, Batistič and Černe, 2021). One of the unresolved questions in leadership development is how to address toxic or bad leadership and followership tendencies. Scholars are noting "a growing emphasis on developing individuals to be virtuous, moral and responsible leaders" (Day, Riggio, Tan, Conger, 2021:6), which is about changing behaviours. Moreover, Prinsloo, Beukes and De Jongh *(*2006:209), advocate for enforcement of responsible leadership practices via legislation and inculcation of new mindsets and behavioural change through a "new heuristic pedagogical approach".

The behavioural approach to responsible leadership attends to the "how" questions of leadership and in that way provides an integrative platform for all other perspectives. There is an emerging convergence between the stakeholder theory and agency views with regards to their emphasis on the discretion of business leaders in terms of the "doing well by doing good" logic, as well as the reconciliation of various corporate social responsibilities with the strategic aims of their organisations (Miska & Mendenhall:120). Therefore, it is this decision-making role of leaders that puts their behaviours under the spotlight, in terms of their roles and responsibilities. In this sense the behavioural perspective could be viewed as helping to locate responsible leadership scholarship within the mainstream of leadership research, since it allows for an analysis at micro, meso and macro levels and also devotes attention to antecedents, mechanisms and outcomes of responsible leadership (Doh & Quigley, 2014:256; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:123, Voegtlin *et al.,* 2019).

2.4.6.3 Main criticisms of the behavioural perspective on responsible leadership
Filatotchev and Nakajima (2014:299) observe that, in practice, organisational leadership behaviours, such as compliance to rules and good corporate governance principles, are constantly being challenged by the "heterogeneous and often ambiguous institutional pressures" which make it difficult for leaders to meet the needs of various stakeholders. When summarising

a list of symposium papers, Waldman and Balven (2015:23) note a lack of clarity in the literature on how to interpret the complexity of leaders exhibiting irresponsible and responsible behaviours at the same time, such as doing good for some stakeholders whilst harming other stakeholders. These scholars also acknowledge the challenges that come with the stakeholder identification and prioritisation processes whereby a leader might succeed in meeting the needs of one stakeholder whilst neglecting the important needs of others. They recommend that a responsible leadership approach would benefit from drawing from the shared leadership approach as a way of mitigating the above challenges (Waldman & Balven, 2015:23). Similarly, Voegtlin *et al.* (2019) acknowledge that responsible leadership research has not yet resolved the challenge of specifying responsible behaviours that would match the various competing stakeholder interests. They apply behavioural complexity and stakeholder theories to explain empirically how responsible leaders could balance competing demands of stakeholders vis-à-vis their own ambiguous roles (Voegtlin *et al.,* 2019).

Lastly, it is not clear in the literature how the application of the behavioural perspective to responsible leadership overcomes the criticisms levelled against the trait and classic behavioural paradigms to leadership research such as putting too much emphasis on the specific traits and behaviours of leaders and neglecting other factors, as discussed by Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1169).

3.4.6.4 Summary of the behavioural perspective on responsible leadership

The behavioural perspective to responsible leadership refers to the focus on specific leadership behaviours and actions (Stahl & de Luque, 2014:238) that demonstrate ethical conduct (Fisher, 2004:398) and stakeholder relations (Pless, 2007:440) that seek to balance various competing demands. It attempts to provide answers to the "how" questions of responsible leadership, which could be helpful for practitioners as they provide suggestions for leadership selection and training programmes (Kempster *et al.,* 2016:164-182; Gustafson & Hailey, 2016:133; Parry & Jackson, 2016:153-162; Voegtlin *et al.* 2019). Advances in responsible leadership scholarship such as the combination of stakeholder theory with psychological theories help to mitigate the criticisms levelled against the leader-centric neoclassical trait and behavioural schools of leadership research (Pless, 2007; Hernandez *et al.,* 2011, Doh & Quigley, 2014, Voegtlin, 2019).

2.5 SUMMARY OF THE KEY ARGUMENTS OF THE VARIOUS APPROACHES TO RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHP AND EXPLORATION OF THE RELATIONAL CONSTRUCT AS A COMMON THREAD AMONG THEM

2.5.1 Summary of the CSR, ethics, stakeholder theory, economic and behavioural perspectives on responsible leadership

This section provides a summary of the abovementioned perspectives on responsible leadership and then discusses the relational construct, which links responsible leadership to relational leadership and the *Ubuntu* moral and ethical worldview. Figure 2.2 depicts the summary of the various perspectives on responsible leadership.
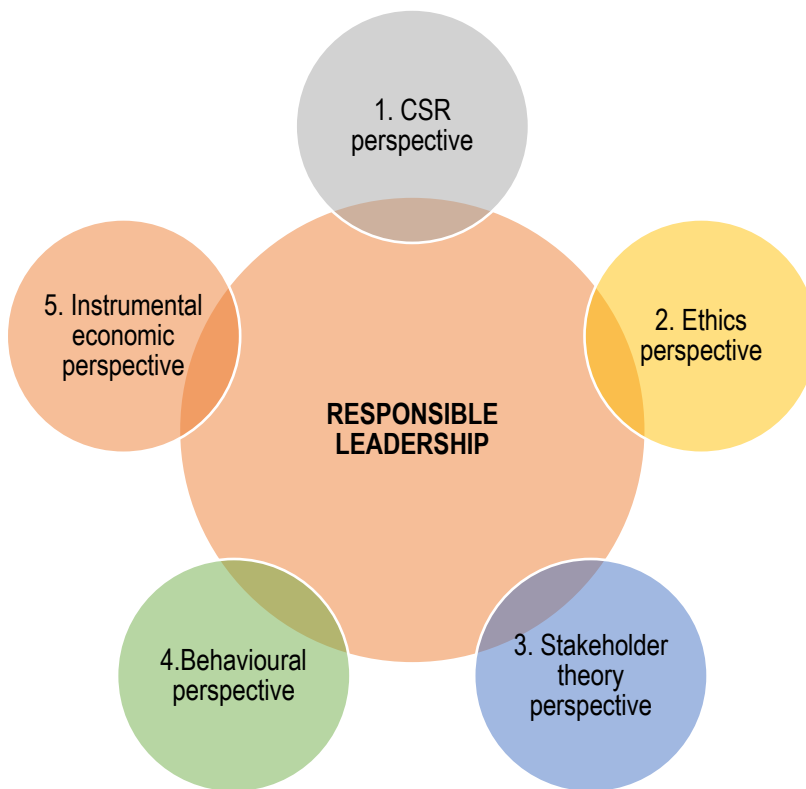
Figure 2.2: Various perspectives on responsible leadership

Figure 2.2. depicts the five different, but not mutually exclusive, perspectives on responsible leadership, namely: CSR, normative ethics, instrumental economic, stakeholder theory, and behavioural perspectives. The view of responsible leadership in CSR terms is that leaders are responsible for value creation in economic terms, legitimacy to stakeholders in socio-political terms, impacts in environmental terms, and balancing of stakeholder interests and values in moral

terms (Mirvis *et al.,* 2010:26). Responsible leadership scholars use the political CSR movement to take leadership research to a global stakeholder engagement level through their analysis of leadership partnerships such as the UN Global Compact (Voegtlin & Pless, 2014). This movement encompasses specialised workstreams or themes, such as the movement on "Responsible Research and Business and Management (RRBM)", whose seven principles were recommended for application in responsible leadership studies by Tsui (2021:169).

The normative ethical perspective is asserted by Maak and Pless (2006:99) when they argue that responsible leadership is "a social-relational and ethical phenomenon" that occurs in multi-stakeholder contexts. Various scholars analyse the ethical perspective as inclusive of values and moral standards that guide the conduct of leaders in their interactions and relations with stakeholders. They justify this emphasis on ethics as a necessary step to address corporate scandals and socio-political challenges facing humanity locally and globally (Maak & Pless, 2006; Pless, 2007; Pless & Maak, 2011; Stahl & De Luque, 2014, Pearce, Wassenaar & Manz, 2014).

The stakeholder theory primarily addresses the preferred conceptual framework and theory that has been used by responsible leadership scholars to explain the nature and dynamics of stakeholder engagement (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). It sets out the main aim of leadership as attaining public good through partnerships with stakeholders in an ethical manner (Maak & Pless, 2006:102-104). The dominance of the stakeholder theory perspective on responsible leadership scholarship contributes both to the advancement of leadership research and research on the stakeholder theory as well as to CSR (Maques *et al.,* 2018; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018).

The instrumental economic perspective is a dominant lens in leadership research and is also viewed as the realistic characterisation of how leadership is practised by business leaders (Waldman & Siegel, 2008). It is guided by the principles of shareholder orientation; application of CSR in an instrumental manner in so far as it provides tangible benefits for the organisation; and the implementation of monitoring measures to incentivise instrumental behaviour of leaders (Waldman & Galvin, 2008:329). Economic considerations are deemed important as part of the triple-bottom-line considerations of CSR and stakeholder frameworks. However, the 'instrumental' economic perspective is deemed limited in terms of advancing responsible leadership scholarship, since its considerations militate against external stakeholder concerns, moral values and ethics. Hence the recommendation by Maritz *et al.* (2011:111), that training should expose

leaders to holistic thinking in strategic management that is guided by the principles of CSR and sustainability.

The behavioural approach to responsible leadership has relied on empirical analysis of the way that leaders apply certain ethics, values and morals in their relations with stakeholders (Pless, 2007:440; Stahl & de Luque, 2014:238). Scholars combine a range of psychological theories with stakeholder theory to explain the roles of responsible leaders in relation to various constituencies who make competing demands on them at multiple levels. It seeks to provide answers to the "how" questions of responsible leadership, which are helpful for practitioners in terms of developing guidelines for leadership selection and capacity development (Kempster *et al.*, 2016:164-182; Gustafson & Hailey, 2016:133; Parry & Jackson, 2016:153-162; Voegtlin *et al.* 2019).

2.5.2 Exploring the relational construct as a common denominator among these various perspectives

The relational construct is at the centre of how all the above approaches to responsible leadership are conceptualised. In terms of the CSR perspective, the focus is on the organisation as a unit of analysis and how it purposefully addresses social, economic and environmental issues in its operational environment. The stakeholder theory serves to map stakeholders in terms of whether they are primary or secondary, and how their relations are characterised and managed.

The instrumental economic perspective is concerned with how the organisation achieves its bottom line and views shareholders as the main stakeholder that business leaders should be concerned about. The relational construct is viewed narrowly in terms of leaders as agents of the owners of the organisation *per se.* The ethical perspective advocates for the guidance of business leaders in terms of how they should conduct themselves in a morally acceptable manner as individuals who are imbued with certain moral values in their stakeholder relations. It sets out norms and standards of behaviour that are deemed central to the conceptualisation of a responsible leadership approach in its normative sense. However, the normative ethical perspective does not account for the lack of common understanding of what constitutes morality and ethics in various contexts and which specific values should be applied by leaders and under what conditions.

The behavioural perspective complements the normative ethics stance by bringing in a practical dimension to ethics through specifying empirically what sorts of behaviours and roles responsible leaders could assume in various stakeholder contexts. The work of Voegtlin *et al.* (2019) assists with applying behavioural complexity theory in conjunction with stakeholder theory to provide a short-list of the roles of responsible leaders within ambiguous stakeholder environments. This study helps with narrowing down the relational construct to a few antecedents and outcomes of responsible leadership (Voegtlin *et al.,* 2019), which helps to address the criticism of the stakeholder theory for being too broad (Waldman & Galvin, 2008; Waldman & Siegel, 2008). The relationality of responsible leadership and its ethical-purposive nature is used to evaluate the empirical findings of this research.

2.6 USING RELATIONALITY TO COMPARE RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP THEORY WITH RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

2.6.1 Introducing relational leadership

Having explored various perspectives on responsible leadership, it is important to compare and contrast the responsible leadership approach to the relational leadership approach. Relational leadership is another emergent leadership approach that places an emphasis on the relationality construct. According to Uhl-Bien (2006:654), while the concept of relational behaviour has long been recognised in leadership studies, the relational leadership approach was developed in the 2000s – the same period when responsible leadership emerged (Iszatt-White, 2016; Marques *et al.*, 2018). Unlike the responsible leadership approach, whose emergence was stimulated by practical concerns about irresponsible tendencies within organisations and society, the emergence of relational leadership scholarship was triggered by the relational turn in the social sciences (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018:535). The relational turn prompted the view that "the individual threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships … [are] part of the reality to be studied" (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012:xx). Consequently, this research cares about the "threads that connect", since they are the relational leadership practices that constitute the "reality to be studied" (Ospina & Uhl-Bien, 2012), as will be explained later when the ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.6.2 Definition of relational leadership

According to Kurucz *et al.* (2019:192), relational leadership refers to a set of leadership approaches that define leadership as relationships that emerge out of interactions between

individuals and groups in informal and formal leadership settings. Raffo (2012:41) defines relational leadership as a leadership approach that is about relationship building and ethical orientation among a group of people for the purposes of making a positive change. At the heart of the above definitions is the relational construct that was described in the discussion of the responsible leadership approach. However, the distinctive aspect of relational leadership is the social construction of leadership as a "social phenomenon" with its emphasis on the relationship between leaders and followers as "actors that constitute what we refer to as leadership" and a "shift away from leadership as just about individual actors" *per se* (Clarke, 2018:2). The foregoing emphasis is confirmed by Wolfgram, Flynn-Colmann and Conroy (2015:651) who assert that relational leadership makes a shift away from an individual leader as the locus of leadership to the "collective dynamic in a larger coordinated social process" where leadership plays an agency role of organising instead of it being viewed as occurring in organised settings.

As such, in terms of relational leadership, followership is part of the leadership construct and the defining element of leadership is the relationship itself between individuals and not just the characteristics of those involved in leadership (Raffo, 2012:41; Clarke, 2018:2, Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:192). Vivier (2019:31) reviews leadership literature from a relational stance and observes that from this perspective three elements are emphasised, namely leadership as a relationship-making process, leadership as influencing social construction, and leadership as a goal of such processes. The discussion below will explore the views of the main scholars of the relational leadership approach and their core ideas in terms of advancing scholarship in this area of leadership research.

2.6.3 Main influencers and their ideas on the relational leadership approach

Brower, Schoorman and Tan (2000) propose the relational leadership approach in their integration of trust literature and literature on the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) approach to leadership. Uhl-Bien (2006:665) distinguishes between "entity" and "relational" perspectives as the two contrasting philosophical and methodological approaches towards the study of the relational leadership approach, as summarised in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6:   Entity and relational perspectives to relational leadership

	ENTITY	RELATIONAL
Ontological assumptions	Realist (assumes an objective reality).	Relational (assumes social reality).

	ENTITY	RELATIONAL
	• Views individuals in relationships as separate, bounded, independent entities	• All social realities – knowledge of self, other people and things – are viewed as interdependent or co-dependent constructions existing and known only in relationship.
Approach to process	Cognitive, constructionist. • Individuals performing internal cognitive operations (separable from external influences) to make sense of and understand how things really are.	Constructionist. • Person and context are interrelated social constructions made in an ongoing local cultural-historical process.
Approach to methodology	Views relating as an individual act • These acts are reduced to one-way causal relations with feedback; therefore, the basic unit of analysis is an individual and studies are operationalised using individual-level variables.	Assumes the primacy of relations • Focuses on communication as the medium in which all social constructions of leadership are continuously created and changed.
View of leadership	Emphasises the importance of interpersonal relations. • Focuses on leadership in conditions of already "being organised".	Emphasises the process of relating and relatedness. • Considers leadership as a process of organising.

Source: After Uhl-Bien (2006:665)

In essence, the entity perspective is based on a notion of objectivism, which assumes leaders are distinct entities whose actions are not influenced by external factors and could be studied as quantitative variables under organised settings. The relational perspective is social constructionist in the sense that leaders are assumed to have co-created interdependent relations with other individuals through communication and mutually organised processes embedded in their social reality (Uhl-Bien, 2006:654, Sánchez *et al.,* 2020). In agreement, Endres and Weibler (2017) conduct a systematic review of the literature on relational leadership and then put forward the "Three-Component Model of Relational Social Constructionist Leadership", which is used in this research to assess the social construction of the relational leadership practices.

Recent developments of the social constructionist approach to relational leadership have been posited by scholars such as Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018) on relationist leadership, Clifton, Larsson and Schnurr (2020) on leadership in interaction, and Raelin (2020) on leadership-as-practice. Cunliffe and Ericksen (2011:1433) adopt a social constructionist stance and propose the following as core elements of a relational leadership approach, namely leadership as being in society; conversations as the key to working with other people in a respectful partnership;

appreciation of moral responsibility that accommodates different perspectives; and adopting a pragmatic approach to issues. These developments are further elaborated on in the discussion of the ontology, epistemology and methodology of this research in Chapter 4 on research design and methods, whereby relational social constructionist leadership is employed as a theoretical lens in line with Ospina and Foldy (2010). The lens of relational social constructionist leadership "implies entering the empirical reality of leadership with an explicit intention of transcending concerns with interpersonal dynamics to explore what goes on" in various multiple stakeholder settings, such as interorganisational partnerships, where groups work together to accomplish common objectives (Ospina & Foldy, 2010:294).

Furthermore, Raffo (2012) employs the relational leadership approach in the context of blogging as a training tool that encourages interactions between the teacher and the student. Key elements of the relational leadership approach, as explicated by Raffo (2012:41), are contrasted with the responsible leadership approach, as depicted in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7:   Elements of a relational leadership compared with responsible leadership

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION	COMPARISON WITH RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP APPROACH
Purposeful	Having a commitment to a goal or activity	Similar and more explicit about responsibilities of leaders
Inclusive	Understanding, valuing and actively engaging diversity of views, approaches, styles and aspects of individuality	Similar and emphasises partnership with external stakeholders
Empowerment	Having a sense of self that claims ownership, claims a place in the process, and expects to be involved and a set of environmental conditions (in the group or organisation) that promote the full involvement of participants by reducing the barriers that block the development of individual talent and involvement.	Similar and advocates for social justice
Ethical	Driven by values and standards and believing that leadership is good (moral) in nature	Similar and adds humanitarian concerns
Process-oriented	Understanding that individuals interact with others and that leaders and other participants work together to accomplish change, which creates energy. Synergy and momentum.	Not explored in the literature on responsible leadership

Source: After Raffo (2012:41)

According to Table 2.7, relational leadership emphasises devotion to a purpose, the democratic participation of all involved, a normative ethical and value-based orientation, and promoting

collaborative processes characterised by the partnership between the leader and other individuals (Raffo, 2012:41). Similarly, Cunliffe and Erickson (2011:1431) argue that relational leadership views organisations as social constructions constituted by human beings and the way that they conduct conversations among themselves rather than being made up of structures and actions.

Kurucz *et al.* (2017:192) extend the conceptualisation of the relational leadership approach into strategic sustainable development, where they define relational leadership for sustainable development as "an ongoing process of meaning-making and reflection within a nested system of the biosphere and human society". They draw from a range of conceptual frameworks and develop a set of practices and capabilities of relational leadership for sustainability (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8: **Relational leadership for strategic sustainability: practices and capabilities to support transformation in the framework for strategic sustainable development (FSSD)**

Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development Levels	Reflective process focuses across levels	RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY	
		Practices	*Capabilities*
(a) **System**	Conceptualising	Surface underlying reality assumptions about physical and social environment.	*Integrative thinking*: expand the field of salience and encourage a holistic perspective.
(b) **Success**		Surface underlying values assumptions from various stakeholder groups.	*Co-production of principles*: acknowledge diversity and similarities to allow for collaboration in developing principles.
(c) **Strategic guidelines**		Engage others in double- and triple-loop learning to generate transformative ideas that integrate a plurality of perspectives.	*Dialogic strategic visioning*: Facilitate dialogue: voicing, listening, respecting, suspending, acknowledging diversity and differences to identify strategic opportunities.
(d) **Actions**	Operationalising	Engage others in pragmatic experimentation to identify and create synergistic actions.	*System-building focus:* understand actions and strategies in the context of system relationships.
(e) **Tools**		Engage others in single- and double-loop learning to support efficiency and effectiveness of the actions identified.	*System quality focus:* ensure that tools are developed to strengthen relationships across levels of the FSSD to support sustainability principles and enable strategic objectives.

Source: After Kurucz *et al.* (2017:198)

Table 2.8 demonstrates that the relational construct in relational leadership for sustainability put forward by Kurucz *et al.* (2017:198) could be harnessed to tap into a set of roles and responsibilities of leadership in a collaborative endeavour that addresses the challenges of the relationship between people and the natural environment across various levels of maturity, from integrative thinking to quality assurance.

Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018:539) propose a "relationist" perspective to relational leadership which serves as an alternative to the dominant "social constructionist perspective" to a relational leadership approach, as depicted in Table 2.9.

Table 2.9: **Comparison of the social constructionist and relationist approaches to relational leadership**

PERSPECTIVE ON LEADERSHIP	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST	RELATIONIST
Ontological assumptions	Antirealist (assumes a socially and linguistically dependent reality or realities, in contrast to realist positions). • Leadership is made up of interdependent constructions, i.e. ontology is not separable from epistemology.	Relativist (assumes multiple realities) • Leadership is an effect of stabilisation and mobilisation of multiple social, material and discursive intersections. • Assumes realities are contextually dependent.
Epistemological assumptions	Relational • Leadership is known only through social relations.	Socio-material • Leadership becomes known as the product of socio-material context, rather than as a human or social construction.
Methodological assumptions	Assumes the primacy of social relations • Focuses on communication and dialogue as the mediums through which all social constructions of leadership are continuously created and changed	Recognises that relations are socio-materially embedded • Focuses on the situated conditions that enable leadership to be constituted as a subject attached to particular practices.
Key emphases	The importance of "relating" and relatedness • Focuses on leadership as a "process of organising"	The recognition of interdiscursive tensions • Focuses on leadership as "enactment" that is situated and performed through human-material assemblages

Source: After Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018:540)

The relationist stance (Table 2.9) on the nature of relational leadership seeks to describe leadership as a normal and regular set of activities that occur in natural settings rather than as a phenomenon that could be prescribed in normative terms as good or bad (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018:539). In other words, the relationist approach to relational leadership differs from both the entity and relational approaches put forward by Ul-Bien (2006), on the one hand, and the

introduction of purposefulness and ethics as presented by Raffo (2012), on the other hand. From the relationist perspective, therefore, relational leadership is significantly different from responsible leadership due to devoting special attention to "social materiality" on the basis of a social constructionist/materialist onto-epistemological worldview (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018:540).

In contrast, Nicholson and Kurucz (2019:34) introduce an ethical perspective to relational leadership using the "moral ethics of care" lens. Their point of departure was to first acknowledge the dominant perspectives of entity versus relational perspectives put forward by Uhl-Bien (2006). They then propose the concept of "relational leadership-as-practice" as a middle ground between the above two perspectives informed by the "Stone Centre Cultural-Relational Theory (RCT)" that is underscored by the relational construct (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:27). They compare and contrast the relational leadership approach with responsible leadership and the rational leadership logics of effectiveness across various dimensions of the moral ethics of care. For instance, in the sub-dimension the "purpose of leadership", the rational logic is about strengthening competitive advantage, the responsible logic is about how a leader mobilises stakeholders ethically, and in the relational logic the leader seeks to "encourage collaborative capacity" (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:30). This work makes a clear distinction and complementarity between the responsible leadership and relational leadership approaches.

In essence, relational leadership is about the type of leadership that values working in a shared, collaborative and partnership approach with stakeholders within the organisation and beyond. As such, it could be viewed as similar to responsible leadership in terms of viewing leadership as inherently a social-relational and ethical phenomenon, as articulated by Maak and Pless (2006:99). Relational leadership, however, differs somewhat from responsible leadership in terms of its articulation of a social constructionist view of leadership as a relational process and a product of socio-material conditions (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018), as well as its focus on the moral ethics of care implications in the context of sustainable development as per Nicholson and Kurucz (2019:30). However, the moral ethics perspective resonates well with the work of Freeman and Auster (2011:21), who employ the concept of the "poetic self", which builds on the concept of a "moral person" applied in responsible leadership theory which "embraces the idea of simultaneously creating self and community" as a responsible leader. In other words, based on the above literature (Maak & Pless, 2006; Freeman & Auster, 2011, Raffo, 2012; Kurucz *et al.*, 2017; Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019), responsible leadership theory contains the relational leadership

elements in its conceptualisation and the two leadership approaches appear to be complementary.

2.6.4 Main criticisms of the relational leadership approach

According to Sánchez *et al.* (2020), there is a "communication gap between entity and constructionist" relational leadership researchers, which requires some intervention through paradigm interplay. Nicholson and Kurucz (2019:27) introduce the moral ethics of care perspective to relational leadership as an attempt to address what they view as the lack of emphasis on ethics in the development of the relational leadership approach in the literature. They argue that this is due to the normative nature of ethics versus the "constructionist approach to relational leadership" approach that cannot be reconciled with the "objective view of reality" and the "focus on virtue as disposition" (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:27). Moreover, the umbrella nature of the relational leadership approach could be viewed as its weakness, since it would be difficult to distinguish it from other leadership approaches that adopt the relational construct (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:27), such as the case of the conceptualisation of responsible leadership approach as a "social-relational and ethical phenomenon" by Pless (2006:99).

The work of Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe and Carsten (2014) on the development of followership theory is critical of the implicit leader-centric nature of relational leadership approach, which ignores the agency of the followers whilst explicitly arguing for the definition of leadership as the relationship process itself. To demonstrate the limitations of the relational view, they discuss the evolution of the relational leadership approach perspectives such as "Lord's connectionist information processing", which pays attention to the processes that govern the leader-follower relationship; "Hollander's relational view" of leadership as a process of mutual influence; and the "Leader-Member-Exchange" theory that highlights the transactional and mutual exchange between the leader and followers to achieve mutually acceptable outcomes (Uhl-Bien *et al.* 2014:87-88). In essence, relational leadership should be able to justify why the relationship process itself is viewed as entailing "leadership", whilst "followership" is not presented in the same light, yet the two role players in a leadership relationship are both leaders and followers. The adoption of the relational social constructionist theoretical paradigm in this study (see Chapter 4) provides tentative answers to these concerns, particularly through the deployment of concepts such as relationality, inter-subjectivity and operationalisation through the practice approach. All such theoretical constructs underpin the relational social constructionist leadership orientation that is employed to guide all of this research, as elaborated on in the next chapter (Uhl-Bien, 2006;

Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018, Sánchez *et al.,* 2020).

2.6.5   Summary of the importance of the relational leadership approach to understanding interorganisational partnerships

From Olley's (2021) grouping framework, responsible leadership and relational leadership approaches could be categorised as power and influence leadership theories. Relational leadership is a form of collective leadership that emphasises the relationship that emerges from the interactions among leaders and their followers in different settings and contexts (Kurucz *et al.,* 2017:192). The ethical approach to relational leadership seeks to define the way in which that relationship occurs in practice, according to Raffo (2012:41) and the addition of the moral ethics of care in the context of relational leadership for sustainability, as per Nicholson and Kurucz (2019:34). The leadership-as-practice view proposed by Raelin (2020) complements the "entity" versus "relational" views of the relational leadership approach put forward by Uhl-Bien (2016:665). The "relationist" stance adopted by Wolfram Cox and Hassard, (2018:540) introduces a "socio-material" perspective that defines relational leadership as the "product of socio-material context, rather than as a human or social construction". These various perspectives on the relational leadership approach are informed by a plethora of relational theories and paradigms (Uhl-Bien *et al.,* 2014:87) that provide richness to the conceptualisation of leadership as the emerging relationship that occurs in informal and formal contexts (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:34). The addition of the physical environment in the application of relational leadership in sustainability by Kurucz *et al.* (2017:198) could be harnessed to tap into a set of roles and responsibilities of leadership in a partnership endeavour that demands mutual collaboration and reciprocity.

The CSR, ethics and behavioural perspectives on responsible leadership that are underpinned by the application of the social-relational construct of the stakeholder theory (Maak & Pless, 2006:99) seem to be complemented well by the relational leadership approach in terms of its emphasis on the entity, social constructionist (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and relationist (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018) conceptions of leadership as emerging in the relationship process and as applied to sustainable development (Kurucz *et al.,* 2017; Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019).

The next section discusses the *Ubuntu* perspective as a distinctive African moral and ethical relational worldview whose key principles align closely with responsible leadership theory.

2.7 USING THE RELATIONAL CONSTRUCT TO LINK RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND THE *UBUNTU* PERSPECTIVE

2.7.1 Definition of *Ubuntu*

According to Pless *et al.* (2022:318), "moral and ethical concepts of leadership are criticized for either reflecting a Western-based perspective … or being conceptually vague without articulating specific norms that moral leaders can refer to…". Therefore, this aspect of the literature review seeks to ensure a better understanding of relationality and responsible leadership theory in interorganisational partnerships that operate in the African cultural milieu. According to West (2014:48), literature on *Ubuntu* contains a view that the construct of "*Ubuntu* cannot easily be translated, or adequately conveyed" in non-African indigenous languages. Furthermore, Woermann and Engelbrecht (2019:32) argue that, the construct of *Ubuntu* has no single and simple definition, but rather various interpretations. Many definitions invoke metaphors in African languages from across Southern Africa which emphasize positive relationships (relationality) and normative expectations (morality and ethics) that embody the *Ubuntu* ethos. West (2014:47), argue that "the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* is typically characterised as a communitarian philosophy that emphasises virtues such as compassion, tolerance and harmony". *Ubuntu* is sometimes "translated as 'African humaneness' (citing Broodryk, 2000:13), 'humanity' (citing Shutte, 2001:2), 'humanism or humaneness' (citing Mnyaka & Motlhabi, 2009:63), or 'the process of becoming an ethical human being' (citing Mkhize, 2008:35)" (West, 2014:48). Okaliko and David (2020:3) take a pragmatic route by recognising the usefulness of the concept of *Ubuntu* in the domain of environmental change, while acknowledging the unfinished business of clarifying its parameters by stating that, "it is obvious that debating the nature of a concept is a common currency in social and scholarly exchange".

As a preferred definition for this thesis, Tutu (1999:31) states that, "*Ubuntu* is an African *weltsanschauung* (worldview), which is about the very essence of being human… My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours… I am human because I belong. I participate. I share'… Harmony, friendliness, community are great goods. Social harmony to us is the *summum bonum* – the greatest good." The foregoing definition captures the philosophical underpinnings of the concept of *Ubuntu* and its implications for ethics; with 'harmony' being viewed as the ultimate value and 'the greatest good'. This definition is widely cited in literature as containing both ontological and epistemological elements of *Ubuntu* (West, 2014; Seehawer, 2018; Molose *et al.*, 2019; De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023). Woermann and Engelbrecht (2019:27) summarises

the definition of *Ubuntu* as comprising of "maxims, 'I am because you are' or 'a person is a person through others'."

2.7.2 Responsible leadership and the *Ubuntu* perspective

This section answers the following question: what is the link between responsible leadership and the *Ubuntu* perspective? According to Waldman *et al.* (2020:15), "while individual-level factors are critically important to consider in understanding what drives or hinders the adoption of socially responsible practices by leaders, they must be integrated into a multilevel perspective that takes into account the profound impact of aspects of both the proximal context (organisational characteristics, such as mission and core values, 'ethical infrastructure,' and so forth) and the distal context (the broader institutional and cultural environment, legal system, corporate governance regulation, etc.) that may promote or constrain responsible behaviour on the part of executives". Against this backdrop, the next paragraphs discuss the *Ubuntu* perspective as providing a different cultural context, values, ethics infrastructure and stakeholder relational constructs regarding social responsibilities of leaders in the African context.

As an African moral and ethical philosophy, the *Ubuntu* perspective could be discussed more broadly in the context of the normative ethics perspective of responsible leadership theory or leadership ethics. There is burgeoning literature that seeks to link the construct of *Ubuntu* with organisational practices in general and business ethics in particular. For instance, from the *Ubuntu* perspective, Pérezts, Russon and Painter (2020:737) propose the following key principles of "ethical relational leadership", namely, "interdependence, relational normativity, communality and understanding unethical leadership essentially as a failure to relate". Likewise, according to West (2014:49), the twin arguments that "pervade much of the literature on *Ubuntu* and business ethics" are as follows. Firstly, there is a view that distinguishes between organisational systems and practices that imbue *Ubuntu* as an African worldview, from organisational systems and practices that are inspired by Western economic systems. Secondly, there is a view that "*Ubuntu*, as a distinctive ethic, can contribute significantly to the development of business ethics globally" (West, 2014:47). According to Woermann and Engelbrecht (2019:31), from the *Ubuntu* perspective, an organisation has "a moral responsibility to affirm and enhance the humanity of those it relates to" …, which should be "characterised by compassion, caring, and responsiveness." These authors further observe that: "the moral value of social relations is often neglected (or regarded as secondary) in Western philosophies, which tend to be either individualist or holist" (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:32). Molose *et al.* (2018:193), argue that

"*Ubuntu* collective values (compassion, survival, group solidarity, respect and dignity), which relate affirmatively with a workplace sense of collectivism, were identified as unique elements of cultural management philosophy for directing personal interactions, workplace commitment and performance management improvements". In the context of responsible leadership, Freeman and Auster (2011:21) argue that, "authenticity becomes the project of finding this unique expression of our own humanity that takes account of both individual (and intra-psychic) and community (and inter-subjective) aspirations". From these foregoing arguments, it is apparent that the *Ubuntu* perspective has certain distinctive elements that can complement the responsible leadership's values, morals and ethics.

As a relational ontology, the *Ubuntu* perspective could be discussed in the context of the stakeholder theory perspective of responsible leadership. Woermann and Engelbrecht (2019:32) propose the "Relationholder theory" which seeks to review and serves as an alternative to "Freeman's libertarian-based stakeholder theory". The core argument of the relationholder theory is that, "from an *Ubuntu* perspective, the primary issue does not concern the stakes of the firm and its various contracting parties, but rather the nature of the relationship between the firm and these parties" (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:28). The core tenets of the relationalholder theory will be discussed further in Chapter 4, as part of a toolkit that will be used to discuss the findings of this research. Moreover, there are calls for global programmes like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be harmonised through the application of *Ubuntu* principles, as "*Ubuntu* would change the leading SDG theme into: 'life is mutual aid' (horizontal *Ubuntu* relationship) rather than the hierarchical 'leave no-one behind' (developed versus developing countries)". (Van Norren, 2022:2791). According to Muff *et al.* (2022:282), "there is an important difference in the total competency assessment of responsible leadership (CARL) performance between the regions with the best region (Africa with an average CARL score of seventy-four percent) performing fourteen percent better than the lowest-scoring region (South-East Asia with an average CARL score of sixty-five percent)." What could be the role of *Ubuntu* in this kind of CARL performance? *Ubuntu*, as "the practice of being humane", presents opportunities to understand how to achieve "harmony" between business, society and nature, as the greater economic and social value for business in Africa (Tutu, 1999; Okoliko & David, 2019:3).

2.8 CONCLUSION OF THE SECOND CHAPTER

This literature review discussed the developments in leadership research over the years and engaged in depth with debates on the responsible leadership approach and linked it to a similar emerging leadership approach known as relational leadership. The focus of the relational leadership approach on relationships as the nature and purpose of leadership adds to the two other aspects of leadership research noted by Vivier (2019: 39), namely, definitions that emphasise the influence that leaders exert upon followers, and those that focus on the change that leaders seek to implement as the main purpose of leadership. Responsible leadership is located in the change orientation aspect of leadership in terms of the agency of leaders in their ethical relationship with the stakeholders as partners. The two approaches build on the leadership scholarship that emerged from the trait and behavioural theories of leadership to contingency models, as well as the emerging and new leadership models such as transformational, charismatic and ethical leadership approaches.

The key contribution of responsible leadership theory is its stakeholder orientation in terms of social responsibilities, whereas the contribution of the relational leadership approach is its explanation of the complexity of relations among various actors as agents of leadership in complex settings like human-environment relationships. These two leadership approaches are dynamic and flexible, since they both allow for the adoption of multiple theoretical perspectives and various ontological, epistemological and methodological paradigms of research without losing their core tenets. In addition, Chapter 2 discussed *Ubuntu* perspective and its implications for responsible leadership and relationality. It is the explanatory power of the relationality construct plus its ethical and behavioural narratives that promises to lay a foundation for the analysis of relational leadership practices as the unit of analysis for this research in terms of how such practices occur in interorganisational partnerships. This will be the focus of the third chapter, which reviews the literature on interorganisational partnerships as the unit of observation for this research.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND THE INTERFACE WITH LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD CHAPTER

Chapter 3 focuses on the review of literature that deals with interorganisational partnerships as the <u>unit of observation</u> for this thesis. Chapter 2 builds on Chapter 1 which dealt with the leadership construct as a <u>unit of analysis</u> for this thesis. According to DeCarlo (2018:183), a unit of analysis refers to the main focus of the study which the research seeks to contribute towards. A unit of observation refers to what is observed or measured in the process of "learning something about your unit of analysis". Sometimes the unit of analysis may be the same as the unit of observation, depending on the research design (DeCarlo, 2018).

The main research question for this study is: *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?*

This review of literature is guided by the following questions:
(1) What are interorganisational partnerships?
(2) What are the different ways in which scholars have studied interorganisational partnerships in literature?
(3) How does research on interorganisational partnership interface with leadership research?
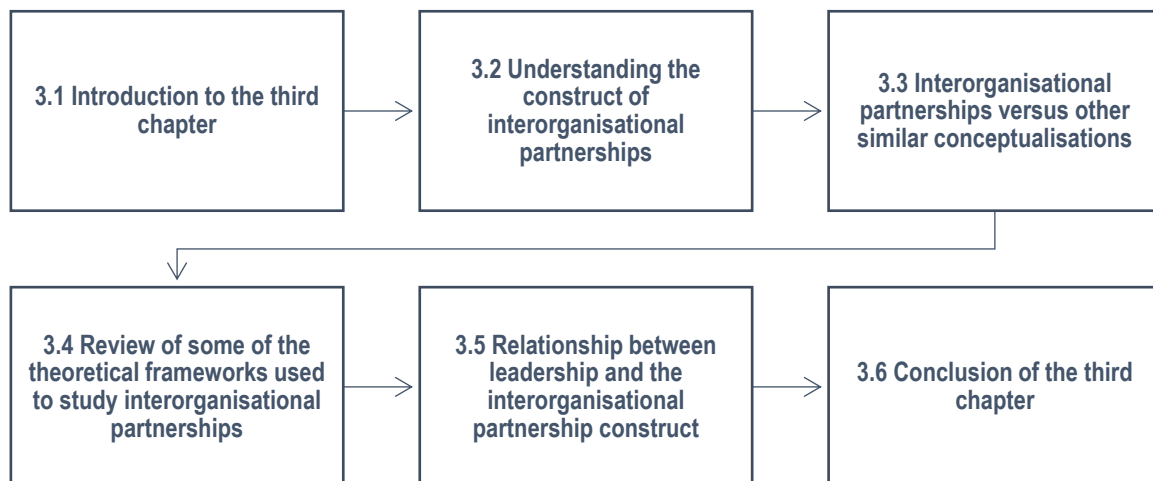
Figure 3.1:   Outline of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 begins by defining interorganisational partnerships and reviewing the partnership concept in the context of similar conceptualisations such as collaborations, coalitions and international cooperation. Research paradigms, theories and conceptual frameworks that have been applied by scholars to understand interorganisational partnerships, are reviewed. The relationship between leadership research and the partnership phenomenon is explored with the view of linking Chapter 3 and Chapter 2, which reviewed literature on leadership studies with a particular focus on responsible leadership.

3.2 UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTRUCT OF INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

3.2.1 Putting interorganisational partnerships in context

Chapter 2 explored the construct of leadership as broadly discussed in leadership research. It then narrowed the discussion in terms of reviewing various perspectives on responsible leadership and the relational leadership approaches. The concept of interorganisational partnerships was not fully defined, although implications for it were highlighted based on the necessary connection to the main research question and topic of this research. The next paragraphs briefly discuss the context of interorganisational partnerships, how scholars conceptualise interorganisational partnerships from a theoretical point of view, and what the gaps in scholarship on leadership practices in interorganisational partnership contexts are.

According to Gray and Stites (2013:49), "the basic premise about the value of partnerships is that outcomes occur that presumably the partners could not accomplish on their own. This ontological existential claim forms the basis of arguments regarding motivations for the formation of interorganisational partnerships, their leadership practices and outcomes". On this basis, Müller-Seitz (2012:428) define interorganisational partnerships "as a social system in which the joint activities of at least three independent legal entities are reflexively coordinated on a repeated basis, in order that joint benefits may accrue to all the parties concerned...". According to Standler (2016:99), interorganisational partnerships between business, government and civil society tend to focus on large-scale national or international challenges which are, by their very nature, complex due to the multi-level nature of their scale and scope. In agreement, Dentoni *et al.* (2018:334) observed "that partnerships can address these complex societal problems by triggering or contributing to societal change…". The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic as an example of a complex social problem (wicked problem) resulted in the calls for global change (Chakraborty, Sharma, Bhattacharya, Saha & Lee, 2020:1-3). Armistead, Pettigrew and Aves

(2007) explore experiences and perceptions about leadership in interorganisational partnerships, motivations for the formation of partnerships, and observe that leadership literature at the time was mainly focusing on single organisations. Tobias-Miersch (2017:473) notes that in participative literature, interorganisational partnerships are "usually the explanandum" and viewed "as the answer" to wicked problems in society due to their "greater flexibility" and in organisational management debates they are promoted as "the most efficient managerial solution". The next paragraphs discuss approaches that various scholars have used to understand interorganisational partnerships. Gaps in literature on interorganisational partnerships are also noted and discussed.

Scholars adopt different approaches when studying and trying to understand interorganisational partnerships. For instance, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998:314-315) indicate that approaches to partnerships could be understood from the principles of competition and collaboration. On the one hand, they use the resource dependency theory to explain how organisations form a type of partnership called alliances to strengthen their competitiveness in the market. On the other hand, they employ collaboration theory to explain development-focused partnerships that emphasise leveraging of synergies among various partners to achieve common goals rather than mere competition against rival organisations (Lowndes & Skelcher, 998:314-315). These scholars further note a gap in literature that "the design of partnerships and their management over time has been little informed by theory" (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998:331). Bogason and Toonen (1998:225) also note this gap and encourage the development of coherent theoretical frameworks to explain approaches to partnerships. Dhillon (2015:307) uses social capital as a construct to analyse interorganisational partnerships.

In addition to the lack of theoretical understanding of interorganisational partnerships (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998; Bogason & Toonen, 1998), there are other gaps in literature on interorganisational partnerships and related leadership theories. Firstly, Connelly (2007:1253) notes the dearth of literature that studies leadership in interorganisational partnership settings or what he characterises as "the collaborative domain". Secondly, Endres and Weibler (2020:278) make an appeal that "there is a significant need for research that does not start with 'leadership' or what is assumed to be leadership, but with the interaction dynamics and practices as they occur" in interorganisational partnership contexts. Thirdly, Huxham and Vangen (2001:1160) note that collaboration or partnership literature "has had little to say about leadership" and they then recommend scholarship that would link leadership research with partnership studies. In

agreement, Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) identify the need for more research on leadership as a relational and "collective phenomenon" in what they refer to as "the space between", which is characterised as interorganisational partnership contexts in this study. Fourthly, Voegtlin and Pless (2014:190) recommend analysis of the partnership phenomenon and responsible leadership as critical issues to advance scholarship on global interorganisational partnerships such as the United Nations' (UN) Global Compact. In short, there is a need to conduct more research on leadership practices in interorganisational contexts (Connelly, 2007) and such research should be open to different configurations of leadership practices and how they relate to the interorganisational partnership phenomenon (Voegtlin & Pless, 2014), Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Endres & Weibler, 2020)

3.2.2 Definitions of interorganisational partnerships

For starters, there is a wide range of terminology that is used to refer to interorganisational partnerships in literature, such as "social alliances... issue management alliances, and strategic partnerships" (Selslky & Parker, 2005:850). Strategic alliances include "joint ventures, minority equity alliances, Research and Development (R&D) contracts, joint R&D, joint production, joint marketing and promotion, enhanced supplier partnership, distributions agreements, and licencing agreements…" (Das & Teng, 2000:31-31). Further discussion of other terminology that is used to refer to interorganisational partnerships will be discussed later.

Interorganisational partnerships are "intentionally created social entities of three or more organisations in which legally autonomous members participate to achieve overarching objectives" (Endres & Weibler, 2020:278). Sometimes interorganisational partnerships are defined in a narrow sense and linked to their purpose, such as environmental, social or economic objective. For instance, according to Stadler and Lin (2019:870), in the natural environment sector partnerships occur as "collaborations" between organisations from government, civil society, academia and other sectors of society with the main goals of deriving positive outcomes and mitigating negative consequences in relation to environmental impacts. In the environmental sector it is common to have partnership agreements covering such issues as knowledge exchange, and the co-creation of new knowledge products, norms and systems (Stadler & Lin, 2019:870).

Interorganisational partnerships could be viewed as synonymous with the concept of cross-sector partnerships that are defined as "the voluntary collaborative efforts of actors from organisations"

who might be from different sectors with the common purpose of addressing a challenge of mutual interest related to public good (Selsky & Parker, 2005:850). Correspondingly, Armistead *et al.* (2007:4) define an interorganisational partnership as "a cross-sector, interorganisational group, working together under some of governance, towards common goals which would be extremely difficult, if not possible, to achieve if tackled by a single organisation." The multisector conceptualisation of interorganisational partnerships resonates with scholarly work on public leadership that examines such partnerships in various forms, such as "public-private partnerships and formal partnerships between government institutions and non-profit organisations" (Vivier, 2019:59). According to Gray & Stites (2013), interorganisational partnerships are "initiatives where public-interest entities, private sector companies and/or civil society organisations enter into an alliance to achieve a common practical purpose, pool competencies, and share risks, responsibilities, resources, costs and benefits" (Citing Utting & Zammit, 2009:40). As an example, Osei-Kei and Chan (2016:176) analysed a range of case studies, and then presented a Public-Private Partnership between South Africa and Mozambique on the construction and operation of the N4 Toll Route, as one of the international best-practice case studies in this approach to interorganisational partnerships.

The aforementioned Endres and Weibler's (2020:278) definition is preferred and adopted for this research, since it characterises interorganisational partnerships as a deliberate way of organising where more than two bodies that have autonomous legal status collaborate with a view to accomplish shared goals. The motivation is that this definition is aligned with the theoretical framework of this research, which is the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) lens (Uhl-bien, 2006; Cunliffe, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017). In addition to the definition of interorganisational partnerships, scholars also provide classifications of interorganisational partnerships as another way of understanding them conceptually, as discussed in the next section.

3.2.3   Classifications of interorganisational partnerships

The above definitions demonstrate that interorganisational partnerships involve stakeholder organisations drawn from different sectors of the economy and society. Selsky and Parker (2005) categorise and discuss interorganisational partnerships in terms of four "arenas" and their foci. Firstly, they note business and civil society partnerships that usually focus on social challenges and underlying causes. Secondly, they note partnerships between public and private sectors that are usually in the form of public-private partnerships focusing on infrastructure and public service

delivery. Thirdly, they identify partnerships that involve public sector and civil society organisations that tend to focus on public works and welfare programmes. Fourthly, and lastly, they developed the concept of "tri-sector" partnerships that involve both business, civil society and public sectors with a focus on local and international programmes on sectors like environment health, community development and economic development issues of common interest (Selsky & Parker, 2005:854-863).

Interorganisational partnerships could display various orientations irrespective of the activity concerned. Other classifications of interorganisational partnerships are made in terms of the main activities of the partnership such as "awareness raising, policy, process work, or product development and distribution" (Stadler & Lin, 2019:872). Correspondingly, Selsky and Parker (2005:850) identify short-term orientation as being primarily about transactions and "largely self-interested" and long-term orientation as mainly open-ended and "largely common-interest oriented." In addition to the multi-sector perspective, these scholars also argue that partnerships vary significantly in terms of "size, scope and purpose" since they could be locally or globally based and could operate under a full legal mandate or on a voluntary basis (Selslky & Parker, 2005:850). In agreement, Das and Teng (2000:31) recognise the multi-objective nature of "strategic alliances" since they usually aim to achieve competitive advantage and/or collaborative advantage. Table 3.1 highlights the key benefits and downsides of interorganisational partnership outcomes for various constituencies:

Table 3.1: Negative and positive interorganisational partnership outcomes by sector

		BUSINESS	NGOs	GOVERNMENT	COMMUNITY	ENVIRONMENT
Positive outcomes		Improve CSR reputation; ensure licence to operate	Greater focus on efficiency and accountability	Improved project designs	Greater voice in policymaking	Environmental advocacy
		Supply chain improvements	Enhanced reputation	Greater transparency and acceptance of plans	Improved quality of life	Deal with complexity
		Innovative products	Achieve needed funding	More efficient resource usage	Gain models that can be used for other projects	Institutionalised attention to problem
		New markets		Strengthen data management	Integrated service delivery	Environmental conditions improved
		Attractiveness to employees		Meet sustainability targets	Retain control of lives	
		Gain critical competencies		Garner greater public accountability	Gain culturally suitable products and outputs	

70

	BUSINESS	NGOs	GOVERNMENT	COMMUNITY	ENVIRONMENT
	Integrate sustainability in core business practices		Insight into economic and demographic trends	Build networks for self-reliance	
	De facto rules for regulating industries		Improve interagency collaboration		
Negative	Perceptions of green-washing	Suffer tainted reputation	Need to deal with conflict	Inequitable outcomes	Continued degradation
		Co-option	Less thorough study of research	Need to balance sub-group vs greater public interest	Replacement of nature with human produced products
			Reduced funds		

Source: Gray and Stites (2013:50)

For the business and governmental stakeholders, only 'perceptions of green-washing' (business) and conflict management, limited use of evidence and reduction in funding (government) are deemed as negative, while seven substantive benefits are recognised for each of these constituencies. For NGOs, the risk of reputational capture by powerful actors is quite significant compared to the benefits that merely serve the operational needs. Community and environment stakeholders could include NGOs as an integral part of civil society, hence their benefits and risks also accrue to them and are substantial outcomes. Overall, Table 3.1 demonstrates more positive outcomes of interorganisational partnerships for all stakeholder grouping (Gray & Stites, 2013). According to Edelman Trust Barometer (2023:38), compared to the public sector and civil society, the business sector is currently rated as the most trusted institution and the findings encourage it to take the lead in terms of forging partnerships with the public sector in order to deliver better results.

3.3   INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS VERSUS OTHER SIMILAR CONCEPTUALISATIONS

3.2.1   Understanding interorganisational partnerships as collaborations

According to Müller-Seitz (2012:428), interorganisational partnerships "consist of three or more separate, collaborating entities". Armistead *et al.* (2007:3) make a distinction between an interorganisational "partnerships as an entity" that incorporates "some form of governance" from an interorganisational "partnership primarily described in terms of collaborative working practices." Ansell and Gash (2008:544) defined "collaboration governance" from a public policy perspective, as the process whereby governmental bodies seek to develop or implement policies

or public programmes through direct engagement with non-state actors to make collective decisions in a "formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative" manner. These authors contrast collaborative governance with two other public policymaking strategies, namely: "adversarialism" whereby collective decision-making is not about building relationships but "winner-takes-all politics"; and "managerialism" that refers to unilateral decision-making by bureaucracies (Ansell & Gash, 2008:544). This conceptualisation of collaborative governance is similar to interorganisational partnerships in terms of focusing on mutuality and cooperation between public agencies and non-state actors for "collective decision-making" on public policy issues (Ansell & Gash, 2008:547).

Huxham and Vangen (2001:1160) discuss the concept of "collaborative inertia" to characterise circumstances in which collaboration does not result in positive intended outcomes, and "collaborative value" in which "something positive is achieved that could not have been achieved without the collaboration". In their analysis, Vangen and Huxham (2003:75) explore the "reasons for collaborative inertia" and conclude that "continuous nurturing and the presence of at least one competent individual who champions and nurtures the partnership is essential…". Lowndes and Skelcher (1998:313-314) view the idea of "collaborative advantage" as presenting an alternative view to "the market, quasi-market and contractualised relationships that have dominated public management reform movement internationally" in Western countries during the 1980s. This conceptualisation emphasised collaborative governance as partnerships that are initiated and facilitated by public sector bodies towards addressing a public policy concern. Nowell and Harrison (2011:21) hypothesise that the more individuals actively identified "opportunities for collaborative advantage, legitimising the work of the partnership to external stakeholders, and facilitating a productive group process internally, the more effective the partnership [would] be."

Archer and Cameron (2014:3) introduce the concept of "collaboration spectrum" that defines three different types of collaborative relationships. In the collaborative spectrum interorganisational partnerships are characterised as "mutually beneficial relationships" in the middle of a spectrum. On the one extreme, the collaborative spectrum is made up of high levels of collaboration in the form of "symbiotic relationships" between parties that spend a lot of time together and have the same objective. On another extreme it comprises of low levels of collaboration in the form of "transactional relationships" like those between suppliers and customers who do not share common objectives or interests (Archer & Cameron, 2014:3). This governance perspective of a collaborative spectrum is useful since it narrows the conceptualisation of interorganisational

partnerships to a limited space of collaboration among parties that share mutual objectives but are not merely transactional and also not necessarily intensively involved. Archer and Cameron's (2014) approach is inclusive of both private sector-led and public sector-led collaborative initiatives.

The foregoing conceptualisation of partnerships in collaborative contexts as relationships of mutual benefit aligns with the concept of "the partnership mechanism" put forward by Stadler and Lin (2019:872) who define it "as the tool the partners plan to use to reach out beyond the partnership boundaries and facilitate environmental change from a cognitive, behavioural and technical perspective." In agreement, Aggarwal (2019:1) finds that "strategic alliances are an essential tool for managers in knowledge intensive settings" since they allow partners to share knowledge that is critical for innovation. It could be that such partnership mechanisms include leadership practices in its relational or collaborative sense, as per the rhetorical question posed by Vivier (2019:58) with regards to "what are the mechanisms that facilitate collaboration". Gray and Stites (2013:8), however, found that interorganisational "partnerships are not necessarily the same as collaborations. Achieving collaboration means reaching optimal outcomes for all parties. Finding such outcomes requires careful attention to the process issues…". This research will explore such leadership process issues empirically as relational leadership practices.

3.2.2   Understanding partnerships as coalitions

The concept of coalitions in organisational and leadership research takes many forms. In strategy literature, Kotter (1995:62), in his articulation of reasons behind failure of change management efforts, notes a lack of "forming a powerful guiding coalition" as one of the ten causes of such failure. In the intra-organisational context, coalitions refer to internal leadership teams that drive a common purpose and, according to Kotter (1995:62), such coalitions start small and comprise of some of the key high echelon executives within the organisation and boards of directors. This conceptualisation of coalitions as internal leadership teams was applied in healthcare settings, whereby it was found that the "Leadership Saves Lives" programme was successful in terms of shifting performance culture in hospitals that built guiding leadership coalitions which were multi-disciplinary and diverse in nature (Bradley, Brewster, McNatt, Linander, Cherline, Fosburgh, Till & Curry, 2018:218-225).

At an interorganisational partnership level, coalitions refer to formally established associations of businesses and informal networks, and their formation is usually for collaborating with government

and civil society stakeholders in order to address social issues of common interest (Austin, 2000:305). This researcher concluded that, whilst context matters, each of the coalitions studied demonstrated that leadership, focused strategy, and good operational systems were crucial determinants for successful coalitions (Austin, 2000:321). These types of business coalitions are common at global level such as the United Nations Global Compact which was formed in 2000 to support the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and later the Sustainable Development Goals (Voegtlin & Pless, 2014:181).

In the market place, interorganisational relations are sometimes characterised as coalitions that are primarily formed by businesses who join forces to compete for opportunities like tenders from government and industry (Mamawi, 2012:35-41). The study by Mamawi (2012) was conducted in the context of the French public procurement system which promotes "co-transaction", which is defined as a "process through which tendering companies can ally with a group of companies" to form "coalitions" that pitch for large government tenders through a collective pool of resources (Mamawi, 2020:36).

The instrumental nature of coalitions is recognised in politics whereby, according to Fox (2010:486), coalitions are "interest-based" partnerships distinguished by instrumental behaviour of partners for the purposes of achieving a common short-term objective such as winning a war or an election or to adopt a policy. The interest-based coalitions could also be viewed as similar to strategic alliances. Das and Teng (2000: 31) note that research on choices of structures for strategic alliances distinguishes between "equity versus non-equity alliances".

Flaherty and Rappaport (2017:78) studied the influence of trade associations on CSR and sustainability. They distinguish between trade associations as interorganisational coalitions versus professional associations whose membership is based on individual professionals. Trade associations are voluntary non-profit partnerships/coalitions that exist to represent the interests of their members and some could be confederations of many trade associations at national or global levels (Flaherty & Rappaport, 2017:78). Similarly, Mekling (2011:29) observed the growth in "trans-national coalitions" in Europe and America since the 1980s and contends that they are "pivotal 'policy arrangement' [their emphasis] of global policy-making." Flaherty and Rappaport (2017:126) argue that trade associations, despite that they are "coalitions of visible rivals", have certain advantages in terms of ensuring CSR and sustainability compared to governments and businesses due to their ability to attract huge investments. Moreover, governments are hampered

by their political constraints that are sometimes influenced by media opinion and electoral cycles Furthermore, businesses are constrained by short accountability cycles which are usually in the form of quarterly reporting (Flaherty & Rappaport, 2017:126).

3.2.3 Understanding interorganisational partnerships as international development cooperation

According to Zhang and Huxham (2009:186), international interorganisational partnerships "are both vehicles for wider strategic change and development and contexts within which individuals pursue a process of development and change to move their separate organisations toward a functioning relationship". In the international development cooperation space, there is a recognised type of partnership called a "development partnership", defined by Bester (2016:vi) as: "The various actors in development cooperation, including governments (national, local, regional), multi-lateral organisations, philanthropic foundations and non-governmental organisations, and the private sector". Naik (2018:1-9) argues that partnerships are crucial in the international development space and provides lessons learnt from projects implemented by Engineers Without Boarders. There is a wealth of both academic and grey literature on development cooperation, mainly focused on the effectiveness of donor funding or aid provided by the rich countries of the north to the poorer countries of the south, as discussed by Pineda-Escobar and Garzon-Cuervo (2016:141-163).

In its 2018 report, the Reality of Aid Network (2018:9) provides an analysis of trends in international development cooperation and notes that one of the emerging trends is advocacy for a shift from a "traditional aid paradigm" to more long-term and sustainable partnerships for poverty eradication. Pineda-Escobar and Garzon-Cuervo (2016:143) note that one of the major paradigm-shifts in this terrain was the incorporation of the principle of "inclusive development partnerships" by the Busan Declaration of 2011 as one of the four "principles of development effectiveness". These scholars expatiated on the concept of "inclusive business" which is about the recognition of businesses as partners for development (Pineda-Escobar & Garzon-Cuervo, 2016:143).

Prinsloo *et al.,* (2006) argue that partnerships among various sectors of society with business leaders are growing. Their study reports that the 2002 meeting of the UN Global Compact and European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) agreed on two things. Firstly, the need for EFMD to lead a process of developing the responsible leadership approach in the

curriculum. Secondly, facilitation of a broad-based coalition and partnership towards strengthening the practice of global responsible leadership (Prinsloo, *et al.,* 2006:199).

Malan (2016:100) reports that the UN Sustainable Development Goals took the partnership principle further by including Goal Seventeen on strengthening implementation mechanisms through partnerships. According to Tomlinson (n.d.:174), the "High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership in Mexico in 2014" adopted the principle of "private sector accountability". The UN Global Compact serves as a partnership whereby business leaders are "urged to engage in partnerships with other signatories or stakeholders through collective action" and organisations are encouraged to commit via an online platform called "Partnerships for Sustainable Development Goals" (Malan, 2016:100).

Arvind and Arevalo (2015:59) characterise the UN Global Compact as a partnership of partnerships since it comprises "Global Compact Local Networks" based on various countries with the main goal of using this interorganisational partnership and its core principles to advance CSR. These scholars view the main drivers of CSR in Spain as the following: (1) business ethics promoted by academics, (2) the adoption of policies on CSR by countries and multilateral bodies and, (3) the proliferation of global business leadership networks that champion CSR and accountability (Aravind & Arevalo, 2015:60-61).

Likewise, Malan (2016:98) analyses reports of the South African businesses who were members of the UN Global Compact and concludes that "low levels of disclosure by South African" businesses were indicative of their "lack of engagement with important societal issues". Voegtlin and Pless (2014:186) argue that in literature, conclusions about the performance or lack of performance of the UN Global Compact depend on whether the study was approached from the "economic, socio-historical or normative" perspective. The next section reviews some of the frameworks that are employed to study interorganisational partnerships.

3.4 REVIEW OF SOME OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS USED TO STUDY INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Worley and Mirvis (2013:264) review seven case studies and find that "all of the researchers used some variant of stakeholder theory… in their studies but emphasised different concepts to frame multi-party collaboration and interpret its development and results. These included complexity

theory, structural and process-based theories of partnering and collaboration, and concepts about capability development, resource exchange, public–private governance, trans-organisation development, and corporate social responsibility issues management". Similarly, Gray and Wood (1991:3) review nine cases studies and conclude that literature of interorganisational partnerships, as "collaborative alliances", have employed the following substantive theoretical frameworks, namely: "resource dependence theory, corporate social performance/institutional economics theory, strategic management/social ecology theory, microeconomics theory, institutional/negotiated order theory, and political theory". Likewise, Gray and Stites (2013:101) report that, "there are ten main theoretical frameworks that are used to describe and examine partnerships for sustainability", namely: 1) institutional theory, 2) resource dependence theory, 3) stakeholder theory, 4) resource-based view, 5) agency theory and transaction cost economics, 6) environmental justice, 6) network theory, 7) critical theory, 8) actor network theory, and 9) deliberative democracy and 10) dialogue theories. The stakeholder theory is discussed in Chapter 2 as one of the perspectives to responsible leadership theory. This thesis contributes to the above theoretical frameworks by employing the relational social constructionist leadership lens.

In the next sections, as an addition to the abovementioned substantive theories, the broader perspectives that are used to study interorganisational partnerships are presented namely: social network research, joined up government, public private partnerships and collective leadership frameworks. The latter also seeks to demonstrate the interface between participative systems literature on interorganisational partnerships and leadership research.

3.4.1 Social Network Research

Müller-Seitz (2012) argue that "a focus on leadership allows us to acknowledge how governance [i.e. how the network is structured] and to be more sensitive to the dynamics of how lead organisations actually influence other network members." According to Gray and Stites (2013:103), "often, [social] network theory is invoked in terms of supply chain relationships for sustainability, where firms must consider their connections both upstream and downstream to achieve sustainability ideals such as cradle-to-grave stewardship and lifecycle analysis." Interorganisational partnerships are sometimes characterised as networks and social network scholars apply variants of the Social Network Analysis theory to study them, as discussed in the next sections.

3.4.1.1 Understanding Social Network Analysis (SNA)

Borgatti *et al.* (2009:892) observed an "explosion of interest" in SNA research across almost all disciplines in both natural and social sciences. They argue that the concept is by no means new since SNA seeks to provide "an answer to a question that has preoccupied social philosophy since the time of Plato, namely, the problem of social order: how autonomous individuals [entities] can combine to create enduring, functioning societies". After reviewing literature on the elements of SNA, these scholars present the "typology of ties" usually investigated by SNA scholars (Borgatti *et al.,* 2009:894). In literature, networks are conceptualised as both an analytical method and an analytical unit. The analytical method perspective is commonly referred to as SNA which, at a basic level, distinguishes between actors (individuals, groups of individuals or organisations) and their relationships (formal and informal relationships) (Whelan, 2011:276).

By way of definition, Gartrell (1987:50) argues that SNA "refers to a body of social science approaches that explain social behaviour and patterns by analysing relations among concrete social entities, e.g. persons, groups, and organisations…" In agreement, Moliterno and Mahony (2011:444) state that, SNA "concerns how actors (e.g. individuals, groups, organisations, etc.) are tied by some sort of social relationship (e.g. advice, giving, resource sharing, alliance partnership, etc…)". This thesis views such social relationships as relational leadership practices.

Milward and Provan (1998:388) contrast SNA with the "rational choice model" that focuses on individual people and "organisational models" that focus on characteristics of individual organisations, and argue that SNA "is focused on the structure of relationships where the network consists of a set of nodes linked by a set of social relationships…" In essence, all of the above definitions agree that SNA focuses on network structures and the nature of the relationship at individual and group levels or the relational phenomenon.

3.4.1.2 Understanding interorganisational partnerships as networks

Armistead *et al.*, (2007) argue that interorganisational partnerships have both horizontal and hierarchical forms of leadership. Relational constructs of collaboration, cooperation and joint-action are central to the phenomenon of interorganisational partnerships as an organisational form, which is normally contrasted with bureaucracies and market organisational forms (Tobias-Miersch, 2017:475). Consequently, Interorganisational partnerships could be viewed as "a form of governance in contrast to the ideal types of hierarchies and markets" (Whelan, 2011:276). Without explicitly contrasting networks with hierarchies and markets, Endres and Weibler

(2020:279) conceptualise networks as "informal social systems rather than bureaucratic structures" which serve the purpose of organising and coordinating members based on mutual commitment instead of mere compliance to contractual legal obligations. As indicated before, these scholars referred to "collaborative interorganisational networks" as "intentionally created social entities of three or more organisations in which legally autonomous members participate to achieve overarching objectives" (Endres & Weibler, 2020:278). In a slightly different conceptualisation, Lowndes and Skelcher (1998:313-314) distinguish between interorganisational partnerships as an "organisational form" versus "networks as a mode of social coordination or governance".

SNA as an analytical method perspective is shared by Carpenter, Li and Jiang (2012:1329) who argue that "a network is defined as social phenomenon composed of entities connected by specific ties reflecting interaction and interdependence, such as friendship, kinship, knowledge exchange, and so on." The main contribution of that study was, firstly, the synthesis of network scholarship into two major research streams, namely, "social capital research" and "network development research". Secondly, these distinguished between two levels of research, namely, interpersonal and interorganisational levels. Thirdly, they developed a conceptual framework that classified "construct selection patterns" and methodological choices that network researchers apply for each type of research and at each of the two levels (Carpenter *et al.,* 2012:1333). On the contrary, Skeltcher (1998) argues that networks are an integral part of interorganisational partnerships as is the governance aspect.

The interorganisational level of a network is the most relevant aspect for this thesis. Carpenter *et al.* (2012:1352) observed that network scholars recognise two actors at the interorganisational levels, namely, the organisations themselves ("alliance networks") or "the upper-echelon executives" in the form of ("inter-locking directorates") who act as representatives of such organisations. Some scholars found evidence of the importance of the role of "lateral leadership" in the management of networks as partnerships in the public sector (Ferlie, Fitzgerald, McGivern, Dopson & Bernnet, 2011:320). The interface between the leadership construct and the interorganisational partnership phenomenon will be explored later on in this chapter.

3.4.1.3 Application of SNA in leadership and partnership research

Maak (2007) drew from SNA concepts to demonstrate "how responsible leaders weave durable relational structures and ultimately networks of relationships which are rich in ties to otherwise

unconnected individuals or groups" as a way of contributing to building "social capital". Moving from the premise of responsible leadership as a "relational phenomenon", his argument centres on the point that in the "global stakeholder society" responsible leaders have to deal with "moral complexity" resulting from competing stakeholder interests and needs. He further reviewed a range of literature that has defined social capital over a period of about a century and then concluded that social capital is about those attributes that facilitate collective action among people. Such features include "networks, relationships, norms, trust and thus goodwill inherent in social relations…" (Maak, 2007:329-343). As such, the role of a responsible leader is to build strong partnerships via mobilising multiple stakeholders into coalitions that result in "value networks" that "build a responsible and sustainable business" (Maak, 2007:340). In agreement, Worley & Mirvis (2013:286) argue that, "while a 'network' can be described without values – it is after all just a set of nodes with connections – when the nodes become organisations (or people) and the network is organised for sustainability, it takes on decided value connotations." As such, SNA could be complemented by relational orientated qualitative methodologies, such as done in this research, to elucidate values and value-creation capabilities beyond mere ties and connections.

Macciò and Cristofoli (2017:1060) investigated the determinants of network endurance in the context of long-term public service delivery interorganisational partnerships. The choice of predictive variables that they assessed included managerial skills of partnership leaders, mechanisms of network coordination, and partnership governance. One of the findings of their study was that partnership managers should have strong leadership skills since "they serve as *trait d'union* between the requirements of complex structural forms and the selection of appropriate functional arrangements" (Macciò and Cristofoli, 2017:1060). The leaders also serve to mobilise stakeholders and coordinate them towards the common purpose of the interorganisational partnership and ensure alignment to mutually agreed good governance mechanisms (Macciò & Cristofoli, 2017:1071).

Hoppe and Reinelt (2010:600-619) applied SNA in the analysis of peer leadership networks, organisational partnerships, field-policy leadership networks, and collective leadership networks. This was among the few early studies that applied SNA to produce a "framework for leadership networks" and how SNA could be applied as an evaluation tool for interorganisational partnerships. Building on Hoppe and Reinelt (2010), Kwok, Hanig, Brown and Shen (2018:648) applied SNA to study "how leader role identity influences the process of leader emergence"

among a sample of 88 leadership students. Their study moved from a premise of leadership as conceptualised as "social interactions" or relational phenomenon. Their research confirmed the hypothesis that people who view themselves as leaders or have a strong identity of being leaders, are more likely to play the leadership role and demonstrate leadership behaviours. Similarly, individuals who are perceived as leaders or informally occupy central positions within groups are more likely to emerge as leaders. Lastly, these authors argue that SNA helped them measure the relationships between individuals and how leadership as a relational construct is enacted in organisations or networks of individuals (Kwok *et al.,* 2018:648-642).

Contractor, DeChurch, Carson, Carter & Keegan (2012:994) used SNA to characterise shared or collective leadership "as particular configurations of social networks". This research contributed to the application of SNA and adaptation of SNA concepts into collective leadership research such as "elicitation" and "representation" empirical methods. In terms of the latter, the study generated the matrix presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: **Representing the tri-partite dimensions of collective leadership across levels of analysis**

Leadership conceptual dimension	Network property	LEVELS OF ANALYSIS				
		Actor (Individual)	*Dyad*	*Triad*	*Group*	*Network*
Team Member	*Member concentration*	Number of members with high in-degree centrality	Number of structurally equivalent (SE) dyads	Transivity	Number of members in the k-cores	In-degree centralisation
Role	*Role multiplexity*	Number of members with high in-degree centrality aggregated across roles	Number of dyads who are structurally equivalent across roles	Transivity across roles	Number of members in the k-score across roles	In-degree centralisation across roles
Time	*Temporal stability*	Number of members with high in-degree centrality aggregated over time	Number of dyads who are structurally equivalent over time	Transivity over time	Number of members in the k-score over time	In-degree centralisation over time

Source: After Contractor *et al.* (2012:1004)

The main contribution of Contractor *et al.'s* (2012:1009) study was to "enable better translation between the conceptual advances of understanding leadership as complex and emergent with corresponding advances in network analytical methodology"

Oliver and Elbers (1998:549) applied SNA in the review of "interorganisational relations" and partnerships or networks from 1980 to 1996. Their contribution was on the exploration of linkages and configurations among core theoretical perspectives in the field of interorganisational relations research which, in their view, could only be described through SNA. Similarly, Lewis (2005) applied SNA in the study of healthcare partnerships in Australia and New Zealand. They were able to combine SNA with agency-based narrative methodology to both describe structural elements and explain causal relationships. The research concluded that stakeholder engagement and relationship-building are crucial for coordinating public service delivery and planning in the context of healthcare partnerships (Lewis, 2005:1-11).

3.4.1.4 Criticisms of SNA

According to Cunliffe and Ericksen (2011:1429), "by drawing attention to the relationship between network elements and infrastructures, and the macro and micro processes of organising, network theories emphasize the need for leaders to consider and manage relational mechanisms and processes, thus extending heroic individualised models. While addressing social processes, network theories still take an entitative perspective (citing Hosking, 1995) by focusing on identifying network elements and modelling relationship mechanisms." According to Hoppe and Reinelt (2010:618), SNA has the following challenges, namely, the collection of network data is difficult, there are privacy concerns on SNA methodology, and there are too many SNA concepts that could make SNA an unduly complicated methodology. From a leadership research perspective, Endres and Weibler (2020:280) note a gap in SNA literature in that "individual actor's leadership and interaction-related leadership processes within networks have been rarely assessed empirically" despite their wide acknowledgement in conceptual studies. As their contribution towards addressing this lacuna in research, these scholars recommend and apply a social constructionist lens to the study of leadership networks rather than the traditional SNA quantitative approaches discussed above (Endres & Weibler, 2020), which is also the preferred theoretical framework for this thesis.

3.4.2 Joined-up government approach to interorganisational partnerships

The technical SNA approaches are sometimes contrasted with joined-up working (Ling, 2002) approaches for the study of interorganisational partnerships, especially in public governance literature on 'joined-up government' (Jacklin-Jarvis & Porter, 2019), as reviewed in the next paragraphs.

3.4.2.1 Definition of joined-up government

According to Jacklin-Jarvis and Potter (2019:2), joined-up government is an approach to public sector leadership that is about interorganisational partnerships among public sector bodies and between public sector, civil society and private sector to address complex policy problems such as environmental concerns or public health disasters. In agreement, O'Flynn, Buick, Blackman and Halligan (2011:244) define joined-up government as the way in which leaders in business, government and civil society stakeholders work together "across organisational boundaries towards a common goal in various forms, including realignment of organisational boundaries, formal partnerships, and informal partnerships".

Clark (1998:108) indicates that in the context of the United Kingdom, the concept of joined-up government gained impetus when the Labour Party (Tony Blair's Administration) was in office until 1998, as spelled out in its "Modernising Government Strategy" and the subsequent 1999 "Modernising Government White Paper". Ling (2002:262) concurs and put forward a typology of partnership or joined-up working in the context of the UK as presented in Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2:   The main dimensions of partnership/joined-up working
Source: Ling (2002:262).

83

In Figure 3.2, four kinds of joined up government are depicted, namely, new ways of: working across organisations; delivering services; accountabilities and incentives; and new types of organisations (Ling, 2002:262).

According to Clark (1998:108), the motivation behind joined-up government was seen as an attempt to address the challenges of silos among governmental organisations, intra-organisational focus in budget implementation, and poor coordination of implementation from macro to micro levels of the public service delivery value-chain. They note that in the UK, "in theory at least, the conception of joined-up government [was] relatively coherent in that its goals [were] relatively clear and that [it had] a recognisable strategy for implementation" (Clark, 1998:108). Keast (2011:221-222) confirms that "the mantra of joined-up government" or "whole-of-government"/ whole of society interorganisational partnership approach gained popularity from the UK government and then spread across the world in the 1990s and 2000s; but in the context of Australia, which has three spheres of government, its implementation presented unique contextual challenges.

3.4.2.2 Leadership in the context of the joined-up government partnership perspective

Jacklin-Jarvis and Potter (2019:2) observed that in joined-up government situations there is a duality in terms of leadership being used to facilitate coordination, integration and alignment of processes and systems, whilst at the same time "processes and structures themselves act as leadership 'media' or sources that shape practice". In one of their case studies, it was observed that policy was used to encourage interorganisational partnerships in order to ensure effectiveness and "leadership roles and responsibilities were clearly defined". However, the challenge was that shared leadership happened only among governmental bodies and "partnership with non-state actors was only loosely defined beyond their role as service providers" and there was also a lack of mutual accountability. In another case study, they observed the paradox of policy serving as a guide to enable collaborative leadership for purposes of addressing a specific problem, "and yet constrain a collaborative approach to leadership" (Jacklin-Jarvis & Potter, 2019:5-9).

Carey and Crammond (2015:1020) make the following observations. Firstly, buy-in at multiple levels of the value-chain of the implementation of join-up government initiatives is one of the critical success factors. Secondly, strong leadership is important at micro, meso and macro levels of the initiative. Thirdly, strategic leadership in the form of political champions is also critical both

in terms of providing the joined-up initiatives with mandates and breaking down interorganisational silos. However, if not properly managed, political leadership could also act as the main constraint for the success of joined-up initiatives. Fourthly, champions that are formally appointed or emerge organically within the join-up government initiative are deemed very important to drive the joined-up government initiatives. Lastly, both top-down and bottom-up approaches work well when coupled with the emphasis that local relations among the partners on the ground are crucial for sustainability of such initiatives (Carey & Crammond, 2015:1020). Keast (2011:225) concurs with these reasons in his matrix of "pragmatic drivers" versus "altruistic drivers" of joined-up government approach to interorganisational partnerships.

Chen (2008) studied leadership at an interorganisational level by using the "dyadic relationship between a lead agency and each of its network partners" as the unit of analysis in his study of joined-up government in the delivery of "family and children services in Los Angeles County". The study found that it is important to customise different collaborative processes in order to achieve specific outcomes, such as trust-building and joint-decision-making as critical for those leaders who "consider goal achievement as the most important outcome". If the intended outcome is about strengthening the collaborative outcomes of the partnership, resource sharing as well as "interpersonal and interorganisational trust" are critical success factors (Chen, 2008:348-363). Pope and Lewis (2008:454) made similar findings in Victoria and recommend that future research should include leadership issues such as how partnerships link to "power and other strategic decision-makers outside the partnership."

Keast (2011:222) outlines various models that were employed by governments such as: "super-agencies", "lead agencies", "central agencies" and interorganisational task committees – which were mandated to ensure better coordination, integration and alignment of the work of various governmental and non-governmental bodies in terms of policy implementation. Besides these structural models, Keast (2011:222) further identifies market models whereby governments outsource service delivery to non-state actors. Due to the challenges experienced with the rigidity of the top-down governmental structural approaches and distant coordination of the outsourced market model, "governments turned to networks, partnerships, and collaborative arrangements with their emphasis on shared missions and negotiated agreements as core integration mechanisms…" (Keast, 2011:222). Having reviewed the Australian experience of joined up government, he proposes the model depicted in Figure 3.3 as measures to mitigate change management challenges of joined up government:

Figure 3.3:   Core elements of joined-up working in the context of joined-up government
<u>Source</u>: Keast (2011:229).

In terms of Figure 3.3, change management challenges faced by joined-up government initiatives could be mitigated via the following four interventions, organisational culture and skilling, including developing leadership skills; adjusted managerial models; better relationship building processes; and integrated and fit-for-purpose governance structures.

The next section will discuss some of the scholarly criticisms levelled against the joined-up government form of interorganisational partnerships.

3.4.2.3 Debates in literature and criticisms of joined-up government approach

Clark (2002:107) cautions that joined-up government should not be confused with joined-up policy, as the former refers to "structural and managerial" emphasis whilst the latter is about "political integration and consensus." He further questions whether the structural goals of joined-up government in terms of interorganisational coordination and integration would lead to substantive partnerships since partnerships are "more likely to engender a common operating culture, since resources and rewards are shared" (Clark, 2002:107). Keast (2011) concludes that the joined-up government mode of partnership is very complex and both governmental and non-

state partners must understand the risks involved, which arise out of the major organisational changes required in terms of thinking, behaviours and processes within each participating stakeholder in order to ensure success of a joined-up government initiative. As a way of addressing this weakness, Keast (2011:229) recommends the "core elements of joined-up working" that are reflected in Figure 3.3 herein above.

Chen (2008:349) notes that despite many calls for interorganisational partnerships in the form of joined-up government in the delivery of public services, "collaboration remains an elusive concept and little is known about when and how these efforts are likely to be successful…" Similarly, Pope and Lewis (2008:455) report that the outcomes of joined-up government initiatives take a very long time to realise. Carey and Crammond (2015:1020) observed that most literature tends to view joined-up government in a positive light as generally beneficial, yet on the contrary, "this normative bias is being challenged by researchers who have demonstrated that the joined-up rhetoric is out of sync with the state of evidence". Askim, Christensen, Fimreite and Lægreit (2009:1023), in their analysis of the Norwegian experience of implementing joined-up government, found that "path dependency and agency level conflicts of interests struck back and changed the content of the reform" that had initially demonstrated elements of success.

The two case studies chosen for this research are closely aligned to the joined-up government model of interorganisational partnerships, with one being a national initiative and another a continental/international initiative, as explained in Chapter 4 where the research design is discussed.

3.4.3   Public-private partnerships approach to interorganisational partnerships

The SNA and joined-up government approaches to the understanding of interorganisational partnerships are complemented by the Public-Private Partnership approach, as discussed in the next paragraphs.

3.4.3.1 Definitions of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Scholars provide several definitions of PPPs which share similar core elements as demonstrated by the next definitions. According to Xiong, Chen, Wang and Zhu (2020:3), PPPs are a form long-term partnership based on legal agreements between government and business sectors to collaborate on the delivery of public infrastructure and services that are traditionally performed by government bodies and usually paid for directly by government to business investors or indirectly

through user tariffs paid by citizens to the private providers. Similarly, Hermans, Geerling-Eiff, Potters and Klerkx (2019:76) argue that PPPs seek to derive shared value for partners through pooling of resources of business, government and other stakeholders such as universities in a long-term contractual collaborative endeavour. In agreement, Kang, Mulaphong, Hwang and Chang (2019:334) define PPPs as "one type of service arrangement in which the public and the private sectors enter into a long-term cooperative relationship for purposes of delivering a public good or service" and they are distinguished by the involvement of private sector partners in decision-making and the existence of a formal legal contract.

In summary, according to the foregoing definitions the core elements of PPPs are their long-term nature, existence of formal legal contracts, and the orientation towards achieving common objectives (Kang *et al.,* 2019:334; Hermans *et al.,* 2019:76; Xiong *et al.,* 2020:3). Correspondingly, Välilä (2020:2), while recognising that there is no single definition of PPPs in literature since their emergence in antiquity, argues that most scholars agree on the existence of "certain core characteristics" of PPPS.

3.4.3.2 Classification of PPPs and debates in literature

In addition to the definition of PPPs, scholars provide a number of categorisations, models and types of PPPs in literature. Wang, Gong, Liu and Thomson (2020:1) argue that there are many classifications of PPPs and different governance models, which are usually analysed through micro-level case studies (sector-based) or macro-level (country-based) approaches. The contribution of their study was on the development of a PPP governance and assessment framework based on a comparative analysis of governance models for PPPs in the UK and China from a governmental perspective (Wang *et al.,* 2020:1). In addition, Osei-Kyei and Chan (2015:1334) report the following as various models of PPPs, namely, Build-Operate-Transfer; Design Build Finance Operate; Build Transfer Operate; Design Build Operate Maintain, Build Own Operate Transfer; Operate and Maintain; Design and Build; Build Lease and Transfer; and Design Construct Manage and Finance.

Xiong *et al.* (2020:3-4) distinguish between three forms of PPPs. The first one is institutional PPPs (iPPPs) which are "hybrid organisations (e.g. alliances, joint ventures, and mixed companies)" whereby there is joint management and service delivery by the partners. "Contractual PPPs (cPPPs) denote a form of interorganisational partnership whereby the private partners take over the ownership of the project that was outsourced by government and designed collaboratively by

the partners. "Regulated PPPs (rPPPs), also known as public-private collaborations, are collaborative relationships between the private and public sectors in which the private sector independently owns the assets and provides services under the public sector regulations" such as "approvals, licensing and inspections". These scholars acknowledged that literature tends for focus on cPPPs and yet these three types of PPPs are unique and suited to different sectors and contexts (Xiong *et al.,* 2020:3-4)

Korab-Karpowicz (2020:2) identify a number of classifications of PPPs in international relations' literature. The first type of PPPs is "co-option of private sectors" whereby government and multi-lateral bodies include representation of leaders from business and civil society organisations in their delegations, who are sometime granted "formal observer status" in international negotiations. This model is common in multilateral bodies like the UN, World Bank and International Monetary Fund. The second type is "delegation of certain functions to private sectors" such as implementation of humanitarian support to non-governmental organisations and standard-setting to private entities like the "International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and European Committee for Standardisation (CEN)". The third type is "involvement of private sectors in rule-making as equal partners" such as in the operations of the International Labour Organisation where leaders from labour, business and government negotiate and collectively adopt rules. Lastly, there is a category that acknowledges "the adoption and consent of self-regulation of private actors" such as in the operations of the World Trade Organisation and global professional ethics bodies. Their research advocates for the establishment of a "United Citizen's Organisation" which would be managed in terms of the PPP model of global affairs (Korab-Karpowicz, 2020:1).

3.4.3.3 Some key debates in literature on PPPs

Xiao and Lam (2020:12) report that PPPs have increased in their popularity since the World Bank recorded that in 2015 infrastructure-related PPPs alone were worth US$115.5 billion, which was a significant decadal increase from US$51.2 billion in 2006 and US$37.2 billion in 1996. In their assessment of 398 PPP projects to understand the reasons behind the private sector willingness to take risks, Xiao and Lam (2020:11) found the construct of "political effectiveness" was positively moderated by "business friendliness" and negatively impacted by "freedom from governmental intervention" constructs. Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2019) conducted a root-cause analysis of conflicts in PPPs in Ghana and China. Their review notes that litigation, arbitration and negotiation are the most common methods used to resolve conflicts in these forms of interorganisational partnerships (Osei-Kyei *et al.*, 2019:185-195). Moving from the premise that conflicts are normal in PPPs in

the construction industry, the study recommends good governance and leadership as important considerations in order to address such conflicts (Osei-Kyei *et al.,* 2019:195).

According to Irfan, Salman, Jabeen, Ahmad and Ansari (2017:53), PPPs represent a "unique form of interorganisational collaboration" that is well-suited to fill the gap between "market and hierarchy" mechanisms of delivering public services. They also note that in literature topics that are usually discussed include theoretical boundary issues on PPPs, PPP governance models, terms and conditions of PPP contracts, economic value of PPPs, institutional implications and effectives of PPPs, among others (Irfan *et al.,* 2017:53). Välilä (2020:1-11) compares PPP procurement with public sector procurement of infrastructure projects using similar topics. According to Hermans *et al.* (2019:77), "partnerships for innovation can have private and public benefits that are related to partnering and also to the innovation that is being developed", as stated in the Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: **Key benefits of partnerships between public and private sectors**

	INNOVATION	PARTNERING
Public benefits	• Environmental and/or social benefits from sustainability innovations. • Contribution to economic growth. • Contribution to the knowledge economy. • Increased employment opportunities.	• Joint/ social learning. • Improved relevance through contact with real problems. • Maintaining research infrastructure and capacity. • Complementary (private) funding.
Private benefits	• Increased production and productivity • Reduction of costs and risks. • Development of new products and market opportunities	• Access to knowledge, technology and other partners. • New marketing and distribution channels. • Publicity.

Source: After Hermans *et al.* (2019:77).

Table 3.3 complements Table 3.3 which discussed positive and negative outcomes of partnerships among various sectors of society. The contribution of Table 3.3, in addition to innovation outcomes, is around highlighting relationality via partnering outcomes such as joint-learning, relevance, complementary resources, absorptive capacity, and new opportunities (Hermans *et al.,* 2019).

According to Biygautane, Neesham and Al-Yahya (2019:194), one of the critical gaps in literature is a lack of engagement with the social aspects of PPPs, as literature emphasises the technical factors that are listed in the Table 3.4.

Table 3.4:   Key requirements for successful implementation of PPPs

Political support	Effective bureaucratic systems	Organisational support for PPPs	PPP supporting legal and regulatory frameworks	Technical and managerial capacity for PPPs
Systemic political support, i.e. government policies and entities that encourage PPP option.	Existence of efficient bureaucracy that takes swift decisions.	PPP units.	PPP laws that support PPP contracts	Techniques for evaluation of projects' value for money
Governance systems that support PPPs	Clear and effective procedures for obtaining licences and approvals	Regulatory agencies with mandate to support PPP contracts	Stable legal frameworks that provide trustworthy platform for solving disputes	Contract management and risk evaluation techniques
Political ecosystem that favours private participation in infrastructure project delivery	Fast-track procedures to accommodate private sector's needs and expectations.	Organisations that provide capacity development to public and private sectors.	Investment-friendly laws that support involvement of foreign companies in PPP projects.	Effective methods of procuring projects
	No interference from politicians in administering PPP contracts.	Organisations that attract foreign investment in infrastructure projects.	PPP-friendly regulatory frameworks.	Reliable tools to transfer project risks and measure project performance.

Source: After Biygautane, Neesham and Al-Yahya (2019:194).

According to Table 3.4, key enablers are the political, bureaucratic, organisational and regulatory frameworks, which are supplemented by relevant PPP skills such as financial and contract management (Biygautane *et al.,* 2019). In addition, Osei-Kyei and Chan (2015:1344) observe that scholars often refer to "risk allocation and sharing, strong private consortium, political support, community/public support and transparent procurement" as the most important factors for the success of PPPs.

3.4.3.4 Criticisms of PPP approach to interorganisational partnerships

Hodge and Greve (2007:553) argue that, "whilst the PPP movement has enjoyed a long historical pedigree", the challenges of conflicting definitions, approaches and understanding of the benefits of PPPs had not yet been resolved and they cautioned that governments should carefully analyse the situation before embarking on PPPs due to the high failure rate of this form of interorganisational partnerships. Furthermore, Osei-Kyei *et al.* (2019:185) state that literature cites many examples of failed PPP projects from all over the world due to conflicts that are usually caused by the long-term nature of the PPP agreements and involvement of many stakeholders

with different interests and worldviews. According to Reis and Sarmento (2019:286), PPPs face the following criticisms: high risk of renegotiation of PPP contracts due to unforeseen circumstances, lack of efficient implementation, lack of accountability, poor management by governments of "incomplete contracting (an unavoidable problem)", and exaggeration of return for investment derived by government from the PPPs. Correspondingly, Parker, Dressel, Chevers and Zeppetella (2018) note that a lack of leadership, poor management of resources, lack of communication and weak stakeholder management are some of the risks that lead to the failure of PPPs.

3.4.4 Collaborative, shared or collective leadership frameworks and interorganisational partnerships

From leadership studies, collaborative, shared or collective leadership frameworks are sometimes employed to understand leadership in interorganisational partnership contexts as discussed below.

3.4.4.1 Definitions of collaborative, shared or collective leadership frameworks

Vangen and Huxham (2003:61) argue that "understanding the way that collaborative approaches may provide value is… an essential element of understanding the changing roles of public sector organisations." According to Nowell and Harrison (2011:21), research on collaboration has noted that "effective collaboration" or successful partnerships are "characterised by creating contexts of shared leadership". Pearce *et al.* (2014:276) present shared leadership as a "meta-theory" or all-encompassing approach to leadership whose starting point is the view that "all leadership is shared leadership; it is simply a matter of degree" of sharing. Scott *et al.* (2018:465) concur with Pearce *et al.* (2014) in terms of the all-encompassing nature of shared leadership and further argue that shared leadership could be viewed as "leadership as network paradigm". They conceptualise leadership networks as having the following features, namely, "relational, patterned, situated within the context, informal and formal". They then define leadership networks "as emergent relational process of mutual influence between team members, and can be conceptualised as the property of the whole system" (Scott *et al.,* 2018:465). This conceptualisation is aligned to the social constructionist paradigm that is employed as the philosophical stance of this thesis, as discussed in Chapter 4.

3.4.4.2 Application of collaborative, shared or collective leadership frameworks

Dionne *et al.* (2014:13) argue that "collective leadership theories" study organisational collectives at network or alliance levels or interorganisational partnership level since they involve more than a single organisation. "In collaborative settings enacting leadership can mean influencing whole organisations rather than individuals" (Vangen & Huxham, 2003:63). In their review, Dionne *et al.* (2014:13) include the following as different types of collective leadership theories, namely, "shared leadership, team leadership, distributed leadership, participative leadership, network leadership, complexity leadership, entrepreneurial leadership, complex leadership, self-leadership, and empowering leadership." In agreement, Pearce *et al.* (2014:276) note that shared leadership is similar or means the same thing as collective leadership, co-leadership, pluralistic leadership and distributed leadership approaches.

Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1177), in the context of their "loci and mechanisms" theoretical framework, argue that shared or collective leadership is cross-cutting since it could emanate from individual leaders, dyads of leaders and followers, and context – and it could be "transmitted through trait, cognition and affect mechanisms." According to Friedrich *et al.* (2016:313), collective leadership is "a dynamic process in which a defined leader, or a set of leaders, selectively utilises the skills and expertise within a network as need arises." Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1177) view the collective leadership framework as universally applicable and therefore appropriate for the study of partnerships or leadership in collaborative or collective contexts.

Friedrich *et al.* (2016:312-331) empirically tested the collective leadership framework with a special focus on the following behaviours: "communication, developing the network and leader-team exchange" and how these behaviours are influenced by context. Their study found that in practice collective leaders tend to alternate between task-oriented versus relationship-oriented behaviours depending on the context where leadership is enacted. With regards to the "network development" or partnership development behaviour, they found that leaders tend to draw from this behaviour to share information and coordinate activities of individuals after organisational changes (Friedrich *et al.*, 2016:329).

Endres and Weibler (2020:275-309) used a Grounded Theory approach to study leadership in interorganisational partnership contexts and found that partnerships tended to have two main characteristics, namely, "leaderless cooperation (leadership void) or developed shared leadership". They found the "joint-motivational network" as the main ingredient or mechanism

behind shared leadership development in interorganisational partnership situations. Furthermore, their study found that: "given embeddedness in a peer-like networked context", leaders shifted from being individualistic to be more relational in outlook. Based on that, these scholars noted the relevance of "plural leadership forms, such as collective or shared leadership, in collaborative interorganisational networks…" (Endres & Weibler, 2020:299).

Gibeau, Langley, Denis and Schendel (2020:5) use the specific form of collective leadership framework called "co-leadership" which is about two individuals or dyads being tasked with the role of "pooled leadership". They specifically sought to empirically explore qualitatively how co-leadership "enables the bridging of different institutional logics." Their study produced mixed results and they identified what they refer to as the "central paradox of collective leadership: that collective leadership may be most needed where it is most difficult to achieve." In the collaborative or partnership contexts with various organisations that have different institutional logics, this finding seems to challenge the finding by Endres and Weibler (2020:299), as mentioned before, that collective leadership is the most appropriate approach in interorganisational partnerships settings. Gibeau *et al.* (2020:23) conclude on a cautionary note that "co-leadership arrangements are not a panacea".

3.4.4.3 Criticisms of collaborative or collective or shared leadership frameworks in interorganisational partnership contexts

Carey and Crammond (2015:1026) found the notion that strong and powerful leaders are required to drive implementation of partnership projects in collaborative contexts, such as joined-up government, is running "counter to much of the rhetoric on joined-up, holistic government: the new modes of working are said to be about partnerships, networks, flat relationships, and trust." In other words, this finding challenges the view that collective leadership and other non-hierarchical collaborative forms of leadership are more relevant for interorganisational partnership contexts.

In her review of collaborative leadership literature, Vivier (2019:61) notes a range of "leadership challenges in context of collaboration". She observed high levels of vagueness and complicatedness; competing interests, aims, visions and stakeholder agendas; complicated collective bureaucracies that are difficult to navigate; sometimes membership of the collective is poorly defined; information asymmetries and incompleteness; complexity of working across organisational boundaries; limited evidence of shared leadership resulting in tangible outcomes;

and a tendency for collaborations to be very slow leading to inertia, among other challenges (Vivier, 2019:61-62). From a complexity leadership theory perspective, "organisations or partnerships are seen as being complex adaptive systems whose ability to thrive depends on their fitness to survive in a dynamic socio-ecological web." (Armistead, 2007:4).

Endress and Weibler (2020:276) observed that despite the fact that the need for shared leadership in interorganisational partnership settings is quite frequently mentioned in literature, there is a dearth of empirical studies that have been conducted in this direction. Furthermore, there are many unresolved paradoxes that manifest themselves in the application of collective or shared leadership in collaborative contexts, such as "silent cry paradox", "unity and diversity paradox", and dominating versus consensus paradox. (Endres & Weibler, 2020:281).

While the collective or shared leadership framework is widely used to characterise leadership in interorganisational partnership contexts, the above discussion demonstrates that it is quite inadequate to fully characterise leadership emergence, processes and practices. This thesis employs the RSCL onto-epistemology as an emerging praxeology to study leadership practices in interorganisational contexts. This theoretical lens is discussed briefly in the next sections and elaborated on in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.5   RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND THE INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIP CONSTRUCT

This thesis uses the practice approach as its methodology which implies that there will be no attempt to present theory *a priori*, but theory will emerge from the study itself in qualitative paradigmatic terms. What has emerged from the above literature is that the RSCL lens appears to be the most relevant theoretical framework to study the leadership phenomenon in interorganisational multi-stakeholder contexts, as elaborated below.

De Cremer and Van Vugt (2002:126) investigates the "social dilemma" or "public goods dilemma", which is a view that many problems in society are about reconciling the conflicts of interests between individual interests versus the group or collective interests. From this view, a leader is appointed to manage the public good in the interest of the collective. Furthermore, according to De Cremer and Van Vugt (2002:217), people cooperate with the leader due to their own self-interest (instrumental perspective) such as to avoid punishment or they cooperate because the

leader is effective in terms of strengthening group relations and collective needs (relational perspective). Brower, Schoorman and Tan (2000) empirically developed the relational leadership approach as an integration of trust literature and literature on the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) approach to leadership and recommend that future research could explore the application of this approach to the organisational level. Horlings, Collinge and Gibney (2017:2) recognised the "spatial turn in leadership research" and proposed the "Relational Knowledge Leadership" style which they defined as "leadership that spans, disrupts and erodes established (organisational, sectorial and territorial) boundaries; that promotes networking – taking into account a multiplicity and novelty of relations and practices; and that performs a framing 'leadership of leadership' role".

After recognising that the relational turn in leadership research occurred in the 2000s, Uhl-Bien (2006:665) distinguish between "entity" and "relational" perspectives as the two contrasting philosophical and methodological approaches towards the study of the relational leadership approach. As discussed in the previous chapter, Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018:539) put forward the "relationist" perspective to relational leadership which serves to advance the "social constructionist perspective" through the recognition of socio-materiality. Eva, Wolfram Cox, Tse and Lowe (2019:6) developed a multi-perspective framework for the purposes of developing collective leadership based on various debates in literature that deal with the collective leadership. The framework identified five perspectives as depicted in the Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Theoretical perspectives and possibilities of collective leadership development

Perspective	Assumptions	Focus of collective leadership development	Leadership development approaches
PERSON-CENTERED	Key individuals are the focal, if not primary, for effective collective leadership	Training to develop the competencies of the individuals within the team and the team as a collective	Team building e.g. giving and receiving effective feedback, role and assertiveness training, stress exposure training.
SOCIAL NETWORK	Focus is on the nature and extent of ties/lack of ties between individuals.	Understanding, leveraging, and modifying network capability through developing the ties between the individuals and between teams within a collective.	Structural interventions e.g. workplace structural and technological changes to foster collaboration, and bringing geographically dispersed teams together to foster interactions that build ties among different actors within the social network.

Perspective	Assumptions	Focus of collective leadership development	Leadership development approaches
SOCIAL-RELATIONAL	Relational social construction of leadership	Encouraging emergence conversation	Dialogic organisation development e.g. appreciative inquiry, open space technology, dynamic facilitation, world café, and organisational learning conversations.
SOCIO-MATERIAL	A socio-material configuration of social, material, and discursive relations (connections, practices, and routines) in everyday management that results in the recognition and attribution of direction and influence as leadership.	Recognising and facilitating new configurations and routines	Learning-based interventions e.g. action learning sets, process analysis, reflection-in-action.
INSTITUTIONAL	Reconciling opposing temporal orientations concerning core values	Managing core contradictions	Communication and negotiation techniques e.g. managing paradox and dialectics

Source: After Eva *et al.* (2019:6).

The above perspectives (Table 3.5) confirm that the relational construct or relational onto-epistemology or relationality that is clearly articulated in the context of collective or shared leadership approaches in general, and the relational leadership approach in particular, provides a useful conceptual lens for the study of leadership in interorganisational settings. Some of the key studies that were discussed in Chapter 2 and in the foregoing paragraphs include the work of Uhl-Bien (2006); Cunliffe and Ericksen (2011); Wolfgram, Flynn-Coleman and Conroy (2015), Kurucz *et al.*, (2017); Endres and Weibler (2017); Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018); Endres and Weibler (2020); and Nicholson and Kurucz (2019). In the context of PPPs, Biygautane *et al.* (2019:215) found that "social interaction and collaborative agency are the powerful but *invisible forces* [their emphasis] that can make or break a project, irrespective of its technical (dis)advantages". Very often in partnerships it is difficult to locate how leadership and where leadership is enacted since "partnership working often involves a redistribution or even a fragmentation of pre-existing power relations" (Armistead, *et al.*, 2007:7). The research will draw from the above literature to design the research framework and approach for this thesis, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Lastly, as discussed in Chapter 2, Maak and Pless (2006:99-115) were among the first movers to link stakeholder theory to responsible leadership to explain the "social-relational" nature of the

responsible leadership approach. The key principles of responsible leadership theory (i.e. the ethical, moral and relationality purpose of leadership) in multi-stakeholder or interorganisational contexts and used as an evaluative instrument for the findings of this research. Similarly, Miska and Mendenhall (2018) note that the stakeholder theory perspective is the preferred theoretical framework that has been used by responsible leadership scholars to explain the nature and dynamics of stakeholder engagement. The behavioural perspective of responsible leadership was prominent in terms of empirical studies that investigated how leaders apply certain ethics, values and morals in their relations with stakeholder (Pless, 2007; Stahl & de Luque, 2014). In addition to the social-relational stakeholder orientation, as argued in the previous chapter, responsible leadership focuses on the purpose of leadership in terms of its emphasis on the ethics of leadership as a core responsibility. Furthermore, relationality and ethics could be viewed as two sides of the same coin since Greenwood and Freeman (2018:3) argue that ethics seek to pose complex questions about organisations and the manner in which people live and relate to each other. According to Worley and Mirvis (2013:286), the relational "view of leadership departs from the 'heroic' version of the all-knowing leader who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way to a 'post-heroic' model whereby leadership exists at every level of the organisation and every part of the [partnership]... For individual leaders to operate in this 'relational' mode requires an emphasis on more collaborative and partnering skills." In simple terms, this study moves from the premise that any leadership could be viewed as relational (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Chreim, 2015:526), hence the RSCL lens is employed as a theoretical framework "to characterise the phenomenon [i.e. leadership in interorganisational partnerships] in all its forms, whether hierarchical, shared or networked" (Ospina & Foldy's, 2010:294).

3.6   CONCLUSION OF THE THIRD CHAPTER

This chapter began by articulating the gap in the literature where both leadership and participative systems literature (i.e. literature on interorganisational partnerships and collaboration) had not engaged with the notion of how leadership emerges and is enacted in interorganisational partnership situations (Huxham & Vangen, 2001:1160; Connelly, 2007:1253; Voegtlin & Pless, 2014:190; Endres & Weibler, 2020:278). Interorganisational partnerships were defined as collaborative initiatives among organisations from business, civil society and public sectors that voluntarily seek to achieve common objectives regarding a public issue of mutual concern (Selsky & Parker, 2005:850; Stadler & Lin, 2019:870; Vivier, 2019:59; Endres & Weibler, 2020:278).

Interorganisational partnerships are sometimes conceptualised as collaborations or coalitions or development cooperation or network forms of organising. The concept of a collaborative spectrum serves as a framework that views mutual beneficial relationships as the partnership phenomenon at the intersection of symbiotic relationships common among members of the same organisation and transactional relationships that are common among buyers and sellers in the marketplace (Archer & Cameron, 2014:3). Interorganisational relations are sometimes characterised as coalitions that are primarily formed by businesses who join forces to compete in the market place for opportunities like tenders from government and industry (Mamawi, 2012:35-41). Flaherty and Rappaport (2017:126) argue that trade associations are voluntary non-profit coalitions that exist to represent the interests of their members and some could be confederations of many trade associations at national or global levels. According to Endres and Weibler (2020:278), networks are collaborative organisational entities of multiple stakeholders that are comprised of members who participate on a voluntary basis and are not bound by legal contracts. The UN Global Compact serves as an example of a development partnership or network of business leaders at an international level established to enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships for the purposes of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals through country-level local partnerships.

A review of various frameworks that have been applied in the study of interorganisational frameworks was done such as network research, Joined-Up Government, Public-Private Partnerships, and collaborative/shared/collective leadership frameworks. Gartrell (1987:50) states that SNA is a set of methodologies that are used to describe social relations structurally among individuals, groups/teams or organisations. Pearce *et al.* (2014:276) argue that collaborative leadership or shared leadership or the collective leadership approach is a "meta-theory" or an all-encompassing framework to leadership whose starting point is the view that "all leadership is shared leadership; it is simply a matter of degree" of sharing. O'Flynn, Buick, Blackman and Halligan (2011:244) define joined-up government as the way in which leaders in business, government and civil society stakeholders work together, either formally or informally, in the interorganisational partnership domain.

The RSCL lens was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study since its tenets are common across responsible leadership, relational leadership and collaborative/shared leadership theories. RSCL is an emerging approach that scholars have gained a deepened understanding of, from an instrumental perspective, to an entity perspective, relational perspective, social constructionist perspective, relationist perspective, social-material perspective and multiple-

perspective approaches, as reviewed and proposed by Eva *et al.* (2019:6). Chapter 4, which focuses on the research design, builds on the theoretical foundation laid by the literature review conducted in Chapters 2 and 3.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1   INTRODUCTION TO THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Chapter 4 builds on the discussion of the research design in Chapter 2, which reviewed the literature on leadership research in general and responsible leadership in particular, as well as Chapter 3 that reviewed literature on interorganisational partnerships and how such participative scholarship is linked to leadership research in collective settings. To recap, the main research question for this thesis is: *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?*

The guiding questions for Chapter 4 are:

(1) What does the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) epistemology and ontology entail? (theoretical framing)

(2) How can the RSCL lens be operationalised through the practice approach? (methodological framing)

(3) What were the research methods and techniques that were employed to generate, analyse and interpret the data? (empirical framing)

(4) What are the ethical considerations that were taken into consideration when conducting this study? (ethical framing)
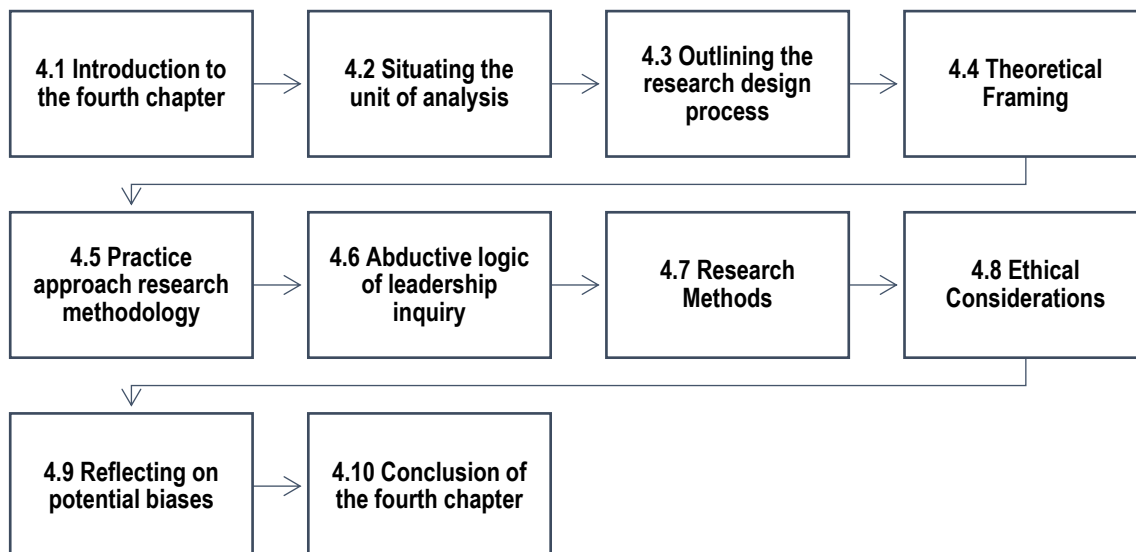
Figure 4.1:   Outline of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 starts by outlining the research design using a conceptual diagram (Figure 4.1). The RSCL theoretical framework is discussed in terms of its epistemology and ontology (i.e. onto-epistemology) as the philosophical foundation and lens for this research. The implications of the theoretical framework for leadership research are discussed. The practice approach is employed to operationalise the RSCL lens, underpinned by the qualitative research paradigm. The qualitative research methods that were employed to generate, analyse and interpret the empirical data are also presented. The chapter also discusses ethical considerations that are viewed as cutting across all the various elements of the research process.

4.2   SITUATING THE UNIT OF ANALYSIS

This research focused on the interorganisational partnerships as the unit of observation and the relational leadership practices as the unit of analysis. The RSCL is used a as lens for this study and provides the primary guiding framework and principles that will guide the inquiry based on the RSCL ontology and epistemology. The choice of 'practices' is informed by the practice approach as an "orienting concept" or the unit of analysis as per Feldman and Worline (2016:308), and Reitz (2017). A unit of analysis is understood to refer to the main focus of the specific research project and could be conceptualised in a dynamic manner as both a "bounded set of elements that make up entities or… set of relations" (Gronn, 2009:289). This conceptualisation resonates well with the RSCL theoretical framework employed in this study, which adopts a relational view of leadership as a socially constructed and dynamic phenomenon when contrasted with other traditional leadership perspectives that approach leadership from an entity or individualistic view that is leader-centric (Cunliffe, 2008:128; Endres & Weibler, 2017:214; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018:536).

An examination of relational leadership practices from the RSCL lens invokes a practice-oriented methodology as proposed by Nicolini and Monteiro (2017:15) and applied in relational leadership research by scholars such as Ospina and Foldy (2010:294) and Clifton, Larsson and Schnurr (2020:514). The field of organisational and management studies has seen an emergence and rapid increase the application of the practice approach, resulting in the birth of scholarly work on ethics-as-practice, strategy-as-practice, entrepreneurship-as-practice, marketing-as-practice and leadership-as-practice (Gherardi & Laasch, 2022:269). Vivier (2019:54) reviewed and adopted a similar approach in terms of using "public leadership practices" as a unit for analysis in her doctoral research, albeit in a very dynamic manner that acknowledged the application of social

constructionist approaches in the context of the public leadership theory. Further details on the ontology, epistemology and methodology of this research are expatiated later in this chapter.

The next section outlines the research design process which is illustrated by means of a conceptual diagram (Figure 4.2).

4.3   OUTLINING THE RESEARCH DESIGN PROCESS

Figure 4.2 summarises the various aspects of the research process, which are briefly outlined in this section and expounded later in this chapter. There are four main aspects used to frame this study, namely: framing of the research itself, theoretical framing, methodological framing, and empirical framing as well as ethical considerations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Framing

The gaps in literature

RESEARCH QUESTION: How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?

Guiding questions per chapter

Theoretical Framing

Literature Review

Theoretical Paradigm

Leadership Approaches

Inter-Organisational Partnerships

Relational Social Constructionist Ontology

Relational Social Constructionist Epistemology

Implications for the Relational Social Constructionist Leadership Lens

Methodological Framing

Methodology = Practice Approach

Qualitative Research Methods

Purposive Sampling

National Inter-Organisational Partnership

International Inter-organisational Partnership

Empirical Framing

Data Gathering: Intersubjective dialogic interviews and focus group conversations

Grounded Theory-inspired data coding processes in the Atlas.ti Software Package

Unit of Observation = Inter-Organisational Partnerships

Abductive Mode of Enquiry

Primary data analysis of the 'relational leadership practices'

Unit of Analysis = Relational Leadership Practices

Presentation and discussion of the research findings

Ethical Considerations

Figure 4.2: **Research design in terms of research framing, theoretical framing, methodological framing and empirical framing**

4.3.1 Research Framing

This section covers the foundation of the research in terms of the gaps in literature that informed the development of the main research question, as elaborated on in the introduction to this thesis (Chapter 1). There is dynamic relationship between the development of the research question and the literature review chapters that helped with the identification and refinement of the gaps in literature.

4.3.2 Theoretical Framing

The literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 covered the review of leadership research and responsible leadership theory on the one hand, and literature on interorganisational partnerships on the other hand. Chapter 4 discusses the RSCL theoretical framework and research methodology. Implications for leadership research are drawn.

4.3.3 Methodological Framing

The practice approach is discussed as a methodological avenue to operationalise the RSCL lens since the two are closely related and aligned by the "relationality construct", which is also a core tenet of the responsible leadership theory (Maak & Pless, 2006). The inter-subjectivity strand of the practice approach draws from the hermeneutic phenomenological tradition of qualitative research (Cunliffe, 2011:658, Raelin, 2020). The practice approach is also central to the emerging view of leadership-as-practice (L-A-P) approach (Raelin, 2020).

4.3.4 Empirical Framing

The core argument in this aspect is the application of an abductive mode of inquiry to elucidate the relational leadership practices (unit of analysis) in the context of interorganisational partnerships (unit of observation) in an iterative manner typical of the RSCL lens. Qualitative data coding and analysis draws from the techniques for qualitative data analysis as put forward by Charmaz (2006) and applied to relational leadership research by Endres and Weibler (2017:216).

4.3.5 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations are framed in such a manner that they cut across all aspects of the research process.

The next section discusses the theoretical paradigm in terms of the ontology and epistemology of this research.

4.4   THEORETICAL FRAMING

4.4.1   Background and context to the RSCL lens

The theoretical framing of a study is about how a researcher interrogates his or her "assumptions about the nature of society reality (ontology) and the nature and purpose of knowledge (epistemology) as a precursor to the choice of the relevant research methodology" (Cunliffe, 2011:649). As such, the RSCL lens, as the theoretical framework for this research, engages with the philosophical questions of the epistemology and ontology of research which "underpin any research design and methods" (Vivier, 2019:124). According to Anfara Jr. and Mertz (2006:xxi), "the researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he or she then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis)." While informed by debates in broader social sciences and humanities, the theoretical framing of this study is done principally within the domain of leadership research, in the context of organisational and management theory (OMT) (Cunliffe, 2011:647). As such, this research adopts a RSCL ontology and epistemology (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Cunliffe, 2008; Cunliffe, 2011; Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Endres & Weibler, 2020). It employs the qualitative paradigm strand of the practice approach as its methodology to operationalise the RSCL lens (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Ospina & Foldy, 2010:308; Feldman & Worline, 2016:308; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018).

4.4.2   Ontology

4.4.2.1 From objectivism to subjectivism and inter-subjectivism worldviews

Over the years it has become important in organisational and management studies, as discussed extensively in Cunliffe (2011:650), especially when conducting qualitative research, for researchers to locate their work within two contrasting philosophical schools of thought. Such schools of thought are objectivism versus subjectivism. On the one hand, in terms of the nature of reality (ontology) objectivism assumes a single objective and knowable reality that exists out there and which could be discovered through scientific methods. As such, positivism is largely aligned to quantitative methods that employ hypothesis testing and statistical analysis of theoretical constructs to explain truth. On the other hand, subjectivism assumes multiple realities that could be understood through embedded qualitative inquiry or interpretation (interpretivism) (Cunliffe, 2011:650). The contrast between objectivism and subjectivism is characterised as "oppositional dualisms" that exist in the philosophy of science, namely: "justification versus discovery, facts versus value, rational versus social" (Fagan, 2010:92). Bourdieu (1990:25)

observed that: "Of all the oppositions that artificially divide social science, the most fundamental, and the most ruinous, is the one that is set up between subjectivism and objectivism". According to Petit and Huault (2008:88), "social constructionism postulates that the world people create, via a process of social exchange, constitutes a reality sui generis." Similarly, Endres and Weibler (2017:218) state that, "whereas constructivists prioritise individual agency and individual dimensions (e.g. perceptions and cognitions) of meaning-making, constructionists prioritise relationality and the interactional dimensions."

In addition, Cunliffe (2011:647) identified a third philosophical school of thought known as inter-subjectivity, which in ontological terms argues that individuals are at all times embedded in a complex flow of intricately entangled "relationality responsive" actions wherein the blockages between them and others are impalpable. Therefore, social constructionism is viewed as an evolving worldview within subjectivism and intersubjectivism (Cunliffe, 2011:648). In agreement, Endres and Weibler (2017) state that social constructionists recognise that reality exists outside of the individual's mind. However, social reality derives its meaning from interpretation "in relation to other subjects; hence, social reality is seen as a result of the interaction between the subjectivity of an individual and an external world with other subjectivities (intersubjective reality approach)" (Endres & Weibler, 2017:219).

4.4.2.2 Social constructionist ontology

Social constructionism will be the central ontology for this research, particularly when locating it within the 'practice turn[1]' and 'relational turn[2]' in OMT (Geiger, 2009; Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011:1430; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018:535; Endres & Weibler, 2020:275). In terms of its implications for relational leadership, social constructionist views on relational leadership prioritise processes by which the meaning of leadership is constructed inter-subjectively in practice compared to the entity relational leadership views that privilege objective truth (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018). Correspondingly, according to Cunliffe and Ericksen

---

[1] The 'practice turn' is associated with influencers like Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Schutz, Bourdieu and Giddens. Some of the applications of practice theory draw from the work of Foucault, Latour, Garfinkel and Vygotsky (Feldman & Worline, 2016:308).

[2] The 'relational turn' in social sciences is a worldview that sees reality in a 'processual' manner rather than the idea that the human universe is made up of 'substances'; those who interact ('interactants') relate in an interdependent way; and the phenomena being studied is characterised by 'co-production' (Dépelteau, 2018:27).

(2011:1445), "relational leadership is a way of being in the world that embraces an inter-subjective and relationally responsive way of thinking and acting." The relational social constructionist ontology and epistemology (onto-epistemology) are adopted for this study.

Cunliffe (2008:124) argues that social constructionism is "based on the idea that social reality is not separate from us" but instead social reality is mingled with human beings, as the one influences and shapes the other through processes of continuous social interaction. Therefore, in ontological terms, social constructionism states that people exist in a mutually interdependent relationship with others and their world and there is a corresponding mutual influence among them in the course of daily "interactions and conversations" (Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011:1432). As such, fundamentally every form of reality, including ontological views of self and other individuals and material things, are "viewed as interdependent or co-dependent constructions existing and known only in relation" (Uhl-Bien (2006:665). This argument by Uhl-Bien (2006) emphasises the basic nature of relationality in social constructionism, which is the construct that underlines all analysis in this research from the RSCL lens.

There are many sub-schools of thought within social constructionism as argued by Fagan (2010:93) who observed that "the term social construction is notoriously ambiguous and encompassing diverse theses" such as social construction of truth, beliefs of scholars and scholarly standards. In agreement, Cunliffe (2011) argues that in the context of OMT there are two forms of social constructionism, namely: a subjective cognitive approach on the one hand and critical theorist and post-structuralist theorist approaches on the other. She then proposes a third approach known as "relationally responsive orientation to social constructionism" (Cunliffe, 2008:128) – which forms the ontological basis for this study. Correspondingly, according to Endres and Weibler (2017:218), social constructionism assumes the existence of reality externally to the individual, and social reality is mutually constructed by individuals in an interwoven and relational manner via interactions.

4.4.2.3 Relational social constructionist ontology

According to Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018:535), relational perspectives were influenced by the "relational turn in social sciences" and relationality is defined as the notion that individuals and groups or organisations form "fields of relationships". This resonates with the definition of relationality by Ospina and Foldy (2010:293) who characterise it as "the theoretical understanding that self and other are inseparable and co-evolve in ways that can be accounted for." Similarly,

Uhl-Bien (2006:655) argues that the "relational perspective views knowledge as socially constructed and socially distributed, not as 'mind-stuff' constructed or accumulated and stored by individuals: That which is understood as real is differently constructed in different relational and historical/cultural settings..." (Uhl-Bien, 2006). When putting forward the relationally responsive orientation to social constructionism, Cunliffe (2011:129) argues that this approach is about focusing on micro-level processes in terms of how people in certain contexts create meanings "inter-subjectively through their embodied dialogical activities". The key tenets of this approach are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.2: Choices within social constructionist-based research

Nature of social reality	
Subjective reality: individuals negotiate meanings within social situations…	Inter-subjective realities: people create meaning and realities within others in spontaneous, responsive ways…
Objectification of social reality, focus on social facts, institutional practices, and symbolic products…	Emerging social realities, focus on processes of meaning-making, no one person in control…
Process of socially constructing reality	
Reality construction and sense-making as a cognitive process. Focus on language and reasoning processes…	Reality construction and sense-making as a relational process. Focus on responsive dialogue and conversations between people…
Social reality as a discursive product, which influences its members…	Social realities as relational and experienced in interaction and dialogue between people…
Social construction as a power infused process	Social construction as a benign process…
Epistemological interests	
Social construction at macro-levels: e.g. cultural, institutional, ideological… The process of construction: how discourse and language operate to create meaning in practical contexts…	Social construction at micro-levels: between people in everyday conversations. An intervening of past, present, and future conversations in the moment of dialogue…
Theoretical generalisations about organisations, identities, organisational processes, and linguistic practices and systems. Search for patterns. Research and learning as a reflective process.	Context-related interpretive insights. Meaning created in ongoing moments. Research and learning as a radically reflexive process…

Source: Adapted from Cunliffe (2011:127).

This study is located within the inter-subjective domain, in which, in terms of the above table, multiple realities are created among people in "spontaneous, responsive ways" where reality is in the process of emergence and all people who are involved are responsible for continuous meaning-making (Cunliffe, 2011:127).

4.4.2.4 Implications of the relational social constructionist ontology for RSCL lens

In terms of RSCL, Uhl-Bien (2006:664) states that: "a relational perspective views leadership as social reality, emergent and inseparable from context…an iterative and messy social process that is shaped by interactions with others…" Furthermore, according to Cunliffe and Erickson (2011:1431): "a relational ontology causes us to radically rethink our notions of reality and who I am in the world", as it locates the origin of our experience in the inter-subjective domain instead of mental and individual domains. In terms of this conceptualisation, organisations are viewed as "communities of people and conversations" and in this orientation, "a relational leader sees people not as objects to be manipulated but as human beings-in-relation with themselves" (Cunliffe & Erickson, 2011:1431). In the context of interorganisational partnerships, and in line with Endres and Weibler (2020:275), the relational leadership lens is viewed as providing opportunities to experience these micro-level processes of leading without judgment and engage in a mutual dialogue and reflexivity with actors in the emerging socially constructed meaning-making process. Reflexivity is defined as "methodological self-consciousness, namely, a researcher's consciousness of her or his own assumptions and prejudices" (citing Lynch, 2000, p. 29) (Hibbert, *et al.* 2014:283). The next section discusses the epistemology aspect of the theoretical framework.

4.4.3   Epistemology

4.4.3.1 Relational social constructionist epistemology

Whilst the focus of the above section on ontology sought to address questions about the nature of reality and who we are in the world from the relational social constructionist paradigm, this section focuses on epistemological questions of who can be a knower, what can be known and how knowledge is created (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:35). Wolfram Cox and Hassard (2018:540) argue that, in terms of relational social constructionism, "leadership is known only through social relations". This aligns well with the concept of "relationality" that was discussed above in terms of the ontology as "fields of relationships" (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018:535) which connotes "inseparability and co-evolution of self with others" (Ospina & Foldy, 2010:293). In this regard, the relational material, in the form of social relations, serves as the epistemology of leadership.

Furthermore, according to Table 4.1, relationally responsive social constructionism pays attention to micro-level processes in terms of how people construct social realities in their day-to-day conversations through dialogue. Meaning is created in a progressive manner not in static

snapshots of theoretical generalisations and the identification of grand patterns (Cunliffe, 2011:127). The RSCL lens pays attention to specific meaning-making processes through which the understanding of leadership is understood instead of focusing on individual traits, behaviours and cognitions (Uhl-Bien, 2006:655). The process of social construction therefore makes the RSCL epistemology different from structuralism and objectivism, as viewed through the entity approach to relational leadership, as noted by Uhl-Bien (2006).

Due to the processual nature of this RSCL onto-epistemology, knowing happens in context and simultaneously occurs among people in their day-to-day mundane activities where inter-subjective interpretations happen from within and are implicated in their historical, present and future processes of social construction (Cunliffe, 2011). The disappearance of the duality between ontology and epistemology in the inter-subjective domain of relational social constructionism is elaborated on by its key tenets identified by Dachler and Hosking (1995). The RSCL onto-epistemology has the following key principles: first, knowledge claims are about the process of interpretation; second, there is unity between the dualities of text and context; third, text and context are interwoven and intertwined; fourth, the social construction of meaning emerges out of multiple dialogue among talking individuals; fifth, the process of meaning-making is endless; and sixth, meaning is interpreted in context and is not generalised (Dachler & Hosking, 1995:10). In other words, the epistemological concern is about social relations where leadership is known from within as a micro-level process through which meaning-making is socially constructed through narration, dialogue and reflection in an inter-subjective way, taking into consideration the impact of the intertwined context in a relational manner (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Cunliffe, 2011; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018).

4.4.3.2 Implications of relational social constructionist epistemology RSCL lens

In epistemological terms, relational leadership is about locating leadership within the "realm of everyday experience" and the fundamental question that is posed is: "how do leaders construct organisational realities and identities in social-psychological processes occurring in relation to other people?" (Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011:1429). RSCL assumes that knowledge comes about through the interpretation of socially constructed reality which is "culturally, historically and linguistically influenced" and the focus of research is on "inter-subjective social reality, and how it is created" (Endres & Weibler, 2017:218). These scholars further argue that RSCL studies "approach the notion of relating (in terms of content basis of relational leadership in general) from an interpretivist stance, in contrast to either an objectivist or constructivist stance" (Endres &

Weibler, 2017:220). According to Bradbury and Lichtenstein (2000:551), relationality "…orientation takes as primary the nexus of relations in organisations, rather than focusing on discrete, abstracted phenomena. In this sense a relationality orientation explores the 'space between' people and phenomena in organisational life." Correspondingly, Carroll and Simpson (2012:1286) argue that, "as long as leadership continues to be perceived as the mere aggregation of individual leaders and their acts, the omission of relationality and its implications from any serious consideration will limit theory-building and practice". The next paragraphs elaborates on how relationality is taken care of through the RSCL lens.

The RSCL lens pays attention to "constructs, processes and practices" (Reitz, 2017:517). In terms of constructs, the focus is on the "constructs of leader, follower and leadership" – whereby the main question asked is: "What does leadership mean and how do we regard leaders?" With regards to processes, the main question asked is: "How do we come to these understandings of leadership and how they are maintained or altered?" In relation to practices as the third focus area, the core question asked is: "What should leaders do if they understand their relationality? (Reitz, 2017:517). Furthermore, practices supplement the emergent and plural understanding of the relations between leaders and followers, such as "practices dealing with unexpected problems…, practices which attend to the invisible, visceral sense of relation…and improvisational practices" (Reitz, 2017:517).

The inter-subjectivity stance adopted by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011:1438) moves beyond the notion of constructs, processes and practices to introduce the relational leadership perspective that gives priority to "the judgement, character and personal values of leaders." From this epistemological standpoint, these scholars note four relational leadership themes, namely: "(1) leadership is a way of being in the world; (2) encompasses working out, dialogically what is meaningful with others; (3) means recognising that working through differences is inherently a moral responsibility; (4) and involves practical wisdom" (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011:1438). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011), practical wisdom is based on the Aristotelian concept of phronesis as one of the three forms of knowledge. "If episteme is know-why and techne is know-how, phronesis is know-what-should-be-done." As such, practical wisdom could be characterised as "experiential knowledge that enables people to make ethical judgements." It is also similar to the Japanese concept of *toku* and Indian concept of *yukta* (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2011). According to Steyn & Sewchurran (2021:679), "managerial phronesis can be understood as a moral thinking and doing competence", and therefore a practical relational orientation.

Moreover, Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011:1439) invoked the concept of "relational integrity" which recognises that responsibility is foundational to day-to-day relations and is not about reflecting the concept of responsibility in corporate guidelines, structures and procedures. The essence of it all is that – as per Cunliffe's (2011:264) summary – RSCL "draws on relational ontology to explore the relational, embodied, and inter-subjective nature of human experience." The notion of relational integrity is similar to the essence of *Ubuntu* perspective, as a moral theory based on humaneness and harmony (Tutu, 1999; Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019). Furthermore, relational integrity and moral responsibility align with the gist of the responsible leadership theory discussed in Chapter 2 in the literature review, whose core tenets are employed to evaluate the relationality (multiple stakeholder consideration) and purpose (moral values and ethics orientation) of the relational leadership practices.

4.4.4   Core tenets of RSCL theoretical perspective

When rejecting the notion that relational leadership is a trend or leadership style; Ospina and Foldy (2010:294) argue that relational leadership is a lens that could be used as "a way to characterise the phenomenon in all its forms, whether hierarchical, shared or networked", particularly in collaborative or interorganisational partnerships or multiple stakeholder engagement contexts. Furthermore, Cunliffe (2008:131) asserts that relational responsive social constructionism goes beyond mere language and speech to recognise the role of people as "speaking embodied beings", wherein individuals understand each other in everyday interactions through intellectual interpretations, "sense impressions, gestures, emotional expressions and responses", such as in the case of crying or smiling. She also identifies the "dialectics of inter-subjectivity" ('we are who we are because of others') and the "dialectics of existence" which imply that through our interactions we constitute our reality which is already constituted. Therefore, "meaning emerges through the dialectical inter-relationships of speakers/listeners, body/language, speech/silence, etc" (Cunliffe (2008:131).

According to Endres and Weibler (2020:279-280), the core assumptions of approaching leadership research from the RSCL lens include the following: (1) leadership is socially constructed through "processes of inter-subjectively creating social realities through ongoing interpretation and interaction…"; (2) the focus of inquiry is to empirically understand "day-to-day experiences and practices of people and how they are co-constructing leadership processes"; (3) the object of the study is the emergence of relational leadership practices where "leadership as such is a process constructed interaction between individuals via ongoing interpretations" formally

and informally; (4) and the influence component of leadership is viewed in the context of "emerging flows of influence at the interpersonal interaction level or the collective level that represent the leadership manifestation." These principles are used to discuss the social construction of the relational leadership practices through the Three Component RSCL Model adopted from Endress and Weibler (2017:222). The core tenets of RSCL lens are applied and operationalised through the practice approach methodology that is discussed below.

4.5   PRACTICE APPROACH RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.5.1   Context of the practice approach

According to Carroll and Simpson (2012:1284), "organizational scholarship is increasingly turning to questions of practice as a way of engaging with the complexity and messiness that characterise organisational life and experience". The practice approach is quite pervasive in social sciences with its influencers identified as Bourdieu, Giddens, Foucault, Garfinkel, Latour, Taylor and Schatzki (Reckwitz, 2002; Heidenstrøm, 2022). In simple terms, the practice approach is a way of conducting research that emphasises the importance of "practice and the human action involved in practice" (Feldman & Worline, 2016:307). With regards to its implications, Whittington (2018:343) remarks that the practice approach's "big message for business is to wake up to the powerful substructures that underlie the extraordinary individuals, visions, and imaginations that tend to get the headlines." In terms of its definition, "a practice is thus a routinised way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood" (Reckwitz, 2002:249). The elements of this definition serve as the analytical parameters (theoretical codes) for the relational leadership practices as the unit of analysis in this research, as it will be expatiated later under the discussion of the data analysis and interpretation process.

Leadership research needs to shift away from emphasising normative leadership approaches to investigate relational leadership practices since that would assist with a better understanding of the collective and relational nature of the leadership construct in order to bring about "a more balanced view of this phenomenon" (Chreim, 2015:518). Fairhurst, Jackson, Foldy and Ospina (2020:598) identified the following three major challenges that leadership scholars should address and also proposed solutions to such challenges. The first challenge is about ambiguity of the space in which collective leadership as a form of relational leadership resides, which could be addressed through the understanding of "leadership configurations and its power-based

114

foundations". The second challenge emanates from the definitions of leadership due to ambiguity, which could be addressed through establishing "how leadership is made relevant in collective settings". The third challenge is the need to embrace process issues when studying leadership via the adoption of process models (Fairhurst *et al.,* 2020:598).

The last two solutions are the preoccupation of this research by means of using interorganisational partnership settings as the unit of observation and employing the process ontology offered by the RSCL lens to examine relational leadership practices as the unit of analysis for this research. Gray and Stites (2013:41) state that in interorganisational partnerships there are "process dynamics" and "drivers". Compared to the drivers that are "largely outside the control of the partners", process dynamics are within the purview of the partners since they are about the "nature of the interactions among the partners" in their quest to achieve common goals. As such, "paying attention to the process and adjusting it as the partnership moves forward" are the two crucial factors that contribute to the success of interorganisational partnerships (Gray & Stites, 2013:41). The process ontology of the RSCL lens is useful for understanding "how leadership processes are created through ongoing interpretation and interaction among individuals" in group settings (Endres & Weibler, 2017:227). The practice approach shares similarities with the RSCL lens in terms of its "processual ontology where the social world is constantly evolving" (Heidenstrøm, 2022:237). However, the practice approach is more useful and effective when employed as a methodology since it is about "methodological situationalism or a processual understanding" (Janssens & Steyaert, 2019:523; Heidenstrøm, 2022:240). From the practice approach methodology, leadership emerges out of a process of interdependence among individual leaders who are engaged in a relationship (Sklaventi, 2020:547).

Additionally, Chreim (2015:521) compares and contrasts the practice approach to the competency approach to leadership research. On the one hand, the competency perspective is individualistic and tends to isolate leaders as individuals out of context and predominately uses quantitative positivist methods. On the other hand, the practice approach "focuses on constructionism and views leadership as relational, collective, situated and socially defined" (Chreim, 2015:521). As such, the practice approach is a better way of operationalising "social construction of leadership since… it provides a way to breakdown the joint work they [leaders] engage in to accomplish their mission" (Ospina & Foldy, 2010:303). Social constructionism and the practice approach raise the following questions for leadership in interorganisational partnership contexts: how does leadership make things happen in partnerships; what are the mechanisms that facilitate

collaboration; how does leadership emerge and what are the paradoxes and challenges that "constitute the way leadership is constructed" (Vivier, 2019:58-59).

The next section articulates the key principles of the practice approach and how they were applied in this research.

4.5.2   Key Principles of the practice approach

Practice scholars agree that practice serves as the fundamental analytical unit for social research (Reckwitz, 2002; Ospina & Foldy, 2010:295; Feldman & Worline, 2016:308). Hence, relational leadership practices serve as the unit of analysis for this research. According to Feldman and Worline (2016:308-310), the practice approach has the following key principles: (1) relationality, which, as discussed before, means "phenomena have meaning in relation to one another rather than in isolation"; (2) dualities: research that is based on the practice approach does not view the world in terms of dichotomies or dualisms, but "as mutually constituted dualities" understood through observation of recurring practices and reflexivity; (3) practice approach investigates the emergence and recurrence of practices "through time as doings and sayings", which are connected to other practices in context (Feldman & Worline, 2016:308). The principles were used to reconceptualise some of the theoretical models that were used to discuss the findings of this research in Chapter 6.

Nicolini and Monteiro (2017:15) assert that "practice-based studies do not investigate practices as abstract entities but rather it 'praxeologises' phenomena, turning the study of decision-making into the study of decision-making practices…". For instance, Schmidt (2022:653) provides an analysis of decision-making practices using a "praxeological perspective", which served as a "culture-analytical alternative in, and to, decision science". Similarly, Raelin (2020) praxeologised leadership research in what he framed as: "praxis-oriented research as a methodological basis for leadership-as-practice" (L-A-P). Raelin (2020) articulates a set of building blocks and a conceptual toolkit from which a researcher could draw such as "issues of agency, identity, materiality, context, power and dialogue". The methodological toolkit is based on phenomenology and dialogic reflexivity, and includes various forms of interpretive inquiry such as "discursive, narrative, ethnographic and/or aesthetic approaches using thick descriptions and diverse modes that attempt to capture the dialogical and practice activity concurrently in process in all its complexity and ambiguity" (Raelin, 2020). In other words, whilst L-A-P distinguishes itself from

traditional qualitative approaches, it is underlined by inter-subjective social constructionist epistemology and interpretive research methods that are at the heart of the RSCL lens.

According to Schmidt (2022:659), the consequences employing the practice approach are that, "the first disengagement leads from methodological individualism to methodological situationalism and from the individual actor to the social situation and its participants." Correspondingly, Heidenstrøm (2022:238) argues that, as a methodology the practice approach makes a shift from methodological 'individualism' (the social world consists of individual actions) and 'holism' (the social world consists of structures that produce actions) to 'situationalism'. Situationalism means that the practice approach "shift analyses away from the individual level and on to the practice as consisting of interconnected elements and routinised performances, and does so without relating them to the individual again by studying individual experiences" (Heidenstrøm, 2022:242). In the context of a decision-making as practice study, Schmidt (2022:664) talk about "praxeography" as a "method [that] seeks to create a distance from participants' 'inner' motives, convictions, and deliberations (while still taking their referencing of such mental aspects seriously) and instead privileges types of data that account for everything that is manifest, public, and observable in what participants do."

Janssens and Steyaert (2019:523) argue that "as a package of theory, method and vocabulary…", the practice approach is relevant to study "how practice-based studies can be conducted" and they articulate various strategies that are normally used for practice approach, based on the work of Nicolini and Monteiro (2017), such as the situational, genealogical, configurational and dialectical strategies. Similarly, Gherardi and Laasch (2022) propose the "responsible-management-as-practice" approach, which is defined "as emergent from the interplay of ongoing ethical, responsible, and sustainable practices", which resonates with the leadership practices that are being investigated by this research. According to Küpers (2020:1455), "practices are not only a collection of purposeful activities of self-contained individual actors and material things. Rather, as embodied and relational forms of doing, they are also pre-personal, personal and trans-individual. As such they are (inter-)personal and systemic events of a dynamic, emergent be(com)ing thus themselves a form of transformation." In sum, the inter-subjectivism principles of relationality, mutual constitution and connectedness serve as conceptual anchors that link the practice approach to the RSCL onto-epistemology.

4.5.3   Implications of the practice approach for RSCL lens

This aspect of the research draws inspiration from Ospina and Foldy (2010:295) whose research employed the practice approach in the context of RSCL onto-epistemology to identify and explore "leadership practices that set the stage for explicit collaborative work". The practices that these scholars found through their empirical analysis include: "prompting cognitive shifts; naming and shaping identity; engaging in dialogue about difference; creating equitable governance mechanisms; and weaving multiple worlds together through interpersonal relationships" (Ospina & Foldy, 2010:295). The latter practice of co-creation via common action resonates with Connelly's (2007:1248) list of key (relational) leadership practices/principles in interorganisational contexts, namely: (1) establishment of a common interorganisational culture; (b) development of common goals; (c) promotion of openness in communication, (d) encouragement of trust and commitment among stakeholders; (5) flexibility of processes and envisaged results; and (6) adherence to the view that partnerships beget or build partnerships/alliances (Connelly, 2007:1248). The practices and principles identified from the literature informed the development of the focus group and interview schedule and data analysis techniques that were employed in this research.

4.5.4   Defining the leadership construct in order to operationalise relational leadership practices

It is deemed important to clarify key definitions of the leadership construct since it is the starting point for this study and is presented as the first part of the findings in Chapter 5, as well as the discussion of the findings in Chapter 6. Armistead *et al.*, (2007:16) notes leadership challenges in interorganisational partnerships and lack of "consensus on the essential nature of leadership in partnership" and then proposed first-, second- and third-person approaches for interpreting leadership in partnerships. Jackson (2019:214) put forward a framework that provides six lenses and questions of defining leadership in terms of position (who creates leadership through formal authority?); person (who creates leadership through informal authority?); performance (what is achieved by leadership?); process (how is leadership created?); purpose (why is leadership created?); and place (where is leadership created?). He further argues that these six definitions are not mutually exclusive since the "interlinkages" between them "are inherently dialogic" in nature (Jackson, 2019:214).

Furthermore, according to Clifton *et al.* (2020:514), scholars who study leadership as a relational process within social interactions tend to choose among four "concepts of leadership" or

definitions. Firstly, "equating leadership with position and focusing on what the formal leader does." The notion of leadership styles and how they operate in practice has been one approach to study positional leadership, which has also helped problematise the notion of leadership styles. Secondly, "seeing leadership as essentially a question of interpersonal influence, and identifying influence in interactional sequences." Thirdly, "focusing on consequences of such influence in the context of how leadership organises action." Here influence processes are examined and surfaced. Fourthly, "focusing on the construction of leader and follower identities" (Clifton *et al.,* 2020:514).

According to Whittington (2018:343), the practice approach "offers a broad understanding of how life tends to work, with pointers about how to get things done." Similarly, Vangen and Huxham (2003:62) argue that collaborative theory "conceptualises leadership as the mechanisms that make things happen" in interorganisational partnerships. In agreement, Müller-Seitz (2012:429) define leadership practices in interorganisational partnerships as "the exertion of influence in order to make things happen…despite lack of formal authority". In terms of seeking to understand leadership as influence in partnership contexts, it is deemed necessary to draw from the various conceptualisations of the shared leadership approach (Zhu, Liao & Johnson, 2018:837) as a form of relational leadership. The first source of influence is "lateral influence among peers" where the focus is on the "interaction of team members during team-leading processes". The second one views influence as emerging from the group as a collective rather than the individual leader or team members or "pooled leadership influence of all team members". The third conceptualisation views "leadership roles and influence… [as] dispersed across team members" (Zhu *et al.,* 2018:837).

When analysing relational leadership practices and how they are affected by context, it was deemed necessary to explore the emerging conceptualisation of relational leadership from the "socio-material perspective" (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018; Eva *et al.*, 2019). Janssens and Steyaert (2020:530) define socio-materiality as "the inseparability of meaning and matter, the social and the technological." Gherardi and Laasch (2013:272) argue that: "A post-humanist practice theory, in denying the centrality of humans, defines practice as an agencement of elements (humans, nonhumans, more-than-humans, discourses, bodies, rules, knowledges) that achieve agency in their being intra-acting." Similarly, according to Eva *et al.* (2019:4), from a socio-material perspective, "leadership is seen as a configuration of social, material and discursive relations (e.g. connections, practices and routines) in everyday management work…"

119

Methods used to understand relational leadership practice include process analysis to reflect on leadership work and group reflections and debriefing to reflect on the experience of leadership and its implications (Eva *et al.,* 2019:4-5).

Whilst the relational leadership lens adopted for this study aligns closely with the notion of "leadership as essentially a question of interpersonal influence" (Clifton *et al.,* 2020:514), the inter-subjectivism inherent in the relational social constructionist onto-epistemology encourages an open mind to research in order to capture leadership emergence (Cunliffe, 2008:131). This is in line with Ospina and Foldy's (2010:294) assertion that relational leadership as a lens could be used as "a way to characterise the phenomenon in all its forms, whether hierarchical, shared or networked". Connelly (2007:1245) adopts a similar position when he asserts that "our more historical person- and qualities-based leadership models are not to be discarded as wrong but rather understood in a broader context of possible descriptions of leadership". Therefore, in this study there was no prescribed definition of the leadership construct *a priori*, but the relational leadership lens as an umbrella construct was employed to explore the construct in all its manifestations. In this way, the deep-seated assumptions about the meaning of leadership in the minds/conceptualisations and practices of the research participants were analysed. These were juxtaposed with theoretical constructs in an abductive mode of inquiry. On the basis of the findings and discussions, recommendations were made about the leadership construct.

Ntakumba and De Jongh (2023:8-9) observe that the implications of using the practice approach to study leadership include the alteration of the language to demonstrate 'action-in-practice', such as the use of the word 'leading' instead of 'leadership'. This alteration of the 'leadership' construct to 'leading' is a "linguistic operation [that] signals a change of perspective from self-standing entities to entities in their becomings" (Gherardi & Laasch, 2022:277), which epitomises the relational and processual onto-epistemology of the practice approach and RSCL lens.

In essence, at the philosophical level of research design, Chapter 4 specified the concept of relationality as core to inter-subjectivism social constructionist onto-epistemology, hence it underpins the RSCL lens. The same concept of relationality is at the heart of the practice approach which serves as the methodology for this study. It is also fundamental to the responsible leadership theory in terms of incorporation of both internal and external stakeholders, as well as values and ethics orientation (Maak & Pless, 2006). Relationality is employed as an instrument to

challenge conventional thinking by way of making proposals for the reconceptualising of some of the models applied to discuss the findings of this research in Chapter 6.

4.6   ABDUCTIVE MODE OF LEADERSHIP INQUIRY

According to Hesse-Bibber and Leavy (2006:17) researchers normally adopt two different kinds of logics, namely: inductive logic and deductive logic. Deductive logic is usually applied in positivist quantitative studies where theory is put upfront for purposes of verification or testing of a hypothesis using statistical methods (theory-testing). The debate about induction versus deduction is well-articulated in Popper (1957). Inductive logic is normally employed in interpretive qualitative research where the aim is to develop theories based on the analysed data (theory development) (Hesse-Bibber & Leavy, 2006; Vivier, 2019). Some scholars are critical of the dominant dual logic. For instance, Hibbert *et al.* (2014:286) share an experience of having worked with Asian scholars and "realised that even fundamental ways of reasoning and theorising differ. Foundations of traditional Western logic and reasoning are Greek dual logic (yes or no, either/or). In contrast, Asian theorising is not necessarily based on (or confined to) this dual logic and also might not regard inconsistency as a problem". Hence alternative modes of leadership inspired by relational social constructionism and accommodation of contextual worldviews, such as the African moral and ethical perspective of *Ubuntu* (Tutu, 1999), are important considerations in leadership research. For instance, Cunliffe (2011:664) states that the third logic, known as abductive logic, refers to a process whereby relational social constructionist researchers "move between theory (neutralising, reframing, dialectics) and practice (participants accounts), each informing the other". In agreement, Raelin (2020:485) argues that the in leadership-as-practice approach researchers do adopt the inductive logic to develop "new theories of experience", but they mostly rely on abductive logic "to be inquisitive about occurrences that are new or anomalous." Therefore, the abductive form of inquiry combines both the deductive and inductive approaches in an iterative manner as applied by Sklaventi (2020:552) in his analysis of leadership practices, which was carried out "abductively from the empirical material to the empirically grounded constructs". Reichertz (2014:127) argues that "abduction is therefore a cerebral process, an intellectual act, a mental leap, that brings together things which one had never associated with one another: a cognitive logic of discovery." This research employs the abductive logic of inquiry.

This research employed the RSCL lens and the practice approach in terms of data gathering and analysis processes. In applying the RSCL lens, the research was sensitive to what was seen as emerging out of the datasets that were analysed in terms of paying attention to the emerging insights that could contribute to further development and refinement of the leadership theory.

The next section on research methods elaborates on the various data generation and analysis techniques that were used to conduct this research.

4.7   RESEARCH METHODS

4.7.1   Interview and focus group schedule

This research employed inter-subjective dialogue interviewing to generate data as proposed by Cunliffe (2011:658). According to Lee (1999:81) "a major characteristic of the conversational [or dialogue] interview is its openness". The research employed a single research schedule for application during dialogic interviews and focus groups. The research schedule (Annexure 2) was developed based on relational social constructionist leadership literature and other insights from leadership literature that was reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this study. A matrix (Annexure 1) was developed which juxtaposes the interview questions with key literature. Then the interview questions were developed in alignment to a specific construct identified in extant literature. The researcher then made comments about the rationale behind the formulation of each specific question. Since this is a qualitative design based on the practice approach methodology, questions are open-ended and follow up questions were designed to assist with gaining deep insights into the views and lived experiences of the research participants. The final research schedule was produced as an extract from this analytical framework or matrix in line with the abductive mode of inquiry adopted for this research.

The main justification for using the interviews and focus groups instead of the commonly used ethnography in practice approach studies is that the researcher could not be in the field for extended periods of time. The first sample involves research participants that are based in various countries across the African continent. The second sample involves a steering committee which had a limited time span.   The advantage of the focus groups and interviews in practice research, according to Loscher, Splitter & Seidl (2019:14), is that they "allow researchers to examine the intentions, as related to the teleoaffective structure involved in enacting particular practices" … and "in a sense interviews allow scholars to analyse the 'normativity' of a practice…". Unveiling

normativity from the perspective of the research participants is useful for a responsible leadership study in relation to understanding the normative ethics and morality aspect of the theory. However, Loscher *et al.* (2019:15), "although sayings accompanying an activity of a practice can be considered accurately descriptive of practices, the decontextualized sayings within an interview – abstracted from the concrete experience of individual practices – tend to reflect particular 'discourses'…". In RSCL epistemology terms, understanding discourses is important since it is about "social construction at micro-levels: between people in everyday conversations [and] …an intervening of past, present, and future conversations in the moment of dialogue…" Cunliffe (2011:127). Indeed, the interviews and focus groups achieved their purposes are demonstrated by the richness of insights from the data generated and presented in Chapter 5.

The next section discusses the research samples.

4.7.2   Sampling

The study employed a purposive sampling approach based on two populations, namely, a national/country-level interorganisational partnership and an international/continental-level interorganisational partnership. "The logic of qualitative research is concerned with in-depth understanding, usually working with small samples. The goal is to look at the 'process' or the 'meanings' individuals attribute to their social situation and not necessarily to make generalisations, which is why small samples are often appropriate" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:79). The two samples are described in the next paragraphs.

4.7.2.1 Sample 1: International interorganisational partnership

This international interorganisational partnership comprised of six countries, two international evaluation capacity development bodies and a university. It is named "*Twende Mbele* (TM) African Partnership for Monitoring and Evaluation" (*Twende Mbele*, 2020). TM involves governmental bodies based in six African countries, namely, South Africa, Ghana, Uganda, Benin, Niger and Kenya. Each of these countries are represented by one member and an alternate who are senior managers responsible for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) in a central department or ministry that is located in the Office of the President or Prime Minister. TM was formerly established in 2016 and launched by the Prime Minister of Uganda at a biennial conference of the African Evaluation Association (AfREA). The establishment of TM was built on the informal collaboration between South Africa, Benin and Uganda since 2012 which focused on peer learning and sharing

around strengthening National Evaluation Systems (NES) as part of the broader country M&E systems.

In addition to the government representatives, the TM Management Committee (ManComm) involves the participation of two regional evaluation capacity development partners, namely, the Centre for Learning on Evaluation and Results in Anglophone Africa (CLEAR-AA) which is based at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits), and the Independent Evaluation Unit (IDEV) of the African Development Bank (AfDB). IDEV, Clear-AA and Wits University are all represented in the TM ManComm. Throughout the duration of the fieldwork in the course of 2020/21 the TM ManComm had a total of nine members. This interorganisational partnership served as the main source of data for this research, as explained in the section on data generation.

4.7.2.2 Sample 2: National interorganisational partnership

This strategic initiative is about the 'development and implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy for South Africa'. On 18 November 2020, the Cabinet of South Africa approved the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) which was developed over a period of four years from 2016 (South Africa, 2020). The process itself involved the participation of many individuals representing a range of organisations and stakeholders from various sectors of the society of South Africa. A number of structures were established to facilitate the consultative and drafting processes of the strategy. Such structures include the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Anti-Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Task Team, the NACS Steering Committee and the NACS Reference Group. Approval processes included engagement with the cluster of government departments and ministries, extended Cabinet (Cabinet Lekgotla) and the National Executive itself (Cabinet).

During the fieldwork for this research, NACS was in the process of being implemented using the new 'whole-of-society' approach as proposed by South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP): Vision 2030 (South Africa, 2012). This envisaged approach is centred on partnership between the public sector, the private sector and various elements of civil society (e.g. labour, think tanks, academia, community-based organisations and development partners). The approach was also adopted in the formulation of the abovementioned structures and organisations and individuals that were targeted during the consultation and drafting processes. Data collection focused on the NACS Steering Committee members who were responsible for the day-to-day processes and content of the NACS. In August 2022, a new structure called the

National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council (NACAC) was established by the President of South Africa and composed of members from various aspects of civil society.

4.7.3   Empirical data generation process

The process of generating data was undertaken in four phases as articulated in the next paragraphs.

Phase 1: Nine (9) dialogic interviews were conducted with past and present members of the international interorganisational partnership. Cunliffe (2011:658) defines dialogic interviews as "conversations in which participants jointly reflect and discuss insights". The one-on-one dialogic interviews comprised of people who had served as chairpersons of the partnership on a rotational basis, members of the TM ManComm drawn from government and civil society representatives, members of the technical steering committee and the programme managers (head of the secretariat). This initial set of interviews took an average of one hour and thirty minutes, similar to a practice-based study conducted by Lammi (2018). The nine transcripts served as the core dataset that was analysed for themes and patterns via the Atlas.ti 22 Software Package's coding system.

Phase 2: Two follow up focus groups were conducted, one with the members of the secretariat and another with the members of the technical steering committee. Unfortunately, the latter was disrupted by poor internet connectivity, hence the data was not deemed useful and valid for use in this research. The transcript of the members of the secretariat was deemed adequate for validation purposes based on its content and the emergence of repeated themes, which was a good indicator of reaching the data saturation point. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006:255) state that: "The ending of a project can happen for a variety of reasons. You might for example have to abruptly exit the field because of time constraints. Other factors may stem from unfortunate events in the setting that make it difficult for you to continue with your work. What often occurs, however, is that you reach saturation point [their emphasis], where you do not find anything new in the setting and where you may even feel that if you stay any longer you may start to lose your researcher perspective." The latter factor of reaching saturation was the main consideration in this study.

Phase 3: For the national (South African) interorganisational partnership case study, the approach taken was to first conduct a focus group before embarking on the individual interviews,

in order to assess if the data would yield any different insights from what was already collected. Then, based on the analysis of the themes and patterns and comparing them with the data already collected, a decision was made to only conduct a single additional interview, which confirmed data saturation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2006:255). The coding of the transcript was done using the existing codes from the previous data generated from the international interorganisational partnership sample. Whilst the content was significantly different, the new data was fully accommodated by the existing codes and themes. This alignment indicated a high level of data saturation in relation to the research question.

Phase 4: As already mentioned above, a single interview was conducted with one of the members of the local interorganisational partnership who was not part of the focus group discussion. The transcript helped to fill in some gaps in the data gathered through the focus group, since the individual had an opportunity to elaborate on issues compared to the focus group discussion. The interview transcript was coded using the existing coding scheme in Atlas.ti. Its codes were fully accommodated by the existing coding system, which helped to validate the data gathered and which also indicated a higher level of data saturation. As such, a decision was made to integrate the data and not continue with the fieldwork as new interviews and focus groups would not add new insights to address the research question.

In summary, the data set comprised of 10 dialogic interviews (nine for the international sample and one for the local sample). It also comprised of two focus group discussions, one for the international sample (TM) and another for the local sample (NACS). The choice of the sample is similar to Vangen and Huxham's (2003:63) whose study focused on thirteen "partnership managers since they appear to significant role in leading the activities of collaborations" on a day-to-day operation of the partnership.

This data gathering process was deliberately sequenced to assess data saturation, as qualitative research does not really depend on the number of interviews conducted, but rather their validity to answer the research question (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:255; Mwita, 2022). According to Fusch and Ness (2015:1409), due to the fact that "study designs are not universal", "there is no one-size-fits-all method to reach data saturation" and there is also no rule regarding the same size. In the context of interviews and focus groups, Fusch and Ness (2015:1409) recommend that "interview questions should be structured to facilitate asking multiple participants the same questions, otherwise one would not be able to achieve data saturation as it would be a constantly

moving target" (Citing Guest *et al.*, 2006). This is the same strategy that was employed in this research via the use of a standardised research schedule. Lee (1999:166) states that, "validity is inferred based on accumulated evidence and the relationship between a study and its purpose". Since the researcher was involved in the two initiatives, he did not have any challenges in terms of accessing as many interviews as deemed necessary, especially since most of the interviews were conducted using online meetings via the Google Meets software application.

For ethical research, all research participants were given the ethics clearance letter and were alerted upfront about the issues of confidentiality and voluntary participation in the study. A few participants did not turn up for the focus group discussions and the researcher did not attempt to persuade them to participate as part of respecting their choice not to be involved in this research. Nowadays confidentially of identity is a matter of personal safety in the African public sector and anti-corruption sector from where the research participants for this study were drawn. Permission was granted to explicitly mention the name '*Twende Mbele*' in the research thesis and related publications.

4.7.4   Data coding, analysis and interpretation processes

According to Locke, Feldman & Golden-Biddle (2020:5), "two common and recognised things people do when they code are engaging their data and engaging the extant literature". This study applied coding practices in an iterative manner by combining codes based on empirical data and codes drawn from literature. Data coding was performed manually with the aid of the Atlas.ti Software Package. It was guided by the Charmaz (2006) coding system. This system has four coding schemes, namely: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding, as depicted in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2:   **Summary of the data coding and analytical framework for relational leadership practices**

Initial coding (Charmaz, 2006)	Focused coding (Charmaz, 2006)	Axial codes based on practice approach (Charmaz, 2006; Reckwitz, 2002; Heidenstrøm, 2022)	Theoretical codes (DAC level1) (Charmaz, 2006; Drath *et al.*, 2008)	Theoretical sub-codes (DAC level 2) (Charmaz, 2006; Drath *et al.*, 2008)	Theoretical codes: Relational Social Constructionist Leadership Model (RSCL) (Charmaz, 2006; Endres & Weibler, 2017)
			Leadership belief	Direction	
				Alignment	

The descriptive codes	77	The thematic codes	11	• Mental and knowledge • Body • Material		Commitment	• Leadership mechanism • Leadership content • Leadership manifestation

As a disclaimer, it must be noted that the adoption of the Grounded Theory coding approach does not make this research a Grounded Theory study in terms of its methodology, as already articulated in the previous discussion on the practice approach methodology. The next paragraphs provide a detailed description of the data codes.

4.7.4.1 Initial and focused coding

As per the above Table 4.2, a total of eleven focused codes (main themes) were generated, which were used to classify the initial codes (sub-themes) that were based on direct quotations. These two levels of coding generated the list of relational leadership practices. The eleven (11) themes (focused codes) served as the "practices of interest" while the seventy-seven (77) sub-themes (initial codes) served as "intersecting practices" in terms of the conceptual framework proposed by Heidenstrøm (2022:238). This framework served as a basis to present the findings of this research in Chapter 5. The findings are presented in two parts. Part 1 presents the analysis of the definitions of leadership from the perspectives of the research participants and Part 2 presents the relational leadership practices.

4.7.4.2 Axial coding

The axial coding was used to classify the data based on the practice approach themes put forward by Reckwitz (2002). Reckwitz (2002) provides a theoretical review that distinguishes the "theory of social practices from its theoretical alternatives" such as "cultural mentalism, textualism and inter-subjectivism" through the framework of body, mind, materials and knowledge. He also argues that, these worldviews point to different "locations of the social" and the practice theory views practices as its unit of analysis (Reckwitz, 2002:244-245). He then put forward the following definition: "A 'practice' (Praktik) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, knowhow, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002:249-250). Heidenstrøm (2002:240) applies the abovementioned definition in her analysis of risk and further argues that: studying practices entails seeking to understand a particular action or behaviour, its components, connections

between the components, the effects of material surroundings on the specific behaviour, and the reproduction or alteration of such behaviours over time. However, due to the use of dialogic interviews, this study did not assess changes in the relational leadership practices over time, as this would be more amenable to ethnographic and related methodologies.

As such, in terms of axial-coding, the abovementioned practice approach proposed by Reckwitz (2002) was employed, which specifies the following as the basic elements of a practice: "(a) Forms of bodily activities, (2) Forms of mental activities, (3) Things and their use, (4) Background knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2002:249; Heidenstrøm, 2022:238). In the context of the analysis performed in this research, background knowledge was combined with mental activities. This resulted in three constructs of body, mental and knowledge, as well as materials/things. This axial coding approach is similar to what Charmaz (1996) regarded as Strauss and Corbin's "organising scheme" of "conditions", "actions/interactions" and "consequences". Due to the fact that these codes were not based on the empirical data per se, their findings were presented as part of the discussion (Chapter 6) where implications for theory are drawn. Additional theoretical coding is discussed below.

4.7.4.3 Theoretical coding

The last step in terms of the coding was theoretical coding, which, according to Charmaz (2006:63), specifies "relationships between categories you have developed in your focused coding" and helps with moving "your story in a theoretical direction." In the context of this research, additional theoretical coding was based on models taken from three relational c, as conceptual models, as discussed in the next paragraphs.

4.7.4.4 Application of the DAC framework

The first model is the Direction, Alignment and Commitment Framework (DAC), which specifies leadership practices versus leadership beliefs as foundational (ontological) elements of a leadership culture (Drath *et al.*, 2008). The three leadership DAC outcomes are defined as follows: "(1) direction: widespread agreement in a collective on overall goals, aims, and mission; (2) alignment: the organisation and coordination of knowledge and work in a collective; and (3) commitment: the willingness of members of a collective to subsume their own interests and benefit within the collective interest and benefit" (Drath, *et al.*, 2008, 636). The DAC outcomes are presented as theoretical codes in Table 4.2. They are used in Chapter 6 in the discussion of the findings of this research.

The justification for choosing the DAC framework is two-fold. Firstly, the DAC framework is based on social constructionism, which makes it to be fully aligned to the RSCL lens adopted for this thesis. It is also inclusive in terms of not rejecting any manifestation of the leadership phenomenon from the empirical data, whilst being unambiguous regarding the construction of leadership in onto-epistemological terms. Secondly, by specifying the DAC outcomes in terms of leadership beliefs and practices, the conceptualisation of the DAC framework as a discussion template complements the processual nature of the practice approach, which focused on the identification of the 'relational leaderships practices' that are presented empirically.

4.7.4.5 Application of the RSCL Model

The second framework is the Three-Component Model of RSCL put forward by Endres and Weibler (2017), which specifies the leadership mechanism, leadership manifestation and leadership content. As already alluded to above, the main principles of approaching leadership research from the RSCL onto-epistemology are, first, the mechanism of leadership refers to "social construction", which is about the ongoing construction of "social realities through ongoing interpretation and interaction". Second, the content of leadership refers to "high-quality relating and communicating", which is about the explicit and implicit connections among people. Third, the manifestation of leadership refers to influence that takes place at dyadic and collective leadership domains (Endres & Weibler, 2017:214).

The value of the RSCL framework is that it provides a precise articulation of the leadership phenomena in relational social constructionist terms. It complements the DAC outcomes, by distinguishing between relational leadership mechanisms, which serve to articulate leadership emergence on the one hand, and the content (high-quality communication factor) and manifestation of leadership (influence factor) on the other hand. There is no evidence of this model having been applied empirically since it was put forward by Endres and Weibler (2018).

4.7.4.6 Application of the Ubuntu-inspired relationholder model

The third model is the *Ubuntu*-inspired relationalholder model. The centrality of the relational concept of 'harmony' in the '*Ubuntu* worldview' as articulated by Tutu (1999) is also confirmed by Metz's (2007) 'African moral theory' and expatiated by Woermann and Engelbrecht's (2019) 'relation holder theory'. In agreement, Pérezts *et al.* (2020:745) state that, "as a basic tenet of African philosophy and ethics, *Ubuntu* suggests that a basic life goal should be to realise human

excellence, which can only be done if living communally with others, honouring harmonious relationships (citing Metz 2014)." As such, the relational leadership practices of agreeing as findings of this research are assessed in terms of how they align to the key tenets of the relationholder theory proposed by Woermann and Engelbrecht (2019), and related themes from the *Ubuntu* literature such as those discussed by Seehawer (2018) and Molose, Thomas and Goldman (2019).

In terms of relationholder model, "moral consideration for others [is based] not on their earned stakes [compared to the stakeholder theory], but simply on the fact of relating, and on the aspiration to honour their ability to commune, and achieving harmonious relationships" (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:42). When examined against the findings of this research, the primacy of "achieving harmonious relationships" as per the *Ubuntu*-inspired relationholder model is fully applicable to both samples, mainly due to the fact that they are initiatives that aimed to achieve public value through collective action; which is at the heart of *Ubuntu* perspective. In fact, given the proliferation of various strands of *Ubuntu* perspective, the 'harmony-centric strand of *Ubuntu*' could be regarded as the 'Tutu's *Ubuntu* consensus' since the primary definition provided in this study is commonly cited in *Ubuntu* literature and explicitly forms the essence of the Woermann and Engelbrecht's (2019) 'relationholder theory' and that in turn is based on the heavily debated Metz's (2007) 'African Moral Theory' (i.e. *Ubuntu* theory). Each of the findings on relational leadership practices (the sub-themes) are discussed from *Ubuntu* perspective using the relationholder model (see De Jongh & Ntakumba, 2023).

In summary, the coding and analysis process in this research was aligned to the abductive logic of leadership inquiry in terms of the iterative process of initial data gathering, coding, and further data gathering for validation purposes, which was followed by other coding processes.

A database comprising of the transcripts, codes and sub-codes is maintained in the Atlas.ti 22 Software Package, where other analytical procedures like word-clouds were performed, as depicted in Figure 4.3.
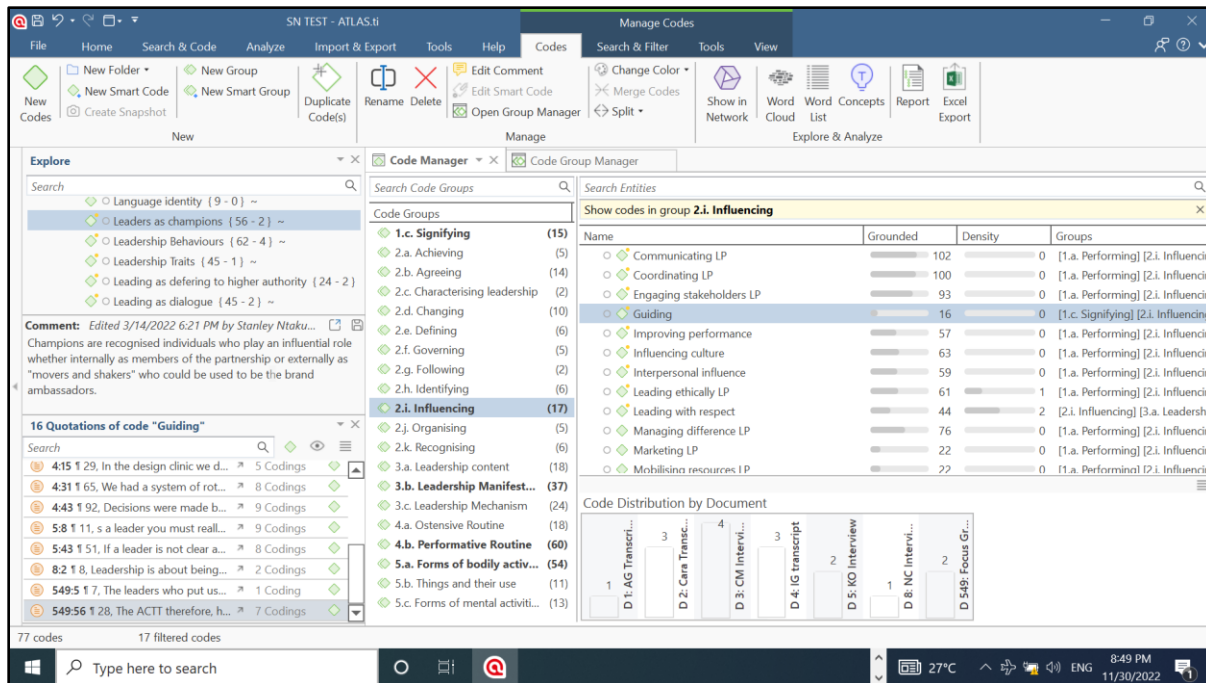
Figure 4.3: Snapshot of the Atlas.ti22 Windows software package database for this thesis

Due to the demands of qualitative data analysis, the analytical process in Chapter 5 is largely descriptive in line with the practice approach. Interpretation of meaning of the theoretical codes is performed in the discussion of the findings in Chapter 6.

4.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study applied standard qualitative research ethical considerations and received ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences of the University of Pretoria. According to Creswell (2003:62-67), ethical considerations cover all stages of the research process, such as the problem statement, purpose of the study, data generation, data analysis and interpretation, and dissemination of the research findings. Therefore, this study ensured that the research participants were aware of the scholarly problem and research questions that this research sought to investigate, as well as its purpose so that they are were not deceived or disempowered in any way from making their own judgements regarding participation or non-participation in the research exercise (Annexure 3). Indeed, a few invitees declined to participate in the focus groups for personal reasons.

Data collection ethical considerations, such as avoiding putting the participants at risk, respect for vulnerable groups, signing of consent forms, avoiding undue disruption of the day-to-day activities

of the participants, and most importantly, protection of the confidentiality of the participants and their information, were adhered to. The use of online interviews via the Google Teams software helped to ensure efficiency in terms of the time spent with the research participants. Confidentiality was also applied during the data analysis and interpretation phase of the research process whereby the reporting of data was anonymised through the use of pseudonyms like Mr X or Alpha. Various processes insights and extracts from the findings were shared with some of the research participants during the validation processes and conference presentations. This is similar to what Lammi (2018:125) reported in his doctoral research, that he, "noted a risk of exposing both workers and unit managers to further scrutiny due to critical comments or cases of resistance emerging" and chose not to present the material as a "cohesive whole" but shared snippets with the research participants. Permission was sought and granted to explicitly mention the name of the international interorganisational partnership, *Twende Mbele.*

Furthermore, care was taken to ensure that data was reported accurately by applying qualitative data validation measures within the Atlas.ti 22 Software Package. Kramer, Day, Nguyen, Hoelscher & Cooper (2019:405) emphasise the importance of detailed descriptions in social constructionism when they argue that the inquirer must "present thick rich descriptions by providing quotes from interviews and field notes so that the readers can determine the veracity of our claims and their transferability to other contexts." The strategy of thick rich descriptions was applied both during the presentation of findings in Chapter 5 and the discussion of the findings in Chapter 6.

The database indices were used to keep the integrity of the data for the purpose of quality assurance of the quotations and archiving of the datasets for further research purposes. In the Atlas.ti 22 Software Package, each quotation is accompanied by three numbers, namely, two ID numbers and a reference number. In this research such numbers are put in brackets as follows [23:34, 76]. In this example, the ID number 23:34 means that the quotation was taken from document number 23 and it is the 34th quotation that was generated in that document. The reference number 76 refers to the location of the quotation within the document, for example paragraph 76.

On questions of validity, according to Cunliffe (2011:667), "beauty and rigour lie in crafting our research carefully and persuasively, being open and responsive to the possibilities of experience, people, ideas, materials and processes, and understanding and enacting the relationship between

our meta-theoretical position, our methods, our theorising, and their practical consequences." Lee (1999:167) proposes that "valid description is related to the accuracy with which the researcher saw, heard, and experienced is represented in the data" and that is normally ensured via "verbatim transcriptions of text". As such, the approach adopted for this research is that of delving into the research process in an open-ended manner, taking into consideration the RSCL theoretical framework and the practice approach methodology, based on the interview and focus group transcripts. This is in line with the abductive mode of inquiry employed by Endres and Weibler (2020:282), whereby they engaged in a process of "iteratively shifting between data-inspired induction and theory-inspired deduction for imaginative practice-oriented theorising." In that way, theorising was informed by empirical work and validated by the extant leadership and partnership literature that was reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Lastly, given the intersubjective nature of this study, the research writing technique adopted an approach proposed by Cunliffe (2011:659) who argues that "it is more appropriate to write in tentative ways about possible meanings and fluid interpretations potentially shared between people" (Cunliffe, 2011:659). The study was also conducted in an iterative manner via continuous data generation and analysis in line with abductive logic, including reflection about extant literature and its implications for the emerging recommendations done in line with the RSCL lens. The study also complied with ethical codes as per the policies and procedures of the University of Pretoria.

The next section elaborates on ethical considerations by discussing the question of potential biases and presenting self-reflexive notes.

4.9   REFLECTING ON POTENTIAL BIASES

According to Rappley (2024:50), "in qualitative research the central resource through which sampling decisions are made is a focus on specific people, situations or sites because they offer a specific – 'biased' or 'information-rich' – perspective (Citing Patton, 2002)". The practice methodology allows for both qualitative (interpretivist) and quantitative (post-positivist) sampling. In this study, the qualitative design was adopted using a non-probabilistic or purposive sampling approach. As such, the first bias, in the form of self-selection bias, is likely to arise from the fact that the research participants were invited to participate in the dialogic interviews and focus groups, and had an option to decline participation. Indeed, those who were not comfortable

participating in the interviews and focus groups were not persuaded to do so as part of respecting their choice and confidentiality.

Secondly, the concentration of the study on members of the governing structures of the interorganisational partnerships sought to ensure that the research participants were people who had an intimate knowledge of the operations of their interorganisational partnerships as the positional leaders. Therefore, bias would occur due to the fact that such people are likely to be very vested in the partnership to the extent that they would be less objective about its negative elements. For example, having interviewed their own sample of eleven research participants, Cunliffe and Ericksen (2011:1445) noted the potential bias and asked a rhetorical question: "How do we know if they were 'walking the talk'?" The same question applies to this thesis. However, the purpose of a phenomenologically-orientated qualitative design in the form of the practice approach is to assess those subjective views and experiences without passing any judgement as discussed under ontology and epistemology. The practice approach and RSCL lens acknowledges the intersubjective nature of the relational processes, including those between the researcher and the researched. The next section reflects on the biographical profile of the researcher in relation to the samples in order to provide more context for the readers of this thesis.

4.10 SELF-REFLEXIVE NOTES

My research background cuts across social, environmental and management sciences. I initially focused on the water sector, as well as science and technology sectors. I then became involved in policy-oriented research on public perceptions, socio-economic development, public sector monitoring and evaluation. I initially got involved in leadership studies for the purpose of personal growth and development as a manager. My involvement in policy-related work as a public servant stimulated my interest in gaining an in-depth understanding of academic views on various leadership challenges. The two challenges that were foremost in my mind were around the lack of understanding in practice regarding how to deal with 'interfaces' among leaders and between organisations that have to work together towards common objectives.

In relation to the first sample, *Twende Mbele*, I was involved with them from before their launch in 2016/17 up until 2019/20. When I conducted the interviews in January and February 2022 I was no longer a participant within its structures. I was involved in the second sample as a member of the Steering Committee of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. When I conducted the interviews in January and February 2022, the main task of developing the National Anti-Corruption

Strategy was already completed since the strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2020. In both cases at some point in time I served as a (co)chairperson.

Just like many other platforms I was participating in, within these two samples there was the lingering challenge of how to ensure the effectiveness of interorganisational partnerships that sought to address wicked societal problems, while also operating in very complex and dynamic environments. The notion of 'good leadership' was always viewed as a solution, although it was not very clear as to what exactly leadership means in such non-hierarchical settings where there is no single authority. I was then attracted to the field of responsible leadership, since it combines leadership with conceptual interests in multi-stakeholder partnerships, sustainability, morality and ethics. In the context of these two interorganisational partnerships, as stakeholders we had collectively achieved great breakthroughs and innovations against major constraints and risks. I then became keen to explore academic literature and the views of my (former) colleagues on the construct of leadership and how that manifested itself in practice in the context of the two samples. I carefully navigated ethical considerations, as articulated separately in this chapter.

In my journey as a researcher, I searched for theoretical frameworks and methodologies that would help me synthesise scholarly ideas from responsible leadership, interorganisational partnerships and practice-oriented thinking towards answering in-depth philosophical and practical questions. So, I found myself in this space of seeking to understand and discuss 'interfaces' between: leadership studies and responsible leadership (Chapter 1), interorganisational partnerships and leadership (Chapter 3), relational-oriented ontology, epistemology, methodology and axiology of leadership research (i.e. RSCL onto-epistemology and practice approach research methodology) (Chapter 4), and how all of these help me to understand what is going on (Chapters 5 to 6) and what am I learning from this unfolding process of becoming (Chapter 7). I found comfort in the journey of 'theorising' through theories-of-practice rather than producing 'the theory'.

I am particularly delighted to have presented the earlier versions of some of my literature review and findings to internal colloquia at the University of Pretoria. My supervisor and I have co-presented the following virtually:
- A paper at the 'Responsible Leadership Reimagined Conference' held on 16-18 March 2022 at the University of Stellenbosch in Cape Town;

- A paper to the discussion panel entitled 'From embodied to disembodied knowledge: understanding the SDGs' at the 'Sustainability Research and Innovation Congress 2022' held in Pretoria in June 2023;
- A paper at the 'Biennial Conference of the South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association' (SAMEA) held on 21-23 October 2022 in Sandton; and
- A paper at 'Cooperating in Value-Creating Networks: A Relational View' held in Paris-Cergy on 8-9 September 2022.

In addition, we have co-authored a paper published in the peer-reviewed 'South African Journal of Business Management' (April 2023, Vol. 54, No. 1). In May 2023, we submitted a manuscript to Springer Publishers that serves to document the proceedings of the conference on 'Cooperating in Value-Creating Networks: A Relational View'.

With regards to my biographical background, I am a Black African male from South Africa. I was born and raised in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. I am married with two teenage children, a girl and a boy. In terms of my educational background, I completed my matriculation studies in 1994 at Palmerton High School, Lusikisiki. In 1995 I enrolled for a four-year Bachelor of Arts (Education) degree at the former University of Transkei (now Walter Sisulu University (WSU)), based in Mthatha. I also obtained a two-year Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree specialising in Geography from WSU. In 2004 I obtained a Master of Science (MSc in Geography, with distinction) from Rhodes University. I also obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Information Management via long-distance education from the former Rand Afrikaans University (now University of Johannesburg). In 2012 I completed a three-year Master of Business Leadership degree from the Graduate School of Business Leadership of the University of South Africa. This thesis serves do document my academic journey towards obtaining the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Leadership from the Albert Luthuli Leadership Institute of the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

In terms of employment, I started working as a teacher in Khanyisa High School at Mthatha in 1999. I then got part-time roles as a tutor and a warden of a postgraduate residence at Rhodes University, whilst studying full-time towards my MSc. After which, I worked as a researcher at the Human Sciences Research Council, where we conducted research on South Africa's National System of Innovation, Research and the Knowledge Economy. I joined South African government in 2005 as a research manager in the Policy and Research unit of the Government

Communication and Information System. In 2007 I became Director: Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System, in the erstwhile Policy Coordination and Advisory Services' unit of The Presidency. In 2010 I joined the newly established Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) in the Presidency, which later assumed the role of supporting the National Planning Commission from 2014, as a planning department. I have served in many different senior management capacities within DPME to date. In 2022 I was seconded by DPME, as Head: Public Service, to support The Presidency on the work of the National Anti-Corruption Advisory Council and the Office of the Head of Public Administration.

The COVID-19 pandemic and related loss of lives and livelihoods across the globe had an adverse impact during this period of my doctoral research. I also experienced the personal loss of my beloved mother, grandmother, close friends and co-workers. They all left positive and beautiful memories and legacies in my life. May their souls rest-in-peace!

4.11   CONCLUSION OF THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Chapter 4 presented the research design. It contributes to answering the main research question via responding to three guiding research questions aligned to the theoretical framework, research methodology and ethical considerations. The RSCL onto-epistemology was adopted as the theoretical framework for this research. Relational leadership practices serve as the unit of analysis and interorganisational partnerships serve as the unit of observation.

The qualitative paradigm strand of the practice approach was employed as the methodology for this study. Two samples were selected, namely, an international interorganisational partnership called *Twende Mbele* (TM) African Partnership for Monitoring and Evaluation, and a national interorganisational partnership related to the development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy of South Africa. The abductive logic of inquiry was used to develop the framework for the interview and focus group schedule (Annexures 1 and 2). The generated data was coded as follows: initial, focused, axial and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006). The analytical framework was presented in the form of a stepwise process that utilised the empirical and theoretical coded data stored in a database in the Atlas.ti22 Software Package. Ethical considerations were discussed and the study received ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences' Research Ethics Committee and complied with the university's rules and guidelines.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1   INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTH CHAPTER
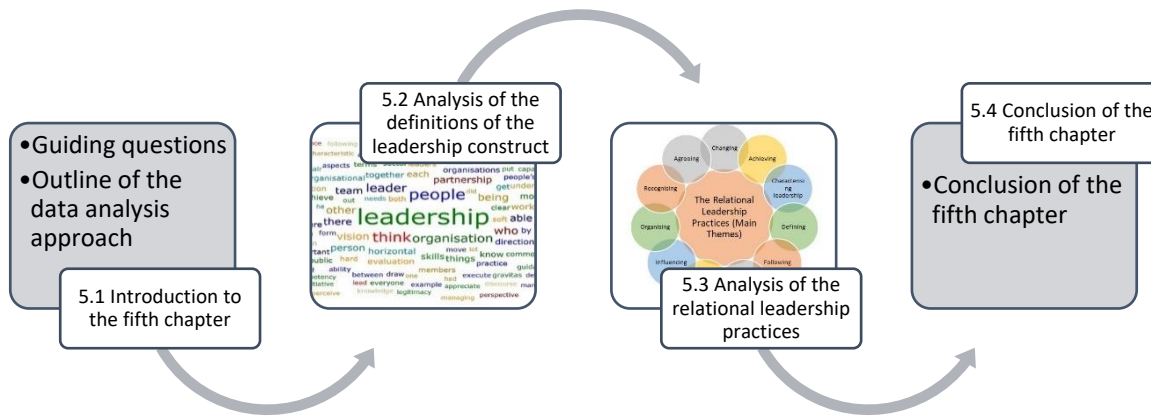
Figure 5.1:   Outline of Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents the findings of this research based on the empirical data generated through the dialogic interviews and the focus groups, as outlined in Figure 5.1. These were conducted in the two samples, namely, the international interorganisational partnership called *Twende Mbele* and the local interorganisational partnership about the development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy of South Africa. As indicated in Chapter 4 on the research design, the international interorganisational partnership was the main sample that was analysed. The data from the national interorganisational partnership was used for data validation alongside a focus group discussion from the international interorganisational partnership. The validation is only reflected where it is applicable. For example, themes that are context specific such as the National Evaluation System, are only validated by the focus group discussion of the international sample rather than by the second sample. Furthermore, the empirical findings are presented as they are without discussing them at this stage, since Chapter 6 is devoted on their discussion using insights from the literature review and the critical appraisal by the researcher against the RSCL lens.

To recap, the main research question for this thesis is: *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?*

The presentation of the findings in Chapter 5 is guided by the following questions:

1) How is the leadership construct understood in interorganisational partnerships?

2) How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships?

The first question on the definition of the leadership construct is answered through providing an analysis of the various definitions of the leadership construct from the perspective of the research participants. In this instance, the leadership construct is treated as the "practice of interest", while other themes are regarded as "intersecting practices" (Heidenstrøm, 2022:236). Furthermore, a thematic analysis of the leadership construct is provided. The practice approach based on Reckwitz (2002) is used to classify each theme.

The second question on understanding how leadership is practiced in the interorganisational partnerships is answered by presenting eleven main themes that serve as the relational leadership "practices of interest" and their related sub-themes, presented as "intersecting practices" (Heidenstrøm, 2022:236). Each of these relational leadership practices are described in order to demonstrate how leadership emerges and is enacted in interorganisational partnerships. This is similar to Ospina and Foldy's (2010) approach to presenting findings of a RSCL study that was operationalised through a practice approach wherein they state that: "We [they] highlight[ed]… what makes each practice analytically distinct, without discounting the important connections among them" (Ospina & Foldy, 2010:297).

The next section analyses the definitions of the leadership construct from the perspectives of the research participants.

5.2   ANALYSIS OF THE DEFINITIONS OF THE LEADERSHIP CONSTRUCT

In this section, the main question is, how is the leadership construct understood in interorganisational partnerships from the perspective of the research participants. As a first step, the concepts of "practice of interest" versus "intersecting practices" as put forward by Heidenstrøm (2022) were utilised as an analytical framework. The construct of leadership was identified as the practice of interest. Then a word-by-word analysis was done for each of the participants focusing on the key terms that they used to define and characterise the leadership construct. Diagrams were produced that demonstrate how each of the participants understood the meaning of leadership. Only a sample of these definitions are presented in these findings. A word-cloud (Figure 5.2) is used to demonstrate the centrality of the leadership construct in this data and a

circular diagram (Figure 5.3) is used to present leadership as a practice of interest versus other intersecting practices.

5.2.1 The centrality of the leadership construct in the data

The word-cloud diagram below demonstrates the centrality of the leadership construct in the data generated from the two interorganisational partnerships:

Figure 5.2: The word-cloud about the definitions of the leadership construct

Figure 5.2 shows a word-cloud generated from all the transcripts focusing on the question regarding the definition of leadership from the perspective of the research participants. The word-cloud was cleaned by removing words such as articles, conjunctions, names of people, places and those words that, when checked in context, did not add value to the meaning of the sentence provided by the participant. The approach of using a word-cloud showed words that were mentioned frequently by the participants by using relative visual size.

The findings indicate the word "leadership" was mentioned thirty-five times, mainly because it was the key word that was being defined. The definitions of the leadership construct were about leadership in organisational contexts relating to organisational performance and identity. The context within which the word "people" was used included phrases such as, people-focused, involve people, how people perceive each other, put together a team of people, being relational with people you work with, know people, and know your people because it is people who execute

141

the vision. The word "vision" was mentioned ten times in phrases such as, provide vision, ensure that the vision is understood, execute the vision, contribution to the common vision, a person who has a vision, and promote the vision through discussion. For instance, a participant defined a leader as: *"Somebody who is also active in leading the group and is open to listen and take on board other people's views. This is a kind of a person who has a vision of where she or he wants to go and manages to lead a group towards that direction" [6:1, 10].* The word "common" was mentioned four times in different contexts, namely, common vision, common interest, common agenda, and common things that are expected of leaders. While the word "think" was prominent, it came predominantly from a single transcript whereby the participant tended to start a sentence by saying "I think". It was left in the word cloud since it denoted a certain emphasis in terms of the extent to which the participant wanted to emphasise their own views.

In summary, the word-cloud confirmed that leadership, is a central construct in the data generated from the two interorganisational partnerships. It should be noted, however, that this finding is likely to be largely influenced by the design of the interview schedule, which primarily focused on the leadership phenomenon as the unit of analysis for this thesis. This is not a problem since this study is based on an RSCL lens that makes no claims of seeking to achieve objectivity, but rather surfaces the socially constructed intersubjective reality and knowledge claims (i.e. the RSCL onto-epistemology) (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

The foregoing analysis is complemented by the next presentation which locates leadership as a practice of interest and related constructs as intersecting practices to help give meaning to the definitions of leadership provided by the participants.

5.2.2   Mapping of key terms used to define leadership as a practice of interest

This section presents findings on the various definitions of the leadership construct from the perspective of the research participants.

Figure 5.3: **Individual leadership as a practice of interest versus its intersecting practices**

Figure 5.3 puts leadership at the centre as the practice of interest. The concepts that were used by the participants to characterise the leadership construct are placed on the margin as intersecting practices. In terms of analysis, the above diagram serves as a springboard for analysing key themes that emerged across the board, as different participants provided slightly different views regarding their own definitions of the leadership construct.

The next sections provide a thematic analysis of the definitions of the leadership construct.

5.2.3 Thematic analysis of the definitions of the leadership construct

The second step of undertaking the analysis was done by means of employing a typology of practices as: "[1] forms of bodily activities; [2] forms of mental activities; [3] things and their use [material things]; and [4] and a background knowledge..." (Reckwitz's, 2002:249). The next section presents the four themes as follows, leadership as an individual characteristic; leadership as an act of doing something; leadership as cognition; and an organisation as a leader in its own right.

5.2.3.1 Leadership as an individual characteristic

The traditional view of leadership, referring to the characteristics and qualities of a particular individual, was quite dominant among the definitions put forward by the participants. From a practice approach, such normative ways of prescribing a definition upfront could be classified as underlying knowledge in terms of Reckwitz's (2002) elements of a practice. In this regard, a leader was characterised as someone who is competent, courageous, skilled, exemplary, ethical, responsible, capable and active. The common characteristics of individual leaders could be summarised into two major classes, namely, values (e.g. courage) and competencies (skills and capabilities). For example, a participant argued that, *"Good leaders must demonstrate the highest level of integrity and promote values and ethics. Leaders are responsible for preaching the importance ethics and practicing and demonstrating ethics. They must conduct themselves with respectful manner and ensuring staff to behave ethically"* [9:66, 88].

The next section presents the second theme of viewing leadership as an act of doing something.

5.2.3.2 Leadership as an act of doing something

Having defined leadership in terms of individual characteristics, the participants went further to characterise leadership as an act of doing something. This characterisation is linked to the forms of bodily activities in terms of Reckwitz's (2002) typology.

Conceptually, the above doings are not at the same level of abstraction. For example, relating, performing and behaving could be viewed as high-order constructs since there could be different types of relating, behaving or performing. Furthermore, there was a slant towards organisational leadership when one considers the use of terms like deciding, approving, executing, getting things done and planning. Relationality is inherent across the board, since leaders inter-subjectively agree, engage, debate, direct, share, enable, impact and cross-pollinate with other people. There is also an element of intentionality when one considers the use of terminology like, leverage, target, prioritise, help, conceptualise and design. For example, a first participant said*: "Leadership for me should have the following elements: guiding, steering, managing, and the ability to inspire trust and confidence in a society, in an institution, in an organisation and in a group setting" [9:1, 18].* Another one noted that, *"Leadership is about helping an organisation (or a group of people) to decide where it wants to go and facilitate a process together" [4:1, 8].* In essence, in this data the doings of leaders are viewed as acts of relating, behaving and performing, as well as

demonstrating agency and intentionality within an organisational environment and with stakeholders.

The next section presents the third theme of leadership as a cognition.

5.2.3.3 Leadership as cognition

In addition to leadership being viewed as a characteristic of individual and an act of doing something; the participants also viewed leadership as a cognitive exercise. Analytically, this cognitive view of leadership is linked to the forms of mental activities in terms Reckwitz's (2002) typology. The difference between mental activities (cognition) and bodily activities is sometimes blurred. On the one hand, the distinguishing factor in the context of this analysis is the extent to which mental activities are individual-centric. On the other hand, bodily performances have an element of relationality between two or more individuals, as well as with material things. In other words, based on this data, mental activities could be viewed exclusively in the realm of intentionality without relationality, whereas doings may comprise of both elements. For example, it is a cognitive state to be seen as an individual who is appreciative, aware and perceptual and has political will. The notion of common interest demonstrates a collective dimension of leadership, but still in an entitative sense as a state of shared cognition among a group of individuals. For example, a participant reported: *"Rotational leadership has been a good thing for TM to create a sense of collective ownership and common purpose. TM became an African regional initiative and not just a South African thing"* [4:34, 68].

The next section presents the fourth theme of viewing an organisation as a leader in its own right.

5.2.3.4 An organisation as a leader in its own right

The foregoing analysis aligns closely with what is already known in leadership literature in terms of viewing leadership as an individual endeavour. The perspective of viewing organisations as leaders in their own right is a surprising finding in this thesis. However, it is not necessarily a special finding in the context of broader organisational studies.

Figure 5.4:   Leadership by an organisation as a practice of interest versus its intersecting practices

In this regard, one participant focused on articulating what they understood as relational leadership practices in the international interorganisational partnership, as demonstrated by the following quotation: *"[Leadership]…is a level of gravitas and respect between Organisation-X and Organisation-Y based on the contribution that both have made in the space of evaluation capacity development in general. The brands have already secured their own legitimacy in the evaluation ecosystem…" [3:16, 17].* In this regard, similar to the notion of a leader as a person as presented above, organisations are viewed as possessing certain characteristics that cause them to earn their place as leaders in a particular setting, for example, gravitas, brand legitimacy and proficiency. Furthermore, there is an acknowledgement of a direct relationship between perceptions of organisations as leaders versus perceptions of individuals representing such organisations as leaders. For example, there is an element of "trusting" individuals representing reputable organisations.

The next section presents the fifth theme, which is about materiality of leadership.

5.2.3.5 Materiality of leadership

The characterisation of organisations as leaders is closely linked to Reckwitz's (2002) element of "things and their use" (materiality). There was an expectation that a leader would use monitoring and evaluation "evidence" in their decision-making or promote the practice of evidence-based decision-making. Similarly, the notion of strengthening evaluation "systems" falls into the category of materiality. This categorisation views materiality as referring to organisational things, such as organisational gravitas, organisational respect, organisational legitimacy, brand legitimacy and organisational proficiency, as "epistemic objects", which, according to Werle and Sedl (2015:70), "…in contrast to other types of objects, epistemic objects are not definite things whose properties can be captured and described but are rather processes and projections". In other words, these are socially constructed as tangible things or artefacts that the partners seek to accomplish through their work of leadership in the interorganisational contexts. For example, a participant argued: *"Historically, the understanding is that the drivers of a national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system include the development of the M&E policy framework, collection of data and production of reports. However, in practice we realised that that was not necessarily the case. The consumption of the M&E reports is not just for the government. The government works for the citizenry. So, the key consideration is how to involve other stakeholders in my M&E intervention as its owners. We collaborated with the Ghana M&E Forum and other actors like African Evaluation Association, including consultancy firms that provide evaluation services to government"* [5:52, 54].

Having presented the findings on the definitions of the leadership construct above, the next section zooms into the presentation of the relational leadership practices.

5.3   ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

This section of the findings seeks to answer the second guiding question, namely, how is leadership practiced in interorganisational partnerships? The practice approach was able to help with isolating a range of relational leadership practices of interest that are summarised in eleven main themes, namely, agreeing, changing, characterising leadership, defining, following, governing, identifying, influencing, organising, and recognising, as depicted in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5: **The main themes presented as relational leadership practices of interest**

The abovementioned main themes were generated using the approach proposed by Charmaz (2006), where focused codes emerged from the aggregation of the initial codes. The initial codes are presented as sub-themes or the intersecting relational leadership practices.

Figure 5.6 depicts the structure of the presentation of each of the relational leadership practices of interest (main themes) versus their intersecting relational leadership practices (sub-themes), as discussed in Chapter 4:
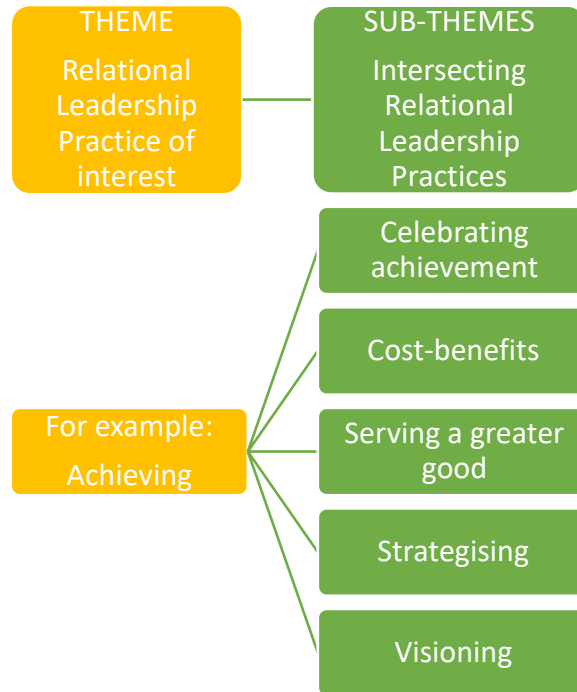
Figure 5.6: **The framework for presenting the data in terms of relational leadership practices of interest (main themes) and intersecting relational leadership practices (sub-themes)**

The next sections provide a detailed presentation of the data in terms of the main relational practices and their related sub-themes.

5.3.1   Relational leadership practices of achieving

The relational leadership practices of achieving refers to situations where the participants expressed a sense of accomplishing or intending to achieve something as part of how they characterised their experiences in the work of the interorganisational partnerships.

Figure 5.7:   The relational leadership practice of achieving and its intersecting practices

As per Figure 5.7, the relational leadership practice of achieving has the following intersecting relational leadership practices: celebrating achievement, cost-benefits, serving a greater good, strategising and visioning, which are presented in the next paragraphs with supporting evidence.

5.3.1.1 Celebrating achievement

In terms of celebrating achievements, participants expressed excitement about achieving something or highlighted a significant milestone or change based on individual action or collective actions or optimism about the prospects of the interorganisational partnership and what it stood for.

A first perspective viewed achievement as the impact of the partnership on its members. One participant stated that, "*TM has achieved a lot in terms of assisting member countries to grow and strengthen their monitoring and evaluation capacity" [1:77,95].* Home-grown leadership models were mentioned as having worked well in terms of assisting with the overall strategic direction of the partnership. Another participant noted that, *"Rotational leadership has been a good thing for TM to create a sense of collective ownership and common purpose. TM became an African regional initiative and not just a South African thing" [4:34, 68].*

A second perspective was about the celebration of best-practice which was linked to highlighting the leadership of one of the partners in a particular domain. A participant reported that, *"South Africa developed its National Evaluation System quickly and there was a lot of interest from other partner countries to learn from our experience" [4:46, 101].* Another participant indicated that, *"When founding individuals left at different times"* the interorganisational partnership continued to function and such sustainability was viewed as *"something worth to celebrate" [4:51, 107].*

A third perspective was about the celebration of successfully rolling out specific projects. A participant stated that they *"had a successful rollout of the course in 2018 for all the heads of departments and it was [evaluated] as enormously useful" [9:32, 25].* A second participant observed that, *"It is a space where there is no body who feels they are superior to others" [8:15, 40].* Another one expressed appreciation of the sense of *"solidarity"* and "*A-Team" [4:53, 111].*

A third perspective was about the sense of celebrating the identity of members as professionals and how the partnership serves as a "*community of practitioners… [where] the voice that is recognised is that of a technical expert rather than the position of authority…" [8:38, 32].* The operational model was also celebrated as an achievement. For instance, the fact that the partnership was *"country-led"* compared to others, created legitimacy for it to engage in-depth with member countries.

A fourth perspective was about highlighting their own achievement within their own member organisation. One participant indicated that within their country they had started an inter-departmental forum where *"monitoring and evaluation focal people have ownership of the ideas and help convince their management about the importance of M&E" [5:15, 19].* Another participant shared an experience of formally recognising people who had achieved something, such as publishing an academic paper within their organisational intranet, as a way of motivating staff.

In terms of validation, the practice of celebrating achievement was also common in the local interorganisational partnership. One participant argued that: *"We brought in credible individuals who are well-known in the space of fighting corruption. They all came with a great sense of enthusiasm and ideas" [550:8].* Another participant stated that: *"The whole-of-society approach, all of a sudden became real through the partnerships forged during the development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy" [549:39, 22].*

Similarly, the focus group of the interorganisational partnership confirmed this relational leadership practice of celebrating achievement, as a participant mentioned that, *"Part of why TM is respected comes from the influence that come with knowledge and the ability to do business differently"* [552:23, 24].

5.3.1.2 Cost-benefits

The relational leadership practice of cost-benefit served as an initial code for instances where the participants evaluated pros and cons of particular actions both in financial and non-financial terms.

A first perspective was about the importance of creating value through trust. For example, one participant argued that, *"The ability of TM to be sustainable and to generate new resources is dependent on the trust that the third-party institutions have on the partnership in terms of its ability to generate knowledge, and its agenda and the value it adds to its respective members. The leadership is primarily responsible for protecting, for building, and for cherishing the trust"* [9:52]. In this instance, trust is viewed as a driver for successfully mobilising funding from donors. Furthermore, the role of positional leaders was viewed as crucial for building such trustful relationships for the benefit of the partnership.

A second perspective was about evaluating the cost-benefits of using online tools such as emailing and virtual meetings. One participant decried the negative impact of COVID-19 which had elevated use of technology. They viewed it as likely to create inequality due to the different levels of digital skills of the participants compared to in-person physical engagements.

A third perspective was an appreciation of the contribution of individual leaders who used their time to benefit the collective. One participant noted that, "*Because this was drawing much from the leadership of individuals, it was about respecting a sense of give-and-take and not just one country to give, give, give"* [7:15, 13]. Also, the role of the partner that hosted the secretariat was noted as a contribution that was mutually beneficial, *"part of its mandate was committed to learning, to build markets, to expand M&E practice across the African continent"* [7:16, 16].

In terms of validation, one of the participants in the local interorganisational partnership reflected that, "*I know that such an approach is not easy to implement in government due to accountability systems and the fact that government works with tax payer's money"* [549:82, 38]. In this case, the view was that experimentation is difficult and risky to implement within the government system

compared to non-state actors, hence the motivation for partnerships between the two sectors of society.

5.3.1.3 Serving the greater good

This relational leadership practice of serving the greater good covered statements that expressed a sense of seeking to serve something bigger than oneself or the greater good of the nation, continent or globe.

A first perspective was about taking risks in service of the greater good. One participant indicated that, *"TM people do what they do for the benefit of the people and I don't think anyone is here for fame and glory"* [2:29, 58]. Another one stated that: *"TM is about evaluation systems and evidence-use more broadly"* [2:63, 85], and there *"is a strong desire to figure out answers to some difficult questions and go try yourself in your own country"* [2:68, 91].

A second perspective was about a sense of having a concrete understanding of how serving a greater good would be achieved programmatically. One participant noted that, *"In terms of the TM programme, we agreed on a set of key outputs such as supporting demand for evaluations; evaluation capacity building; learning and sharing on evaluation systems; collaborative tool development for evaluation systems; and TM programme management. We had key activities under each of those outputs which were directly linked to the budget"* [4:13, 26].

A third perspective was about an expression of deep moral values. One participant acknowledged that, *"We valued that people were not there to take advantage of others, but built trustful relationships in line with the common objectives of TM"* [4:48, 107].

A fourth perspective was about the intentional use of certain platforms like international conferences to share case studies that helped others in the broader community of practice. One participant said, *"So, I think our participation in international forums hosted by the African Evaluation Association and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund as actually useful"* [5:36, 42].

A fourth perspective was about an expression of the need to do more. One participant indicated that, *"If we want TM to succeed, in future countries must identify programmes that would involve TM"* [5:40, 48].

153

A fifth perspective was about appreciating the agency of particular individuals in terms of providing leadership to the partnership: One participant noted that, *"At any given time, you need someone to motivate and galvanise others towards the achievement of the common agenda"* [5:79, 81]. The emphasis of serving the greater good came up in the definitions of leadership, as one participant argued that, *"A leader is someone who is able to coordinate all these actors in a seamless manner to ensure that the individual values do not overtake the common good"* [5:83, 81].

A sixth perspective was the recognition of the practice of regular quarterly and annual reviews of the partnership as adding value. One participant stated that, "*TM conducts regular reviews of the work it does. And that helps everyone to understand best practices, what has worked [well], and what could be learned from each other as partners…The focus is always about the results and impacts of what we are doing as countries through the partnership*" [8:81, 76].

A seventh perspective was about appreciating the success of specific projects. One participant recognised the importance of the extensive use of *"webinars and other online mechanisms"* to engage in debates about "*topical issues"* and network relations. She further expressed that, *"this has been of great value to the wider community of practice of evaluators and M&E researchers across the globe. It has been useful to policymakers within the African continent"* [9:29, 22].

In terms of validation, from the local interorganisational partnership, one participant argued that, *"You have to have a big picture for you to be able to understand and apply the whole-of-society approach"* [549:66, 32].

Validation from the focus group of the international interorganisational partnership demonstrated that, *"These are group of peers with that kind of identity and belonging, which makes them lead beyond the partnership itself"* [552:24].

5.3.1.4 Strategising

The relational leadership practice of strategising comprised of actions and intentions that were about finding solutions to problems, or planning the work of the partnership, or deliberating on various options that could be explored to move the work of the partnership forward in a particular area of interest.

A first view was a cluster of responses that mentioned strategy or an equivalent construct or reflected a form of strategising at the level of defining leadership or leadership practices. One participant indicated that, *"Leadership entails the ability to convince even those who might have doubts about the initiative until you are together in the common agenda" [5:3, 8].* Another one stated that, *"Leadership is about helping an organisation (or a group of people) to decide where it wants to go and facilitate a process together" [4:1, 8].* In terms of the above, the role of a leader in the strategic process was viewed as comprising of actions that seek to convince (persuade) others about the strategic direction (common agenda) and fostering an agreement regarding the strategic orientation of the interorganisational partnership.

A second view was identification of the need to strategise around addressing the challenge of accommodating French as a language at the same level as English in terms of the medium of communication within the partnership. Translation of all communication materials was proposed as a potential solution to ensure free and active participation of Francophone partner countries. A participant recommended the following option, *"TM must have a chairperson who could speak the languages of all the members" [1:61, 43].*

A third view was about extending the sphere of influence. One participant argued that, *"TM needed to prove its value and to help government step outside the bureaucracy and be able to try things and get going and move the ball a little bit" [2:87, 121].* Here, there was an expectation and confidence that the partnership could assist with re-orienting the way government works through the partnership projects.

A fourth view was a reflection on the strategic actions that were embarked upon by the host partner (CLEAR-AA) in the course of the evolution of the partnership since its inception. One participant mentioned that, *"When TM and CLEAR-AA shared their visions together, there was a need for investing resources in order to make the vision come alive. Initially it was just an aspiration" [3:22, 23].* Another participant argued that, *"I guess innovation came when we put together something on paper conceptually and there was a lot of back-and-forth discussion between the TM ManCom and CLEAR-AA… A lot of thinking went into how to execute the peer-learning vision of TM, which was something new" [3:35, 31].* This demonstrates strategising through actions of investing resources, conceptualising, thinking and back-and-forth discussion with one of the core partners in order to envision and develop the strategic direction.

155

A fifth view was a reflection on strategising about the operational model of the partnership. At one level it was about how an individual partner contributed to the common agenda of the partnership through programming. One participant stated that, *"The most important thing is that we have integrated the work of TM into our own workplans, programmes, strategy, and our results framework… It's not tangential or a nice to have. It's integrated into the work we do" [3:85, 60-61].* Another one reflected that, *"Within Benin, TM was not properly promoted and we corrected that through the support of TM. TM helped us design a communication programme" [1:37, 28].* In terms of the above quotations, strategising was about the integration of the work of TM into member partners as done through "workplans" and the "design of a communication programme."

A sixth view was about strategising in relation to constructing a collective identity for the partnership. One participant argued that, *"There is a lot of work to be done around building collective identities. It is much easier around a concrete project, but when you speak generically about organisations and what they do, that needs to be made more explicit. I don't think we have done that sufficiently…" [3:36, 34].* In this instance, the solution is proposed as the need to shift from implicit construction of common identity to an explicit and intentional strategy framed around concrete actions as the work of leadership.

A seventh view was about the impact of communication style, which was deemed as very important. A participant argued that, *"I definitely think that one cannot emphasise enough the critical importance of face-to-face engagements and repeated engagements. It's about building a fraternity in a way" [7:27, 25].*

An eighth view was a reflection on how to continuously improve the leadership and governance model of the partnership. One participant reported that, *"There is a question around leadership, whether we will continue to have automatic rotational chairperson or we will vote for a chairperson based on a certain set of criteria. The size of the ManCom will also become an issue for discussion once you have many members. The future size of the secretariat is also something that we are discussing" [9:49, 46].* Another participant noted that, *"We used to have country coordinators as mini-secretariats in each of the countries and that is open for discussion if we still need those. We currently assigned those roles to some of our staff. Overall, I think we have an evolving structure which is reviewed every three years and adjusted accordingly" [9:50, 46].*

In terms of validation, from the focus group of the national interorganisational partnership one participant argued that, *"One of the lessons we have learned as GIZ in terms of working with partners on projects, [is that] one tends to over-plan and overdesign projects by fitting all the activities that one seeks to achieve to fit neatly into a plan in a clear order"* [549:80, 38]. Another complementary view was that, *"One must not be fixated on having a neat implementation plan and a picture of what will happen. As long as there is openness, sharing, and everyone knows what other people are doing"* [549:83, 38]. Another participant posited that, *"I would say we need leadership that would strategise"* [550:50, 27].

5.3.1.5 Visioning

This relational leadership practice denotes a situation whereby participants mentioned the word vision as part of their own definition of leadership and leadership practices, as well as practical actions that implicitly or explicitly referred to envisioning or contributing towards the achievement of the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the partnership.

A first lens was about the fact that the vision construct was quite prevalent across most of the definitions of the concepts of a leader, leadership and leadership practices that were provided by the participants. One participant defined a leader thus, *"This is a kind of a person who has a vision of where she or he wants to go and manages to lead a group towards that direction"* [6:4, 10]. Another participant indicated that, *"A leader must have a clear vision of what needs to be achieved… A leader must then ensure that the vision is understood by staff within the organisation or whoever is part of the team that the person is leading that has to execute the vision"* [3:2, 8]. In this context, visioning is regarded a practice of leading by organisational leaders and their role goes beyond formulating the vision, to communicating it in order for others who are being led to understand the strategic direction of the organisation or collective partnership.

A second lens was about the moment of bilateral engagement between the host organisation, CLEAR-AA, and the interorganisational partnership Management Committee (ManComm) around the development of the vision statement for the partnership. One participant cited the following experience, *"I think there was struggle initially in terms of understanding what this peer-learning vision was and how CLEAR-AA could execute a project that could help fulfil that TM's vision and mission"* [3:35, 31].

A third lens was a view that locates visioning at the level of concrete action rather than aspirations. One participant stated that, *"It was about facilitating together and conceptualising the approach. There was a planning process and engagement with donor X. Then we spent time designing the programme and developing good operational procedures, tools and guidelines jointly as the three countries" [4:4, 11].* Another participant indicated that, *"…there was a need for investing resources in order to make the vision come alive. Initially it was just an aspiration" [3:22, 23].*

A fourth lens was a sense of comradery that was demonstrated by the use of words like fraternity, solidarity, alumni and common agenda, which implied a vision of the partnership. One participant argued that, *"One of the things that I have observed over time is that people who left TM… remained available as some kind of alumni to provide advice and maintain the relationships… In essence that created a community of people that care about each other and the common purpose of TM. It builds commitment… whereby people had strong ownership of the TM objectives and vision" [4:51, 110].*

A fifth lens was about the value of a vision as a motivational factor behind the participation of members in the partnership. One participant argued that, *"I do think there was a great sense of vision behind the creation of TM. There was a lot of thought put around the criteria for bringing new countries. How to ensure that the principle of give and take was maintained so that there were no free-riders. It was based on the understanding that those who joined ManCom would have to do a lot of work. That principle of saying: I will have something to learn if I join this was a pull-factor that I think helped sustain commitment" [7:88, 84].*

A sixth lens was a sense that the partnership assists its members in terms of capacitating them to formulate their own vision statements. One participant argued that, *"I believe that TM's articulation of a roadmap which a country should take in order to develop its M&E system is useful. We have such a roadmap in the TM website" [9:40, 34].* In this case the roadmap served as a guide for countries to implement their own systems of evaluation.

A seventh lens was about the practice of regular reviews and ad hoc evaluations of the partnership. These were not used for accountability only, but also for the purpose of learning from experience in order to reimagine the future through visioning. One of the participants mentioned that, *"We have also conducted an evaluation of TM in order to draw lessons learnt and get recommendations of what needs to be done differently going forward" [9:40, 34].* This practice

resonates with the vision of TM in terms of promoting use of evidence to inform decision-making. In this case, TM applied the practice of evaluation onto its own day-to-day work.

In terms of validation, participants from the local interorganisational partnership were less optimistic. One participant argued that, *"I am a little bit concerned that how are we going to keep the momentum around implementation of the NACS. I am already seeing a split-off"* [549:61, 31]. Another participant noted that, *"It will be very, very important that the momentum is carried through"* [550:28, 19].

5.3.2 Relational leadership practices of agreeing

The relational practices of agreeing comprised of fourteen sub-themes, namely, collaborating, collective responsibility, common objectives, fostering agreement, hosting partners, informal relationships, inviting others, leading-as-dialogue, making decisions, negotiating, participating, partnering model, rotational leadership and trusting.

Figure 5.8:   The relational leadership practice of agreeing and its intersecting practices

5.3.2.1 Collaborating

The relational leadership practice of collaborating refers to situations where the participants mentioned the word "collaboration" or described the act of collaborating or working together.

Firstly, collaborating was mentioned as one of the main triggers for the formation of the partnership, even before it was formally launched, as demonstrated by this quotation, *"We had a side meeting and agreed that we should be taking this work forward. We agreed to collaborate in an informal way through sharing of ideas and inviting each other to country evaluation training workshops" [4:6, 14]*. In this regard, both the practice of agreeing and collaborating were explicitly expressed, which shows how fundamental they are to this partnership.

A second highlight is the explicit mentioning of collaboration in the mission statement of the partnership, *"In terms of the TM programme, we agreed on a set of outputs such as… collaborative tool development for evaluation systems" [4:13, 26]*. In this regard, collaborating is one of the ends to be achieved collectively. Another participant noted that, *"Strategically, the TM partnership seeks to strengthen different aspects of the countries' M&E systems through collaboration and peer-learning" [6:22, 45]*. Another one stated that, *"The aspect of collaboration is the spinal cord of TM, since TM is a voluntary association of countries and institutions that would like to collaborate and learn from each other. It is therefore a core principle" [9:55, 64]*.

A third highlight is where collaborating was embedded in the operational business model of the partnership in terms of how the partners worked together, *"The definition of projects we worked on was those whereby the three partners would contribute and derive value, and not necessarily all of them… Emphasis is placed on areas of common interest" [4:29. 59]*. Linked to this, was the view of collaborating as part of the organisational culture, *"The culture is very collaborative. Decision-making is by consensus and not by majority. Projects only go ahead if everyone agrees. The members are treated on an equal footing. If two or three countries are interested to collaborate in a particular area, they are supported to go ahead" [6:41, 52]*. In this case, the issue of agreeing is emphasised as being intertwined with collaboration.

A fourth highlight is how the partnership influenced collaboration internally at the level of the individual member countries as partners, *"At a country level the key institution is the government body that drives M&E since it would bring influence to others. Such a body needs to understand that it cannot achieve anything working alone, but it must bring others on board to collaborate in driving the country's developmental agenda. TM works with government in order to catalyse collaboration with other partners" [5:22, 28]*.

In the fifth highlight, collaborating is not made explicit, but as an application of a leadership model of taking the lead in project management: *"Leadership in this context is about taking responsibility for certain activities of the partnership… All activities of TM partnership are pursued by at least two or three of the member countries. For each activity there is a designated person who takes the lead. In that sense other participants follow the person who is taking the lead. Every member of the ManCom takes a lead in one or a few projects, which balances out roles and responsibilities"* [6:6, 13]. In the foregoing excerpt, the manner in which the process of collaborating is articulated clearly demonstrates intentionality in terms of activating collaboration and balancing participation. In this regard, collaboration is not only the *how* of doing the work (operational model), but also the operationalisation of the goal of the partnership. That is, if the project did not have someone allocated to lead it and there were no other partners involved, it would not be characterised as a typical partnership project that would make it onto the priority list.

Lastly, collaborating was portrayed as the embodiment of the participants in the partnership and branding of the products of the partnership. One participant stated that, *"Let me make an example of the collaborative curriculum project that I led…"* [3:18, 20]. In this instance, the project explicitly has the word collaborative in its nomenclature, which is about the branding of the partnership product.

In terms of validation, the participants from the national interorganisational partnership mentioned that, *"I think the concept of whole-of-government and society approach became alive and practiced during the development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy…[We] really gave stakeholders an impression that we do want them to be part of the process. I think it worked well"* [549:60, 31]. Another participant reported that, *"The agreement was that both government and civil society should both run the process as co-chairs. There was emphasis that the process must be driven by both government and civil society, not just one party"* [550:13, 12].

5.3.2.2 Collective responsibility
The relational leadership practice of collective responsibility refers to those instances where participants described actions or outcomes that demonstrated the sharing of responsibilities or mutual accountability. Collective responsibility is closely associated with collaborating.

A first dimension of collective responsibility was at the level defining leadership. One participant argued that, *"Leadership is about helping an organisation, or a group of people, to decide where*

it wants to go and facilitate a process together" [4:2, 8]. In this case the operational word is "together" in terms of decision-making and facilitation of the processes.

A second dimension relates to the operations of the partnership, *"The whole peer-learning in TM is very unique…It operates in a much more collective way, respecting each other"* [4:25, 53]. In this instance, there is an emphasis on the uniqueness of the collective approach and is linked to mutual respect among the partners. As a result, the partnership was seen as a collective effort since one participant noted that, *"TM is seen as a product of all the partners"* [4:34, 56].

A third dimension is about how the collective effort was instrumental to the establishment of the TM brand and related plans during the formative stages of the partnership, *"TM was not just something that I and Mr Alpha came up with and sent to people for endorsement. We worked on the plan and concept together"* [4:39, 80].

A fourth dimension is around the role or agency of the chairperson in terms of their leadership style. One participant reported that, "*I was playing a leadership role then as the chair. I ensured that the processes were developed and agreed upon collectively. We would discuss them in our meetings. We produced what we needed to produce in an efficient way on the time available. Obviously a more participatory style of working does take longer. And there are benefits to it and it is very important to ensure that participatory style becomes part of the culture of a partnership like TM"* [4:40, 83]. The above quotation highlights the importance of a central leader in the form of the chairperson, who must have a participatory style, which would be a driver behind collective agreements. Moreover, the "participatory style" was institutionalised into the organisational culture of the "partnership like TM".

A fifth dimension was about creating conducive conditions for collective action through intentionally designing the organisation to be flat. One participant argued that, *"If you are dealing with many stakeholders who, within their own specific spaces are affected by tight bureaucratic red-tape, when you are bringing them together the one thing you would not want to do is to emulate those bureaucracies that exist within those specific spaces. You want to create the space that is more fluid and flexible so that you can work together easier as the different partners. That is what I found to be very helpful with TM"* [8:35, 32]. In this regard there is an appreciation that TM's structure enables stakeholders to participate and "work together easier".

Lastly, and sixthly, there was an acknowledgement that collective effort works because of the contribution of different partners. As one participant put it, *"There is an understanding that each member has a good contribution to bring to the table and together we all learn from each other"* [9:17, 14]. In this case collective responsibility is implied.

In terms of validation, the national interorganisational partnership expressed the following view, "*After the change of administration there was this strong interest in building relations and buy into this idea of a social compact" [549:38, 22]*.

From the focus group of the international interorganisational partnership, one participant reported that, *"Co-production… happens with other people in interaction with as well… They left me with the feeling that all three of us had a say on the development of the blog" [552:15, 16]*.

5.3.2.3 Common objectives
The relational leadership practice of common objectives codifies instances where the participants explicitly referred to the word objectives or an equivalent concept, like goals or aims, as well as implicit references in the use of phrases like common agenda or common vision. Invariably, this practice is closely associated with the practice of visioning and other relational terms that denote collectiveness such as collective responsibility.

A first perspective of the practice of common objectives came up at the level of defining the leadership construct. As one participant mentioned, *"Leadership is about ensuring intentionally that there is commitment. This is achieved through developing a common agenda in a participatory manner in terms of accommodating views and inputs of the partners" [9:46, 37]*.

A second perspective was about unity in diversity in the sense that, while the partnership was formed by *"different countries and different institutions, which different backgrounds and different contexts; all aim to achieve common objectives through TM" [9:5, 11]*.

A third perspective was that common objectives served as the catalyst for the formation of the partnership. As one participant argued, "*It became clear that the three countries were quite ahead in terms of establishing their M&E systems and that inspired them to come up with ideas of forming an association or club of countries that were having national M&E systems" [9:12, 14]*. In this

case, the common interest of "having national M&E systems" is highlighted as the main driver behind the establishment of the partnership.

A fourth perspective of characterising the common objectives was around the alignment of the individual objectives of the parties in the partnership to the common agenda. "*Our respective role is about influencing how service delivery is done in each country. Each of our country partners has specific units for improving service delivery*" *[9:41, 11]*. As such, in addition to national M&E systems as a primary objective, service delivery was highlighted as the secondary objective.

A fifth perspective was about various interpretations of the abovementioned common objectives and an explanation of how they contributed to decision-making that seeks to address common concerns. The following quotation specifies and summarises the common objectives thus, *"For example, we grapple with issues of how to ensure that planning and budgeting are informed by M&E evidence and how to build capacity of M&E. How strong are our policy systems in our respective countries? How are budgets responsive to the needs of the people? How are government programmes communicated to the citizens and the voice of the civil society? We are kind of brought together by common interest and similar characteristics of the partner countries. We seek to improve service delivery"* *[9:42, 11]*.

In summary, the practice of collective objectives is part of a definition of leadership and in the context of this partnership it was about the common agenda of strengthening country M&E systems, enhancing service delivery, unity of purpose, and supporting decision-making to address specific problems.

5.3.2.4 Fostering agreement
The relational leadership practice of fostering agreement refers to specific instances where the word agreement was explicitly mentioned or where there was a process of facilitating agreement among parties, as well as other actions aimed at achieving agreement.

Firstly, at the level of defining the leadership construct, there were views that saw leadership as the ability to foster agreement. One participant stated that, "*The leader should be able to foster partnership and collaboration among the relevant actors, so that decisions are made at the right time and feedback is done so that adjustments can be made along the way*" *[5:42, 51]*. Another participant argued that, "*Leadership also means the capability to implement the agreed upon*

projects of the TM partnership" [1:14, 14]. A third one argued that, *"Let's say there is a difficult decision to make among people, leaders are often the people who will bring people to a decision and to move on. Efficiency is about getting consensus" [2:78, 112].* In this regard, the role of leaders and leadership in fostering agreement is emphasised.

Secondly, one partner highlighted their role of facilitating the expansion and influence of the partnership in their sub-region through stakeholder engagements based on their language advantage and expectations that emanated from the sense of being viewed as a leader. The participant said, *"As Benin we are viewed as a leader in the Francophone region and we have shared our experiences with Mali, Togo, Senegal, etc. We are working hard to bring more Francophone countries to TM to make sure that it does become truly a continent-wide partnership" [1:75, 89].* In this regard, the practice of fostering agreement is presented as the agency of an individual partner organisation and country as a leader in this particular domain.

Thirdly, the role of technology, like the use of emails, was acknowledged as facilitators of decisions by the leaders. As one participant noted, *"The ManCom does take decisions through emails…The emails are sometimes for lower level kind of decision-making or like if we have talked about something… and then it's like a follow up or we needed more information. Or something that needs a yes or know and it is rarely about changing a decision" [2:21, 43].* This example, also denotes the specific type of decisions that are facilitated through emailing, that is, "lower-level kind of decision-making", which are administrative routines.

Fourthly, fostering agreement was viewed as a way of building relations among the partners as driven by specific positional leaders within the partnership. As one participant noted, *"When I started as a Programme Manager I tried to facilitate one-on-one conversations to gain people's rapport" [2:41, 64].* Here the agency of an individual is highlighted and how they used in-person engagement as a strategy to foster agreements. This is reinforced by the following quotation from another participant, "*What is important in a structure like TM is to have someone like the Programme Manager who is the glue that holds everything together. The PM is the person in-between who interfaces with everyone" [8:48, 43].* The metaphor of the "glue that holds everything together" emphasises how this role fosters cohesion in the partnership of this nature.

Fifthly, the role of having formal legal instruments as agreements was mentioned. "*As with anything, especially evaluation, you need to create an enabling environment. For some countries*

they may need memorandum of understanding" [2:89, 124]. Another example of an instrument that was identified as important for fostering agreements was a concept note, as mentioned in the following quotation, *"So, I would say a concept note was an anchor of it which went through a lot of thinking and a lot of brainstorming in terms of developing something that could be regarded as innovative*" [3:38, 31].

Sixthly, there was also acknowledgement of the status of the partner within the partnership as an agreed operational partnership model. *"When CLEAR-AA was an implementing partner, there was clarity that CLEAR-AA needed to execute some work for TM*" [3:41, 34].

Lastly, fostering agreement was viewed as an ethical issue. One participant argued that, *"If there is a compliance rule within the university as our host or from our partners such as terms and conditions within grant funding, we don't veer from that. Don't go into any grey areas. The only time that things are negotiable is when the rules are silent about it. And then we have to ask as to how our integrity will stand in terms of this decision externally"* [3:123, 95]. In this regard, compliance to rules is highlighted as non-negotiable and, in their absence, "integrity" and reputation are viewed as the moral test for decisions taken.

5.3.2.5 Hosting partners

This relational practice of the hosting of partners covers situations where the word "hosting" was used in a significant way or specific events where one partner hosted others or the act of being a host for the partnership.

Firstly, the activity of hosting the founding event for the partnership was viewed as a significant event that was highlighted by some of the participants, for example, *"The initial encounter was in 2012 whereby DPME hosted an African workshop of seven countries on M&E in partnership with CLEAR"* [4:5, 14].

Secondly, the practice of hosting partners was used to build relationships with external stakeholders. For instance, one participant mentioned that, "*TM has previously organised workshops for non-members such as representatives from government who are not members of TM. It used such workshops to share experiences of the members with the non-members"* [6:44, 58].

Thirdly, the practice of hosting partners was noted as a non-physical act of serving as the guardian of another partner. One participant indicated that, "*Initially CLEAR-AA was a host for TM to get off the ground. It was a suitable host because part of its own mandate was committed to learning; to building markets; to expand M&E practice across the African continent*" *[7:16, 16].* In this regard, there is also an acknowledgement of a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship.

Lastly, the enabler of the practice of hosting partners was viewed as openness and its benefit, reciprocity. The following participant was not an insider in terms of being a member of the ManCom and they expressed a sense of appreciation for this practice, "*By design of the TM space, it allowed for open engagements as colleagues rather than bureaucratic positions. I like working with people from TM. They have been keen on inviting participation of… staff in their activities. We also invite each other as TM countries to our respective activities*" *[8:41, 37].*

5.3.2.6 Informal relationships
The relational leadership practice of informal relationships refers to specific cases whereby the participants mentioned informality in a significant way or specifically shared an experience whereby informality was valued.

The notion of intentionally building relationships informally was indicated as crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of the partnership. "*I think, a lot of the influence is relational. So, people who are new tend to sit back and watch what's happening. It's only when the relationships are built that influence starts happening. I know for a fact that most of the most impactful conversations in terms of ensuring influence happen in private through a phone call or when we used to sit face-to-face over a lunch or dinner together*" *[2:13, 34].*

Informality was also viewed as part of the organisational culture. On participant noted that, "*I think everyone in TM has dropped their formal hats when it comes to meetings and learning spaces… New people see how others relate to each other and start assimilating into the TM culture*" *[2:44, 64].*

The practice of informality played a crucial role in the founding of the partnership as demonstrated by the following excerpt, "*In the first case it was about an informal discussion with key protagonists which were myself, from South Africa, Mr Alpha (Uganda) and Mr Beta (Benin) about the potential*

to collaborate on M&E and mobilising funding from Donor X which was keen on supporting emerging countries" [4:3, 11].

The practice was used to address challenges faced by the partners that would otherwise not be possible to voice in formal meetings. *"I also had a side meeting with Benin representative who needed advice in terms of handling certain challenges with evaluations in his country. He found that very useful"* [4:27, 53].

The practice was factored into the stakeholder engagement strategy which had three concentric circles. That is, core partners, collaborating partners and *"the third circle comprised a wide group of countries that had an interest, but still had a long way to go in terms of developing their M&E frameworks"* [7:23, 19].

5.3.2.7 Inviting others

The relational leadership practice of inviting others refers to situations where the act of inviting was mentioned as significant and this practice is closely related to hosting. Therefore, only those aspects that were not deemed significant under the practice of hosting partners will be presented under the practice of inviting others. The distinguishing factor between the two is that, inviting implies taking the initiative to call and attract others, whilst hosting is about entertaining those who have already been invited as guests.

Inviting others happened among country partners and with other stakeholders external to the TM partnership domain, as demonstrated by the following quotation, *"The Benin Evaluation Days is a major event in the National Evaluation System, whereby we invite both local and international stakeholders…Internationally, we have participation from across the African Continent, from Europe, from the USA, from Canada, from Latin America and from Asia. The TM peer countries are also invited and have participated in various events over the years. International organisations such as UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank and so forth, are invited"* [1:33, 25].

Implicitly, inviting others occurs as a request for support and not merely participation in events as demonstrated by the following excerpt, *"TM was requested twice to provide support to the Benin Parliament to help Members of Parliament understand evidence production and evidence use"* [1:40, 31]. Another participant gave the following example, *"In the initial stages we invited the two countries to our evaluation training courses that we were piloting. We also invited them to*

participate in the evaluation design clinic, which introduced them to the theory of change approach" [4:10, 26]. The purpose of the invitation is to enhance capacity and influence others into the main agenda of the partnership, which is about building various aspects of the National Evaluations Systems and the use of evidence to inform decision-making and service delivery.

The intentionality inherent in the relational practice of inviting others is demonstrated by the following quotation: *"We have, at a programmatic level, tried to include more people in the club at various stages…We invite them into TM spaces so that they could form those relationships, so that they could be influenced, so that they could also influence others, as well as allow them space to bring their knowledge and expertise into the TM fold" [2:57, 82].* In this regard, it is part of the programme design to be more inclusive and enhance relationality and mutual "influence", which are important relational leadership practices.

5.3.2.8 Leading-as-dialogue

The relational leadership practice of leading-as-dialogue refers to instances where the participants indicated two-way communication or emphasised conversations or engagements or collective discussions towards addressing a specific issue of mutual interest or greater good.

A first perspective was at the level of defining leaders, where leading-as-dialogue was viewed thus, *"I suppose that often times they [leaders] would have good negotiation skills, an ability to persuade and influence. I would say that in TM, most of that is verbal. Of course, there are non-verbal signals when we are all together. I think there is a skill of how to talk to people and how to engage them that is conversational and verbal. Such leaders are not writing long posts to win hearts and minds like that" [2:18, 37].* In fact, being able to dialogue was viewed as a requisite skill for a leader in terms of "having good negotiation skills, an ability to persuade and influence… how to talk to people and to engage them." There is also a contrast between verbal dialogue and writing, where this participant views dialogue as essentially "conversational and verbal" and is also about impact in terms of how "to win hearts and minds".

A second perspective was about the purpose of the partnership, *"As a learning partnership we need to have a safe space to reflect and to discuss issues and hold each other accountable. In my view it is crucial to get people to work together and build bonds of trust" [2:26, 64].* In this regard, reflection and discussion are deemed as forms of dialogue that help with ensuring mutual accountability and "working together" and building "bonds of trust." The latter purpose of building

trust through dialogue is further reinforced by the following quotation: *"Although we have a common TM identity, there are slight cultural differences among countries. Some are more hierarchical than others. In my experience, the chair has always had a good sense of what could be shared, getting people to talk to each other and maintain bonds" [2:93, 133].* In this regard, dialogue serves to strengthen "common identity" while recognising and appreciating differences. The agency of the positional role of the chairperson is also highlighted in terms of stimulating such dialogue.

A third perspective came from the recognition that leading-as-dialogue was something that others were investing on in the broader community of practice. Hence, there were deliberate steps to learn from others who shared the same goals as depicted by the following quotation: *"We also hosted a webinar on peer-learning in order to share ideas with other people that are trying to develop similar learning systems" [2:98, 142].* In this case the practice of leading-as-dialogue is about sharing information. Another approach that was used to enhance dialogue was via social media and webinars: *"We used the website and conducted webinars to engage in dialogues with practitioners in the field of M&E about topical issues. The intent was to reach as many people as possible in order to sell our story. Social media helped TM to get feedback from other stakeholders" [4:55, 115].* The dimension of getting feedback is an important element of dialogue.

A fourth perspective relates to how dialogue as brainstorming was used to innovate, *"I guess innovation came when we put together something on paper conceptually and there was a lot of back-and-forth discussion…" [3:35, 31].* Furthermore, the development of a concept-note as a product of dialogue and brainstorming is also confirmed by the following quotation, *"So, I would say a concept note was an anchor of it which went through a lot of thinking and a lot of brainstorming in terms of developing something that could be regarded as innovative" [3:38, 31].*

A fourth perspective relates to how the participants viewed themselves as positional leaders who applied leading-as-dialogue in their own organisations, *"I have a recent example whereby our funding was coming to an end and that was affecting the timing of signing-off of new contracts. Staff were getting anxious whether their contracts would be renewed or not. We decided that it was important to allay people's fears. We had a two-pronged process whereby we had individual calls to people whose contracts were coming to an end within the next three to six months. We also had a group meeting where we explained exactly what was going on" [3:103, 80].* In this

instance, dialogue was deemed important for risk-mitigation in terms of managing staff anxiety and fears through one-on-one and group dialogues.

A fifth perspective relates to how the participants reflected on their role as chairpersons of the partnership, *"When I was the chair, I designed the agenda in such a manner that it was a facilitated conversation rather than a traditional formal meeting. We would have what I call a flow of energy that would work for us as opposed to a formal meeting protocol. Using the facilitation model, we would use our meetings to develop new ideas" [4:20, 44].* In this case, agenda-setting and the "facilitated conversation" are activities of leading-as-dialogue.

A sixth perspective was around the use of dialogue to communicate messages via the mainstream media and educate others about your own jargon as a practitioner, *"As a leader you must really know how to engage with media… I remember a scenario when I was invited to some of the media houses. They did not understand the concept of 'results' and they were using the word 'impact' differently. It was my duty to make them distinguish between everyday use of the terminology compared to what we mean in the development and public sector context" [5:8, 11].* The intention of leading-as-dialogue in this instance is both about mitigating the risk of being misunderstood, as well as influencing your target audience through the intelligent use of the media.

A seventh, and the last, perspective was about the ethics of leading-as-dialogue*, "At the same time, we must speak truth to authority. We must acknowledge what is good and also what is not good in a more respectful and humane manner" [5:37, 45].* In this regard, openness, integrity and respect are viewed as ingredients of leading-as-dialogue.

5.3.2.9 Making decisions
The relational leadership practice of making decisions refers to instances where participants mentioned decision-making or described the process of making decisions or suggested ways in which decision-making could be improved.

A first dimension was about viewing decision-making as part of the definition of a leader and the leadership construct. One participant argued that, "*Leadership is about helping an organisation (or a group of people) to decide where it wants to go and facilitate a process together" [4:1, 8].*

A second dimension was about who makes what type of a decision in the context of this interorganisational partnership. One participant stated that, *"The chairperson does not really have powers in terms of strategic decision-making. He or she only facilitates decision-making through the ManCom meeting. He or she only makes administrative decisions rather than strategic ones, which are done by the ManCom. The technical decisions are made at the Technical Committee and strategic decisions at the Strategic ManCom"* [1:67, 74]. Another participant recognised that, *"The ManCom makes the decisions, although I have only been involved in their planning meetings"* [8:75, 64-65]. Another one confirmed that, *"There are strategic and administrative decisions. The chairperson and Programme Manager make operational decisions. Policy and programming decisions are made democratically through the TM ManCom meetings which approve new polices and programme documents. At country-levels, the country coordinators make own decisions about what needs to be done within their countries"* [9:60, 70]. As such, there is a very clear hierarchy of governance structures and the nature of decisions that they were empowered to make.

5.3.2.10 Governance structures

The relational leadership practice of governance structures refers to instances where the participants described governance structures or their operations.

A first viewpoint was about how governance is conducted within one of the partners. One participant reflected that, *"We use our Executive Management…[which] has developed organically over the years based on the three senior-most people meeting weekly. We also have an open-door policy that whenever there is a major decision to be made at a project level we make ourselves available. If we feel that particular issues require input from the line managers, we defer the discussion to the next Executive Management meeting or call a special meeting of senior people. Decisions of high magnitude such as those that are about the direction of the organisation or finances are done collectively by the senior management. On a case-by-case basis we also hold staff meetings"* [3:100, 76-77].

A second viewpoint was about how decisions were made. One participant indicated that, *"Decisions were made by consensus. PM and Chair play a role in terms of making minor decisions to act on the big strategic decisions. There is strong liaison between the PM and the chair to ensure day-to-day operations"* [4:43, 92].

A third viewpoint was about reflecting on the quality of decisions. One participant noted that, *"We have good ethics in TM. Members respect procedures and very transparent in terms of what they do"* [1:76, 92].

5.3.2.11 Negotiating

The relational leadership practice of negotiating refers to those instances where the participants either mentioned the word negotiation or described an experience that demonstrated the process of negotiating as significant in how they do business. This is closely linked to the relational leadership practices of making-decisions and leading-as-dialogue.

A first perspective was around articulating the process of negotiating for the establishment of the partnership among the partners: *"In December 2014 we had our first planning workshop in South Africa, where we conceptualised the TM programme together. In March 2015 we did some detailed action-planning in Uganda. Finally, the initiative got funded by Donor X since 2016"* [4:12, 26]. In this regard, negotiating is implicit in the conceptualisation, planning and funding processes of the partnership.

A second perspective was that at a bilateral level negotiating happened with the host partner, *"…there was a lot of back-and-forth discussion between the TM ManCom and CLEAR-AA… I think there was a struggle initially in terms of understanding what this peer-learning vision was and how CLEAR-AA could execute a project that could help fulfil that TM's vision and mission"* [3:35, 31].

A third perspective was about negotiating as a skill, as one participant noted that, *"Mr X being a relational person who is able to work with different personalities assisted in terms of convincing people to work with us"* [3:20, 25]. The act of convincing implies negotiating skills which the participant also regarded as an embodiment of relationality. Another participant recognised the manifestation of different negotiating skills at informal versus formal levels, *"But when you speak to him privately he is very thoughtful, insightful; persuasive as a human"* [2:33, 61]. Being persuasive is recognised as something that was experienced at an interpersonal level. The role of negotiating at an informal interpersonal level is further confirmed by the following quotation: *"The assignment is to meet the person or country and build rapport around key areas of potential partnership or common interest"* [31:109, 83]. In this case, there is intentionality when networking to negotiate areas of potential partnering.

The fourth perspective was about how negotiating was seen as the role of the leader based on their own personal experience within their own partner organisation. This is demonstrated by the following quotation, *"From the point of view of the work of my department…, we had to appreciate that other departments already have their own systems, ethos, allegiances, values and ways of doing things. So as a leader it becomes important to understand all those dynamics so that you can bring everyone around the table in a seamless manner" [5:4, 8].* The act of "bringing everyone" demonstrates the use of negotiating to coordinate stakeholders.

5.3.2.12 Participating
The relational leadership practice of participating was about those cases where participants emphasised the significance of participation or a participatory approach in relation to how leadership was practiced within the partnership or by individual leaders or individual partners.

A first lens was around the appreciation of the value-add of the practice of participating. One participant noted that, *"I only started to understand TM structures last year when I became member of the ManCom" [3:54, 43].* In this regard, the value-add is new knowledge about how the partnership works. Similarly, another participant noted the value of meetings, *"By having the meetings, we were able to give people an opportunity to speak out and discuss new ideas openly" [4:45, 98].* Therefore, participating is deemed as important for deliberating on "new ideas openly", where openness is also an ethical concern.

A second lens was about the rules of participating and how they could be improved. One participant said, *"Sometimes, minor challenges emerge from non-country members. For examples, when we were discussing admission of new members, the voice of the technical partners was quite strong in terms of disqualifying the interested new members. This is a country partnership and therefore the technical partners should only come to provide technical advice rather than to make decisions in terms of what needs to be done" [1:15, 49].* In this regard, the participation of a certain category of partners is contested in the context of making certain types of decisions.

A third lens was about participating in the events. One participant noted that, *"The TM peer countries are also invited and have participated in various events over the years" [1:32, 25].* Another one reported that*, "We have attracted a lot of participation in webinars than on writing"*

[2:71, 97]. This latter point compares the level of participation in certain activities (e.g. webinars) versus others (e.g. writing).

A fourth lens was about organisational and individual level participation and its impact. One participant indicated that, *"If no one demonstrates commitment, as a partnership we fall apart. It is demonstrated through responding to emails, turning up to meetings, making inputs to plans, producing the reports, etc. It's basically about turning up" [2:75, 109].* The emphasis is commitment to participate through various means and summing up participating as "turning up". Another participant noted that, *"TM also participates in international conferences. For instance, in some of the panels I participated on, TM was very impactful" [5:34, 42].*

A fifth lens was about the identification of the participants in the partnership as part of defining its boundaries. One participant articulated the evolution of the partnership as follows, *"Initially it was Uganda, Benin and South Africa. In the second phase we were able to recruit Ghana, Niger and Kenya. In the ManCom we have IDEV of AfDB and CLEAR-AA that host the Secretariat at Wits University. We are looking at new proposals to grow even bigger, both horizontally and vertically" [9:19, 17].*

The sixth lens was about measures being used to encourage participation of the members. One participant observed that, *"We used our resources to ensure optimal participation in physical events, formally and informally" [4:22, 47].* Another one drew from personal experience within their own organisation and reported that, *"Building the relationship was not difficult at all. It facilitated an informal atmosphere whereby one would walk into another person's office and say: by the way I am busy with this, are you interested to participate?" [3:60, 46].* In this instance, the emphasis was on using informality to prompt interest for participating. Another one reported that, *"For each activity there is a designated person who takes the lead. In that sense other participants follow the person who is taking the lead. Every member of the ManCom takes a lead in one or a few projects, which balances out the roles and responsibilities" [6:8, 13].* In this case, participating is denoted as "taking the lead", which is explicitly a type of a relational leadership practice.

5.3.2.13 Partnering model

The relational leadership practice of the partnering model refers to instances where the participants described the partnership model or explicitly noted the operating model of the interorganisational partnership.

Firstly, there was articulation of the partnership model in terms of how partners were categorised into a hierarchy: For instance, one participant indicated that, "*In summary, the core was made up of category A countries who were members of ManComm, category B countries were collaborators who were still at early stages of establishing their M&E capacity, and category C was the wider group of countries that were interested to start their M&E systems*" *[7:24, 19]*. Another participant described the same model and highlighted its value-add thus: *The system of having three levels of collaboration in terms of core-countries in ManCom, collaborating countries who were potential partners and wider stakeholders who were interested in what TM is doing helped with developing analytical frameworks in terms of where each of the countries were in their capacities*" *[7:98, 93]*.

Secondly, there was a description of how the partnership functions in practice by way of using their own experience and examples from the perspective of being the partner. One participant stated that, "*In TM, peer-learning comes in four levels. There is country-level where TM facilitates or participates in the development of national M&E systems such as through Evaluation Weeks. Secondly, there is a level whereby TM organises forums where TM partners share country experiences via webinars and TM workshops. Out of these engagements, members take lessons that they could apply in their own countries. Thirdly, TM also participates in regional conferences such as those of the African Evaluation Association (AfREA). TM organised sessions within the AfrEA where knowledge and lessons are shared with other M&E practitioners. And, fourthly, there is a global platform such as those forums that are organised by UN agencies like the UNICEF conference that I mentioned before. In the global platforms, TM shares its own experiences and also learns lessons from others*" *[5:66, 69]*.

Thirdly, there was a description of the partnership model in terms of who is regarded as a legitimate representative of the partners involved. On participant noted that*, "Some are from the offices of the President or Prime Minister or from line ministries… Others only have a mandate to evaluate the programme of government or the political party in power. And others have a broader mandate of helping citizens to hold governments accountable to its citizenry*" *[6:59, 85].* Another participant indicated that, "*What is different about TM is that the partnership drew from the like-mindedness of people; of individuals that were in leadership positions around use of evidence in decision-making. And people that were tasked with or had a desire to build systems to enable the*

use of evidence in decision-making. I think that likeminded individuals decided to come together to help one another in strengthening and deepening their National Evaluation Systems" [7:11, 13].

Fifthly, there was a description of the partnership model in terms of spatial organisation. One participant reported that, "*I certainly think that meeting in different localities was really useful. So, like having a meeting in South Africa; having a meeting in Uganda; having a meeting at the African Development Bank in Côte d'Ivoire; having a meeting in Benin – was hugely successful. Not just having meetings in Johannesburg even though it was cheaper to do so. Trust-building happens by understanding context within which members are operating in and seeing that context"* [7:79, 75]. In this case, the emphasis was on using meeting venues to enhance mutual understanding of each other's physical environment and as a way of strengthening bonds among the partners.

Sixthly, there was articulation of the partnership model in terms of rolling out specific projects. One participant noted that, *"The way we do it within TM is that, for instance, the rapid evaluation approach was supported by TM to ensure that more rapid evaluations happened across the three countries. The idea was that through TM support, as the member countries we would develop our guidelines on rapid evaluations. In terms of practical operations, the approach was that we would apply and customise the guideline in our respective countries, but then there would be a way to converge at different spaces, whether we are at the meetings or we are at conferences, where we would converge to share experiences about that specific aspect of our work in our respective countries"* [8:19, 17].

Lastly, there was a description of each individual partner's operating model and how it complements the collective partnership model. One participant described the partnership model of their own organisation thus, "*As CLEAR-AA we have been very fortunate that we have had a lot of stakeholders who approached us to work with them. At the moment that is probably the primary modality of how we collaborate with partners and get approached to do joint-projects. We get approached by other development partners and UN agencies and so forth. Sometimes private companies who are contracted by bigger donors approach us who have come across the work of CLEAR-AA somehow. There is legitimacy we have earned in this space of evaluation capacity development"* [3:93, 69]. In this regard, the partnership model of the individual partner is viewed as different, but aligned and mutually beneficial to the interorganisational partnership.

5.3.2.14 Rotational leadership

The relational leadership practice of rotational leadership was formally adopted as an approach for rotating chairpersons in the international interorganisational partnership.

Firstly, the rotational leadership model was based on the fact that, *"The chair-ship of the TM partnership is held on an annual rotational basis" [6:36, 43].* As a model, one participant expatiated it thus, *"We had a system of rotational leadership whereby partner countries take turns in terms of the chair-ship role for a year each. The chair would then work closely with the Programme Manager in terms of planning meetings, making operational decisions. That depends on the time that a specific chair has, they could spend quite a significant amount of time working closely with the secretariat" [4:31, 65].*

Secondly, there was an explanation of why the model was adopted. One participant argued that, *"Through rotational leadership, we deliberately created a sense of shared ownership… Rotating the chair-ship ensured that TM is not seen as just a South African thing or identified with the founder chairperson, as Mrs-B's thing as it could have been seen. But TM is seen as a product of all the partners" [4:32, 68].* Another participant did not mention the model, but argued for rotation as a good leadership practice thus*, "Leaders must realise that they will not be there forever. Others who are followers today can become leaders tomorrow. Acknowledging all these things allows one to create space and not block other people from excelling. You must not compromise the potential of your team" [5:80, 81].*

Thirdly, there was an evaluation of the benefits of the rotational leadership model. One participant noted that, *"Because leadership of ManCom is held on a rotational basis, it has actually contributed to building leadership capacity of each of the champions and the member countries to learn from the technical aspects, coordination, peer-learning and sharing" [9:18, 14].*

Fourthly, there was a risk-assessment of the rotational leadership model and proposals for mitigation of those risks were put forward. One participant reported that, *"When it comes to the chairs, after Mr A stepped down, there was an obvious shift. Mr A set the vision and put a lot of work and energy into TM. This set the bar very high for the next incumbents of the chair-ship role. The other chairs did not really assert their own vision and actually deferred most of the responsibilities to the Secretariat" [7:56, 55].* Another participant observed that, *"There is a question around leadership, whether we will continue to have an automatic rotational chairperson*

or we will vote for a chairperson based on a certain set of criteria. The size of the ManCom will also become an issue for discussion once you have many members. The future size of the secretariat is also something that we are discussing" [9:49, 46]. In this case, the utility of the model is questioned in the case of future expansion, including the impact on the other structures. Another participant reported that the model has actually been revised as follows, *"Different set of challenges present themselves. For instance, this year we have two chairpersons or a chair and a co-chair. The reason is because the new chair is one of the new members and does not really have institutional memory. It was thought to be wise to have two leaders, me as co-chair as one of the historical members to support the new chairperson. That is one of the measures we put in place to address some of the new challenges" [9:48, 46].* The specific risk of loss of "organisational memory" was cited as the reason behind the reinforcement of the rotational chairperson with a co-chairperson.

5.3.2.15 Trusting
The relational leadership practice of trusting refers to instances where the participants specifically mentioned the word "trust" or described a trust-building exercise or intention or feeling.

A first perspective was about the trustworthiness of an organisation and its representatives. One participant argued that, *"At the end of the day, the value of an organisation or institution is measured by how much it is trusted. So, the issue of trust is very central to leadership in this sense" [9:51, 55].*

A second perspective was about factors that contribute to building trustful relationships. One participant argued that, *"It's a perception of how effective or how proficient this organisation is in what it does. And therefore, I trust and admire the leadership of the individual that is representing that organisation" [3:10, 13].* In this case, the representatives are trusted because of the trustworthy reputation of the organisation they come from. Another one stated that, *"I don't know if it would be correct for me to use the word ethical, but I would use the word trust. We valued that people were not there to take advantage of others, but build trustful relationships in line with the common objectives of TM" [4:48, 107].* This point equates trust with the ethical behaviour of not participating in a partnership because you want "to take advantage of others". Similarly, another participant argued that, *"Openness, honesty and objectivity are critical ingredients for building trust. So, it is important that nobody feels that members are hiding something or don't want them to have their voice" [5:37, 45].*

A third perspective was slightly different from the foregoing, since trust was seen as something that just happens as an integral part of leadership. One participant indicated that, "*Again, trust-building is one of those things that we have not thought through; it happens very organically*" *[3:80, 58]*. Another participant observed that, *"It was never in the formal spaces or more often it is once people trust each other and better able to understand each other's context and then can see the significance of what someone is saying and, I guess, how they have embodied leadership in their own context, which makes them look like more of a leader when they come to a group setting" [2:14, 34].* As such, in this regard trust is viewed as an integral component of leadership.

A fourth perspective was about the reflections of the participants regarding how they cultivated trust within their own organisations as leaders. One participant reported that, *"If I've got a senior person to manage that, I trust that they are committed to execute that to the best of their ability...I guess that is part of leadership characteristics as well" [3:91, 66].* In this regard, trust is viewed as synonymous with entrusting someone with a responsibility, as part of own leadership characteristics as a person in a position of authority. Another one reported that, *"I personally was able to play a leadership role in terms of bridging the divide between Anglophone and Francophone countries due to my ability to speak both languages. I was able to ensure that Mr Beta was able to participate and follow the discussion although he was not very fluent in English" [4:30, 62].* In this regard, trust is not mentioned explicitly, but as "bridging the divide" based on their own language competency as a leader in a partnership. Another one indicated that, *"I think we managed to set a culture where we trusted each other...We were not just dealing with each other from the distance. That helped set a foundation for sustained relations of trust which have kept TM up to so far" [4:37, 77].* This case emphasises the collective responsibility of building trust and its impact on the sustainability of the partnership.

5.3.3 Relational leadership practices of characterising leadership

The relational leadership practices of characterising leadership comprised of leadership traits and leadership behaviours.

Figure 5.9: **Relational leadership practices of characterising leadership as behaviours and traits**

5.3.3.1 Leadership behaviours

The characterisation of leadership in terms of leadership behaviours was identified by the participants as specific performances that leaders do or are expected to enact.

A first perspective emerged from the definitions of leadership provided by the participants, where they listed a set of behaviours and skills that they viewed as the embodiment of leadership or how a leader is expected to behave. *"I think leadership should do both: inspire psychologically as well as provide technical expertise and pathways to get there"* [7:6, 7].

A second perspective viewed leadership behaviours as specific types of individual skills, as one participant mentioned that, *"It has to do with soft skills, tone of communication, regularity of communication, the motives that come through when one is communicating. And these are kind of the intangible characteristics of a leader"* [3:115, 92].

A third perspective relates to the collective behaviours or the behaviours of the organisation. One participant argued that, *"The whole peer-leaning approach in TM is very unique… TM did not operate in an autocratic way. It operates in a much more collective way, respecting each other. It works in a more positive and relational manner"* [4:25, 53].

A fourth perspective was about certain behaviours that are expected when one is playing a particular role in the context of TM as an interorganisational partnership. One participant reported that, *"I lead a project X. There was a structured process in the sense that there was a template that I populated to develop the concept note for the project that I was leading. So, each project followed a certain predefined structure. You had to draft the concept note and submit to the group*

for the first round of comments. Then you take on board the comments received and resubmit to the group for discussion in the ManCom meeting where the concept note would be approved or sent back for further refinements. After approval the concept note would be submitted to the donor for funding. Then the project would be implemented according to its implementation plan. The implementation plan would contain specific timelines for the rollout of the project. As the lead person you would still play a role in overseeing the implementation of the project until its conclusion" [.6:12, 19]. This quote demonstrates how certain behaviours as practices were explicitly expected from the "lead persons" of projects.

5.3.3.2 Leadership traits

In terms of characterising leadership as leadership traits, participants mentioned inherent attributes of being a leader, not necessarily performance.

A first perspective relates to the general assumption on the part of the participants that leaders are individuals with very unique and mysterious traits that do not have to be specified. One participant mentioned that, *"It is important for us to understand in the organisation as to what makes a particular individual tick" [3:116, 92].* Another participant argued that, *"Since as a leader you have something that they might not have, it is important to motivate and empower your followers to be like you" [5:54, 57].*

A second perspective made a link between organisational traits and individual traits: One participant argued that, *"So, the gravitas and legitimacy and perception of the organisation you represent into a partnership can only take you so far; it is crucial that the person representing the organisation into the partnership begins to embody the perceived gravitas of their organisation" [3:16, 17].* Another one stated that, *"I think it is important for a leader to have some competency in the work of the organisation concerned or technical know-how about the operations of the organisation" [3:8, 10].*

A third perspective was about certain inherent behaviours that leaders are expected to embody as their distinguishing traits. A first participant said, *"You have to have maturity to trust others" [3:77, 55].* A second one argued that, "*Leadership is about being able to give guidance for work and for initiatives to be done" [8:3, 8].* A third one stated that, *"Leaders…[are] matured people and I think the countries sent very strong people to be representatives into the ManCom" [5:32, 36].*

A fourth perspective was about defining the nature of a relational leader both in terms of the relational leadership approach and in its application in practice in the context of the interorganisational partnership under study. One participant indicated that, "*So, in TM relational leadership is about focusing on the results. Results are about what change are we making out there through learning and sharing within TM*" *[7:31, 28].* Another one pointed out that, *"Champions would be like individuals who were movers and shakers within their countries" [9:7, 11].*

5.3.4 Relational leadership practices of changing

The relational leadership practices of changing indicated the changing of something from one state to another. The following practices were categorised under this theme: breaking silos, building capacity, centralising, empowering others, facilitating change, innovating, making an impact, producing outputs, reversing roles, and tacit emergence.

Figure 5.10:   The relational leadership practices of changing

5.3.4.1 Breaking silos

The relational leadership practice of breaking silos refers to actions aimed at removing barriers between partners or individuals or categories of people.

A first perspective was about establishing horizontal ways of working within the partnership. One participant argued that, *"It means that you have to walk a fine line. You have to recognise and respect people's formal status… Sometimes you do need to pull down those formal and bureaucratic ways of thinking and working"* [2:39, 64]. Another participant observed that, *"I think everyone in TM has dropped their formal hats when it comes to meetings and learning spaces"* [2:44, 64]. In this instance, there was an observation of change in terms of behaviour.

As second perspective was about an acknowledgement that the ethos of the partnership demands breaking down silos to cultivate trust. One participant reflected that, *"As a learning partnership we need to have a safe space to reflect and to discuss issues and hold each other accountable"* [2:42, 64].

A third perspective was about putting in place measures to nurture the partnership at a bilateral level through the use of joint-projects. One participant reported that, *"So, what we are trying to do now is to work on smaller initiatives and scale up later and say, okay, let's think about something concrete that we can work on together because we have a commitment to the partnership. We really do value the partnership"* [3:79, 55]. In this regard, there is a deliberate strategy to start small and grow bigger later as a way of building relations. In other words, there is a change management process being put in place.

A fourth perspective was about the use of social media, like WhatsApp, to develop relations. One participant noted that, "*I am actually in frequent contact with the TM protagonists via WhatsApp…Social media works well when you already have an established relationship"* [4:23, 39-40]. In this case, the role and place of social media as a communication platform is recognised for sustaining relations with partners.

The fifth perspective was about information sharing to encourage others to change their systems. One participant remarked that, *"We were all sharing new methods and tools and trying things out. It was very exciting!"* [4:46, 101]. The act of "trying out" denotes experimentation as a way of stimulating innovation for change.

A sixth perspective was about the need to change how the partnership works in terms of fully embracing bilingualism. One participant suggested that, *"If TM wants to be really pan-African, it must think carefully about equality in terms of use of languages. The real actions would include*

translation of all meetings and translation of all documentation" [7:69, 63]. In this regard, translation of everything was seen as an important consideration for the partnership to achieve its vision and become truly "pan-African" in character.

A seventh perspective relates to how champions were used as change agents. One participant indicated that, *"…we took a deliberate decision to send champions to countries that were in a very progressive state of developing their national M&E systems compared to the rest in the African Continent… Now all of them have M&E policies developed and approved and a lot of structures in place" [9:21, 20].* In this instance, the act of sending champions as change agents was regarded as having resulted in the partner countries putting in place new "policies" and "structures".

5.3.4.2 Building capacity

The relational leadership practice of building capacity in this context refers to actions that were meant to improve individual skills through training and coaching or technical support to institutions.

The first perspective was about the practice of capacity building being part of the programme design of the partnership. One participant reported that, *"is setup to be able to help country governments perhaps to experiment, innovate, or run projects that they cannot be able to set up themselves such as proof-of-concepts" [TM2:85, 121].* Another indicated that, *"We share experiences among countries in terms of what works well in each of the countries that other partners can learn from. TM is very instrumental in ensuring sharing of best practices among its member countries" [1:71, 86].*

A second perspective was about specifying the capacity building activities conducted. One participant reported that. One participant noted that, *"TM has many capacity building initiatives, upskill people, give voice, providing resources for people to enact new ideas" [2:92, 130].* Another one listed the activities as follows, *"We have deliberate training programmes across all the countries" [9:63, 79].* Another one mentioned the following activities, *"The learning component has impact stories and case studies, country-level shout-outs or achievements. The idea of best practice is embedded in the learning agenda. We are quite sensitive to various contexts in terms of what works and doesn't work in different contexts" [2:99, 145].*

A third perspective was about the purpose of the capacity building initiatives. One participant argued that, *"TM needed to prove its value and to help government step outside the bureaucracy and be able to try things and get going and move the ball a little bit" [2:87, 121].*

A fourth perspective was about identifying gaps and making proposals for new capacity building activities. One participant suggested that, "*In my view, TM should also be targeting a broader audience such as academia so that its practice could be taught at universities and used by emerging evaluators who might still be postgraduate students" [7:75, 72].*

The fifth perspective was around providing feedback on the impact of capacity building on their own country's programmes. One participant stated that, "*There are many benefits for being a member of the TM partnership. TM did a lot in terms of supporting Benin to build its NES and capacities" [1:42, 34].* Another one reported that, *"They have also helped us develop guidelines on rapid evaluations that we will ensure that the system is more responsive for decision-making. TM is always very dynamic since they specialise on national evaluation systems" [8:74, 61].*

5.3.4.3 Centralising

The relational leadership practice of centralising emphasised statements where participants identified the centrality of certain individuals or structures, such as focal points or secretariats, as significant for leading the partnership.

The first dimension was about identifying who were the central people in the operation of the partnership. *"The relationship is mainly between the secretariat and country focal points. The chairperson is not directly involved in operations and therefore does not have a full grasp of what is happening within each country…TM has to reorganise the role of the chairperson to be more hands-on on the implementation of TM projects" [1:62, 61].* In this regard, there was also a suggestion for changing the centrality of the programme manager to make the chairperson more central. Another participant suggested that, *"TM need to appoint dedicated focal persons who will be an interface between TM and the countries" [1:63, 64].*

The second dimension was about viewing centrality as a critical element of the definition of a leader or leadership. "*A leader must know the way, and knowing the way means that the leader has a clear understanding of where the team is going. A leader has a clear understanding of who is relevant for the process. A leader has a clear strategy of how to bring all the actors together. A*

leader has a clear appreciation of how people will work together. The leader should be able to foster partnership and collaboration among the relevant actors, so that decisions are made at the right time and feedback is done so that adjustments can be made along the way" [5:42, 51]. In this definition, a leader is viewed as someone who plays a central role in all crucial aspects of an organisation or partnership.

A third dimension is about the centrality in terms of the level of communication based on the structure of the operational model of the partnership. One participant noted that, *"So, communication was deepest among ManCom members, and there were newsletters and invitations to learning events. Category B group were invited to conferences. Category C received the newsletter and were invited to a few conferences and was not as intense as others in terms of communication" [7:25, 19].* In this regard, there is clear intentionality about who is central and the kind of content they can receive.

5.3.4.4 Empowering others

The relational leadership practice of empowering others is similar to the relational leadership practice of capacity building. The distinction is that, empowering activities were not structured as capacity building activities, like training and institutional support, but emerged in an organic and agile manner.

A first viewpoint was around the fact that empowerment was intentionally designed to be an integral part of how the partnership projects were rolled out to achieve the broader goal as demonstrated by the following quotation, *"Each project develops capacity in certain areas such as gender-responsive evaluations, or collaboration with civil society, or communicating about evaluations. So, each project is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the country M&E systems. Each project contains an element of training or developing guidelines or developing templates which the employees of the particular government could then apply after the project is over. Each TM project has explicit objective to strengthen capacities to strengthen country M&E systems and how they undertake and use own evaluation information" [6:50, 70].* In the forgoing quotations, empowerment is viewed as going beyond traditional and formal capacity building activities, like training, since it emerged as part of the collective action among the partners within the interorganisational partnership.

A second viewpoint was the role of leadership in terms of empowering a collective through participatory actions. One participant posited that, *"I also think one key thing for a leader is being able to draw from each of the team members and coordinate and facilitate to create an enabling environment so that all of these different competencies and skills can actually work together to achieve efficiency" [3:6, 8].* The notion of "different skills and competencies" working "together to achieve efficiency" talks to something beyond individual empowerment, but rather to the collective performance of the partnership, which could also be viewed as an interorganisational outcome of "efficiency".

A third viewpoint was about appreciating the uniqueness of the empowering approach and how it could be promoted as a best practice. One participant observed that, *"The fact that TM promotes government-led M&E is something that is well-received and could be shared with other stakeholders in the world" [1:70, 83].* Another participant reported that, *"…in Benin we adapted the MPAT tool from South Africa which is a best practice. It has great impact within our government" [1:72, 86].* Another participant confirmed that, *"Benin has played a key role to captivate Niger in terms of catalysing Niger's establishment of its own country's M&E system" [1:75, 89].* In all these cases, the emphasis is on country empowerment through peer-learning and knowledge sharing.

A fourth viewpoint was about how empowerment was done by positional leaders for their followers. One participant reported that, *"A lot of capacity building within CLEAR-AA comes from on-the-job learning. We keep the safety-net of keeping the more senior people involved in the projects" [3:94, 72].* The involvement of senior people in projects as "the safety-net" to facilitate "on-the-job" learning is an empowering strategy within one of the partners, which the participant celebrated.

A fifth viewpoint emphasised the agency of the collective in terms of facilitating mutual empowerment and empowering others. One participant argued that, *"I think by creating a space for a process that people could buy into, people did give their energy and commitment to make things work and take them forward. It was crucial to find roles for each of the participants" [4:42, 89].* Another one stated that, *"We sat down with all stakeholders and ensured that everyone was on board regarding what needed to be done. It was also a learning process for all of us" [5:53, 54].* The above quotations highlight the role of the collective in terms of "creating a space", "we

account to each other" and "ensuring that everyone was on board" to realise the "learning process for all".

5.3.4.5 Facilitating change

The relational leadership practice of facilitating change describes specific processes embarked upon by the participants to bring about change.

A first lens was about the definition of leadership or what a leader is expected to do. One participant argued that, *"I think leadership is really about inspiring a team to achieve organisational objectives and to bring about change" [7:3, 7].* Another participant noted that, *"Leadership also includes knowledge that is demonstrated to the team about the methodological steps for achieving that organisational change" [7:4, 7].* Another one stated that*, "Leadership is to help the organisation to move forward" [1:10, 11].* Another participant also noted that, *"A leader must also appreciate that whatever was initially defined before could change and should understand that not everyone had the same understanding" [5:2, 8].*

A second lens was noting the role of leadership in terms of bringing about innovation within the partnership. One participant who was not part of the management team observed that, *"There is a sense of innovation and trying out new things and learning from each other's experiences… TM people do not just want to do the standard things, they want change and innovation" [4:47, 104].* Another contended that, *"In TM we believe that you don't have to have all the resources, you just need to have faith to catalyse change and motivate innovation that will turn the system and enable the system to work very well" [5:15, 22-23].*

A third lens was about how the change process is done. One participant reported that, *"When we started, there was a lot of those that were weaker on M&E than others. But when we started discussing, interacting and critiquing each other's work things began to improve. After the first few meetings, the ice broke as people started not being too sensitive about criticism. They were keen to come forward with challenges experienced so that they could get ideas in terms of how to address those problems" [5:14, 19].* Another one reflected that, *"Using the facilitation model, we would use our meetings to develop new ideas" [4:26, 53].*

A fourth lens was about regarding change as performance. One participant argued that, *"Results are about what change are we making out there through learning and sharing within TM" [9:8,*

11]. In this regard, change was viewed as the reason behind the existence of the interorganisational partnership in terms of achieving its "results" via "learning and sharing".

5.3.4.6 Innovating

The relational leadership practice of innovating refers to the introduction of a new process or activity or product into an organisation or partnership.

A first perspective was about providing concrete examples of innovations that were either in progress or completed. One participant noted that, "*I find that spaces like TM promote innovation and innovative thinking. When we worked with TM, things like procurement were done more efficiently" [8:27, 23]*. In this case there is an additional dimension of acknowledging "innovating thinking". Another noted that, *"So, over the years through TM we have developed a set of M&E tools such as on performance assessment, rapid evaluations, engagement with the civil society, training of policy-makers on evidence generation and use. We have all these resources that are available in our website" [9:27, 23].* Another one argued that, *"TM is set up to be able to help country governments perhaps to experiment, innovate, or run projects that they cannot be able to set up themselves such as proof-of-concepts" [2:85, 121].* In this regard, innovation is also viewed as the operational model of the partnership.

A second perspective was about linking innovation to the agency of leadership. One participant argued that, *"For me that is how leadership worked for that international course. Because nothing had existed before we initiated that course of that particular kind. There were many new processes that we had to suggest within the university's administrative environment" [3:29, 25].* In this case there is also a tangible impact on the operational environment as a result of the innovative course.

A third perspective was about other mechanisms that were used to enable innovation. One participant mentioned that, *"…we spent time designing the programme and developing good operational procedures, tools and guidelines jointly as the three countries.* Another one stated that, "*Once we completed developing a guideline on rapid evaluations through TM support, it was shared with TM partners for them to adapt and customise for their own countries. We emulate aspects of our systems through sharing good practices. There is power in sharing because when you share people start seeing what's happening and they may decide to partner or adapt the new practice in their own environment or come to ask you how you went about doing what you have*

achieved" [4:4, 11]. In this regard, there is intentionality around how the process is arranged to help achieve innovation.

The fourth perspective was the view that there was no real innovation despite participants noting specific examples. One participant reported that, "*Rapid evaluation is an example of a new thing. Conceptualisation is done for new projects. However, I don't really view such as really significant innovations" [2:25, 55].* Another noted that, "*I don't really think that as CLEAR-AA we came to think of our work on TM as innovation. We have never deliberately thought of it as innovating something new" [3:39, 31].* These foregoing arguments could be viewed as downplaying innovativeness or participants understanding innovation as only referring to something that is huge, such as an award-deserving technological invention.

5.3.4.7 Making an impact

Making an impact covers those instances where participants expressed a sense of achieving a goal or using something in order to enhance performance.

On the one hand, ways in which impact was achieved were described. One participant noted that, "*We create templates for such reports and learning briefs that we can share. We interview members to pull out learnings and use research methods like snowball interviews to collect lessons learnt" [2:97, 129].* Another participant reported that, "*TM also participates in international conferences. For instance, in some of the panels I participated on, TM was very impactful" [5:34, 42].* Another participant argued that, "*Some of the people came to me afterwards to ask for advice in terms of how they could start similar initiatives in their regions" [5:35, 42].* This was appreciation of the TM model itself as something that has potential to make a difference.

On the other hand, there was a sense of knowing that the goal of the partnership was about making an impact, yet there was still a long way to go in terms of achieving the desired impact. One participant observed that, "*By design, TM seeks to be the driver of results-based management and M&E practices in the African continent. However, at this stage, TM has not yet been able to assert its role very well. Member countries are supposed to sell the work of TM in their respective countries. There is still more work to be done for TM to achieve the prominence of being a results champion in the continent" [5:33, 39].* Another participant indicated that, "*I have not had an opportunity to know how impactful is the TM website in terms of visits and downloading of reports" [5:36, 42].*

5.3.4.8 Producing outputs

The practice of producing outputs refers to situations where the participants emphasised the provision of services or products as outputs to clients as works of leadership.

A first viewpoint was about producing outputs being viewed as integral to leadership as a responsibility. One participant argued that, *"Leadership in this context is about taking responsibility for certain activities of the partnership"* [6.6, 13]. Another participant stated that, *"We produced what we needed to produce in an efficient way on the time available. Obviously a more participatory style of working does take longer"* [4:40, 83]. However, the negative effect of the participatory style was noted as slowness of production.

A second viewpoint was about citing examples of products that were produced and the difference they were making. *"We have attracted a lot of participation in webinars than on writing. Of course, we have not stopped producing documents"* [2:71, 97]. In this case, there is a sense of highlighting that if emphasis is on one product (webinars), the other competing product (writing) is affected in terms of levels of participation and production.

A third viewpoint was around highlighting the role of the support capability to ensure productivity. One participant noted that, *"The support is done through the TM secretariat and the TM focal persons that we have within our countries"* [1:48, 37]. Another used his own country example thus, *"The focal persons were also grouped into technical working groups and got trained to understand deeper concepts. This also enabled them to scrutinise information submitted by other departments. They would ask hard questions like: To what extent does this information tell us about the achievement of results and impact?"* [5:71, 72]. In this case the product is the information whose content was used to interrogate people's performance.

A fourth viewpoint was about the importance of quality assurance in order to produce good products. One participant argued that, *"Part of producing good use of evidence was about producing good evaluations that were rigorously done"* [7:35, 31]. Another participant noted that, *"So, it's a question of knowing your target audiences and defining how best you can get your key messages across to them. In essence we disseminate specific products to various audiences using social media and other channels"* [6:21, 26]. Another one posited that, *"You need to complete what you are doing and ensure that the project is delivered on time and to quality. We*

are always conscious that the money comes from somewhere, that is a donor who experts proper reporting for the money used" [8:52, 49].

5.3.4.9 Reversing roles

The practice of reversing roles denotes a situation where there is a change of roles among partners or leadership role-players as part of the evolution of the partnership.

A first observation was about what happened when the founder chairperson left. One participant noted that, *"When it comes to the chairs, after Mr A stepped down, there was an obvious shift. Mr A set the vision and put a lot of work and energy into TM. This set the bar very high for the next incumbents of the chair-ship role. The other chairs did not really assert their own vision and actually deferred most of the responsibilities to the Secretariat"* [7:56, 55]. In fact, due to the reversing of roles the participant decried loss of a certain leadership style in relation to the observation that "other chairs did not really assert their own vision", but instead "deferred… to the Secretariat."

A second observation was about the role of one governance player versus others in terms of running the partnership. One participant indicated that, *"I think the evolution of the staffing of the TM Secretariat from Ms A to Ms B and their teams really helped to professionalise TM. It helped to ensure greater transparency and accountability in terms of how funds were being used and it brought accountability"* [7:54, 52]. Another participant noted that, *"We used to have country coordinators as mini-secretariats in each of the countries and that is open for discussion if we will still need those. We currently assigned those roles to some of our staff. Overall, I think we have an evolving structure which is reviewed every three years and adjusted accordingly"* [9:50, 46]. Another participant observed that, *"The organisational culture of TM was such that with time it became too dominated by the Secretariat… The Secretariat is there to be on the service of ManCom, and not the other way around"* [7:72, 69]. In essence, the Secretariat is the one not only being burdened with the responsibilities of the chairpersons, but it was perceived as having become a dominant structure in terms of the operations of the partnership.

A third perspective was at a bilateral level where one partner felt change had reversed the roles and status between the two partners. One participant noted that, *"At the beginning it was like CLEAR-AA was hand-holding a little toddler, but later there was like some role reversal. Most of the CLEAR-AA staff were worried about becoming absorbed by TM. As TM started to grow and*

move very rapidly when things in CLEAR-AA were still in their forming and storming stages" [7:51, 49]. The metaphors of "little toddler" versus "worried about being absorbed" shows a significant shift in terms of the roles. Another participant noted that, *"It became a little bit harder from CLEAR-AA staff to draw lessons once TM began to outsource more of its projects because those consultants that it had hired to were 'hired guns'." [7:95, 90]*. The role of consultants was seen as competition that affected how one partner used to derive lessons from the experience of being the sole implementer for the partnership project, as the host for the Secretariat.

A fourth perspective was about the adverse effects of the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic on the performance of certain roles. One participant argued that, *"COVID-19 affected how we share information with each other. Before the onset of COVID-19, we would invite each other as TM countries to present in each other's events, to share information and communicate about various things that we were doing that would be of interest to others. That has since waned. There is a lot of momentum that we have lost due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. Now we only use email communication and I am not sure if others within TM have started catching up using the online platforms" [8:76, 67]*. In this case the reversal is on the platforms used for stakeholder engagement and information-sharing, from in-person to the use of technology.

5.3.4.10 Tacit emergence

The practice of tacit emergence refers to situations where the participants expressed a sense of surprise regarding the existence of something or implicitness in how things unfolded, as opposed to deliberate change and explicit innovation.

A first perspective was about viewing the partnership itself as something that emerged in an unplanned manner. One participant argued that, *"It became clear that the three countries were quite ahead in terms of establishing their M&E systems and that inspired them to come up with ideas of forming an association or club of countries that were having national M&E systems. The main goal was to use TM to strengthen their country M&E systems" [9:11, 14]*.

A second perspective was a sense of feeling that the questions that were posed during the interview highlighted things that were taken-for-granted, but were important to the functioning of partnership and related leadership work. One participant noted that, *"I think these have been incredible difficult questions because once you are in a leadership position you do really think about these things, they become tacit in how you work. You assume that everybody knows how*

to connect, how to establish collective identity, how to govern, how to ensure that the organisation operates with integrity. When we appoint somebody into a leadership position we assume that somebody knows these things. We don't necessarily unpack these things as organisations and say this is going to be our strategy. This has taught me a lot today" [3:126, 98]. The same participant offered the following solutions, "*But what we need to make sure is that, for posterity and longevity, maybe we need to make these things explicit when new leaders come on board. Or when leaders go through development programmes in the organisation. We could then have a clear idea as to why that worked because we have made those kinds of things explicit. Simple things like saying these are our core values when connecting with people such as everybody should know that we don't sell our work when we connect with our partners. So, my real take from this conversation is that we do need to make some of these [practices] explicit in how we run our organisations" [3:127, 98].*

A third perspective was about noting enabling conditions so that certain organisational practices can be explicit rather than tacit. One participant argued that, *"Difference is something that becomes easier to pick up when you have a toxic organisation, when something is going wrong"* [3:47, 40]. Another one noted that, *"There is lot more work to be done around building collective identities. It is much easier around a concrete project, but when you speak generically about organisations and what they do, that needs to be made more explicit" [3:46, 34].*

A fourth perspective was noting triggers for tacit emergence. One participant noted that, "*One of the reasons that triggered the curriculum review is the fact that there have been developments in the evaluation field in areas such as methodology and approaches. For example, COVID-19 restrictions have pushed us to rethink our methodologies, also in light of lack of funding" [8:72, 61].*

A fifth perspective viewed tacit emergence as informality. One participant noted that, *"We are indeed considerate of broad ethical principles such as considering methodology and research instruments upfront and get them approved by the evaluation steering committees. We emphasise confidentiality of participants, protection of sensitive information, and so forth – but we do not necessarily have a formal ethical clearance process like research institutions such as the HSRC and universities" [8:89, 82].* In this regard, there is a sense that ethics do exist in practice despite there being no "formal ethical clearance process". So, ethics emerge tacitly in how things are done in the organisation.

5.3.5 Relational leadership practices of defining

The relational leadership practices of defining were about situations where the participants provided definitions of key concepts or objects and also clarified roles of various stakeholders. It comprised of the following relational leadership practices: defining a leader, defining leadership, defining the National Evaluation System, mapping stakeholders, and clarifying roles.
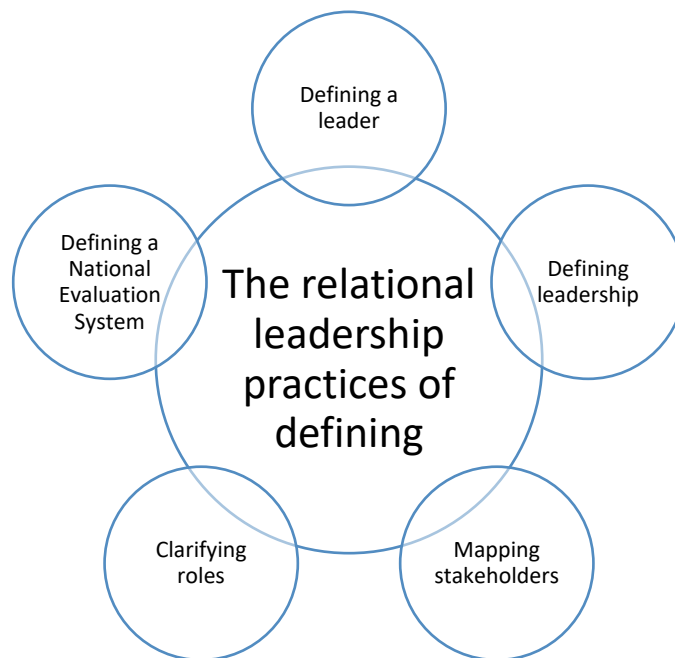
Figure 5.11: The relational leadership practices of defining

5.3.5.1 Defining a leader

In terms of the relational leadership practice of defining a leader, definitions of a leader were provided in a descriptive form by the participants when responding to the questions regarding their own definition of the leadership construct. Given that issues of definitions of a leader and leadership are extensively dealt with in a separate section, in this section only a few examples will be provided to demonstrate various perspectives that the participants shared when defining a leader beyond responding to the main question on definitions.

A first cluster of definitions of a leader was about the acknowledgement of the position of authority that an individual held which caused them to be regarded as the leader. For instance, one participant remarked that, *"As the most senior person in the organisation, the buck stops with me at the end of the day. Even though you give a lot of latitude and the trust, your team should be*

able to make mistakes and even they [when such mistakes] happened to be made, you will problem-solve together. And the senior leader also knows that the buck stops with me" [3:90, 66]. The question of where "the buck stops" denotes the responsibility that comes with the position of authority as an organisational leader.

A second cluster explicitly recognised the way an individual operated within a collective. One participant noted that, *"I think a leader is someone who takes a lead in a group. Somebody who makes proposals and seeks to convince others to follow his or her ideas. Somebody who is also active in leading the group and is open to listen and take on board other people's views. This is a kind of a person who has a vision of where she or he wants to go and manages to lead a group towards that direction"* [6:1, 10]. In this regard, the emphasis is on the expected behaviours of an individual leader.

A third perspective highlighted the positive element of an individual and their values as the definition of a leader. One participant argued that, *"Good leaders must demonstrate the highest level of integrity and promote values and ethics. Leaders are responsible for preaching the importance ethics and practicing and demonstrating ethics. They must conduct themselves with respectful manner and ensuring staff to behave ethically"* [9:66, 88]. In this case, there is a delineation of what "good leaders" do, which by implication means there are also bad leaders who behave unethically. Similarly, another participant noted that, *"Another important characteristic for me is that a leader must be exemplary in all aspects, both soft and hard aspects"* [3:89, 63]. In this case, a normative standard is set for leaders in that they "must be exemplary in all aspects".

5.3.5.2 Defining leadership
When compared with the construct of a "leader", the construct of "leadership" has slightly different connotations.

A first perspective was about defining leadership as a construct in abstract terms. A first participant stated that, *"I think leadership is the ability to guide, steer, manage and the inspire trust. In other words, leadership for me should have the following elements: guiding, steering, managing, and the ability to inspire trust and confidence in a society, in an institution, in an organisation and in a group setting"* [9:1, 18]. A second participant noted that, *"Leadership is about helping an organisation (or a group of people) to decide where it wants to go and facilitate a process together"* [4:1, 8].

A second perspective was about defining leadership in the context of an interorganisational partnership. One participant observed that, *"Somebody said that the development of Africa is not lack of resources, but it is lack of leadership. That is, quality leadership. Leadership is not only about leading, but leadership is also about motivating others to achieve; it is about trust, it is about openness; and selflessness" [5:81, 81].* Another participant argued that, *"When we come to spaces like TM, it is a multi-cultural environment where we all come with the baggage of perceptions and values and other things. When someone is able to coordinate all these actors in a seamless manner to ensure that the individual values do not overtake the common good; that is leadership" [5:82, 81].* In this regard, there was a sense of aspiring for a certain kind of "quality leadership" to address the problem of lack thereof in the "African continent"; as well as the acknowledgment of the "baggage of perceptions" that could be transformed via coordination.

A third perspective was about defining relational leadership and relational leadership practices. One participant provided the following definition, *"Relational leadership would be about being able to understand where the need is amongst partners or collaborators in order to draw on the experience you have that would be useful in highlighting good practice or in learning from mistakes made" [7:7, 10].* Another one defined it thus *"Relational leadership is about winning hearts and minds of people as opposed to being in the position of authority, which is not necessarily leadership" [2:15, 37].*

A fourth perspective was about providing examples of how relational leadership was constructed in the partnership. One participant reported that, *"Through rotational leadership, we deliberately created a sense of shared ownership" [4:31, 68].* Another participant said that*, "So, the relational leadership practices in this context involve use of champions and spreading the message to influence new players" [9:22, 20].* In sum, relational leadership was viewed as similar to "rotational leadership" and "use of champions" in the context of the international interorganisational partnership.

5.3.5.3 Defining the national evaluation system

The relational leadership practice of defining the National Evaluation System emanates from the fact that, in the context of the international interorganisational partnership, participants tended to provide a definition of the "national evaluation system" (NES) as the main thing that the

partnership sought to improve and use to catalyse change within partner countries and the continent.

A first perspective was about locating the definition of NESs in the context of the mission or theory of change of the partnership, as well as measures that were put in place to achieve such a mission. One participant argued that, *"At the country level the key institution is the government body that drives M&E since it would bring influence to others. Such a body needs to understand that it cannot achieve anything working alone, but it must bring others on board to collaborate in driving the country's development agenda. TM works with government in order to catalyse collaboration with other partners. It does this to promote focus on the results and bring about change"* [5:15, 22-23].

A second perspective was about defining how the concept is applied within each partner country or organisation. One participant argued that, *"Historically, the understanding is that the drivers of a national M&E system include the development of the M&E policy framework, collection of data and production of reports. However, in practice we realised that that was not necessarily the case. The consumption of the M&E reports is not just for the government. The government works for the citizenry. So, the key consideration is how to involve other stakeholders in my M&E intervention as its owners. We collaborated with the Ghana M&E Forum and other actors like African Evaluation Association, including consultancy firms that provide evaluation services to government"* [5:52, 54].

5.3.5.4 Mapping stakeholders

The relational leadership practice of mapping stakeholders refers to instances where the participants explicitly mentioned it or described activities of mapping stakeholders.

A first view was about mapping stakeholders that should be served by the partnership. One participant argued that, *"TM countries evaluate for the benefit of government and I think they could think beyond governmental stakeholders in terms of identifying other key stakeholders of interest in their own contexts. These could be parliaments, line ministries or civil society or other groups in the country. The dissemination plans help with knowledge sharing more broadly and other stakeholders would assist with championing the evaluative practice thereby making the evaluation system better known. The stakeholders could also advocate for the use of the evaluation knowledge for policy and decision-making"* [6:52, 76].

A second perspective was about the model that could be used to map the stakeholders to achieve certain ends. One participant debated that, *"What are the primary and secondary stakeholders and what are their knowledge needs? What kind of knowledge products that we need to develop to meet those needs? And what are the most relevant channels that we could use to reach the audiences. Other audiences are best reached through emailing and other audiences through a presentation or a workshop or through social media"* [6:20, 26].

5.3.5.5 Clarifying roles

The relational leadership practice of clarifying roles refers to situations where the participants either clarified roles and responsibilities of various partners within the partnership or mentioned the importance thereof.

The first level of role-clarification was in terms of various positional leadership roles. One participant noted that, *"The Programme Manager (PM) now manages a team of about four people who form the TM Secretariat. Strategic direction comes from the chair and the ManCom. The PM prepares for the meetings and follows up on the implementation of projects and management of the finances and staff"* [4:35, 71]. Another former chairperson reflected that, *"Even though we have an approved budget for conducting a rapid evaluation, I would bring everyone to the planning discussion whereby we broke things down. The project plan would have clear roles and responsibilities so that everyone had a clear understanding of what needs to be done"* [5:46, 51].

The second level of role clarification was in terms of how work was executed internally. One participant reported that, *"Every member of the ManCom takes a lead in one or a few projects, which balances out the roles and responsibilities"* [6:6, 13]. Another one noted that, *"I can recall a time when there were fourteen projects running at the same time. Each member of ManCom had to lead two or more projects. Each project lead would be responsible for developing a concept note and submitting to the group for further inputs"* [6:10, 16].

A third level was about clarifying roles of various kinds of partners externally. One participant argued that, *"There is a system of having three levels of collaboration in terms of core-countries in ManCom, collaborating countries who were potential partners and wider stakeholders who were interested in what TM is doing helped with developing analytical frameworks in terms of where each of the countries were in their capacities"* [7:98, 93]. Another one suggested that, *"There*

200

should be some bilateral activities that are done parallel to TM activities and then reported to ManCom. External networking is also weak since TM does not really have relationships with other organisations in this space of evaluations" [1:69, 80]. In this instance, the focus is on the collaborating model as a way of clarifying the roles of different levels of partners in terms of the intensity of partnering and how new role-players could be involved.

5.3.6 Relational leadership practices of following

The relational leadership practices of following refer to situations where participants highlighted followership as a way of influencing outcomes either through deliberately deferring decision-making to higher authorities or performing leadership roles at different levels of the hierarchy. The following practices fell under this theme, namely, leading as differing to higher authority and leading at different levels.
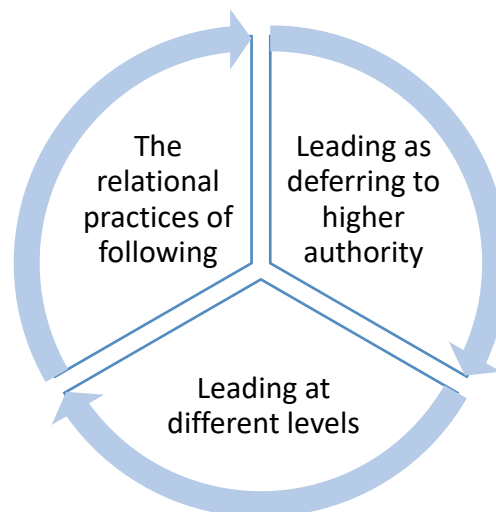
Figure 5.12:   The relational leadership practices of following

5.3.6.1 Leading as deferring to higher authority

The relational leadership practice of deferring to higher authority refers to instances where the participants specifically mentioned that a specific role, such as a particular type of decision, was reserved for a specific positional leader or structure or someone perceived to be higher up in the organisational hierarchy. In other words, this practice is about recognition of higher status and respect for authority.

The first dimension was around the recognition of some stakeholders as having a special status due to accountability expectations and the greater influence of their roles, such as the donors and external champions. One participant argued that, *"A lot of it is about relationship-building with the donors, among the peer countries and with other key stakeholders. It's also about processes like planning and accountability to the donors on time and with quality. Advocacy to champions like the participation of permanent secretaries or heads of departments and political principals and ensuring their active participation in the TM activities"* [4:41, 86].

The second dimension was about reflecting on the positive role of hierarchy or positional leadership within their own countries. One participant argued that, "*For us we waited for an opportunity when we had a Minister who was a former academic professor. He was very passionate about research and use of M&E evidence to inform policy and decision-making"* [9:34, 28].

A third dimension was about the dynamics of being a positional leader within a partnership of this nature. One participant stated that, *"PM and Chair play a role in terms of making minor decisions to act on the big strategic decisions"* [4:43, 92]. Another one indicated that, *"Some are more hierarchical than others. In my experience, the chair has always had a good sense of what could be shared, getting people to talk to each other and maintain bonds"* [2:93, 133]. In this case, there is a sense that the chairperson holds a senior position and therefore is able to "maintain bonds" and gender identity was projected as something that affects one's ability to assume the identity of being "a leader in this group."

5.3.6.2 Leading at different levels
The relational leadership practice of "leading at different levels" involves recognition of different domains where leading happened and sometimes it was about one person playing a leadership role lower or higher in the organisational hierarchy.

A first perspective was about recognising that all stakeholders play some leadership role that must be acknowledged and accommodated. A first participant noted that, *"Leadership was not only in the executive, but was in many other stakeholders and sectors such as parliamentarians and civil society, and so forth"* [7:33, 28]. A second participant argued that, *"It is also about values both at a personal level and societal level"* [2:6, 25]. A third participant noted, *"There are leaders at country levels, churches, families, communities and recognised global leaders like Mother*

202

Theresa and Nelson Mandela. It is at different levels and the ultimate goal of leadership is about bringing different people together" [8:4, 8].

A second perspective was about the organisational culture of the partnership which was viewed as enabling horizontal leading and was also collegial in nature. The first participant observed that, *"I think there is a culture of mutual support that is embodied through the role of chairs and other facilitators who guide and support interaction to foster as safe space for expression"* [2:74, 106]. A second participant remarked that, *"This is perhaps one of the things that make TM a winner for me: governance is flexible, not rigid, but efficient… The fluidity is quite important… There is no hierarchy in TM; you can communicate freely with anyone who might be holding very high-level positions in their own organisations back home"* [8:34, 32].

A third perspective was about the distribution of leadership roles during operations. One participant observed a leadership style of the team member within their organisation, *"If you talk about 360 degrees leadership approach or leadership from the bottom, Mr X was not the most senior person but was able to work with various senior people effectively. He was able to interface well with partners like TM that were either providing bursaries, or sponsorship for the course or trainers or quality assurers of the course and various departments within the university environment"* [3:36, 25].

5.3.7 Relational leadership practices of governing

The relational leadership practices of governing refer to instances where the participants emphasised the role of formal structures, rules, procedures and accountability mechanisms as part of how leading is done within the interorganisational partnership.

Figure 5.13:   The relational leadership practice of governing

5.3.7.1 Fostering accountability

The practice of fostering accountability is about instances where the participants mentioned the word accountability or mutual accountability in a significant way, or highlighted the importance of reporting to other bodies and structures, or highlighted the practice of complying with rules and frameworks. The practices were fostering accountability, delimiting boundaries, managing, governing structures, and hierarchical approach.

A first domain was about defining leadership or a leader as somebody who values accountability. One participant reflected that, *"That is one of the first things that I paid attention to via having conversations with the senior staff on integrity. If there is a compliance rule within the university as our host or from our partners such as terms and conditions within grant funding, we don't veer from that" [3:123, 95].* Another participant defined a leader as somebody who, *"Don't bend the rules to favour anybody. Allow everyone to contribute to the formulation of the strategy so that there is predictability in the system. People can actually see that this result can be attributed to this action" [5:39, 45].*

A second domain was about identifying fostering accountability as a leadership style. One participant noted that, *"The core was how to strengthen our relationship via solving problems*

collectively. What this minor example of an operational issue shows how in the absence of hard rules and procedures you are able to work together to solve a practical logistical challenge. The small logistical issues can actually cause conflict. They can jettison an entire project" [3:21, 20]. Another remarked that, *"He is very rules-based, which I think has do with being from government"* [2:34, 61].

A third domain was viewing fostering accountability as an efficiency measure achieved through the agency of positional leaders. One participant noted that, *"Efficiency is ensured in the sense that you do not have too many people running the show. There is a clear focal point of contact in the form of the PM unless she is on leave. There is a clear planning, budgeting and reporting cycle: this time is disbursements, this time is reporting, this time we are doing planning. That M&E structure that she is using is quite efficient. It helps partners to know when and how to report on TM supported activities. The consistency in terms of the administration is also very crucial for efficiency. There aren't too many points of communication. There is some kind of a centre and that makes everything work efficiently"* [8:57, 52].

A fourth domain was about highlighting the value of mutual accountability in interorganisational partnership settings. One participant mentioned that, *"We have a practice of asking each other to indicate three big things that one will be doing each day. And we hold each other mutually accountable for the commitments made"* [2:13, 52]. Another participant remarked that, *"There is a culture of mutual support and accountability"* [2:67, 91]. A third participant argued that, *"The fact that we have to account to each other as professionals is how commitment is built. The principle of mutual accountability is respected"* [8:52, 41].

A fifth domain was about reflecting on the role of governance structures and people in positions of authority who are charged to foster accountability. One participant argued that, *"I think governance structures function very much from positional leadership. Everyone understands the guidelines, roles, minutes and other operations of governance like tools and templates"* [2:52, 73]. Another participant reported that, *"We use the evaluation standards guidelines for procurement and when we bring together various stakeholders around an evaluation. We ensure adherence to those standards"* [8:91, 85].

The fifth domain was about comparing how accountability works in a partnership setting versus the public sector. One participant reported that, *"In case of rapid evaluations, we are lot more*

efficient compared to government. If you look a rapid evaluation that TM is doing with DPME, TM is able to procure teams within a week, yet when it goes back to government, the procurement system would not enable that" [2:86, 121]. Another participant concurred that, *"In comparison to government, TM is very efficient such as procurement systems are more agile, whilst maintaining rigour and good controls in line with… [university] rules" [2:83, 121].* Another gave an example that, *"I went to ask for assistance from TM, and the processes was completed very swiftly" [8:60, 52].*

A sixth domain was about viewing accountability as accounting for funds and projects to other bodies as a legal compliance issue. One participant reported that, *"TM receives grants which have certain terms and conditions. So, since TM itself is about accountability, it must also be accountable for what it does. During my time I ensured that TM complied with regular reviews and learn lessons from the findings. Lessons learnt and recommendations are then shared widely" [5:57, 63].* Another participant reported that, *"We build it into contracts with consultants by stating, for example, that you don't get paid until you have given us this learning report" [2:96, 139].*

5.3.7.2 Delimiting boundaries
The relational leadership practice of delimiting boundaries refers to situations where the participants noted grey areas and prescribed a separation of roles or functions.

A first perspective related to the evolution of the governance structure for the partnership. One participant reported that, *"A decision was made to establish a separate technical committee whose participation would be open to more technically-oriented representatives. So, the senior management committee was freed to focus on more strategic issues" [6:38, 46].*

A second perspective related to the stakeholder engagement approach. One participant summarised it as follows, *"…the core was made up of category A countries who were members of ManCom, category B countries were collaborators who were still at early stages of establishing their M&E capacity, and category C was the wider group of countries that were interested to start their M&E systems" [7:24, 19].*

A third perspective was about clarifying roles of various categories of leaders as champions. One participant argued that, *"The point to take away is that there are different roles of champions, and maybe legacy champions are better as advisors to say in my time this is what I recall as useful*

versus contemporary champions that are dealing with day-to-day challenges of implementing M&E in their country. And therefore, contemporary champions are better able to utilise advice and lessons from TM in their country" [7:47, 43].

A fourth perspective was about a bilateral relationship between the host partner and the interorganisational partnership. One participant stated that, *"We actually took a decision that TM is not necessarily part of CLEAR-AA structure. So, we no longer have them participating in CLEAR-AA staff meetings and strategic planning sessions. That's not to say it is not going to happen going forward, but until we find the answer to the big question; that is how is this partnership constructed and how is our collective identity constructed. Then we can decide in which occasions we could involve each other… The only place where we are involved in is the TM ManCom"* [3:83, 58].

A fifth perspective was about the definition of a good leader. One participant argued that, *"If you as an organisation or individual leader, you don't clarify your boundaries in terms of how you operate; and your staff and your team do not know what those boundaries are; then there is an integrity challenge..."* [3:120, 15]. In this regard, there is a deeper sense that delimiting boundaries should also be known, and that is viewed as a moral value of integrity.

5.3.7.3 Managing
The relational leadership practice of managing refers to specific instances where the role of a management position or structure or process were highlighted as significant in terms of how the partnership worked.

On the one hand, views were expressed in terms of sharing the experience of how the operations of the partnership were managed. One participant remarked that, *"Managing TM was a hell of work for me"* [7:52, 49]. Another participant reflected that, *"At the end of the day we report to the group about what we managed to achieve or couldn't achieve. That also applies to me, as I want my team to be able to hold me to account. Some conversations would be about checking for certain operational information from a team member, such as whether a terms-of-reference for such and such a task has been done, etc"* [2:24, 52].

On the other hand, challenges that were experienced with the management processes and structures were reported and solutions were proposed. One participant argued that, *"The fact that*

the chairperson and Programme Manager are not in the same place, makes things a little bit difficult to ensure that they do work together very closely and ensure accountability on implementation. TM has to reorganise the role of the chairperson to be more hands-on on the implementation of TM projects" [1:62, 61]. Another one reported that, *"The Programme Manager handles the day-to-day management of the partnership. They act as the glue that holds the partnership together in operational terms…The Programme Manager prepares for the meetings and follows up on the implementation of projects and management of the finances and staff" [4:35, 71].*

5.3.7.4 Governing structures

The relational leadership practice of governing structures refers to situations where the description of governing structures was presented as significant for how the partnership was being led.

On the one hand, views were expressed regarding underlying principles of the governance structures. One participant observed that, *"The governance structure is focused on the principle of equality. The chairpersonship of the TM partnership is held on an annual rotational basis" [6:35, 43].*

On the other hand, the governance structures were described and evaluated in terms of their functionality. One participant noted that, *"The governance aspect is delegated to various positions. When you work with donors, it is very much concentrated on the chair's role. This has been very challenging for fundraising. The Management Committee approves our annual plan. The rest of the operational stuff happens at the level of the Programme Manager and the chair. Governance matters are well codified and respected by all" [2:53, 76].* Another one stated that, *"TM has what I call a 'three-tier structures of governance' which are the ManCom, Technical Committee and the Secretariat or Administration. I think the governance mechanism is fine" [5:27, 33].* Another one indicated that, *"In summary, this is how we make decisions at TM: strategic decisions are made by ManCom, technical Committee processes technical documents, and the Chairperson and the Programme Manager make day-to-day decisions. The chairperson is accountable to the ManCom" [5:56, 60].*

5.3.7.5 Hierarchical approach

The hierarchical approach refers to situations where the participants referred to some form of hierarchy in terms of how they described a certain event or way of doing things.

The first perspective was about highlighting the horizontal nature of the partnership. One participant noted that, *"The members of the TM ManCom are all peers and are all equals since TM is a peer-learning partnership. There is no hierarchical relationship between the members and they all come from an equal footing. They all bring their own knowledge and experience and they are all representing their own organisations or entities that they lead. They deal with each other from the basis of equality"* [6:5, 13]. Another participant observed that, *"There is no hierarchy in TM… In normal government circumstances, I would not be sharing a platform as a panellist in a webinar with Mr X because he is probably a head of department and I am not. Because TM is a community of practice for practitioners, the voice that is recognised is that of a technical expert rather than what position of authority I am holding within my government bureaucracy"* [8:36, 32].

A second perspective was about recognising some form of hierarchy in terms of certain individual leader's styles or how tasks are accomplished. A participant observed that, *"Mr Omega has a more hierarchical, formalised way of leadership"* [2:36, 31]. Another noted that, *"I think governance structures function very much from positional leadership"* [2:53, 72].

A third perspective was about how a hierarchical approach is used to categorise different kinds of partners or stakeholders. One participant argued that, *"The country-level is owned by countries themselves and TM comes to participate. TM organises its own forums where countries participate through online zoom meetings and other workshops. TM attends regional and global platforms. All of this peer-learning is supported by the website and webinars"* [5:63, 69].

5.3.8   Relational leadership practices of identifying

The relational leadership practices of identifying refer to those situations where participants talked about how identities emerge and are formed in the context of the international interorganisational partnership or how the partners as a collective distinguished themselves. The following were the practices that fell under this theme, unique identity, gender identity, government identity, language identity, leaders as champions, and learning culture identity.
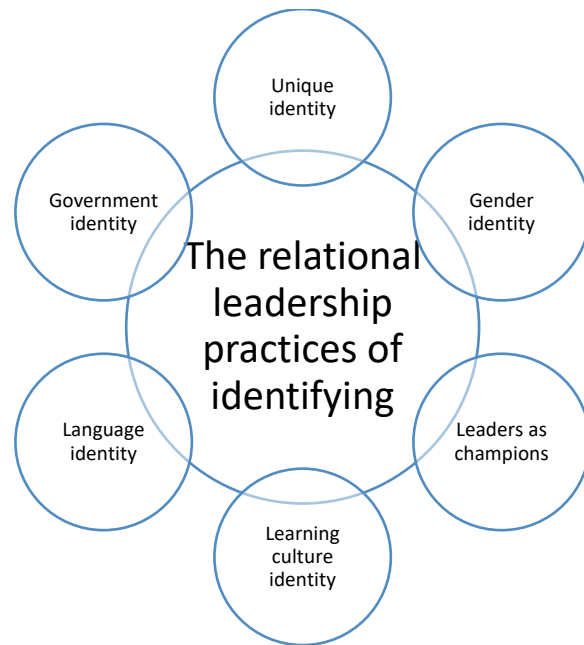
Figure 5.14:   The relational leadership practices of identifying

5.3.8.1 Unique identity

The relational leadership practice of the unique identity refers to instances where the participants emphasised uniqueness of the partnership or aspects thereof.

A first viewpoint was about the African identity of the partnership. A first participant argued that, *"TM's identity is on its name, which means 'moving forward together' as Africans. It's about promoting greatness and pride amongst Africans. It's about building Africa as Africans. The recognition of Africanness is what defines TM for me and building each other as Africans" [8:30, 26].* A second participant reported that, *"We developed the theory of change together. I also remember that the name 'Twende Mbele' was suggested by Mr Alpha from Uganda" [8:39, 80].* A third participant stated that, *"The collective identity of TM is that if Africans can own their own development agenda and work through their challenges, and learnt along the way, and make corrective actions, then Africa can achieve its own development results. In TM we believe that you don't have to have all the resources, you just need to have faith to catalyse change and motivate innovation that will turn the system and enable the system to work very well" [5:16, 22].*

A second viewpoint was about the unique focus on peer-learning among the partners. A first participant argued that, *"Well, I think TM was such an incredible vehicle to demonstrate the*

210

richness of learning that can happen from a pan-African initiative" [7:70, 65-66]. A second one noted that, *"...the value proposition of TM is peer-learning. That is what is special about what TM is trying to do" [3:69, 52].* A third one observed that, "*The whole peer-leaning approach in TM is very unique" [4:25, 53].* A fourth one stated that, *"I think that was solidarity. Even when we met in conferences there was this sense that we were the A-team" [4:53, 111].* A fifth participant argued that, *"TM people are likely to identify themselves as learning, interested and analytical humans" [2:27, 58].*

A second viewpoint was about the unique influencing function of the partnership. One participant reported that, *"Remember TM is about influencing development of national M&E systems. So, over the years through TM we have developed a set of M&E tools such as on performance assessment, rapid evaluations, engagement with the civil society, training of policy-makers on evidence generation and use. We have all these resources that are available in our website" [9:27, 22].* Another one noted that, "*Our respective role is influencing how service delivery is done in each country. Each of our country partners has specific units for improving service delivery. That is one aspect that brings us together as members of TM. When you look at the level of development of the TM countries, they are at the same level and are facing similar challenges" [9:41, 37].*

A third viewpoint was about the unique value of the partnership for its members. A first participant argued that, *"You want to be committed to a cause like this because of what it is built on" [8:54, 49].* A second participant argued that, *"TM serves as a catalytic initiative" [5:5, 11].* A third participant argued that, *"The aspect of collaboration is the spinal cord of TM, since TM is a voluntary association of countries and institutions that would like to collaborate and learn from each other. It is therefore a core principle of TM" [9:55, 64].* A fourth participant noted that, *"I think what's different about TM is that you can have communities of practice where people share knowledge with each other about experience of great achievement or experience of having managed change where there were difficulties" [7:10, 13].*

5.3.8.2 Gender identity
The relational leadership practice of gender identity refers to instances where the participants mentioned gender as an identity issue.

The following quotes relate to one specific participant who passionately shared a gendered view of the TM identity. Firstly, the participant noted that, *"Unintentionally there is an identity around African men and it is very manly" [2:26, 58].* She further argued that, *"I think within masculine identities, I do think there is a role for how leadership is practiced or how the role of women or the leadership of the men" [2:30, 61].*

5.3.8.3 Government identity

The relational practice of government identity refers to instances where participants emphasised the importance of governmental stakeholders within the partnership as well as governments as being the main client for the partnership interventions. The first participant argued that, *"TM needed to prove its value and to help government step outside the bureaucracy and be able to try things and get going and move the ball a little bit" [2:87, 121].* The second one reported that, *"The initial encounter was in 2012 whereby DPME hosted an African workshop of seven countries on M&E in partnership with CLEAR-AA. Those countries presented on the state of their country-level M&E systems. Out of the discussions we realised that SA, Benin and Uganda shared a similar approach to the establishment of government-led national evaluations systems" [4:5, 14].* The third one noted that, *"At the country level the key institution is the government body that drives M&E since it would bring influence to others. Such a body needs to understand that it cannot achieve anything working alone, but it must bring others on board to collaborate in driving the country's development agenda. TM works with government in order to catalyse collaboration with other partners" [5:17, 22].* The fourth one argued that, "*It is critical that the TM is experienced as country-driven in terms of setting the agenda" [7:105, 104].* A fifth one proposed that, *"It is something TM ManCom must constantly reflect on regarding the role of the countries*" [7:106, 104]. A sixth one stated that, *"The TM influence became cross-cutting across the whole of government. My predecessor and I have been very active in terms of championing good M&E practices across government" [9:35, 28].*

5.3.8.4 Language identity

The relational leadership practice of language identity was about instances where language was mentioned as a significant identity issue.

A first perspective was about recognising the bilingual nature of the partnership. One participant reported that, *"There are language differences. There are Francophone and Anglophone countries within the TM partnership" [6:30, 37].* Another participant elaborated that, *"Benin and*

Niger have a West African Francophone identity and they speak the same language and influence each other more" [2:38, 61].

A second perspective was about the management of the language identity. The first participant contended that, *"I really feel badly for the initial weakness in terms of lack of commitment on TM to manage bilingualism" [7:60, 58].* The second participant indicated that, *"I personally was able to play a leadership role in terms of bridging the divide between Anglophone and Francophone countries due to my ability to speak both languages. I was able to ensure that Mr Beta was able to participate and follow the discussion although he was not very fluent in English. The new participants from Benin are bilingual. TM also invests in real-time translation of its meetings" [4:30, 62].* The third participant argued that, *"At some point there was a recognition within ManCom that translation should be prioritised and once there was proper translation, it completely changed the dynamics of the conversations when you got an interpreter on board. The principle is that we should offer people to speak in their language of preference" [7:68, 63].* The fourth participant reported that, *"All TM meetings and materials are translated" [9:46, 40].* The fifth one indicated that, *"We have had training on French and English in respective countries. TM supported participation of members at each other's evaluation events" [9:47, 43].* And the sixth one noted that, *"We try to operate bilingually as much as we can" [2:47, 70].*

5.3.8.5 Leaders-as-champions

The relational leadership practice of leaders-as-champions denotes a situation where the participants highlighted the use of champions to achieve common objectives of the partnership or identified certain people explicitly as champions.

A first perspective was that, in TM, the notion of champions was part of the partnership strategy. One participant argued that, *"In the TM theory of change, implicitly and explicitly, there is this idea of champions" [2:56, 82].*

A second perspective was about the definition of champions. One participant defined them as follows, *"In my conversations with people, champions are regarded as leaders of a sort. They can be positional such as the Prime Minister of Uganda as a champion for evaluations" [2:62, 85].* Another participant stated that, *"Champions would be like individuals who were movers and shakers within their countries and were in the limelight of their own media and were a thorn on the backside of the legislature in terms of wanting to see better legislation being put in place to*

make use of evaluation evidence in law. Not just a nice to have, but a legal requirement. They were pushing the drafting of legislation to advance their countries' laws around this. So that it was not just depending on the political whims of who was in power at the time" [7:31, 28].

A third perspective was about how champions were developed. A first participant reported that, *"We are trying to investigate the question of status and recognition. We sponsor people to write and to attend conferences so as to cultivate thought leadership. We create a 'tribe' of people that could support you as our champion to learn on this journey and mission. There are a few different things that we could do to create champions for evaluations"* [2:66, 85]. A second participant reported that, *"We have different training for more technical champions"* [2:65, 85].

A fourth perspective was about recognising the members of the TM ManCom as champions in their own right. A first participant argued that, *"So, even within TM people who are involved are recognised within the evaluation ecosystem. Having those recognised champions, it assists with fostering inter-connectedness between the various organisations"* "[8:66, 55]. A second participant indicated that, *"Because leadership of ManCom is held on a rotational basis, it has actually contributed to building leadership capacity of each of the champions and the member countries to learn from the technical aspects, coordination, peer-learning and sharing"* [9:18, 14]. A third one observed that, *"My predecessor and I have been very active in terms of championing good M&E practices across government"* [9:35, 28].

A fifth perspective was about the accomplishments of the champions, irrespective of whether they were internal to TM or external. One participant reported that, *"In the second phase, we took a deliberate decision to send champions to countries that were in a very progressive state of developing their national M&E systems compared to the rest in the African Continent. I think those engagements were very fruitful for TM and those countries because we could gauge as to what are additional steps for those countries to take in order to strengthen their M&E systems. Now all of them have M&E policies developed and approved and a lot of structures in place"* [9:21, 20]. Another one observed that, *"Because of the quality of champions that we have had as TM, we were able to engage very high-level policymakers such as the Speaker of Parliament and Prime Minister of Uganda"* [9:36, 31].

5.3.9   Relational leadership practices of influencing

The relational leadership practices of influencing refer to situations where the participants defined leadership or leadership practices as influence and where they specifically referred to an action about influencing some outcome. The following practices are under this theme communicating, coordinating, engaging stakeholders, guiding, improving performance, influencing culture, interpersonal influence, leading ethically, leading with respect, managing difference, marketing, mobilising resources, presenting a perspective, promoting, prompting debate, voicing our own views, and writing influencing texts.
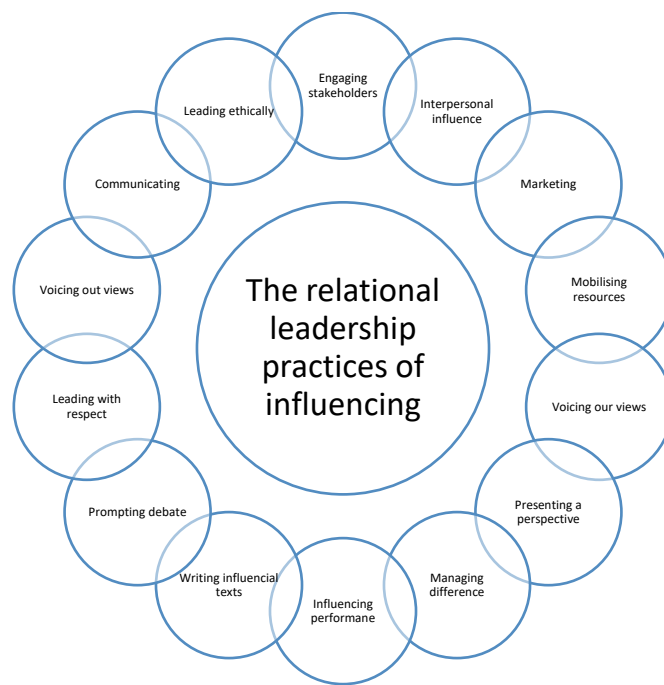
Figure 5.15:   The relational leadership practice of influencing

5.3.9.1 Communicating

The relational leadership practice of communicating is about the act of communicating something or identifying a communication method or medium.

A first perspective was about evaluating the importance of communication and its centrality in the work of the partnership. A first participant reported that, *"My experience of communication is that it mainly comes from the Secretariat towards members. Then communication among the members mainly takes place in formal meetings. The meetings are either in person or held online"* *[6:42, 55].* A second participant argued that, *"Conversational learning and sharing is the*

preference for most people than writing. We have attracted a lot of participation in webinars than on writing. Of course, we have not stopped producing documents. But we value communication and accessibility" [2:71, 97]. A third participant celebrated that, *"There are many good things that TM has done. We have documented those through writing books and academic papers" [1:70, 83].*

A second perspective was about the use of technology to share information and interactions through social media. A first participant stated that, *"We use social media to engage with the wider community of evaluation. We advertise jobs through social media. Our website has a lot of material such as policy briefs and video clips. We mainly use Twitter and LinkedIn. We also have a WhatsApp group for the ManComm. We mainly use it for non-decision-making communication such as alerts and updates" [2:22, 46].* A second one stated that, *"Social media was used with the Category A, B and C countries. Social media was therefore the main source for communicating with category C countries. I think the TM secretariat was very effective in the use of social media in terms of Twitter for getting feedback and responses, and for just circulating ideas across a wide canvas of movers and shakers that were interested in what was happening in this space" [7:26, 22].*

A third perspective was about the importance of communicating through mainstream media. One participant argued that, *"As a leader you must really know how to engage with media to ensure that they help you achieve your communication objectives and understand the context within which you are working. Otherwise, they can completely misinterpret your message. I remember a scenario when I was invited to some of the media houses. They did not understand the concept of 'results' and they were using the word 'impact' differently. It was my duty to make them distinguish between everyday use of the terminology compared to what we mean in the development and public sector context" [5:8, 11].* Another participant reported that, *"Uganda had an experience of organising a media breakfast to communicate results of an evaluation to a target audience. It also had good experience with managing partnerships between government and civil society organisations. This experience was shared with other members of TM so that partners could learn from those practices and adapt them to their own country situation" [6:27, 29].*

A fourth perspective was about the critical assessment of gaps and what could be improved in terms of communication within the partnership. One participant noted that, *"I do think there is quite a lot more to be done in terms of communication. There is a weakness in terms of*

communication between the members at a bilateral level. There are no projects that are initiated by members bilaterally in order to enhance communication and collaboration. All activities are run via TM" [1:60, 55]. Another participant argued that, *"You can't make decisions without communication. There is internal and external communication. Both can be improved within TM"* [2:72, 100].

5.3.9.2 Coordinating

The relational leadership practice of coordinating was about instances where the participants analysed coordination as important in terms of how the partnership worked.

A first viewpoint was about how coordination of various countries laid the foundation for the partnership. As one participant reported, *"It was about facilitating coming together and conceptualising the approach. There was a planning process and engagement with Donor X. Then we spent time designing the programme and developing good operational procedures, tools and guidelines jointly as the three countries"* [4:4, 11].

A second viewpoint was about the role of positional leaders in terms of coordinating the partners. One participant reflected that, *"So, for me what I normally did when I was the chairperson of TM, there was no intervention that would start without a clear concept note"* [5:46, 51].

5.3.9.3 Engaging stakeholders

The relational leadership practice of engaging stakeholders was about how the interorganisational partnership engaged its various stakeholders.

A first lens was about how stakeholder engagement served as a catalyst for the establishment of the partnership. One participant argued that, *"The initial encounter was in 2012 whereby DPME hosted an African workshop of seven countries on M&E in partnership with CLEAR. Those countries presented on the state of their country-level M&E systems. Out of the discussions we realised that SA, Benin and Uganda shared a similar approach to the establishment of government-led national evaluations systems"* [4:5, 14].

A second lens was the main purpose of stakeholder engagement as the co-production of new ideas and products. A first participant argued that, *"In the design clinic we developed theories of change for such interventions. We conceptualised what the concept notes would be. We then*

summarised those concept notes in the National Evaluation Plan" [4:15, 29]. A second participant noted that, *"Using the facilitation model, we would use our meetings to develop new ideas. I remember one particular meeting on the side-lines of the SAMEA conference where we were brainstorming on new projects to pursue such as rapid evaluations and link between planning and budgeting" [4:26, 53].*

A third lens was about the stakeholder engagement model which is synonymous with the collaboration model. One participant argued that, *"In summary, the country-level is owned by countries themselves and TM comes to participate. TM organises its own forums where countries participate through online zoom meetings and other workshops. TM attends regional and global platforms. All of this peer-learning is supported by the website and webinars" [5:63, 69].*

A fourth lens was about the levers that were used to ensure the effectiveness of stakeholder engagements. The first participant reported how his country leveraged the language advantage to mobilise other stakeholders in their region thus, *"Everything that has been done in Benin through TM is replicated in Niger. Since Benin is a Francophone country it has better opportunity to connect with Niger in terms of sharing evaluation information. Benin has played a key role to captivate Niger in terms of catalysing Niger's establishment of its own country's M&E system" [1:75, 89].*

A fifth lens was about noting gaps in terms of how the partnership engages with its stakeholders. One participant argued that, *"Inside TM networking is very weak, since there are no bilateral relations between the members. There should be some bilateral activities that are done parallel to TM activities and then reported to ManCom" [1:69, 80].*

5.3.9.4 Guiding
The relational practice of guiding denotes instances whereby participants described guidance as an important leadership practice within their interorganisational partnership.

A first perspective was about noting guidance as an integral part of the definition of leadership. One participant argued that, *"Leadership is about being able to give guidance for work and for initiatives to be done" [8:2, 8].*

A second, and the most common, lens was about describing how guidance was done as part of the day-to-day functioning of the interorganisational partnership or as a practice within one of the partner organisations. A first participant reported that, *"We have a practice of asking each other to indicate three big things that one will be doing each day. And we hold each other mutually accountable for the commitments made. Sometimes we have a follow up discussion about what needs to be done and how to achieve it. At the end of the day we report about to the group about what we managed to achieve or couldn't achieve. That also applies to me, as I want my team to be able to hold me to account. Some conversations would be about checking for certain operational information from a team member, such as whether a terms-of-reference for such and such a task has been done, etc"* [2:24, 52].

A third perspective was about the downstream impact of guidance given by the partnership to its own members. One participant observed that, *"TM has done very well in terms of ensuring sharing of best practices. That Benin now is able to share its practices with Francophone countries like Niger is due to the support of TM"* [1:74, 86].

5.3.9.5 Improving performance
The relational practice of improving performance was about the definition of leadership as effectiveness and how such performance-improvement was applied in the context of the interorganisational partnership.

A first viewpoint was about the definition of leadership. One participant argued that, *"Leadership also means the capability to implement the agreed upon projects of the TM partnership"* [1:14, 14]. Another one stated that, *"I think leadership is really about inspiring a team to achieve organisational objectives"* [7:2, 7]. Another one noted that, *"I guess leadership is what creates the enabling environment for learning that motivates people to want to do things better. And that creates greater efficiency"* [7:91, 87].

A second viewpoint was about how performance was achieved within the partnership. A first participant noted that, *"The role of a leader or leadership in TM is about attaining that objective.* "A second participant argued that, *"There is some kind of a centre and that makes everything work efficiently"* [9:9, 11].

A third viewpoint was about how performance was rewarded within one of the partners. One participant reported that, *"We use promotion to recognise people's growth in the career ladder. If we identified that somebody has progressed very swiftly in their performance, we motivate to the Human Resources Management division to have such a person considered for promotion"* [3:112, 89].

A fourth viewpoint was about acknowledging the collective performance of the partnership. One participant argued that, *"TM has been very successful in terms of ensuring focus on the results and development impact across the continent"* [5:15, 22-23]. Another observed that, *"We could see it forming and growing up because all the partners did not have a luxury of a decade or so of having packaged their systems"* [4:55, 115].

A fifth viewpoint was about noting performance shortcomings and proposing measures to address them. A first participant argued that, *"Some of the people who were really leaders at their time and really critical in getting systems moving off the ground were no longer doing it. They should have been removed or replaced quite earlier with those who were living and breathing it every day"* [7:41, 35].

5.3.9.6 Influencing culture
The relational leadership practice of influencing culture was about instances where the participants mentioned organisational cultural change as an objective or changing the way things were done within one of the partners.

A first perspective was about culture change as the role of a leader. One participant argued that, *"A leader must also appreciate that whatever was initially defined before could change and should understand that not everyone had the same understanding"* [5:2, 8].

A second perspective was articulating key success factors for this interorganisational partnership's approach to cultural change. *"One of the factors that we have seen influencing TM is about learning and sharing around policy and institutional reforms within the African countries and beyond"* [9:20, 20].

A third perspective was about how cultural change was achieved within each partner's sphere of control. A first participant noted that, *"…we already had good experience with collaborating and*

engaging development partners such as 3ie Impact and other donors. We seized the opportunity of a very supportive Permanent Secretary and also addressed a committee of Permanent Secretaries. The TM influence became cross-cutting across the whole of government" [6:27, 29]. A second participant argued that, *"I think the next level we need to get to is to synthesise the learning notes and say what are their implications for the theory of change. How does it influence our modalities of change? That aspect we have not gotten to grips with and I think there is a lot of work for us to do there. We now have a clear business line for research and learning and it has a space within our organisation"* [3:110, 86].

5.3.9.7 Interpersonal influence

The relational leadership practice of interpersonal influence locates influence at an inter-subjective level between individuals or entities, such as partner countries.

A first perspective reflected on the impact of building interpersonal relations with key stakeholders. A first participant observed that, *"The Prime Minister of Uganda launched TM and was sharing some of the publications of TM to his peers. Because of the quality of champions that we have had as TM, we were able to engage very high-level policymakers such as the Speaker of Parliament and Prime Minister of Uganda"* [9:36, 31]. A second participant noted that, *"Some of the people came to me afterwards to ask for advice in terms of how they could start similar initiatives in their regions"* [5:35, 42].

A second perspective was about the role of language in interpersonal influence among partners. One participant indicated that: *"As Benin we are viewed as a leader in the Francophone region and we have shared our experiences with Mali, Togo, Senegal, etc. We are working hard to bring more Francophone countries to TM to make sure that it does become truly a continent-wide partnership"* [1:75, 89]. Another one stated that, *"I was able to ensure that Mr Beta was able to participate and follow the discussion although he was not very fluent in English"* [4:30, 62].

A third perspective was about how TM, as a partnership, stimulates interpersonal influence intentionally. A first participant argued that, *"In order to execute the vision, we needed to share that with other partners as well"* [3:23, 23]. A second participant noted that, *"Invite them into TM spaces so that they could form those relationships, so that they could be influenced, so that they could also influence others, as well as allow them space to bring their knowledge and expertise into the TM fold"* [2:60, 82].

5.3.9.8 Leading ethically

The relational leadership practice of leading ethically analyses the application of moral values and ethics within the interorganisational partnership, either as an explicit practice or a tacit exercise.

A first perspective was about the importance of ethics and leadership and how it is applied within the partnership as demonstrated by the following excerpt, *"At the end of the day the success of any intervention or initiative of this nature thrives hugely on the integrity and ethics; and how those principles and values are cherished and exhibited in the institution. Good leaders must demonstrate the highest level of integrity and promote values and ethics. Leaders are responsible for preaching the importance of ethics and practicing and demonstrating ethics. They must conduct themselves with respectful manner and ensuring staff to behave ethically. I am very proud to say in TM we have had a very exceptional experience since we have not experienced any ethical breaches"* [9:66, 88].

A second perspective was about moral values and how they were manifested in how the partnership operated. One participant argued that, *"In the first instance I think it is about the values that are held by the individual leaders in the partner organisations. The partnership consists of people who are professionals, people who have worked in development, people who understand issues around race and power and class and gender dynamics. Who will speak up in defence of those issues in their workplaces. For example, TM has done a lot of work on gender equity and has done some knowledge production around that subject. So, it is part of its DNA in terms of what it seeks to change in the evaluation capacity development space"* [3:49, 40].

A third perspective was about the relationship between the constructs of trust and ethics. One participant argued that, *"I don't know if it would be correct for me to use the word ethical, but I would use the word trust. We valued that people were not there to take advantage of others, but build trustful relationships in line with the common objectives of TM"* [4:48, 107]. Another one stated that, *"Openness, honesty and objectivity are critical ingredients for building trust. So, it is important that nobody feels that members are hiding something or don't want them to have their voice. At the same time, we must speak truth to authority. We must acknowledge what is good and also what is not good in a more respectful and humane manner. When it comes to me being a civil servant, trust is built via me walking the talk"* [5:37, 45].

A fourth perspective was about acknowledging that the subject of ethics had not been prioritised within the partnership. One participant noted that, *"Ethics did not really come to the fore in our deliberation" [7:102, 101].* Another one confirmed that, *"Ethics is not a topic that we have explicitly discussed within TM. It largely remains intuitive" [6:57, 85].*

A fifth perspective was around how some participants reflected on how the subject of ethics was treated within their own organisations. A participant stated that, *"It's obvious that ethics are important for leadership. We have been grappling with this subject of ethics, actually. We have received a lot of criticism that among our national evaluation guidelines we don't have one on ethics. For each evaluation we do we understand ethics considerations that must be addressed for that particular study at that particular time. But we did not, and we still do not, seek ethical clearance for many of the evaluations that we undertake" [8:86, 82].*

A sixth perspective was about how the gap, in terms of the absence of an ethical code, was being addressed. *"I have conducted some studies where we took them through ethical clearance. We are working with TM in terms of developing an ethics guideline which will help us resolve these issues. In essence, ethics are attended to implicitly, but we do not have an explicit clearance process in place" [8:93, 85].*

5.3.9.9 Leading with respect
The relational leadership practice of leading with respect refers to instances where participants mentioned respect as an important consideration for leadership and how relations were managed within the partnership.

On the one hand, there was an emphasis on mutual respect among the partners. A first participant stated that, *"There is a lot of mutual respect, and I think that is important. It is also a highly professional environment. You could see when people are presenting that they take their work very seriously" [9:45, 40].* A second participant indicated that, *"TM members have interacted so well and have strong interpersonal relationships. There is mutual respect for each other" [9:45, 40].* A third participant noted that, *"I think once individuals have managed to get together in a partnership context, there is a respect for, and an acceptance that we respect the person representing this particular organisation into this partnership" [3:11, 13].*

On the other hand, there was an acknowledgement that respect is even more imperative in multicultural environments. A first participant argued that, *"As a peer-learning partnership we should be respectful to each other and be respectful of the different country circumstances. We also have to take cognisance of the different positions that TM members hold within their own countries" [6:58, 85].* A second participant argued that, *"Leadership within TM was about a combination of diversity, a combination of understanding that you are dealing with different groups of people, from different spaces and in different circumstances" [8:7, 11].*

5.3.9.10 Managing difference
The relational leadership practice of managing difference was about noting measures put in place to ensure that difference is managed in a positive manner.

A first perspective was about how planning was used to prioritise interorganisational projects. A participant reported that, *"It is very much a partner-driven model. No one is deciding for the members as to which priorities they should pursue. They are the ones that determine their own priorities on the basis of their national interests or nationally-defined needs" [4:29, 59].*

A second perspective was about how the difference between public sector and development sector partners was managed. One participant observed that, *"CLEAR-AA's experience of having worked with parliamentarians and how to create evidence systems in the legislatures also helped TM to think about decision-making beyond the executive branch of government" [7:18, 16].*

A third perspective was about how the language difference among the partners was managed. A participant mentioned that, *"At some point there was a recognition within ManCom that translation should be prioritised and once there was proper translation, it completely changed the dynamics of the conversations when you got an interpreter on board. The principle is that we should offer people to speak in their language of preference" [7:68, 63].*

5.3.9.11 Marketing
The relational leadership practice of marketing denotes practices that are about ensuring that the brand and services of the interorganisational partnership were marketed widely.

A first perspective was about the use of technology as a marketing tool for the interorganisational partnership. One participant expressed that, *"To us, the website is like TM's our face, our gate or*

our door to the rest of the world. Anyone who would like to know more about us would get good information from our website and what we stand for. Our values, objectives and focus areas are well articulated in the TM website. I do think that has been quite important for TM" [9:25, 22].

A second perspective was about the brand name and how it came about. One participant reported that, *"I also remember that the name "Twende Mbele" was suggested by Mr Alpha from Uganda. Everybody suggested names and there was a sense of having collectively came up with the TM brand in a workshop"* [4:39, 80].

A third perspective is how individual countries and partners marketed their work. One participant reported that, *"They would share that in South Africa M&E is done at the highest possible level and it is working very well"* [8:32, 29].

5.3.9.12 Mobilising resources

A first viewpoint was about lack of funding. One participant indicated that, "*More could still be done to improve TM, especially if we could have more funding*". Another one stated that, *"I think TM is a very good initiative. It has achieved a lot in terms of assisting member countries to grow and strengthen their M&E capacity. The risk is limited funding which might imply lack of sustainability of TM"* [1:77:95].

A second viewpoint was about the responsibility of mobilising funding for the partnership. One participant argued that, *"When you work with donors, it is very much concentrated on the chair's role. This has been very challenging for fundraising"* [2:53, 76].

A third viewpoint was how the resources were mobilised. One participant argued that, *"In the first case it was about an informal discussion with key protagonists which were myself, from South Africa, Mr Alpha (Uganda) and Mr Beta (Benin) about the potential to collaborate on M&E and mobilising funding from Donor X which was keen on supporting emerging countries"* [4:3, 11].

A fourth viewpoint was the value of building relationships as part of resource mobilisation. One participant argued that, *"I think there is a role of having the big picture. A lot of it is about relationship-building with the donors, among the peer countries and with other key stakeholders. It's also about processes like planning and accountability to the donors on time and with quality"* [4:41, 86].

A fifth viewpoint was about value of countries contributing resources to the partnership. One participant argued that, *"Member countries must be willing to fund their TM work. So, during my tenure I realised that TM has a great potential to transform the continent through M&E, but the country partners must be more assertive. The countries must own the initiative and be willing to fund TM from their own coffers"* [5:20, 25].

The above was validated by the national interorganisational partnership as follows: *"There are partners like GIZ and others who would like to come on board to provide technical assistance in terms of NACS rollout. I think we should leverage that good will and momentum towards NACS rollout. Although I expressed some reservations, there is a lot to be positive about"* [2:53, 76].

5.3.9.13 Presenting a perspective
The relational leadership practice of presenting a perspective refers to situations where the participants acknowledged that what they were saying was not a mainstream view, or acknowledging others who do the same.

One perspective was about appreciating people who speak their minds as a form of leadership. The following quotation sums it up, *"I do think that there are other things that people do such as speaking out. I am going to be very honest here: sometimes someone like Mr Gamma might raise up something that everyone was thinking but not saying. To me that is a form of leadership: since it's a practice of saying what you think, and what you think is right and what you believe is the best way to move forward; which is the point of leadership. That is to get people to do things in terms of speaking out and engage people's mindsets and engage people's interest in this way-forward"* [2:9, 31].

Another perspective was about noting how the use of emotions was part of being expressive of one perspective as a leader. One participant noted that, *"There is a language issue and Mr Omega use to get very angry that everything was in English"* [2:51, 70].

In the national interorganisational partnership, the relational leadership practice of presenting a perspective was validated by the following quotation, *"Others think that bribing a cop is not a big issue, others think it is part of life, you can get away with it. Some people are looking at infrastructure issues and some are aware would is stilling it and they are not reporting it"* [550:37,

21] In this case, the participants noted the need for reporting criminality as a form of expressing one's views.

5.3.9.14 Promoting
The relational leadership practice of promoting was about steps taken to actively promote the partnership or its products to others as part of how influencing was done.

A first perspective was about how the interorganisational partnership was promoted. One participant mentioned that, *"I promoted TM among development partners and other stakeholders such as the UNDP, UNICEF, etc"* [5:36, 42].

A second perspective was about the promotion of specific products of the partnership. *"Once the TM partners saw that, they got interested to implement this approach in their own countries. For instance, in Benin they have made theory of change mandatory in the design of new programmes and policies, which will simplify continuous evaluation of such programmes"* [4:16, 29].

A third perspective was proactive measures that were adopted to actively promote the partnership. One participant reported that, *"Another example, in Kampala on the side-lines of the African Evaluation Association (AfREA) conference we facilitated a workshop with different countries that were interested to participate in TM"* [4:27, 53].

A third perspective was about the channels that were employed to promote the work of the partnership. One participant stated that, *"TM serves as a catalytic initiative. We used the website and conducted webinars to engage in dialogues with practitioners in the field of M&E about topical issues. The intent was to reach as many people as possible in order to sell our story. Social media helped TM to get feedback from other stakeholders"* [5:6, 10-11].

5.3.9.15 Prompting debate
The relational leadership practice of prompting debate refers to situations where debate was mentioned as an important way to influence others.

A first perspective was about appreciating the art of debating as part of how things were done in the partnership. A participant indicated that, *"Ms Delta might say something that people do not*

agree with or I say something that people don't agree with. And that prompts a discussion" [2:10, 31].

A second perspective was about the role of meetings to prompt debates. A participant stated that, *"By having the meetings, we were able to give people an opportunity to speak out and discuss new ideas openly. During the informal period informal invitation to each other's events helped with networking" [5:45, 98].*

A third perspective was about using diagnosis processes as part of prompting debates. One participant argued that, "*The initial undertaking of conducting a diagnosis in a participatory manner is extremely important. Some people can bring other perspectives that you do not see."* Another participant argued that, *"The stakeholders could also advocate for the use of the evaluation knowledge for policy and decision-making" [5:45, 51].*

A fourth perspective was about the use of technological platforms, like social media, to prompt debates. One participant reported that, *"TM has used webinars and other online mechanisms to interact with other stakeholders in the evidence ecosystem. This has also worked in terms of stimulating debates on topical issues, on capacity development, on leadership collaboration and relations" [9:28, 22].*

The practice of prompting debate was validated by the focus group with the secretariat of the international interorganisational partnership as follows, *"Someone put an advert for a webinar on sensemaking and story-telling in M&E. The panellists were put forward as three white guys. DD writes back asking, could you make your panel more diverse? This then started a whole debate about what is the role of this stuff in evaluation and in the practice of evaluation. If you have knowledge to share, it shouldn't matter what colour you are. As part of the broad transformation, can we bring those principles to inform our evaluation practices. I do think that a lot of these conversations among us as professional evaluators need to be made practical. What does it mean to have a more integrative and more participatory form of leadership?" [552:9, 10].*

5.3.9.16 Voicing out own views
The relational leadership practice of voicing out own views refers to situations where the issue of individual voice was highlighted as crucial to ensure progress.

A first perspective was about the value of communicating evaluations to stakeholders. One participant said, *"The stakeholders could also advocate for the use of the evaluation knowledge for policy and decision-making. People would then begin to know the value of evaluations and why they are important to be used to inform decisions. We could do the global evaluation community a favour by communicating more about our activities and what we are producing"* [6:54, 76].

A second perspective was about the advantage of using mother tongue to voice their own views. A participant indicated that, *"I remember many ManCom meetings where Mr F graciously listened in English, but sometimes expressed that he would like to speak in French now so that he could articulate himself out more clearly. It took him a long time to finally put forward his concerns"* [7:61, 58].

The important of voicing our views as communication was validated by the national interorganisational partnership thus, *"It will be very, very important that the momentum is carried through. There should be some form of communication to members of the committees to say this is where we are now and this is what is coming"* [549:90, 40].

5.3.9.17 Writing influencing texts

The relational practice of writing influencing texts refers to the emphasis made by some participants regarding the value of writing as a mechanism of influencing your target audience.

A first perspective was about the importance of publishing research and evaluations. One participant stated that, *"At its conception, TM had an ambitious research agenda and I am not sure how committed TM was after a period of time to translating that research into publications beyond just policy briefs and short learning pieces. I do think that, given the amount of money that was invested on research, and the rigour that went to its conceptualisation, it was a missed opportunity not to have that published in peer-reviewed journals and books"* [7:76, 72].

A second perspective was about the value of writing in general. One participant argued that, *"It has not exercised its full potential in the thought leadership front. If you think of it, we have six countries represented; people with key skills, knowledge and expertise. The lack of writing; not just emails, but all writing – it does limit TM's forward motion. We could reach a lot further if people would write a bit more. Obviously emails for me are the main link; I write a lot of emails, you know.*

But I don't know how well do I convince, persuade and influence people though my emails. Basically because of the constraints of the job, everyone is super busy. People don't really have time to sit down and do things. Emails are super important, writing is super important. Writing can be a good practice of leaders, but it requires good brain space, time, interest and commitment to do it. I don't think that is built into anyone's job" [2:19, 40].

A third perspective was about writing emails to make decisions. *"The Management Committee does take decisions through emails. Sometimes, we have calls for very minor decisions such as deciding on a date of a meeting…Sometimes due to a lack of conversation, you saw Country X objected a proposal. Unfortunately, you can't have a full conversation via email to say, for example, Country Y you are just one country among the six, so your idea will not be taken forward. Email is not great for engaging"* [2:21, 43].

A third perspective was about harvesting knowledge through writing. One participant stated that, *"We create templates for such reports and learning briefs that we can share. We interview members to pull out learnings and use research methods like snowball interviews to collect lessons learnt."* Another participant said, *"TM has tried as much as possible to document key lessons from engagements and through its own reviews and evaluations."* Another participant reported that, *"There is a specific part in our annual report and the Evaluation Update where TM is featured as one of our key partners"* [2:97, 139].

A fourth perspective was about the role of writing in terms of keeping institutional memory. *"Without that documenting it would have been harder to understand how their national evaluation system was evolving. It was difficult to understand where it was being blocked and why. That is why TM developed, right from the beginning, a research agenda to be able to ask key questions that needed answering for TM to be able to achieve its theory of change"* [7:39, 34].

The importance of writing influencing text was validated by use of letters to organise stakeholders, as demonstrated by the following quotation from the national interorganisational partnership: *"The members were issued with letters. We had our inaugural meeting held at the Offices of the Special Investigative Unit. It was one of the well-attended meetings"* [550:11, 12].

5.3.10 Relational leadership practices of organising

The relational leadership practices of organising refer to instances where the participants highlighted operational practices such as following through, managing time, networking, organising meetings and organising people.

Figure 5.16:   The relational leadership practice of organising

5.3.10.1 Following through

The relational leadership practice of following through was about ensuring that connections between one activity and others flowed smoothly and efficiently towards the accomplishment of a task.

A first perspective was about how the secretariat coordinates its own day-to-day activities to follow through on the strategic decisions of the collective. One participant indicated that, *"We have a practice of asking each other to indicate three big things that one will be doing each day. And we hold each other mutually accountable for the commitments made. Sometimes we have a follow up discussion about what needs to be done and how to achieve it. At the end of the day we report to the group about what we managed to achieve or couldn't achieve. That also applies to me, as I want my team to be able to hold me to account" [2:24, 52].* The first element is the practice of "asking each other" and "holding each other accountable" as the hallmark of how follow through

is made in this context. There is also assistance that comes through a "follow up discussion" and "reporting to the group" on the progress made.

A second perspective views following-through as tracking progress in a supervisory mode of checking. One participant mentioned that, *"Some conversations would be about checking for certain operational information from a team member, such as whether a terms-of-reference for such and such a task has been done, etc" [2:24, 52].* Another participant reported that, *"As the lead person you would still play a role in overseeing the implementation of the project until its conclusion" [6:13, 19].*

A third perspective was about factors that led to a lack of follow through. One participant argued that, *"We all understand that this commitment was voluntary and was on top of very demanding positions that the ManCom members hold back in their organisations. Maybe that was a mistake in that by making it voluntary and something that was an add-on to existing workplans and there was an underestimation of the time and energy commitment required" [7:58, 55].* In this regard, the design of the partnership as "voluntary" and an "add-on" role for people who are full-time elsewhere contributed negatively to the ability of the partners to follow through on commitments made.

A fourth perspective was about the value of following through efficiently and related push factors. One participant indicated that, *"You need to complete what you are doing and ensure that the project is delivered on time and to quality. We are always conscious that the money comes from somewhere, that is a donor who expects proper reporting for the money used" [8:52, 41].* In this case, the accountability consciousness was a push factor for the practice of following through.

5.3.10.2 Managing time
The relational leadership practice of managing time was linked to the participants' understanding of efficiency.

A first perspective was about viewing management of time as a core value for the partnership. One participant stated that, *"We try not to take too much of people's time" [2:90, 124].* Another participant confirmed that, *"In spaces like TM, everything was done more efficiently and quicker. The rules are different to those of government" [8:29, 23].* Another emphasised that, *"It is about*

impact and timing. If a project was done cheaply, but done late, it is as useless as anything" [5:41, 51].

A second perspective was about the negative effect of the time factor. One participant compared the work of the partnership with universities and contended that, *"The main factor around ethical clearance is time required"* [8:92, 85].

A third perspective was about challenges experienced with embracing the practice of managing time among some of the critical stakeholders. One participant argued that, *"There are few problems, such as some of the chairs not putting in enough time to do the job as effectively as they could" [4:33, 68].*

5.3.10.3 Networking

The relational leadership practice of networking was about how the partners built networks with external stakeholders and internally among themselves.

A first perspective was about the approach that was used to promote networking. One participant indicated that, *"It has been part of the ethos of TM to help people form relationships though side events in major conferences or making at least two people from TM to attend a conference and help raise the TM flag high and network with others on behalf of TM" [2:55, 82].* In this regard, there was an investment made to promote networking via subsidising participation in conferences and promoting the work of the partnership. Another participant expressed that, "*This demonstrate the rigour and seriousness with which networking as a leadership practice in this network" [9:62, 76].*

A second perspective was about the constraints experienced with networking. One participant reported that, *"I can say that, because of the COVID-19 situation, that has become a lot more difficult because people are just not in each other's physical spaces any longer. People are not relating as easily and as seamlessly as before. I have identified that as a constraining factor" [3:61, 46].*

A third perspective demonstrated how creative opportunities were identified to facilitate networking whilst also saving costs. One participant reported that, *"SA and Uganda were members of 3ie Impact and we took that opportunity to meet informally every six months at 3ie*

Impact Board Meetings. That meant we could meet physically at no additional cost to TM. We used emails to carry on some of our conversations and sharing of information" [4:18, 38].

A fourth perspective was viewing the partnership as a network organisational forum. One participant argued that, *"I think at the beginning it was very much about setting the tone for the kind of a network we wanted and I had a strong feeling that it had to be a collective one"* [4:37, 77].

5.3.10.4 Organising meetings
The relational leadership practice of organising meetings is about the value derived from the different forms of meetings to accomplish different kinds of purposes.

A first perspective was about how meetings were organised in such a way that they intentionally removed hierarchy. One participant said, *"We organise meetings where open space facilitation is used to ensure that people engage without reference to their formal titles and statuses"* [2:43, 64].

A second perspective was about the purpose of webinars. One participant stated that, *"Webinars require less preparations. We do them in order to get information out, build partnerships and discuss difficult topics. Conversational learning and sharing are the preference for most people than writing"* [2:71, 97].

A third perspective was about how workshops were used to facilitate the development of new programmes. One participant mentioned that, *"In December 2014 we had our first planning workshop in South Africa, where we conceptualised the TM programme together. In March 2015 we did some detailed action-planning in Uganda. Finally, the initiative got funded by Donor X since 2016".* Another participant argued that, *"I also think a series of workshops that were organised by CLEAR-AA for TM that were face-to-face were incredibly important and without those we would not have been able to build relationships among peers, had it had been just virtual"* [7:30, 25].

A fourth perspective was about the value derived from rotating venues for the meetings of the partners. One participant indicated that, "*I certainly think that meeting in different localities was really useful. So, like having a meeting in South Africa; having a meeting in Uganda; having a meeting at the African Development Bank in Côte d'Ivoire; having a meeting in Benin – was hugely*

successful. Not just having meetings in Johannesburg even though it was cheaper to do so. Trust-building happens by understanding context within which members are operating and seeing that context" [7:79, 25].

5.3.10.5 Organising people

The relational leadership practice of organising people was about how individuals were prioritised to achieve certain objectives of the partnership.

A first dimension was about the appreciation of different pressures that people face when executing projects. One participant argued that, *"The people that are working on the ground do not just want to finish the project in the most efficiency way because they need buy-in and people to agree. Politics is a real thing and life is a real thing. They need to go slowly and do other things that will ensure sustainability and longevity"* [2:82, 115].

A second dimension was about organising people for training purposes. A first participant stated that, *"The ManCom members were critical in terms of identifying people who needed to be trained per each country. The targeted training was good value for money. The secretariat also played a big role in organising the training workshops in the countries".* A second participant indicated that, *"The focal persons were also grouped into technical working groups and got trained to understand deeper concepts"* [8:71, 72].

A third dimension was about careful identification of individuals who could ensure efficient implementation. *"The leadership aspect from our side was about recognising as to which individuals will bring about impact in terms of peer-learning and sharing. And those were the individuals who were picked because they were in strategic offices. That helped because they could fast-track implementation on the other side"* [8:17, 14].

The focus group with the members of the secretariat of the international interorganisational partnership validated this practice of organising people thus, "*Essentially, what we are trying to achieve is a debate on the benefits of vertical versus horizontal structures in organisations. How could horizontal leadership be beneficial for a public sector organisational monitoring and evaluation (M&E) unit as opposed to vertical structures. That is a gist of it"* [5:52, 4].

5.3.11 Relational leadership practices of recognising

The relational leadership practices of recognising were about how the participants expressed views regarding the importance of recognising risks, brand legitimacy, dealing with frustration, dealing with paradox, recognising difference, and recognising individuals for their contribution.

Figure 5.17:   The relational leadership practice of recognising

5.3.11.1 Recognising risks

The relational leadership practice of recognising risks refers to instances where the participants acknowledged specific risks that might affect the work of the partnership.

A first viewpoint was about the negative impact of distance. One participant observed that, *"The fact that the Chairperson and Programme Manager are not in the same place, makes things a little bit difficult to ensure that they do work together very closely and ensure accountability on implementation. TM has to reorganise the role of the chairperson to be more hands-on in the implementation of TM projects"* [1:62:61].

A second viewpoint was the potential risk posed by decision-making processes. One participant noted that, *"The fact that technical partners have representatives within ManCom with equal rights*

on decision-making, is problematic. They should not be part of decision-making, but advise technically rather than voting on decisions" [1:66, 73].

A third viewpoint was the impact of a lack of funds. One participant argued that*, "The risk is limited funding which might imply lack of sustainability of TM"* [1:77, 95].

A fourth viewpoint was about the risk of conflict triggered by small things. One participant argued that, *"The small logistical issues can actually cause conflict. They can jettison an entire project…It was always about how we problem-solve together"* [3:21, 20].

A fifth viewpoint was about the challenge of managing the collective identity of the partnership. One participant argued that, *"When you are trying to build a collective identity with different partners… it is quite a challenge since each organisation has its own vision and approach to work"* [3:42, 34].

The sixth viewpoint was about challenges of managing power dynamics. One participant stated that, "*When talking about decolonising the evaluation practice, because there are sometimes power asymmetries between donors from western Europe and North America; we know that these are some of the spaces we operate in and those are some of our funders and we talk very openly about asymmetries of power and sometimes the microcosms of relationships where sometimes one might feel undermined or sometimes that your ideas are not taken seriously or the power asymmetries define what your organisation can or cannot do"* [3:52, 40].

A sixth viewpoint was about the risk posed by the partnership model compared to their home organisation. One participant observed that, *"The TM value proposition is lot more difficult to execute than CLEAR-AA's approach of working with a single country. That is probably why it is difficult to define specific projects that we could work on together. CLEAR-AA has these individual countries that it is working in and how do you get different countries into one room and say, okay, can we scale up this particular initiative across multiple countries. That is a hard task"* [3:74, 52].

A seventh viewpoint was about identifying the risk of tacit versus explicit knowledge on the work of leadership. One participant noted that, *"I think these have been incredible difficult questions because once you are in a leadership position you do really think about these things, they become tacit in how you work. You assume that everybody knows how to connect, how to establish*

237

collective identity, how to govern, how to ensure that the organisation operates with integrity. When we appoint somebody into a leadership position we assume that somebody knows these things. We don't necessarily unpack these things as organisations and say this is going to be our strategy. This has taught me a lot today" [3:126, 98].

An eighth viewpoint was the importance of maintaining the leadership role of the partnership in determining its own direction without being influenced by external parties or dominated by the secretariat. *"I think really, what is important for a network like TM is not to be seen to be donor-driven. It should also set parameters for the role of the Secretariat. It is critical that the TM is experienced as country-driven in terms of setting the agenda"* [7:103, 104].

5.3.11.2 Brand legitimacy

The relational leadership practice of recognising the legitimacy of the brand of the partnership was about instances where the participants highlighted the importance of the partnership name or brand.

A first perspective was about the role of champions in ensuring brand legitimacy for the partnership. One participant noted that, *"So, even within TM people who are involved are recognised within the evaluation ecosystem. Having those recognised champions, it assists with fostering inter-connectedness between the various organisations"* [8:66, 55].

A second perspective was about how the brand is promoted. One participant argued that, *"To us, the website is like TM's our face, our gate or our door to the rest of the world. Anyone who would like to know more about us would get good information from our website and what we stand for. Our values, objectives and focus areas are well articulated in the TM website. I do think that has been quite important for TM"* [9:25, 22].

A third perspective was about the approach to the work of the partnership. One participant indicated that, *"Remember TM is about influencing development of national M&E systems. So, over the years through TM we have developed a set of M&E tools such as on performance assessment, rapid evaluations, engagement with the civil society, training of policy-makers on evidence generation and use"* [9:27, 22].

5.3.11.3 Dealing with frustration

The relational leadership practice of dealing with frustration refers to instances where the participants shared feelings of frustration linked to important aspects of their work.

A first perspective was about the frustration caused by the COVID-19 related restrictions for transnational travelling. One participant observed that, *"It has become a lot more difficult now that we can't travel due to COVID-19 restrictions" [8:76, 67].* The pandemic presented frustration since it halted the cross-border travelling that was one of the operational enablers for the international interorganisational partnership.

A second perspective was about the downside of prioritising projects based on the number of partners that are interested. One participant indicated that, *"We focus on those areas of greatest common interest. Therefore, that presents a bit of challenge for topics that are not selected due to lack of interest for collaboration among the partners" [6:34, 40].* In this case, the fact that projects have to gain critical mass in terms of support before they can be adopted as partnership projects frustrated partners who believed their ideas should be taken forward and funded irrespective of others' interests or the common interest.

A third perspective was about a lack of participation due to hierarchical considerations. One participant observed that, *"Mr Y was dealing with ups and downs on a daily basis and therefore could have been effective. I think out of protocol from his own country, although he was present, Mr Y was quiet for too long as if he was of inferior position to Mr X" [7:43, 38].* In this case there was a lack of space for participation by a certain member from the same country due to allowing their boss to be the one who spoke based on the seniority from their own country. The member from a less hierarchical environment of a capacity development agency was frustrated by the shift since he/she was aware that the quieter person could have made better inputs based on their hands-on involvement in the specific area of common interest.

5.3.11.4 Dealing with paradox

The relational leadership practice of dealing with paradox refers to situations where the participants expressed experiences of encountering paradoxical situations.

A first lens was about the paradox of identity of the partnership. One participant noted that, *"TM, like the African Union or European Union are, is about sameness of the member countries. It is*

about that inclusion and identity of being Africans and yet understanding diversity within that common identity" [8:12, 11]. In this case, the opposing values of sameness and diversity are seen as important dialectics that were put forward as a paradoxical issue regarding the nature of the partnership.

A second lens was around the desire to adopt ethical clearance processes for one partner, but the challenge that comes with the time taken to conduct such processes. One participant indicated that, *"Again, TM has offered to assist us with developing a guideline on ethics and we are currently developing the ethics guideline with their support. We are still conflicted in the sense that ethical clearance processes add another layer of bureaucracy in the evaluation process"* [8:87, 82].

A third lens was about the importance placed on the role of the chairperson, yet some of those who qualify did not have adequate experience and confidence to independently run with the role. One participant reported that, *"Like every institution of this nature, it has to evolve. Different set of challenges present themselves. For instance, this year we have two chairpersons or a chair and a co-chair. The reason is because the new chair is one of the new members and does not really have institutional memory. It was thought to be wise to have two leaders, me as co-chair as one of the historical members to support the new chairperson. That is one of the measures we put in place to address some of the new challenges" [9:48, 46].* The introduction of the co-chairperson role was seen as a mitigation measure to manage the challenge of rotational chairpersons where some would refuse to take the position when the turn of their country comes due to lack of confidence based on limited experience or other factors reported by the participants.

5.3.11.5 Recognising difference
The relational leadership practice of recognising difference is about the value that was attached by the participants to cultural or another form of difference.

A first view was about language difference and suggestions on how to manage that difference better. One participant reported that, *"Benin and Niger have a West African Francophone identity and they speak the same language and influence each other more. It's also a language issue… Benin is small and quite peaceful. It has to do with the system and situational variables, not merely the person" [2:38, 61].* Another participant indicated that, *"We have to be conscious that the African continent is comprised of Francophone, Anglophone, Lusophone and Portuguese speaking countries" [1:50, 40].*

A second view was about the distinctive features of the international interorganisational partnership when compared to similar bodies. One participant argued that, *"The difference is also linked with methodology and approach. Unlike other development partners that only provide funding, TM is involved in implementation support and capacity development"* [1:47, 37].

A third view was about recognising gender differences. One participant stated that, *"It also has to do with how women in that space negotiate voice, you know, assertiveness versus aggression"* [2:36, 61].

A fourth view was about the different expectations between donors and project implementers in the form of consultants and the country units involved in the rollout of TM initiatives. One participant argued that, *"The people that are working on the ground do not just want to finish the project in the most efficient way because they need buy-in and people to agree. Politics is a real thing and life is a real thing. They need to go slowly and do other things that will ensure sustainability and longevity"* [2:82, 115].

A fifth difference was about recognising religious differences*. One participant observed that, "So, for example, in Benin, when we worked on a conference with Mr X, it was during the Moslem Ramadan period because Benin is predominantly a Muslim country. He was just indicating that he wishes that some of these engagements happened outside of his holy month. It was a very small thing, but it was interesting for me to understand and think around various aspects of diversity"* [8:8, 11].

5.3.11.6 Recognising individuals

The relational practice of recognising individuals was about the expression of the need for recognition or experiences of individual recognition or lack thereof.

A first perspective was about the role of a leader in terms of allocating tasks to people according to their abilities. One participant argued that, *"As the leader I had to identify people with key skills that were relevant for particular aspects of that task, and Mr X's skills came in handy in that regard. I actually identified that this person can coordinate well…"* [3:111, 89].

A second perspective was about the importance of respective people's status. One participant indicated that, *"It means that you have to walk a fine line. You have to recognise and respect people's formal status. You need people to trust each other and they will not trust each other unless they relate to each other and engage one another" [2:40, 64].*

A third perspective was about the consequences of having positional leaders who are not taken seriously. One participant noted that, *"Sometimes it does take the leadership of the chair such as encouraging people to demonstrate commitment to TM. If the leader like the chair, or is not respected or the group of leaders which is the TM ManComm, people would move away. New people will not join TM" [2:76, 109].* Another participant stated that, *"…leaders already have leadership competencies under their belt" [3:89, 63].*

A fourth perspective was about performance recognitions and awards. One participant noted that, *"We do not have formalised awards or anything like that. But our recognition is very explicit in terms of recognising individuals for the good work they have accomplished. That happens across the board, from the very junior person to the most senior person" [3:111, 89].*

5.4   CONCLUSION OF THE FIFTH CHAPTER

Chapter 5 presented the findings in a descriptive manner guided by the analytical toolkit of coding and the practice approach methodology. The first set of findings demonstrate how the participants defined the constructs of a leader, leadership, and leadership practices from their own perspectives. The concepts of practice of interest versus intersecting practices, as articulated by Heidenstrøm (2022), were applied. The findings indicated that there are many ways in which the participants defined leadership and related constructs, mainly in a positive normative manner. The various leadership practices that were reported by the participants were clustered into the eleven relational leadership practices of interest. These were depicted in Figure 5.5 as follows, agreeing, changing, characterising leadership, defining, following, governing, identifying, influencing, organising, and recognising. Under each of the relational leadership practices of interest, there is a grand total of seventy-seven intersecting relational leadership practices that occur in the sampled interorganisational partnerships.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Chapter 6 starts with an introduction followed by the discussion of the findings on the leadership construct and the eleven relational leadership practices of interest. On the basis of the discussion of the findings, implications for leadership theory are explored and then Chapter 6 is concluded (See Figure 6.1).

Chapter 6 contributes towards answering the main research question, which is: *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?* In order to answer the foregoing research question, Chapter 6 uses the following guiding questions:

   (1) How is leadership socially constructed in interorganisational partnership contexts?

   (2) What are the outcomes of socially constructed RLPs?

   (3) How can we evaluate relationality and purpose of RLPs using responsible leadership theory and the *Ubuntu* perspective?

   (4) What is the contribution of this thesis to knowledge and practice?

Figure 6.1:   Outline of Chapter 6
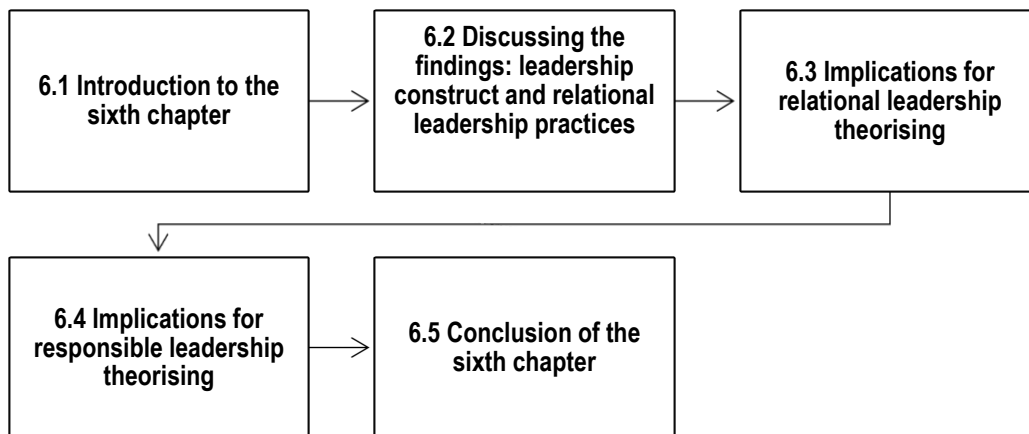
Through the foregoing three guiding questions, Chapter 6 aims to address the following three gaps in leadership literature. The first gap in leadership research pertains to the limited scholarly research on how the leadership construct is understood in interorganisational partnership contexts since there is limited empirical research that examines how leadership emerges and is

enacted in such settings as the "collaborative domain" (Connelly, 2007:1253). Instead, in interorganisational partnership contexts leadership is "mentioned but rarely studied empirically" (Huxham & Vangen, 2001:1160; Endres & Weibler, 2020:276). Consequently, as per Chapter 4 on the research design, the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) lens was adopted for this study to guide the onto-epistemological understanding of how leadership is socially constructed in interorganisational partnership contexts (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Cunliffe, 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018; Endres & Weibler, 2020). The RSCL lens was operationalised using the qualitative paradigm branch of the practice approach methodology (Ospina & Foldy, 2010). The practice approach was useful in terms of defining relational leadership practices as a "unit of analysis" and set parameters for generating and analysing the empirical data from the interorganisational partnerships as the "unit of observation" (Reckwitz, 2002; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Feldman & Worline, 2016, Janssens & Steyaert, 2019; Heidenstrøm, 2022).

The second gap in literature pertains to the paucity of understanding the outcomes of leadership at an ontological level of the leadership construct. The predominant mainstream leadership scholarship focuses on the leader versus followers and their goals. The RSCL lens mainly pays attention to the processual onto-epistemological questions of how the leadership phenomenon emerges and is enacted (Drath *et al.,* 2008). Hence in this discussion, there is a special focus in terms of analysing the outcomes of leadership using the leadership outcomes ontology proposed by Drath *et al.* (2008).

The third gap in leadership literature is around the lack of leadership studies that go beyond presenting practices and begin to analyse their relationality and purpose using extant leadership theory. In Chapter 2 it was found that the conceptual foundations of the responsible leadership theory could be employed to understand the relationality and purpose of the RLPs as "social-relational and ethical" phenomena (Maak & Pless, 2006:99; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:130). As such, extant responsible leadership literature is used to evaluate the relationality and purpose of the relational leadership practices.

The next section presents a framework that provides the context for the discussion of the findings using the abovementioned three guiding questions and gaps in literature, as summarised in Figure 6.2.
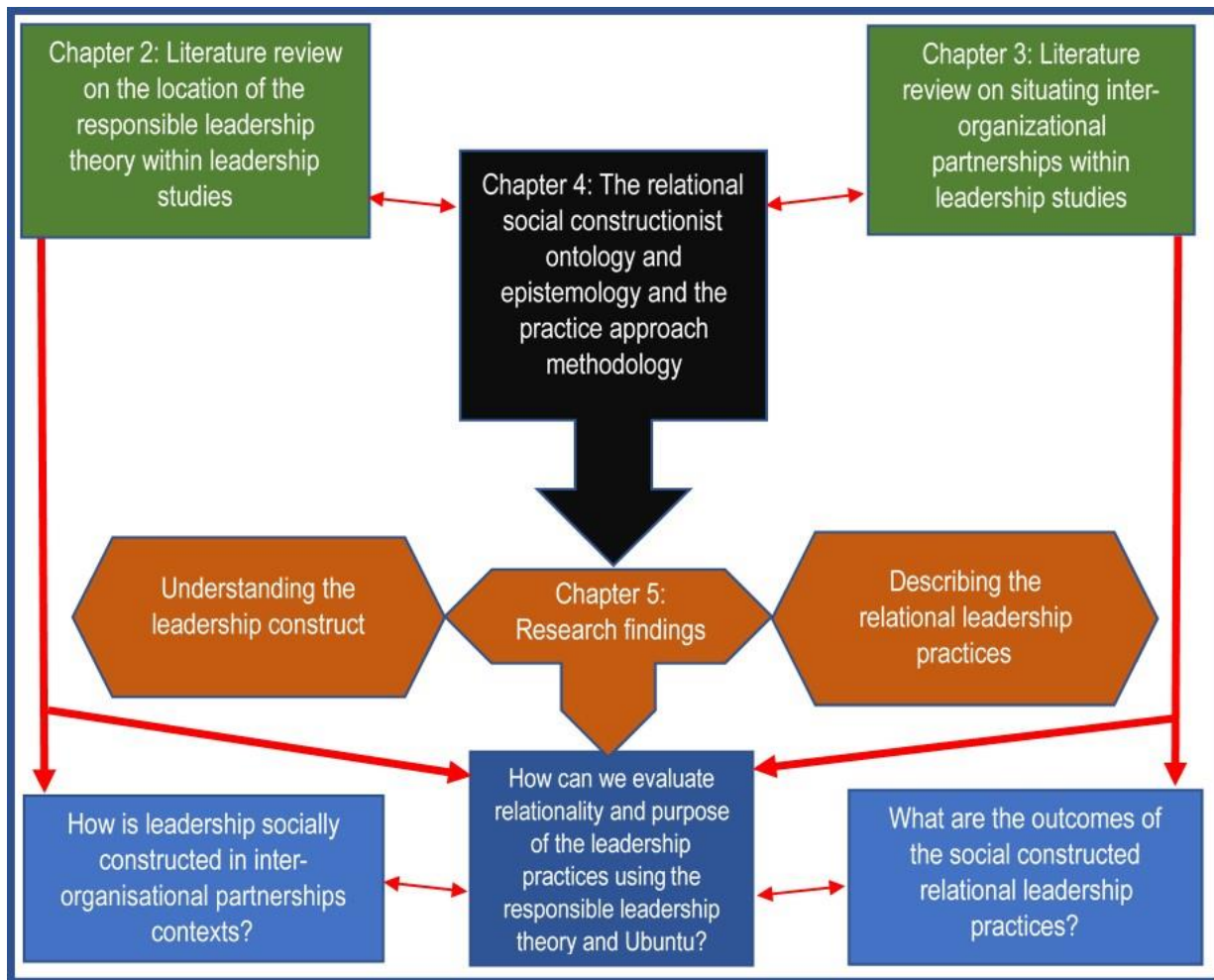
Figure 6.2: **Demonstrating the relationship between Chapter 6 and the previous chapters of this thesis**

In terms of Figure 6.2, Chapter 2 discussed the evolution of the leadership studies and then focused on responsible leadership theory as one of the emerging leadership approaches. The literature review noted that responsible leadership theory is primarily guided by the relationality principle of external stakeholder incorporation and the principle of orientation towards moral values and ethics, which partly serves as a response to corporate and public scandals that emanate from irresponsible leadership practices in society (Maak & Pless, 2006:99; Waldman, 2011; Patzer, Voegtlin & Scherer, 2018; Miska & Mendenhall 2018). In terms of comparison, responsible leadership theory shares the relationality construct with the relational leadership theory (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023), hence the use of the RSCL lens in this research.

Chapter 3 discussed the various kinds of interorganisational partnerships and situated their understanding within the collective forms of leadership. Again, the relationality construct was observed as a central concept in participative systems literature and collective leadership research, hence the RSCL lens was confirmed as the preferred theoretical framework for this research (Eva *et al,* 2019:6; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Endress & Weibler, 2020).

Chapter 4 on the research design presented the theoretical framing, methodological framing and empirical framing of the study. It discussed the ontology, epistemology and methodology of this research. The onto-epistemology that was adopted for this research is the RSCL theoretical lens[3]. The methodology that was employed for this research was the practice approach. In Chapter 4, the logic of the research was presented as the abductive mode of inquiry, which is about iterative movement between literature and empirical data during the processes of data collection, analysis and discussion (Cunliffe, 2011; Raelin, 2020; Sklaventi, 2020). In that chapter, the approach to sampling (the two interorganisational partnerships) and data gathering (dialogic interviews and focus groups) was outlined accordingly and the research schedule was presented. Then the data analysis framework was discussed, which was inspired by the coding practices of Charmaz (2006). The ethical implications of the study were also discussed.

Chapter 5 presented the two parts of the research findings, namely, an analysis of the definitions of the leadership construct and an analysis of the RLPs. Consequently, Chapter 6 uses the three guiding questions to discuss each of the two aspects of the research findings.

The arrows in figure 6.2 demonstrate relationships between the various aspects of this research and the fact that such relationships are not linear, but should be viewed as inter-connected through feedback loops. For instance, the theoretical framework was informed by the relationality construct which emerged as a central theme from the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3. The discussion of the findings was based on the findings presented in Chapter 5 and guided by the research design in Chapter 4. The research questions that guided the discussion of the findings

---

[3] The core argument of the RSCL lens is that leadership is the property of a group and it is found in the work of that group, not in specific individuals (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). This means, relational leadership practices are viewed as emerging from the interorganisational partnerships studied and are also enacted within them (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

are mutually related since they seek to integrate insights from the empirical findings with themes from the extant literature.

Table 4.2 in Chapter 4 described the coding processes. In line with the abductive mode of inquiry that was discussed in Chapter 4, the research process moved between the empirical data, that is: the initial, focused and axial codes representing the RLPs, and theoretical codes, which apply the leadership theory to the empirically coded data.

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings based on two analytical models[4] from the literature. The <u>first model </u>is the Direction, Alignment and Commitment (DAC) ontology by Drath *et al.* (2008). Table 6.1 presents the core tenets of the DAC ontology and how it goes beyond the tripod ontology of leaders versus follower characteristics.

Table 6.1: Comparing the DAC ontology to the tripod ontology

TRIPOD ONTOLOGY	DAC ONTOLOGY
Characteristics of leaders and followers	<u>Leadership beliefs</u> transcend leader and follower characteristics because leadership beliefs can be about any aspect of how to produce DAC, but leadership beliefs also include beliefs about leader and follower characteristics
Behaviours of leaders and followers	<u>Leadership practices</u> transcend leader and follower behaviours to involve the total pattern of interactions and systems that produce DAC, but leadership practices include the leader-follower interaction.

<u>Source:</u> After Drath *et al.* (2008:643)

In terms of Table 6.1, the existence of DAC confirms the existence of the leadership phenomenon in collective settings. This is similar to the tripod framework which assumes that the leadership phenomenon is present in situations where influence takes place between a leader and followers in relation to their common objectives. The production of DAC outcomes is contingent on the leadership beliefs and practices. This is comparable to the tripod model wherein influence of the followers by a leader depends on their characteristics (Drath *et al.* 2008:642). Recent literature of responsible leadership has empirically tested the relationship between responsible leadership and organisational commitment and found a positive relationship between the two constructs (Haque *et al.,* 2029). In this research, the DAC ontology is referred to as the DAC Framework. Each of the leadership outcomes (i.e. direction, alignment and commitment [DAC] leadership

---

[4]As a special note, the RSCL Model and DAC Framework will not be cited every time they are mentioned in this research. Citation will be included in cases whereby additional insights or direct quotes from these authors are included over and above the brief explanation provided in the foregoing paragraphs.

beliefs and practices) were specified in the theoretical coding of each of the initial codes of the RLPs that are depicted in Table 6.1.

The <u>second model</u> is the Three-Component RSCL Model that specifies the leadership mechanism, leadership manifestation and leadership content (Endres & Weibler, 2017:222) as presented in Figure 6.3.
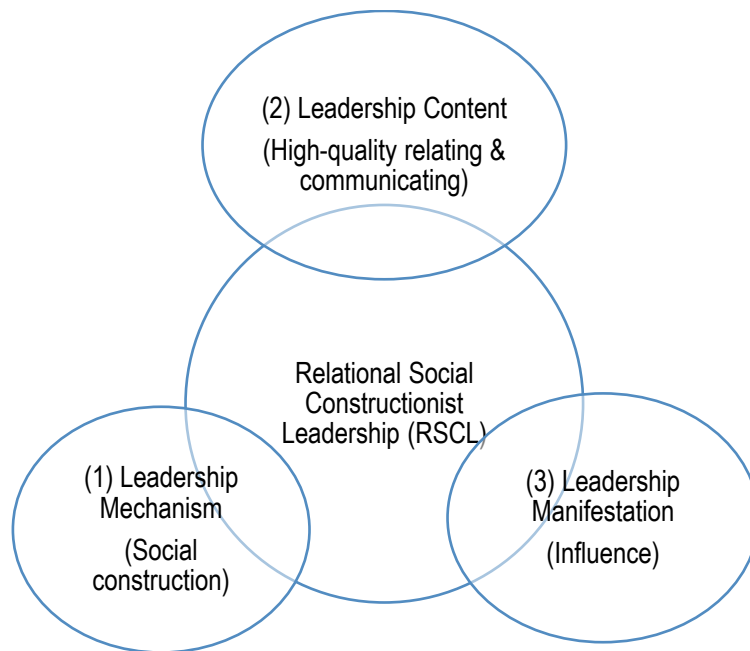
Figure 6.3: Outlining the Three-Component Model for RSCL

<u>Source</u>: Adapted from Endres and Weibler (2017:222), and Ntakumba and De Jongh (2023:3)

According to Figure 6.3, first, the mechanism of leadership refers to "social construction", which is about the continuous construction of "social realities through ongoing interpretation and interaction". Second, the content of leadership refers to "high-quality relating and communicating", which is about the explicit and implicit connections among people. Third, the manifestation of leadership refers to influence that takes place at dyadic and collective leadership domains (Endres & Weibler, 2017:214).

In this research, the Three-Component Model of RSCL is referred to as the RSCL Model (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023). Similar to the DAC Framework, each element of the RSCL Model (i.e. leadership mechanism, content and manifestation) were specified in the theoretical coding of each of the initial codes of the RLPs.

The structure of the presentation of the discussion of the findings' sections is illustrated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Presenting the structure of the research findings

MAIN SECTIONS OF THE DISCUSSION	SUB-SECTIONS OF THE DISCUSSION AS PER THE THREE GUIDING QUESTIONS
1) The definitions of the leadership construct 2) RLPs e.g. agreeing.	a) Discussion in terms of social construction of leadership using the RSCL Model
	b) Discussion in terms of the leadership outcomes using the DAC Framework
	c) Evaluation of the relationality and purpose of the RLP using responsible leadership theory
	d) Discussing the RLPs of 'agreeing' using the *Ubuntu* perspective

Furthermore, the discussion of the leadership construct and each of the eleven RLPs is preceded by diagrams that are numbered and colour-coded for each of the RLPs as depicted in Figure 6.4.
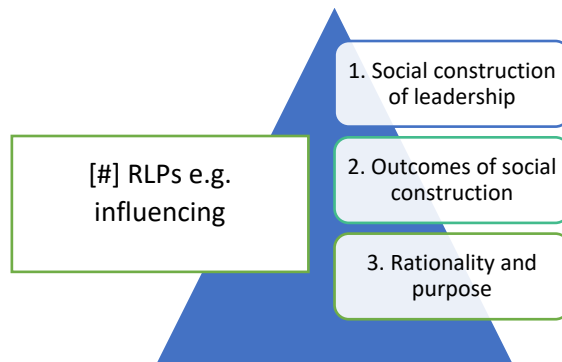
Figure 6.42: Presenting the framework for outlining the discussion of each of the RLPs

It is against the foregoing introduction and context that the next sections present the discussion of the findings[5].

---

[5] As a special note: in Atlas.ti 22 Windows software, each quotation is accompanied by three numbers, namely: the two ID numbers and a reference number. In this research such numbers are put in brackets as follows [23:34, 76]. In this example, the ID number 23:34 means that the quotation was taken from document number 23 and it is the 34th quotation that was generated in that document. The reference number 76 refers to the location of the quotation within the document e.g. paragraph 76.

6.2 DISCUSSING THE FINDINGS: LEADERSHIP CONSTRUCT AND RLPS

The first section discusses the leadership construct as a socially constructed relational phenomenon in interorganisational partnership contexts. It also assesses leadership using the DAC Framework and the RSCL Model. Other insights from literature are incorporated as cited accordingly. The various themes regarding the perspectives of the participants about their definitions of leadership are evaluated using the responsible leadership theory.

6.2.1 Discussing various perspectives on the definitions of the leadership construct
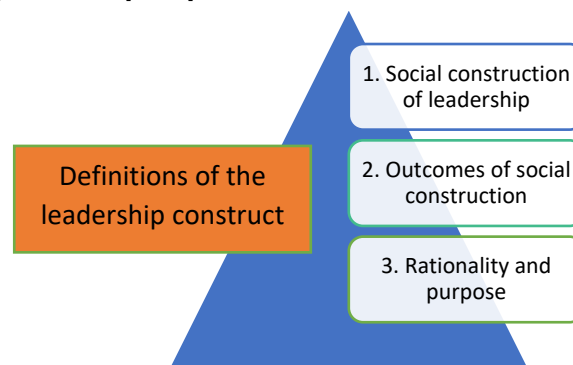
Figure 6.5: **Framework for discussing the definitions of the leadership construct**

6.2.1.1 The social construction of the leadership construct

In Chapter 5, the word-cloud confirmed the centrality of the leadership construct in the empirical data. This was useful for data validation in terms of assessing whether the generated data aligned to the main focus of the study, which is the leadership phenomenon and how it occurs in interorganisational partnership contexts. In terms of the RSCL Model, the leadership mechanism could be represented by the socially constructed themes such as "people" "vision" and "think" in the definitions provided by the participants. The leadership context is represented by the action phrases such as leaders "put together a team of people" and "common agenda". The manifestation of leadership is elucidated by the presentation of the leadership construct as a practice of interest versus various themes that served to characterise the leadership phenomenon from the perspective of the participants. Such themes indicated the role of a leader as "giving direction", "stimulating interest" and "facilitating achievement".

The characterisation of leaders in terms of their traits and behaviours aligns to the predominant view of the leadership construct as presented in the literature review in Chapter 2 and also confirmed by the review done by Hernandez *et al.* (2011:1165) and the tripod ontology (Drath *et*

al., 2008). The common thread among these scholars is that a leader is viewed as someone who has agency towards others for the purposes of accomplishing something. The traditional view of leadership (the tripod ontology as per Drath *et al.,* 2008), could be characterised as agency towards followers or stakeholders in terms of: "convincing", "influencing", and "motivating", as also confirmed by the study conducted by Banks, Gooty, Ross, Williams and Harrington (2018:236).

The cognitive perspective of the definition of leadership aligns to the focus on the antecedents of leadership in terms of motivational drivers and the inner theatre of leadership as examined by studies conducted by Pless (2007) and Castillo, Sánchez, & Dueñas-Ocampo (2020:329). The development of the concept of leadership beliefs in the DAC Framework was informed by the organisational cognition literature which deals with similar concepts such as, cognitive maps, interpretive schemes, folk stories, screens, frames of reference, folk theories, shared perspectives, team mental models, tacit understanding, organisational schemas and belief structures (Drath *et al.*, 2008:644).

The notion of organisations as leaders in their own right could be located within the meso-level of leadership research (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:121). However, this conceptualisation of organisations as leaders is quite rare in leadership research. Markham (2012:1149) discusses the "evolutionary competition among the organisational species", but does not examine the idea of organisations as leaders. However, the discipline of strategy does pay attention to organisational performance and related leading practices (Jarbaskwoski & Spee, 2009:88).

The view of leadership work in material terms refers to the prominence of expressions that view the role of a leader as seeking to develop "national evaluation systems" and to champion the use of "evidence", as epistemic objects (Werle & Sedl, 2015:70). In terms of "socio-materiality", the construct of leadership is conceptualised "as a configuration of social, material and discursive relations (e.g., connections, practices and routines) in everyday management work." (Eva *et al.*, 2019:4). The theme of socio-materiality is not explored further in this research since the focus is primarily on the social construction of the leadership construct.

6.2.1.2 Assessing the outcomes of leadership from the definitions of the leadership construct

In terms of the direction outcome, both the DAC leadership beliefs and DAC leadership practices were prevalent, such as the use of phrases like "visioning", "engaging" and "giving direction". The

alignment outcome was also implicit when considering the use of statements such as "team-playing", "embodiment of organisational attributes" and "alignment between organisational representatives and their home organisations". To the extent that these sayings were directly linked to the individual-centric definitions of leadership, that confirm that the DAC Framework does not necessarily replace the tripod framework (leaders, followers and shared goals), but channels our attention to the ontological value of emphasising the leadership outcomes (Drath *et al.,* 2018). The commitment DAC outcome was not found in this aspect of the data analysis.

6.2.1.3   *Evaluating the definitions of leadership using the key tenets of responsible leadership theory*

In terms of evaluating the definitions of leadership from the responsible leadership theory perspective, the first tenet of ethics-orientation was not common. There were a few exceptions in terms of cases where the importance of "values" and how a leader should relate with followers in a "trustful" and "ethical" manner were highlighted. However, the themes of ethics and values are quite prevalent in the analysis of the RLPs, which demonstrated the disjuncture between normative definitions (prescriptive) versus practical behaviours (actions) and experiences in terms of how leadership is enacted in interorganisational partnerships. Similarly, the second tenet of responsible leadership theory in terms of the incorporation of external stakeholders was not prevalent in the definitions of the leadership construct since such definitions tended to focus on the behaviours of leaders towards their followers internally within an organisation.

In summary, participants of this research tended to provide normative definitions of leadership that are aligned to the traditional view of the leadership construct and such definitions were not explicitly aligned to the key tenets of the responsible leadership theory in terms of values and ethical orientation and external stakeholder inclusion (Maak & Pless, 2006; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018).

6.2.2   Main themes of the relational leadership practices (RLPs)

This second part of Chapter 6 discusses the findings linked to each of the eleven themes that were presented as the main RLPs of interest in Chapter 5. Figure 6.5 presents the relational practices and juxtaposes them against the guiding questions:
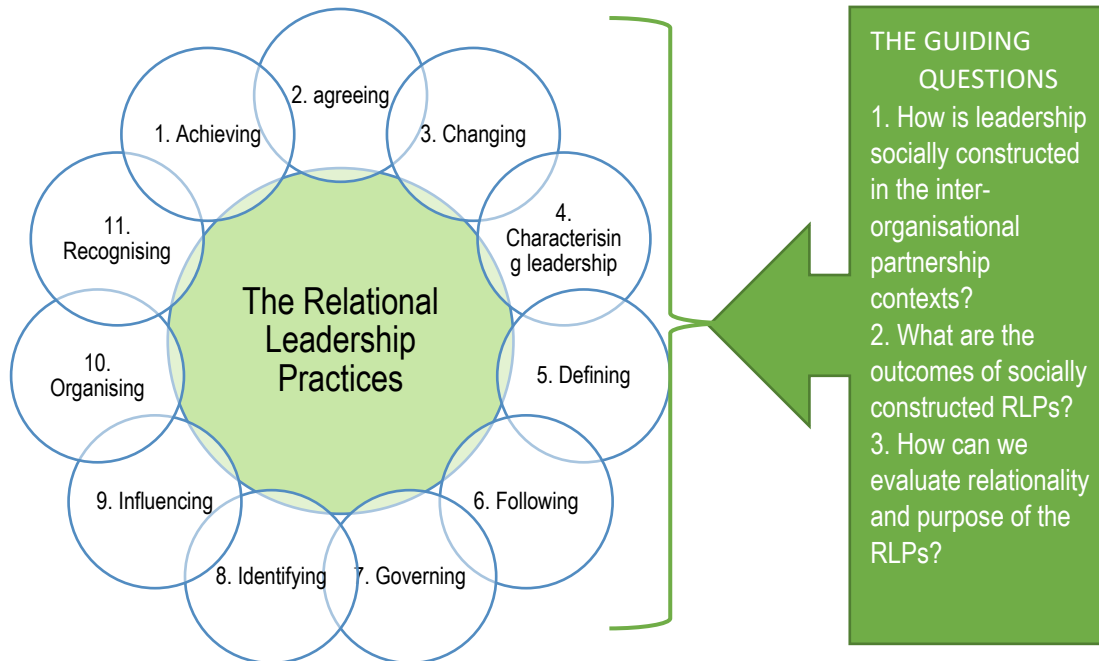
Figure 6.6: Presenting the RLPs in relation to the guiding research questions

Figure 6.6 depicts the following eleven RLPs, achieving, characterising leadership, defining, following, governing, identifying, influencing, organising, recognising, agreeing and changing. In the next sub-sections, each of these RLPs are discussed based on the three guiding questions.

6.2.2.1 Discussing the RLPs of *achieving*
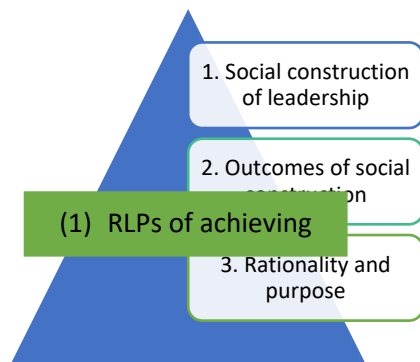
Figure 6.7: Framing the RLPs of achieving

The RLPs of achieving refer to situations where the participants expressed a sense of accomplishing or intending to achieve something as part of how they characterised their experiences in the work of the interorganisational partnerships. This theme had five practices,

namely, celebrating achievement, cost-benefits, serving the greater good, strategising and visioning.

6.2.2.1.1 Social construction of RLPs of achieving

Under theme of 'achieving', the RLPs of 'celebrating achievement' and 'cost-benefits' were classified as 'leadership manifestations' in terms of the RSCL Model. This means that these two RLPs were about leadership influence. The notion of TM being knowledgeable and able "to do business differently" [552:23, 24] demonstrated this sense of celebration. Similarly, in the national interorganisational partnership, there was a celebration of the "whole-of-society approach" that was achieved through mobilising various stakeholders behind the "development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy" (549:39, 22].

\With regards to the RLP of cost-benefit one participant noted that, "Because this was drawing much from the leadership of individuals, it was about respecting a sense of give-and-take and not just one country to give, give, give" [7:15, 13]. The findings demonstrate that the work of leadership in the interorganisational partnerships involves a degree of calculating costs and benefits of engaging with partners and multiple stakeholders through a "sense of give-and-take". The RLPs of serving the greater good, strategising and visioning were categorised as the leadership mechanisms in terms of the RSCL Model, which means these practices were about social construction of leadership in terms of inter-subjective meaning-making and sense-making (Endres & Weibler, 2017). For example, a participant from the national interorganisational partnership argued that, *"You have to have a big picture for you to be able to understand and apply the whole-of-society approach [549:66, 32]".* The aspiration to serve the entire society and envisioning achievement beyond one's sphere of influence through strategic actions serves to create an environment for the emergence and enactment of leadership.

The relational practice of achieving aligns closely with the view of relational leadership for sustainability which emphasises the need to shift from consumption mentality to the bigger picture of being "socially engaged relational human beings" (Nicholson & Kurucz, 2019:26). This ontological posture of intersubjective selves or beings is a background mechanism for the emergence and enactment of leadership as a social construct for serving the greater good, strategising and envisioning the future. The next sub-section assesses the leadership outcomes of the RLPs of achieving.

6.2.2.1.2   Assessing the RLPs of achieving as leadership outcomes

The following RLPs of achieving were categorised as direction-giving leadership practices, namely, celebrating achievement, serving the greater good, strategising and visioning. A participant celebrated the fact that they, *"…had a successful rollout of the course in 2018 for all the heads of departments and it was enormously useful" [9:32, 25].* Another participant argued that, *"At any given time, you need someone to motivate and galvanise others towards the achievement of the common agenda" [5:79, 81].* The celebration of efficacious course-delivery and the identification of the need to socially engage others to contribute to the "achievement of the common agenda" demonstrated the role of leadership in terms of providing the direction to the partnership.

The relational practice of cost-benefits was classified as a leadership belief, which is defined as a "disposition to behave" either held by an individual or a collective (Drath *et al.,* 2008:644). The role of positional leaders was deemed crucial for building trustful relationships for the benefit of the partnership. Similarly, the role of the host partner was believed to be of mutual benefit to the partners. The next section evaluates the relationality and purpose of the practices of achieving using responsible leadership theory.

6.2.2.1.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of achieving using the
*   responsible leadership theory*

The RLPs of achieving were fully aligned to the idea of responsible leadership as the purpose of leadership (Pless *et al.,* 2022). One participant from the national interorganisational partnership reported that, *"We brought in credible individuals who are well-known in the space of fighting corruption. They all came with a great sense of enthusiasm and ideas" [550:8].* The RLPs of achieving are closely aligned to responsible leadership theory when conceptualised as "awareness and consideration of the consequences of one's actions for all stakeholders…" (Voegtlin, 2011:59).

There is direct alignment between the specific RLPs mentioned above to the "roles model of responsible leadership" proposed by Pless (2007), particularly the roles such as visionary (visioning RLP), steward (cost-benefit RLP) and citizen (serving greater good RLP). These roles were further validated by a study conducted by Pless, Sengupta, Wheeler, and Maak (2022) wherein they also argued that, "responsible leadership mindsets reflect such mental models, which can help leaders on the one hand to focus their attention and energy, pursue a particular

idea, vision, purpose, and create a specific script for their 'leadership'". The "responsible leadership mindsets" (Pless *et al.*, 2022) also align to the DAC Framework which presents the leadership beliefs versus practices as the DAC outcomes of the work of leadership (Drath *et al.*, 2008).

Patzer, Voegtlin and Scherer (2018) conceptualised responsible leadership as both a "strategic action" and a "communicative action" – which further validates the RLP of strategising as aligned to responsible leadership theory. The concern for "the benefit of the people" and "evidence-use more broadly" confirms the purpose and relationality of leadership in the findings of this research in line with the responsible leadership theory.

The next section discusses RLPs of characterising leadership.

6.2.2.2 Discussing the RLPs of characterising leadership

The RLPs of characterising leadership comprised of the following, leadership traits and leadership behaviours. On the one hand, the trait theories of leadership refer to "leader-centric" leadership theories where psychologists searched for key traits that identified leaders and how they could influence their followers (Uhl-bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014:84). On the other hand, behavioural theories focused on the behaviours of leaders in terms of the dichotomies such as democratic versus laissez-faire, performance/production-focused versus people/employee oriented, task-oriented versus social-oriented leaders (Hernandez *et al.*, 2011:1169)
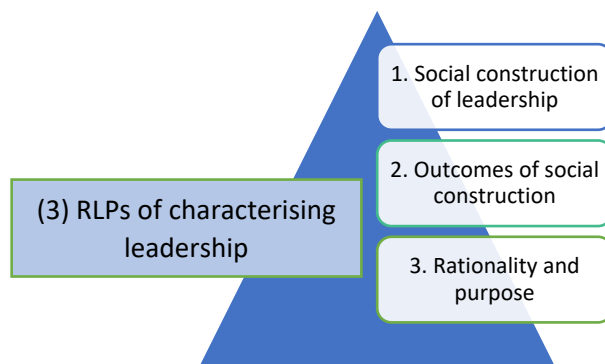
Figure 6.8: Framing RLPs of characterising leadership

6.2.2.2.1 The social construction of the RLPs of characterising leadership

In terms of the RSCL Model, both the leadership behaviours and traits were categorised as leadership content since they were primarily about how leaders influence their followers and

stakeholders. For instance, one participant argued that, *"I think leadership should do both: inspire psychologically as well as provide technical expertise and pathways to get there. [7:6, 7].* The psychological inspiration is a behavioural issue. In relation to leadership traits, the following quotation provides an example, *"Leaders…[are] matured people and I think the countries sent very strong people to be representatives into the ManCom. [5:32, 36].* Compared to the traditional leader-centric leadership scholarship on traits and behaviours, in the context of the international interorganisational partnership, the listed behaviours demonstrated behaviours-in-practice. This articulation of the behaviours-in-practice aligns well with the practice approach. One participant indicated the significance of the role of the chairperson and then listed behaviours that were expected in order to achieve certain outcomes, such as, being very active, encouraging people, pushing, holding people accountable, organising and driving. In this context, the dynamism of the partnership is viewed as dependent on the level of performance as behaviour-in-practice of this positional leader.

6.2.2.2.2 *Assessing the RLPs of characterising leadership as leadership outcomes*

On the one hand, the RLP of characterising leadership traits was categorised as a commitment leadership belief. On the other hand, the RLP of characterising leadership as a behaviour was categorised as a commitment leadership practice. None was classified as direction. In essence, while both practices were about the commitment outcome, the distinction is that traits were viewed as inherent expectations in spite of action (confidence or belief), whereas behaviours were about enactment of leadership in practice.

6.2.2.2.3 *Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of characterising leadership using the responsible leadership theory*

There is plenty of responsible leadership literature that focuses on the behaviours of individuals or what could be viewed as the behavioural approach. Since RLPs are almost synonymous with relational leadership behaviours, most of the practices in the findings of this research would qualify as examples. At a "micro level" responsible leadership theory focuses on individuals in terms of their "values and ethical motivations" and "leadership orientations and competencies" (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:120). The behavioural approach is inspired by the theoretical underpinnings and origins of the responsible leadership theory particularly "psychology and psychoanalysis" as it aims to understand processes that "lead to responsible behaviour and responsible action for social change" (Pless, 2007:438).

A study by Voegtlin *et al.,* (2019) identified empathy, self-transcendence, positive affect and holistic thinking as antecedents of responsible behaviour; and its outcomes as effectiveness, employees' commitment, duty towards other members, community citizenship, leader-as-role-model, and attractiveness of the organisation to external stakeholders. While the emphasis on the "collective way" and "respecting each other" demonstrates the behavioural characterisation of the leadership phenomenon, the highlighting of uniqueness of the partnership could implicitly be viewed as implying the existence of special leadership traits. Jackson (2020:1-5) conducted an empirical analysis of the gravitas trait against the other known leadership traits since ancient Imperialist Rome and Imperialist Britain and concluded that the trait approach is still relevant in the context of transformational leadership since "our knowledge of leadership is not so different from how it was 2000 years ago" (Jackson, 2020:1-5). This conclusion about a lack of change explains why the participants provided definitions of leadership from the trait and behavioural perspectives in the interorganisational partnerships in line with the mainstream discourse on leadership. For instance, one participant argued that, *"So, the gravitas and legitimacy and perception of the organisation you represent into a partnership can only take you so far; it is crucial that the person representing the organisation into the partnership begins to embody the perceived gravitas of their organisation" [3:16, 17].* This perspective talks to the alignment between traits and perceptions of the partner organisation and that of the individual representatives. The gravitas trait is deemed as critical for both the organisation and its representatives.

6.2.2.3 Discussing the RLPs of changing

The RLPs of changing aggregate ten practices, namely, breaking silos, building capacity, centralising, empowering others, facilitating change, innovating, making an impact, producing outputs, reversing roles, and tacit emergence.
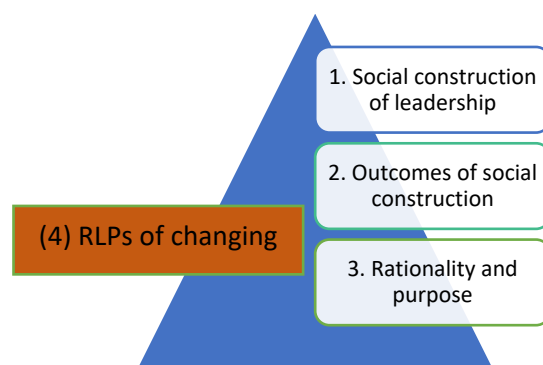
Figure 6.9:   Framing the RLPs of changing

6.2.2.3.1   The social construction of the RLPs of changing

The RLPs of centralising and innovating were categorised as the leadership content since they are about improving the quality of leadership relationships and communication within the interorganisational partnership. In relation to the RLPs of centralising and communicating, a participant noted that, *"So, communication was deepest among ManCom members" [7:25, 19].* In terms of the practice of innovating, one participant stated that, *"TM is set up to be able to help country governments perhaps to experiment, innovate, or run projects that they cannot be able to set up themselves such as proof-of-concepts" [2:85, 121].* Innovation, in terms of being part of the "set up" could be viewed as an integral part of the operational model of the partnership in terms of advocating for change.

Prominently, eight out of ten of the RLPs were categorised as leadership manifestation, which implies that influence as the work of leadership in interorganisational partnerships was viewed as closely related to the practice of changing something. In relation to the practice of breaking silos, one participant suggested that, *"If TM wants to be really pan-African, it must think carefully about equality in terms of use of languages" [7:69, 63].* This demonstrates expression of interest to see change internally within the partnership in order to facilitate more collaborative work and communication. In relation to the practice of building capacity, one participant reported that, *"We share experiences among countries in terms of what works well in each of the countries that other partners can learn from. TM is very instrumental in ensuring sharing of best practices among its member countries" [1:71, 86].* Again, the purpose of sharing best practices and experiences is to achieve learning, which is about change. With regards to the practice of empowerment, which is closely related to capacity building. The notion of "different skills and competencies" working "together to achieve efficiency" talks to something beyond individual empowerment, but collective performance of the partnership, which could also be viewed as an interorganisational partnership result of "efficiency". Similar examples abound in relation to the rest of the leadership practices of changing. The common thread is that the interorganisational partnership socially constructed the notion of being advocates for change through practical actions.

6.2.2.3.2   Assessing the RLPs of changing as leadership outcomes

In terms of the DAC Framework, the following RLPs were classified as seeking to achieve the alignment outcome, namely, centralising, breaking silos, building capacity, and reversing roles. When distinguishing between leadership beliefs versus leadership practices of alignment, the

centralising practice was categorised as leadership belief, while the other three were viewed as practices since they are about tangible actions of enacting change. The practices of empowering others and producing outputs were classified as commitment leadership practices. The practices of innovating, facilitating change, making an impact and tacit emergence were categorised as direction giving leadership practices. On tacit emergence, for example, one participant noted that, *"One of the reasons that triggered the curriculum review is the fact that there have been developments the evaluation field in areas such as methodology and approaches. For example, COVID-19 restrictions have pushed us to rethink our methodologies, also in light of lack of funding" [8:72, 61].* In this case, the onset of the pandemic served as a stimulant for change in the form of "curriculum review".

6.2.2.3.3 *Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of changing using the responsible leadership theory*

The practice of changing is quite dominant in terms of the conceptualisation of leadership in extant literature since there is high prevalence of definitions of leadership that emphasise influence by leaders upon followers and those that focus on change that leaders seek to enact as the main purpose of leadership (Hernandez *et al.,* 2011; Vivier, 2019). Similarly, responsible leadership theory was stimulated by the need to change leadership theory by "bringing responsibility into the foreground" (Carroll, 2016:42). Moreover, responsible leadership is about a "commitment for achieving sustainable value creation and social change" (Pless, 2007:438). In line with the tenets of responsible leadership one participant argued that, *"Good leaders must demonstrate the highest level of integrity and promote values and ethics" [9:66, 88].* The notion of "good leaders" imbues the kind of behavioural change that is required to meet the expected normative standards.

The RLPs of 'changing' are significantly aligned to responsible leadership theory, both in terms of its origins and what it seeks to achieve as a "social-relational and ethical phenomenon" (Maak & Pless, 2006:99). There is a recognition of the prevalence of a hierarchical approach as symbolised by the status of people. Then there is an advocacy for change of the silo mentality in terms of "ways of thinking and working". A study by Javed, Rashid, Hussain, and Ali (2019) found that, "socially responsible firms [that] have leaders with strong stakeholder values… practice excessive CSR that hurts performance." Voegtlin *et al.* (2019), recommended "behavioural ambidexterity" as an important consideration for the purposes of balancing contradictory interests and worldviews of various stakeholders who might comprise of people who are oriented towards the

orthodox/instrumental economic stance versus those who are inclined to the fundamentalist moral and ethical standpoints of responsible leadership.

6.2.2.4 Discussing the RLPs of *defining*

The RLPs of defining entailed situations whereby the participants provided definitions of key concepts or objects and also clarified roles of various stakeholders. There were five practices under this theme, namely, defining a leader, defining leadership, defining a national evaluation system, mapping stakeholders and clarifying roles.
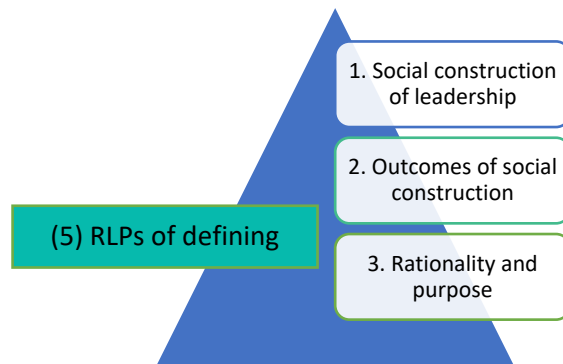
Figure 6.10: Framing the RLPs of defining

6.2.2.4.1 The social construction of the RLPs of *defining*

All the RLPs of defining were categorised as leadership mechanisms in terms of the RSCL Model since they were about "focusing on processes of social construction and emerging joint action [that] reflects 'common understanding' [my emphasis] through which leadership gains legitimacy" (Endres & Weibler, 2017:229). There was a common understanding among the partners regarding the shared meaning of a national evaluation system as an important social construct that served to legitimise their joint programme as the international interorganisational partnership. Similarly, in terms of defining or clarifying roles, one participant reported that, *"Every member of the ManCom takes a lead in one or a few projects, which balances out the roles and responsibilities" [6:6, 13].* In this case the activity of "taking a lead" is a social construct that denotes the common understanding of what it means to lead projects as part of the collective partnership. The role of leading was constructed as everyone's responsibility.

The difference between this section and the first section which discussed definitions of the leadership construct is that, the findings that were discussed in the previous section paid attention exclusively to the definitions that were provided by the participants as a response to the specific

question that asked them to provide their own definitions of leadership. In this section, consideration is given for any data elements where the participants gravitated towards providing definitions irrespective of whether they were asked or not. Therefore, there are some overlaps between the two sections in so far as the definitions of a leader and leadership are concerned.

In this context, there were three clusters of defining a leader, namely, as a position of authority, operation of a leader as part of a collective, and the positive view of a leader as a special individual in relation to their traits, behaviours and values. As presented in the research findings, participants expressed their deep understanding of what entails leadership and what defines "good leaders" as persons of "integrity" who must be "exemplary" in their conduct.

6.2.2.4.2   Assessing the RLPs of defining as leadership outcomes

While the RSCL Model put the relational practices of defining in the one basket of leadership mechanisms, in the DAC Framework there were significant differences among the five practices that were noted. Firstly, the practice of defining the constructs of a leader and leadership were categorised as direction giving leadership beliefs. Secondly, the practices of clarifying roles and mapping stakeholders were categorised as alignment leadership practices. And thirdly, the practice of defining a national evaluation system was categorised as an alignment leadership belief. In the findings, the participants contrasted the normative view of the system with the practical lessons learnt in terms of characterising such a system as not just about the agency of one stakeholder, but a collective effort via the involvement of multiple partners.

6.2.2.4.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of defining using the responsible leadership theory

Unlike the first section dealing with the definition of the leadership construct, where it was found that the behavioural and trait orientations were quite prominent; on RLPs it was found that the ethical and stakeholder dimensions were also highlighted in how the participants socially constructed leadership. Similarly, the stakeholder dimension is predominant across all five practices of defining. This is in line with Maak and Pless's (2006) framework of the roles of responsible leaders in a stakeholder society, especially as "facilitators of relational processes of co-creation and orchestrators of common objectives" (Maak & Pless, 2006:112). One participant argued that, *"When we come to spaces like TM, it is a multi-cultural environment where we all come with the baggage of perceptions and values and other things. When someone is able to*

coordinate all these actors in a seamless manner to ensure that the individual values do not overtake the common good; that is leadership" [5:82, 81].

Furthermore, the RLPs of defining demonstrated the view by Pearce *et al.,* (2014:281-282) that "comprehensive shared responsible leadership is present when the organisation has shared responsible leadership inculcated throughout many of its operations." One participant mentioned that, *"Through rotational leadership, we deliberately created a sense of shared ownership"* [4:31, 68]. The practices of defining serve a purpose of inculcating common understanding among the partners by way of defining roles and responsibilities, mapping stakeholders, and clearly defining the meaning of central concepts like the national evaluation system, as well as clarifying the expectations that partners have on each other as leaders of the interorganisational partnership as a shared enterprise.

6.2.2.5 Discussing the RLPs of following

The RLPs of following refer to situations where participants highlighted followership as a way of influencing outcomes either through deliberately deferring decision-making to higher authorities or performing leadership roles at different levels of the hierarchy. It comprised of the following two practices, namely, leading as deferring to higher authority and leading at different levels.
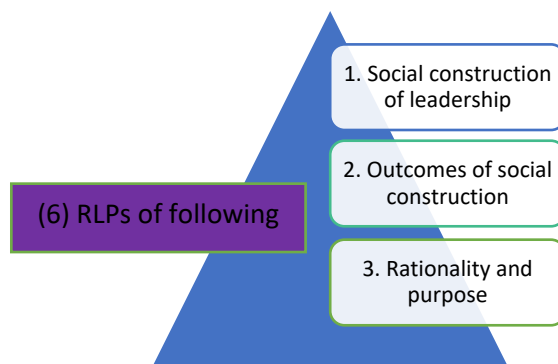
Figure 6.11:   Framing the RLPs of following

6.2.2.5.1   The social construction of the RLPs of following

The RLPs of following were both categorised as the content of leadership since they were about the "emerging flows of influence" (Endres & Weibler, 2017:222). In terms of the RLP of leading at different levels, one participant appreciated the leadership style of a team member as follows, *"If you talk about 360 degrees leadership approach or leadership from the bottom, Mr X was not the most senior person but was able to work with various senior people effectively"* [3:36, 25]. In this

case, the participant had a concept of what kind of leadership Mr X displayed, that is, "360 degrees leadership" or "leadership from the bottom" as a form of followership. Therefore, in partnerships following/followership is socially constructed as a form of influencing decisions by deferring to the perceived higher authority such as governing structures and consciously providing leadership from different levels irrespective of one's position in the hierarchy.

6.2.2.5.2 Assessing the RLPs of following as leadership outcomes

The RLP of deferring to a higher authority was classified as an alignment leadership belief, whereas the practice of leading at different levels was classified as an alignment leadership practice. In terms of deferring to a higher authority, one participant argued that, *"I think I manage, and I don't think I lead and I think it is up to the people of ManCom to lead" [2:37, 61].* In this case, deferring to a higher authority meant that the particular individual socially constructed their role as a manager and others as leaders to whom she deferred the leadership function. The expression of "I don't think I lead" demonstrates an ingrained belief within this person and how, through their practice of deferring she ensured alignment between herself and others who she believed to be occupying a higher authority.

6.2.2.5.3 Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of following using the responsible leadership theory

While the dominant view in responsible leadership theory is about the role of an individual responsible leader in terms of influencing stakeholders from an ethical and values-based orientation (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018), the construct of followership as a form of leadership is implicit within the notions of a responsible leader as a servant (Maak & Pless, 2007) and responsible leadership as shared leadership (Pearce, *et al.*, 2014). Pearce *et al.*, (2014:277) argue that "shared leadership moves beyond the moribund myth of leadership being a solely top-down hierarchical affair…". This is confirmed by one participant who reported that, *"There is no hierarchy in TM; you can communicate freely with anyone who might be holding very high-level positions in their own organisations back home" [8:34, 32].* These findings indicate that responsible leadership scholarship still has more room to engage explicitly with how the RLP of following or followership emerges and is enacted in interorganisational partnership contexts.

6.2.2.6 RLPs of governing

RLPs of governing comprised of the following five practices, fostering accountability, delimiting boundaries, managing, governing structures, and hierarchical approach.
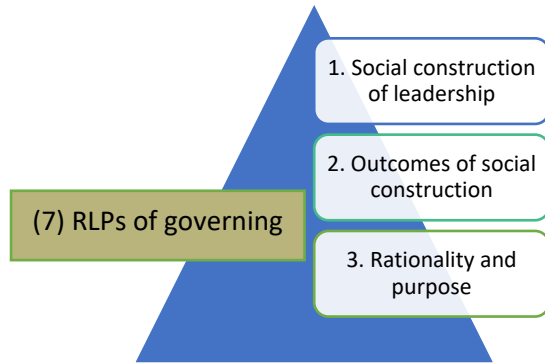
Figure 6.12: **Framing the RLPs of governing**

6.2.2.6.1   Social construction of RLPs of governing

The relational practice of governing structures was categorised as the relational leadership mechanism since it helped with enabling the operation of the interorganisational partnership. One participant argued that, *"the governance structure is focused on the principle of equality. The chairpersonship of the TM partnership is held on an annual rotational basis [6:35, 43]."* The "principle of equality" demonstrates the idea that the partners valued the idea of equal participation and stakeholder involvement. The RLPs of managing and hierarchical approach were categorised as leadership content. While a number of participants confirmed the principle of equality, there was also a view that hierarchy still mattered. One participant reported that, "*Strategic direction comes from the chair and the Management Committee. The Programme Manager prepares for the meetings and follows up on the implementation of projects and management of the finances and staff [4:35, 71]".*

The RLPs of fostering accountability and delimiting boundaries were categorised as leadership manifestation. With regards to fostering accountability, one participant argued that, "*Everyone understands the guidelines, roles, minutes and other operations of governance like tools and templates [2:52, 73]."* In terms of delimiting boundaries, one participant reported that, *"A decision was made to establish a separate technical committee whose participation would be open to more technically-oriented representatives. So, the senior management committee was freed to focus on more strategic issues [6:38, 46]".* The RLP of governing covered all the dimensions of the RSCL Model, namely: mechanism, content and manifestation, which makes it to be very balanced in this dataset.

6.2.2.6.2   Assessing RLPs of governing as leadership outcomes

Fostering accountability was categorised as commitment leadership practice. The two RLPs of delimiting boundaries and managing were categorised as alignment leadership practices. Governance structures and hierarchical approach were categorised as alignment leadership beliefs. According to Reit and Halevy (2020:126), "hierarchy involves a trade-off whereby individuals surrender some of their liberties to a centralised authority as a means to promote social order, security, and safety, which in turn, enable fulfilment of individuals' needs and aspirations". For example, one participant argued that, *"I think governance structures function very much from positional leadership" [2:53, 72]*. This acknowledged that hierarchy was still present despite the fact that the interorganisational partnership operated on the principle of equality.

In summary, the RLP of governing comprised of both DAC leadership practices and leadership beliefs. The alignment outcome was the most common leadership outcome, since governance seeks to ensure that an organisation works in a coherent and aligned manner.

6.2.2.6.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of governing using the responsible leadership theory

While there is very limited research on governance structures and responsible leadership theory, some scholars posit that "governance factors, such as control systems and managerial incentives, can work in concert to influence" responsible leadership (Filatochev & Nakajima, 2014). In that research, there was no assessment of such governance factors. The principle of equality, however, confirms the observation that "flatter organisations that work effectively across silos are replacing hierarchies and command-and-control leadership" (Mirvis *et al.,* 2010:37). The emergence of flat structures is confirmed by the following quotation, "*The members of the TM ManCom are all peers and are all equals since TM is a peer-learning partnership. There is no hierarchical relationship between the members and they all come from an equal footing" [6:5, 13].* In terms of research in interorganisational partnerships, Jacklin-Jarvis and Potter (2019:2) observed that in joined-up government situations there is a duality in terms of leadership being used to facilitate coordination, integration and alignment of processes and systems (governing); whilst at the same time "[governance] processes and structures themselves act as leadership 'media' or sources that shape practice".

6.2.2.7 Discussing the RLPs of identifying

RLPs of identifying were unique identity/brand, gender identity, government identity, language identity, leaders as champions and learning culture identity. The RLPs of identifying are also discussed by Ntakumba and De Jongh (2023:4-7).
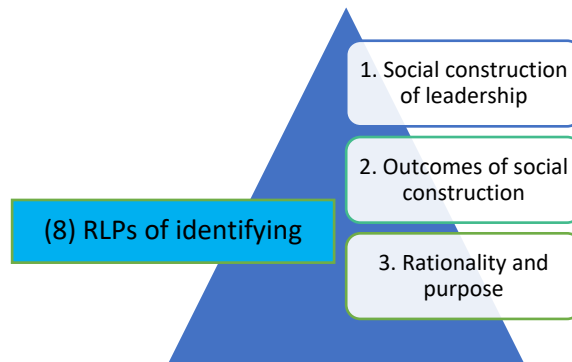
Figure 6.13:   Framing the RLPs of identifying

6.2.2.7.1   Social construction of RLPs of identifying

The RLP of leaders-as-champions was the only practice that was categorised as leadership content since it was about "high-quality relating and communication" (Endres & Weibler, 2017). The following quotation demonstrates how the notion of champions was cultivated within the interorganisational partnership, *"In the second phase, we took a deliberate decision to send champions to countries that were in a very progressive state of developing their national M&E systems compared to the rest in the African Continent" [9:21, 20].* The "decision to send champions" denotes the intentionality to influence change in the targeted environments through the champions. The rest of the RLPs of identifying were categorised as leadership mechanisms, since they are "social construction processes… through which potentially leadership is produced" (Endres & Weibler, 2017:225). There were no RLPs of identifying that were classified as leadership manifestation.

6.2.2.7.2   Assessing RLPs of identifying as leadership outcomes

The RLP of leaders-as-champions was the only practice that was categorised as a direction leadership belief. The following quotation demonstrates how this practice was about the belief of giving direction: *"Because of the quality of champions that we have had as TM, we were able to engage very high-level policymakers such as the Speaker of Parliament and Prime Minister of Uganda" [9:36, 31].* In this instance, the belief in "quality of champions" was proven by their ability "to engage very high-level policymakers" as a form of giving direction. The rest of the identifying

practices were all categorised as commitment leadership beliefs. in the findings, participants used phrases like government is the "the key institution", "it must bring others on board to collaborate" and "catalyse collaboration" indicate the commitment leadership belief in the agency of government to lead social change.

6.2.2.7.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of identifying using the responsible leadership theory

Responsible leadership theory started by conceptualising "role identity" of responsible leaders as demonstrated by studies conducted by Maak and Pless (2006), and Pless (2007). Pless's (2007:451) study was able to come to conclusions about "Roddick's identity script". However, while Maak and Pless's (2006) "roles model of responsible leadership" is cited extensively in literature, responsible leadership theory has not yet moved into the space of investigating identity in interorganisational partnership contexts. Enslin *et al.* (2023:11) state that, "responsible leaders align all decisions and actions to build and enhance cohesive brands, thus creating ecosystems with clear identities, cultures, structures, policies, procedures and stakeholder alliances that cogently work together towards a shared goal". The linking of responsible leadership to brand purpose (Enslin *et al.*, 2023) is an interesting idea in terms how interorganisational partnership collective identifies as brands could be managed better.

Furthermore, there is an entire body of research known as identity theory and leadership researchers are beginning to appreciate the value of "identity-based processes for leadership-related outcomes", as one study found that "individuals who see themselves as leaders are more likely to obtain central positions" and consequently "emerge as leaders" (Kwok, Haning, Brown & Shen, 2018:660). As such, RLPs of identifying signify the power of socially constructed identities such as government, uniqueness and champions. For an example, one participant argued that, *"Even when we met in conferences there was this sense that we were the A-team" [4:53, 111].* The special or unique identity of being the "A-team" served as a motivational factor for the partners to assert themselves among their peers (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

6.2.2.8 Discussing RLPs of *influencing*

RLPs of influencing were communicating, coordinating, engaging stakeholders, guiding, improving performance, influencing culture, interpersonal influence, leading ethically, leading with respect, managing difference, marketing, mobilising resources, presenting a perspective, promoting, prompting debate, voicing our own views, and writing influencing texts. The notion of leadership as influence is the most prevalent conceptualisation of the leadership construct in literature (Yukl, 2010; Vivier, 2019).
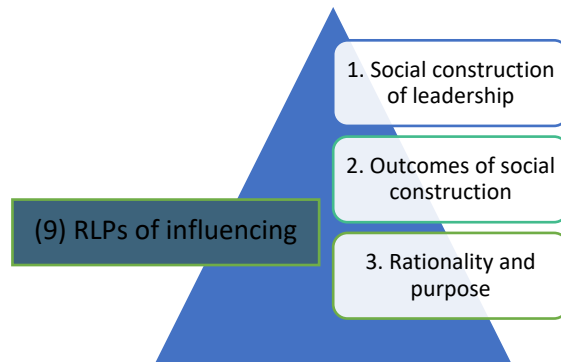
Figure 6.14:   Framing the RLPs of influencing

6.2.2.8.1   Social construction of RLPs of *influencing*

All of the RLPs of influencing were categorised as leadership manifestation. This is aligned to the view that "RSCL becomes manifest only when flows of influence become apparent at the interpersonal interaction level or the collective level" (Endres & Weibler, 2017:226). The practice of influencing is demonstrated by the following quotation, *"TM has done very well in terms of ensuring sharing of best practices. That Benin now is able to share its practices with Francophone countries like Niger is due to the support of TM" [1:74, 86].* In this case, the participant attributed the agency of one country in terms of influencing other countries in its region as caused by the work of the interorganisational partnership.

6.2.2.8.2   Assessing RLPs of *influencing* as leadership outcomes

The two RLPs of marketing and mobilising resources were categorised as alignment leadership practices. The three RLPs of engaging stakeholders, managing difference and promoting were categorised as commitment leadership practices. The rest of the twelve RLPs were categorised as direction giving leadership practices. None of the influencing practices were categorised as leadership beliefs. The following quotation demonstrates the practicality of the influencing

practices, "*One of the factors that we have seen influencing TM is about learning and sharing around policy and institutional reforms within the African countries and beyond*" *[9:20, 20].*

6.2.2.8.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of influencing using the responsible leadership theory

The foregoing discussion of the RLPs of influencing confirms the position that, "leading responsibly… means for leaders to open up to a broader target group (the stakeholders) with the goal of securing the legitimacy of the organisation in a given society and establishing and maintaining mutually beneficial stakeholder relations" (Voegtlin *et al.,* 2012). The recognition that the partnership comprises of "people who are professionals" and "who will speak in defence of those issues [of difference] in their workplaces" indicates the confidence that the participant had in the individual partners to bring about "change in the evaluation capacity development space" as the sphere of influence for the interorganisational partnership. Therefore, there is significant alignment between the RLPs of influencing with the responsible leadership theory in relation to the goal of responsible leaders to "maintain mutually beneficial stakeholder relations" (Voegtlin *et al.,* 2012).

6.2.2.9 Discussing the RLPs of organising
The RLP of organising comprised of the following leadership practices, following through, managing time, networking, organising meetings, and organising people.

Figure 6.15:   Framing the RLPs of organising

6.2.2.9.1   Social construction of RLPs of organising

The two practices of following through and managing time were categorised as the manifestation of leadership since they were about influencing. With regards to the RLP of following through, one participant reported that, *"Sometimes we have a follow up discussion about what needs to be done and how to achieve it. At the end of the day we report to the group about what we managed to achieve or couldn't achieve" [2:24, 52].* The "follow up discussion" and "reporting to the group" denote the value attached to following-through as part of the day-to-day leadership practice within the interorganisational partnership.

Furthermore, the three practices of networking, organising meetings and organising people were categorised as relational leadership mechanisms. The networking RLP was socially constructed as "part of the ethos" and to "help raise the TM flag high", which demonstrates the high level of value attached to the RLP of networking.

6.2.2.9.2   Assessing RLPs of organising as leadership outcomes

The RLP of following through was categorised as a direction giving leadership practice. One participant argued that, "*You need to complete what you are doing and ensure that the project is delivered on time and to quality. We are always conscious that the money comes from somewhere, that is a donor who expects proper reporting for the money used" [8:52, 41].* In this case, the "need to complete" is emphasised and the motivating factor is the direction given by the donor of the resources "who expects proper reporting." Networking was categorised as commitment leadership practice. The last three practices of organising were categorised as alignment leadership practices, namely, managing time, organising meetings and organising time.

6.2.2.9.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of organising using the responsible leadership theory

The practice of organising provides a different entry point to the leadership conversation, which is about a collective process of stakeholders interacting for the purposes of achieving common goals, such as meeting, networking and following through.

The practices of organising are closely aligned to the viewpoint that responsible leadership is "both strategic action that influences others to achieve organisational goals and a communicative action that influences others to achieve common goals…" (Patzer *et al.,* 2018). Furthermore, there

is a stance that the role of a responsible leader is to build strong partnerships via mobilising multiple stakeholders into coalitions that result in "value networks" that "build a responsible and sustainable business" (Maak, 2007:340). The notion of value networks is demonstrated by the following quotation, *"SA and Uganda were members of 3ie Impact and we took that opportunity to meet informally every six months at 3ie Impact Board Meetings. That meant we could meet physically at no additional cost to TM. We used emails to carry on some of our conversations and sharing of information" [4:18, 38].* The taking of an "opportunity to meet informally" and "at no additional cost" indicates the extent to which deliberate networking served to derive value via cost-cutting measures.

Lessons can be drawn from the literature on partnerships (as presented in Chapter 3), such as the definition of "joined-up government" as the way in which leaders from various stakeholders work together "across organisational boundaries towards a common goal in various forms, including realignment of organisational boundaries, formal partnerships, and informal partnerships" (O'Flynn, Buick, Blackman & Halligan, 2011:244). In this regard, there is an explicit reference to the "realignment of organisational boundaries" as a way of organising. Endres and Weibler (2020:279) conceptualised networks as "informal social systems rather than bureaucratic structures", which serve the purpose of organising and coordinating members based on mutual commitment instead of mere compliance to contractual legal obligations. Relational leadership scholars referred to "collaborative interorganisational networks" as "intentionally created social entities of three or more organisations in which legally autonomous members participate to achieve overarching objectives" (Endres & Weibler, 2020:278). Other research distinguished between interorganisational partnerships as an "organisational form" versus "networks as a mode of social coordination or governance" (Lowndes & Skelcher, 1998:313-314). Therefore, this relational practice of organising places the partnership phenomenon at the forefront of how leadership work is accomplished in such settings as a social-relational phenomenon (Maak & Pless, 2006).

6.2.2.10   *Discussing the RLPs of recognising*

The RLPs of recognising comprised of the following six practices, acknowledging risks, brand legitimacy, dealing with frustration, dealing with paradox, recognising difference, and recognising individuals.
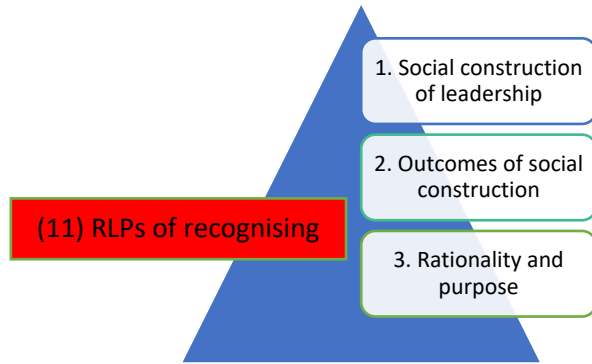
Figure 6.16:   Framing the RLPs of recognising

6.2.2.10.1   Social construction of RLPs of recognising

The relational leadership of brand legitimacy was categorised as leadership content because it is about influencing. For example, one participant noted that, *"Remember TM is about influencing development of national M&E systems" [9:27, 22].* In this case there is an articulation of specific pieces of work that the interorganisational partnership performs as its niche market that legitimises the uniqueness of the brand.

The other five RLPs were categorised as leadership manifestation. For instance, one participant expressed frustration as follows, *"We focus on those areas of greatest common interest. Therefore, that presents a bit of a challenge for topics that are not selected due to lack of interest for collaboration among the partners" [6:34, 40].* In this instance, the frustration is about how prioritisation is done and is designed in such a way that individual interests are trumped by collective preferences.

6.2.2.10.2   Assessing RLPs of recognising as leadership outcomes

The relational practices of acknowledging risks and brand legitimacy were categorised as commitment leadership beliefs. The practice of dealing with frustration was categorised as a commitment leadership practice. The practice of dealing with paradox was categorised as a direction giving leadership belief. The practices of recognising difference and recognising individuals were categorised as direction giving practices.

6.2.2.10.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of recognising using the responsible leadership theory

Responsible leadership theory is clear in terms of recognising the features of a responsible leader and defining their roles (Pless, 2006). However, in relation to dealing with frustration, risks and paradox, the instrumental economic perspective tends to raise caution with regards to the emphasis and scope of the mainstream responsible leadership theory. Responsible leadership anchored on stakeholder theory is sometimes "criticised for taking a pollyannaish stance with regard to human nature" and is viewed as being unrealistic from an economic view of organisations as comprised of individuals who are driven by "self-interest and opportunism" whose conduct must always be kept under check (Waldman & Galvin, 2008:332). In agreement, Pless *et al.,* (2012:57) reported that responsible leaders as "opportunity seekers" implement CSR in an instrumental manner to derive benefits for their organisations. For instance, one participant observed that in practice, *"The people that are working on the ground do not just want to finish the project in the most efficiency way because they need buy-in and people to agree. Politics is a real thing and life is a real thing. They need to go slowly and do other things that will ensure sustainability and longevity" [2:82, 115].* The appeal for people to recognise that "politics is a real thing and life is a real thing" expresses a deep sense of feeling that idealist approaches to service delivery and stakeholder management should be aware of the contradictions and risks at execution level.

Literature on interorganisational partnerships does address the practice of dealing with risks, paradoxes and frustrations. For example, one study proposed a framework that recognises a range of governance mechanisms such as "deliberation, decision-making and enforcement" that could be used to address "knowledge uncertainty, value conflict and dynamic complexity" in the context of "wicked problems" as the purpose of interorganisational partnerships (Dentoni, Bitzer & Schouten, 2018:333).

6.2.2.11   *Discussing the RLPs of agreeing*
The RLPs of agreeing comprised the following: collaborating, collective responsibility, common objectives, fostering agreement, hosting partners, informal relationships, inviting others, leading-as-dialogue, making decisions, negotiating, participating, partnering model, rotational leadership and trusting.
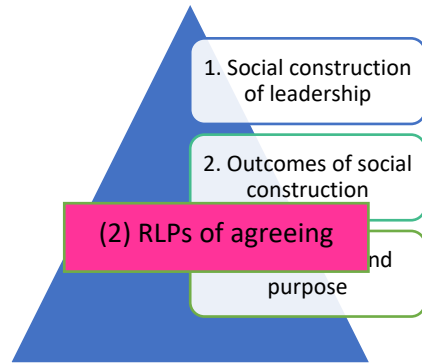
Figure 6.17:   Framing the RLPs of agreeing

6.2.2.11.1   The social construction of the RLPs of agreeing

The RLPs of agreeing embody a sense of agreement or inter-subjectivity where people accept as true that their view of the "social world emerges continually as…[they] interact with others" (Cunliffe, 2008:128). The two practices of collaborating and rotating leadership were classified as the content of leadership since they are forms of "high quality relating and communicating" (Enders & Weibler, 2017:225). The collaborative action demonstrates intentionality on the part of the partners to enact the practice of collaborating as their collective agreement. Within TM there was a deliberate strategy and an explicit agreement to take turns in relation to the leadership position of the partnership chair-ship. In the national interorganisational partnership there was a system of co-chairpersons. Furthermore, under the 'agreeing' theme, the seven RLPs of collective responsibility, common objectives, hosting partners, informal relationships, inviting others, partnering model and trusting were categorised as leadership mechanisms since they are socially constructed forms of interaction "through which potentially leadership… [could be] produced" (Endres & Weibler, 2017: 225).

The five practices of fostering agreement, making decisions, leading-as-dialogue, negotiating and participating were categorised as leadership manifestation in terms of being forms of influence. With regards to the practice of fostering agreements, for instance, one participant reported that, *"As with anything, especially evaluation, you need to create an enabling environment. For some countries they may need memorandum of understanding" [2:89, 124].* The "memorandum of understanding" is an instrument to ensure that partners clarify upfront ways of relating to each other.

6.2.2.11.2   Assessing the RLPs of agreeing as leadership outcomes

Under the RLPs of agreeing, leading-as-dialogue and common objectives were categorised as direction-giving leadership beliefs. A participant observed that, *"In my experience, the chair has always had a good sense of what could be shared, getting people to talk to each other and maintain bonds" [2:93, 133].* In this case, the role of the chairperson, in terms of "getting people to talk to each other", acknowledges the importance of dialogue. Leading-as-dialogue served to strengthen bonds among the partners. The RLPs of fostering agreements, negotiating and trusting were categorised as direction leadership practice. The RLP of collective responsibility was categorised as a commitment leadership belief. Regarding trusting, a participant argued that, *"At the end of the day, the value of an organisation or institution is measured by how much it is trusted. So, the issue of trust is very central to leadership in this sense" [9:51, 55].* The centrality of trust in leadership and efficient decision-making are part of giving direction as a role of leaders. The RLPs of collaborating, participating and informal relationships were categorised as commitment leadership practices. The partnering model was categorised as an alignment DAC belief since it was about "the organisation and coordination of knowledge and work in a collective" (Drath *et al.*, 2008:636). The RLPs of rotating leadership, making decisions, hosting partners, and inviting partners were classified as alignment DAC practices.

6.2.2.11.3   Evaluating the relationality and purpose of the RLPs of agreeing using the responsible leadership theory

Trust is at the centre of the psychological influence pathway to how responsible leaders engage with stakeholders in an ethico-moral way (Doh & Quigley, 2014). For instance, one participant argued that, *"I think leadership should do both: inspire psychologically as well as provide technical expertise and pathways to get there. [7:6, 7].* In relation to trust, a participant argued that, *"I don't know if it would be correct for me to use the word ethical, but I would use the word trust. We valued that people were not there to take advantage of others, but build trustful relationships in line with the common objectives of TM" [4:48, 107].* This shows that in the mind of the research participant, trust is equivalent to, and undergirds, the ethics of relating in an interorganisational partnership.

Responsible leaders should engage in "deliberative democratic processes" in order to facilitate agreement with various stakeholders "as a pragmatic approach to the problems of globally engaged leaders" (Patzer *et al.*; 2011). The RLPs of agreeing could be viewed as pragmatic since they are practical actions and behaviours that assist leaders in the interorganisational

partnerships to become "leaders-as-citizens" in terms of "initiating and moderating stakeholder discourses" (Patzer *et al.,* 2011). A participant described the partnership model and highlighted its value-add as follows, *"The system of having three levels of collaboration in terms of core-countries in ManCom, collaborating countries who were potential partners and wider stakeholders who were interested in what TM is doing helped with developing analytical frameworks in terms of where each of the countries were in their capacities" [7:98, 93].* This demonstrated intentionality in terms of designing the model for engaging stakeholders across the African continent. The prioritisation of collaboration confirms Biygautane *et al.'s* (2019:215) view that "social interaction and collaborative agency are the powerful but invisible forces that can make or break a project, irrespective of its technical (dis)advantages".

There is a dearth of engagement with the construct of leadership in the collaboration literature since "some texts make passing references to leaders, [and] the concept is rarely discussed in detail" (Huxham & Vangen, 2001:1160). The emergence of responsible leadership theory with its emphasis on stakeholder participation drew attention to "the responsibilities that leaders have in relation to different stakeholder groups" (Pless & Maak, 2011:99). RLPs such as collective responsibility and negotiating demonstrate that the stakeholder interest is central within the interorganisational partnerships as collective endeavours. This was demonstrated by the process of negotiating the establishment of the international interorganisational partnership as follows, *"In December 2014 we had our first planning workshop in South Africa, where we conceptualised the TM programme together. In March 2015 we did some detailed action-planning in Uganda. Finally, the initiative got funded by Donor X since 2016" [4:12, 26].* The process was deliberately done in different countries over a period of time to ensure buy-in and ownership.

Lastly, there is also an expected agency of the positional leaders such as the rotational chairpersons to "*get people to talk to each other*" *[2:93, 133],* and "*facilitate decision-making*" *[1:67, 74]* for purposes of reaching collective agreements, as a responsible thing to do. The use of the rotational leadership model confirms the idea of "rotated shared responsible leadership… [that] involves conscious strategies to have different people in a group clearly assuming the role of leader at different points" (Pearce *et al.,* 2014:282-282). One participant clarified the rationale behind rotational leadership or chair-ship in the international interorganisational partnership as follows, *"Through rotational leadership, we deliberately created a sense of shared ownership… Rotating the chair-ship ensured that TM is not seen as just a South African thing or identified with the founder chairperson, as Mrs-B's thing as it could have been seen. But TM is seen as a product*

of all the partners" [4:32, 68]. The consideration of other partners is quintessential of the relationality and ethical orientation principles of the responsible leadership theory.

The next section applies *Ubuntu* perspective on the discussion of the RLPs of agreeing. *Ubuntu* perspective emerged abductively as one of the relationality constructs that could not be ignored in presentation of this thesis.

6.2.2.12. A special discussion of the RLPs of agreeing from the Ubuntu perspective

6.2.2.12.1 Context
The RLPs of agreeing are subjected to further discussion from the *Ubuntu* perspective. As discussed under Chapter 2 (review of responsible literature) and Chapter 4 (research design), there is a strand of literature on *Ubuntu* moral and ethical worldview that aligns closely with some of the core tenets of responsible leadership theory and the RSCL lens, albeit with a special consideration of the African context. This in line with Pless *et al.'s* (2022:318) argument that, "moral and ethical concepts of leadership are criticised for either reflecting a Western-based perspective … or being conceptually vague without articulating specific norms that moral leaders can refer to…".

6.2.2.12.2 RLP of collaborating
Seehawer (2018) characterises actions that deny collaborative action as likely to be viewed as 'anti-*Ubuntu*' and she illustrates that in terms of how she worked closely with her research participants who were keen to engage in a process of collaborative learning. This is similar to Huxham and Vangen's (2001:1160) view when they discuss the concept of "collaborative inertia" to characterize circumstances where collaboration does not result in positive intended outcomes, and "collaborative value" whereby "something positive is achieved that could not have been achieved without the collaboration". In these research findings, the act of "balancing roles and responsibilities" through ensuring that each project had a "lead person" and involved more than one partner, is a demonstration of collaboration-in-practice. In a subtle way, the nature of collaboration was not only formal, but the founders "agreed to collaborate in an informal way". In the context of the sample on the development of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy "the agreement was that both government and civil society should both run the process as co-chairs", which served to reinforce collaboration, not just as an outcome, but as a precursor to enable collaborative action in an *Ubuntu* ethos. According to Regine (2009:21), "leaders who have

278

Ubuntu are natural healers, for they can see and hold the collective vulnerability, encourage true collaboration, and one by one, heal the many."

6.2.2.12.3   RLP of collective responsibility

The *Ubuntu* perspective as a "communal and communitarian ethic", emphasises collectivism and collective responsibility (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:30). In agreement, Sulimayo (2022:30) contends that "the sharing of responsibility and resources is at the core of *Ubuntu*. In instances when a family or community has limited resources, it is the responsibility of those individuals with resources to share their resources with the family or the community." Although in the findings of this research there is no explicit mention of resource-sharing, collective responsibility is embodied in the way the partnership works, since: "the whole peer-learning in TM is very unique…It operates in a much more collective way, respecting each other" [4:25, 53] (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

6.2.2.12.4   RLP of common objectives

Having clear common objectives is crucial from managing relations in a diverse and culturally complex environment. In this instance, there is acknowledgement of diversity, in terms of "different countries and different institutions, with different backgrounds and different contexts; all aim to achieve common objectives through TM" [9:5, 11]. The *Ubuntu*-inspired relationholder theory notes that "shared purpose" is reflected in the *Ubuntu*-based principles in the 'King IV Report on Corporate Governance' and it is an important consideration when engaging employees to ensure that they co-create and understand the common objectives of the organisation (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:32). This is further confirmed by Harris (2021:60) whose research concluded that: "*Ubuntu* can be used to enhance the principle of right of action under the deontological ethical perspective" and "*Ubuntu* principles along with relational theories can also assist with enhancing the current corporate governance models."

The communitarian ethic of *Ubuntu* perspective is about prioritising the collective aspirations of the community as the common objective above individual interests, and "the community comes first and the leader second" (Van Norren, 2022:2806). In this case, the common objectives of the inter-organisational partnership as a community of practice helped to derive shared value in spite of the diversity of the backgrounds of the individual members. In that way, this risk of cultural complexity is mitigated by the emphasis placed on common objectives.

6.2.2.12.5   RLP of fostering agreements

One of the critical considerations of the reationholder theory is the question of stakes versus relations. In terms of stakes, as per the stakeholder theory, one would have clear legal instruments such as contracts with shareholders and employees, licences with regulators and invoices with suppliers and customers.   However, the call for social contracts or social compacting with communities is beyond legal compliance, since it is about shared value and recognition a priori of the claims that the community has on the organisation. In the context of *Ubuntu*, fostering agreements, therefore, is not just a legal compliance issue but a moral and ethical imperative to create harmony with all stakeholders and the natural environment (Woermann & Engelbrecht, 2019:30; Van Norren, 2022). When arguing that *Ubuntu* perspective includes environmental concerns, Okoliko and David (2019:7) assert that "harmony of an eco-commune needs to be given a more central place in the pursuit of development."

6.2.2.12.6   RLP of hosting partners

The relational leadership practice of 'hosting' resonates with the *Ubuntu* value of hospitality, which is highlighted as important in *Ubuntu* literature (Papageorgiou, Fortuin, Shamsoodien, Mothelisi, Khoza & Plant, 2022). For an example, in situations whereby an African would "open their home to total strangers giving them a place to stay and a meal to eat although he/she knew nothing about them" (Molose, Goldman and Thomas, 2018: 197). The primacy of the value of caring in terms of hosting others resonates with the *Ubuntu* perspective.

In the relational leadership literature, Nicholson and Kurucz (2019:29) stated that in their moral ethics of care framework they "move beyond a view of care that is understood more narrowly as a response to pain and suffering and focus more on the dynamics of a relationship that allows leaders to deal with complexity". As such, hosting-as-caring could be regarded as one of those *Ubuntu* values that are universal in nature and serve as small acts of investment with high returns in terms of helping 'leaders to deal with complexity', including cultural complexity.

6.2.2.12.7   RLP of informal relationships

The views about what constitutes formality versus informality are quite central in culturally complex environments. They range from views and attitudes about attire, dining etiquette, meeting protocols and language use. It is crucial to understand protocol of a particular organisation or group context if one wants to be successful with regards to building relations with those stakeholders. The *Ubuntu* ethos has an unwritten or oral code of informality. For instance,

when negotiating access to research participants, Seehawer (2018:459) reflected on the importance of informal personal encounters versus formal protocols thus: "It was evident, however, that these signatures did not have much impact on the process of gaining access, but that what was meaningful had taken place in the personal encounters."

In the context of this research, the findings demonstrate that informality was crucial for problem-solving. The *Ubuntu* ethos leverages informality as way to oil relationships among people. The pervasiveness informality in inter-organisational partnerships is confirmed as by Tobias-Miersch (2017:482) who noted "widespread assertion that network organizations differ from more bureaucratic organizations by their little use of formal rules." It could be argued, however, that this value of informality could easily get abused in terms of corrupting influence; which would be deemed wrongful in terms of the relationholder theory and Tutu's *Ubuntu* consensus wherein rightful moral action aimed at harmonious relationships is normatively promoted as virtuous.

6.2.2.12.8   RLP of inviting others

The relational leadership practice of inviting others is a proactive way of managing stakeholder relations in order to address challenges that come with cultural complexity. There is great value derived out of inviting others to events such as conferences where ideas are shared and common interests are identified to create opportunities for mutually beneficial outcomes. Inviting others is part of the programme logic and it seeks to achieve inclusivity and enhance relationality, which are core tenets of *Ubuntu* perspective. Those who are invited tend to appreciate such an honour and sometimes reciprocate the favour later as part of sustaining the relationship, as confirmed by Seehawer's (2018:460) observation of "relational ethics – post research".

6.2.2.12.9   RLP of leading-as-dialogue

Ubuntu perspective is seen as crucial in terms of using dialogue for large scale social action like restorative justice and mutual restitution, such as in the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process of South Africa and managing the effects of pandemics (Tutu, 1999; Abubakre, Faik & Mkansi, 2021:843; Sulamoyo, 2022). In the context of the findings of this research, dialogue was put forward as the purpose of the partnership. In this regard, reflection and discussion are deemed as forms of dialogue that help with ensuring mutual accountability and "working together" and building "bonds of trust." Dialogue serves to strengthen "common identity" while recognising and appreciating differences. The agency of the positional role of the chairperson is also highlighted in terms of stimulating such dialogue and overcoming risks

associated with cross-cultural differences. Similar dialogic practices were highlighted in relation to bridging the language divide between Francophone and Anglophone countries via use of champions and translation (Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023).

6.2.2.12.10   RLP of rotational leadership

The approach of rotating Chairpersons annually among the partner countries was viewed as a deliberate and intentional practice, as one participant stated, "Through rotational leadership, we deliberately created a sense of shared ownership [4:32, 68]". While *Ubuntu* perspective would be associated with traditional cultural leadership of permanent positions (kings by birth right), the goal of rotational leadership in this context is fully aligned with the core principles of *Ubuntu* in terms of enforcing 'shared ownership'. In terms of the *Ubuntu*-inspired relationholder theory, the question of shared ownership is demonstrated via arguing that co-ownership would deepen the intimacy of employees to an organisation since they "are most closely connected to the process of value creation, [and] it is their efforts that create the products, services and relationships that earn the company a profit." The practice of worker participation and ownership is not common in Africa, but has been practiced for a very long time in Germany through codetermination rules (Bucelli, Gatti, and Soro, 2020).

6.2.2.12.11   RLP of trusting

Trust is regarded as a controlling mechanism in the "theoretical development of the construct of" inter-organisational partnerships, as trust serves to distinguish network organisational forms from bureaucratic and market organisational forms (Tobias-Miersch, 2017:475). Metz (2007:324) argues that "to violate trust, for example, break a promise, for marginal personal gain" is one of the universal principles that *Ubuntu* moral theory shares with Western ethical perspectives. One would argue, however, that *Ubuntu* perspective slightly differs from the Western ethical perspective since informality is quite valued in terms of building trustful relations. The risk of informality though is that corrupt practices could easily interfere with the noble intentions of trusting, which makes it difficult to reverse the situation when there were no formal mechanisms put in place to prevent such unwanted and irresponsible practices. The solution is to institutionalise informality as part of the organisational way of doing business and value system with clear parameters set via ethical guidelines. As some scholars – especially those engaging on the construct of *Ubuntu* and the decolonialisation debate – have warned that a misinterpretation and misuse of some of the *Ubuntu* values and ethics could lead to negative

unintended consequences (Wood, 2007; Moore & Stückelberger, 2009:279; Molefe, 2017; Naude, 2017:35; Seehawer, 2018; Papageorgiou *et al.*, 2022; and Van Norren, 2022).

The next section discusses implications for leadership theory.

6.3   IMPLICATIONS FOR RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORISING

This research applied leadership concepts from the DAC Framework (Drath *et al.*, 2008) and the RSCL Model (Endres & Weibler, 2017) as theoretical coding instruments, as discussed in the literature review and further elaborated in Table 6.2 and Figure 6.3, respectively. The application of these instruments has also revealed certain implications that have led to the realisation that some aspects of these conceptual frameworks could be reconceptualised for the purposes of their better application in future research, as discussed in the next sections.

6.3.1   Proposed modification of the DAC Framework

The first consequence is that we need to rethink the characterisation of RLPs in black-box terms as merely a given set of "routinised behaviours" (Reckwitz, 2002). This argument is put forward due to the fact that, from the DAC Framework, the separation between DAC leadership beliefs and DAC leadership practices draws a line between what is intended or desired (antecedents) versus what is said and done in practice (outcomes). As Drath *et al.* (2008:644) put it, "a belief is a disposition to behave; a practice is the playing out of that disposition". Since the DAC Framework refers to both the beliefs and practices as outcomes, in terms of the above argument, the beliefs could be qualified as emergent/antecedent outcomes denoting the anticipated or intended or expected outcomes. Then the DAC practices would be referred to as enacted/practical outcomes, as summarised in Figure 6.8:
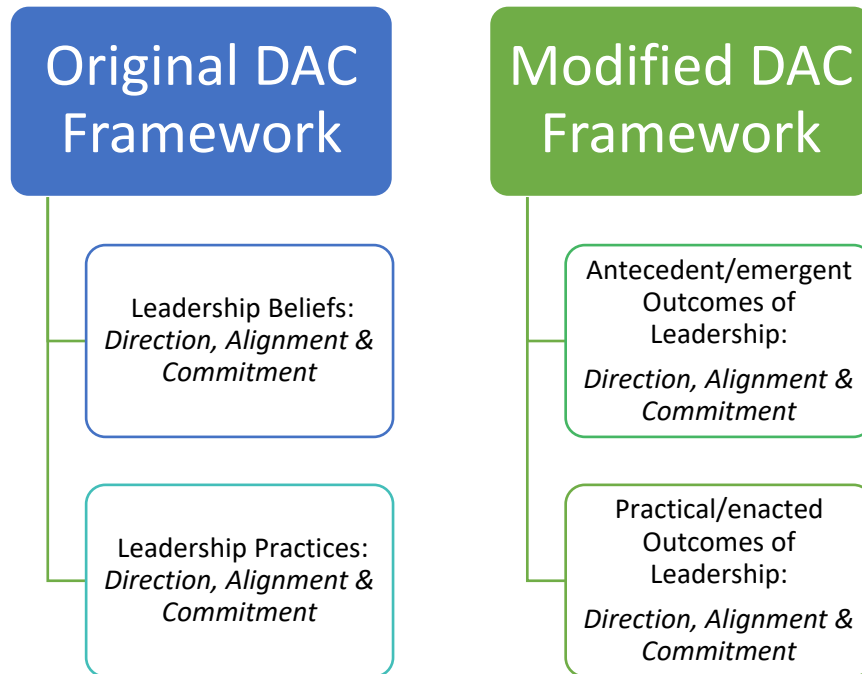
Figure 6.18: Modifying the DAC ontology

Source: Adapted from Drath et al. (2008).

The above proposed shift in conceptualisation is not merely about the use of language, but an empirically informed need for correspondence between the tested DAC Framework and the extant leadership theory and practice. This shift in conceptualisation will align with Miska and Mendenhall's (2008:119-120) multiple levels of analysis approach that distinguishes between the antecedents and outcomes on the one hand, and macro, meso, micro and cross-levels of responsible leadership research on the other hand. In that way, the application of the modified DAC Framework could provide clarity in terms of distinguishing between leadership emergence and enactment.

In terms of content, the distinction between antecedent outcomes and practical outcomes is similar to the distinction made by some of the behavioural research on the responsible leadership theory. That research argues that responsible leadership is closely tied to its normative justification (Patzer *et al.* 2018:1), since values and ethics are viewed as "key driver[s] for pro-social behaviour and responsible decision-making" (Maak, 2016:xvi). Drawing from development psychology and neurobiology literature, Pless (2007:440) posits that values and ethical norms are antecedents of responsible leadership behaviours, and she identifies the need and sense of

"recognition", "justice" and "care" as the three key normative drivers of behaviour. She then uses the behavioural perspective to analyse the "inner theatre" of Anita Roddick's biography as a widely recognised individual who embodied responsible leadership behaviour (Pless, 2007:437). The findings of that clinical analysis confirmed the importance of alignment between what the leader thinks or believes (Pless, 2007:451) (the emergent/antecedent outcomes) versus what they say and do in practice (the enacted/practical outcomes). In this way, the usefulness of separating between emergent/antecedent outcomes and enacted/practical outcomes would assist with understanding the dynamics of RLPs in context rather than merely listing them as a set of behaviours/practices at the same conceptual onto-epistemological level.

6.3.2   Further application and proposed modification of the RSCL Model

One of the two analytical models that are applied in the analysis and discussion of the findings is the Three-Component RSCL Model (Endres & Weibler, 2017:222), as depicted in Figure 6.3 and subsequently described. In this section, the application of the model is taken a step further by means of, firstly, using evidence to demonstrate its elements in an abridged form. And secondly, by proposing modification of its interpretation based on the philosophical underpinnings of the concept of relationality.
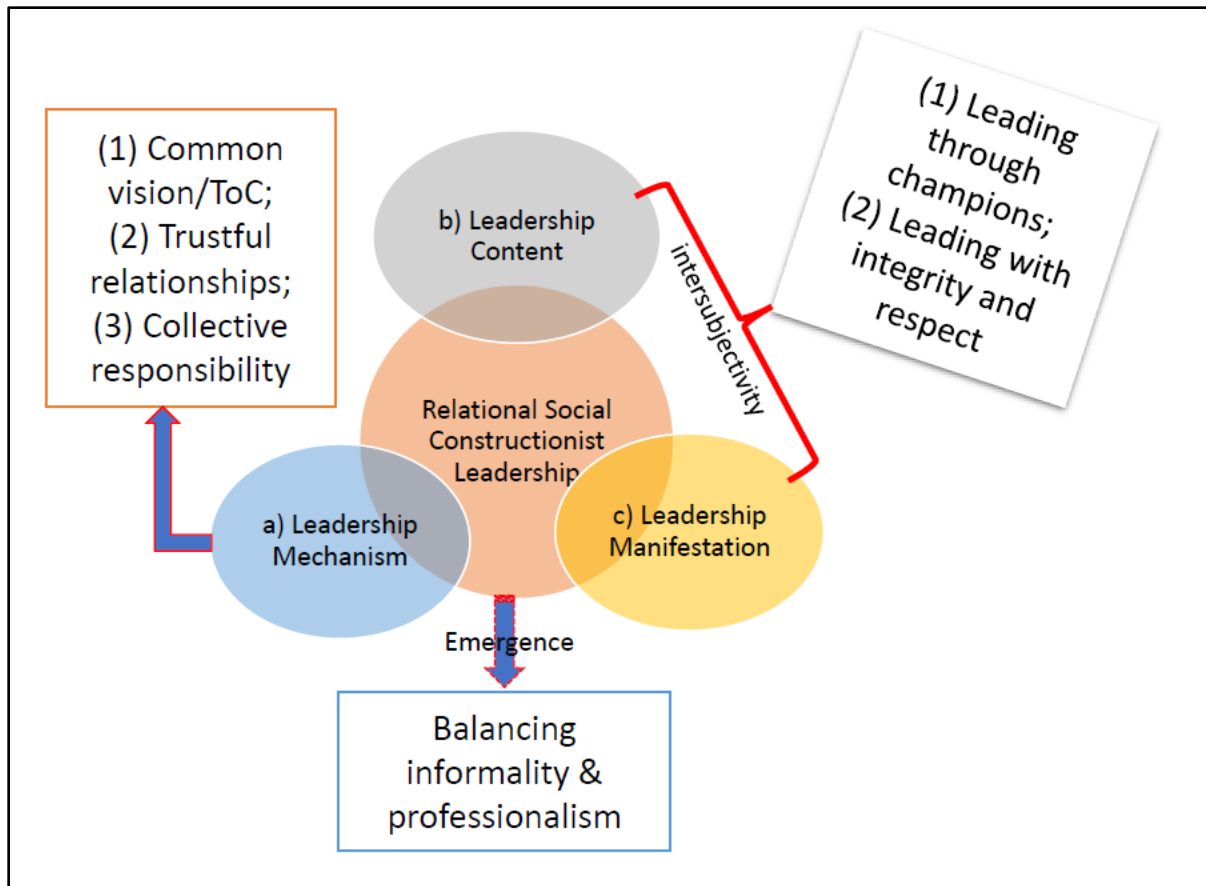
Figure 6.19: A revised RSCL model based on the research findings

The next paragraphs unpack Figure 6.19 in more detail.

6.3.2.1 The socially constructed leadership mechanisms

The examples of RLPs that are used to expatiate on leadership mechanisms are: visioning, trust-building and collective responsibility.

(a) *Leadership Mechanism 1: Visioning*

In the context of TM as an interorganisational partnership, the notion of developing a common vision through the use of the theory of change approach was identified as one of the significant leadership mechanisms. Morra Imas & Rist (2009, p151) define a 'theory of change as the 'blueprint of the building blocks needed to achieve the long-term goals of a social change initiative.' The responses from the participants illustrate the importance placed by the leaders of this partnership on the practice of collective visioning: *"There was a lot of goodwill when we*

started. It all started at a gathering of African countries… In that encounter with many other countries there was a sense of similarities between Benin, Uganda and South Africa that laid the basis for a partnership. I do think there was a great sense of vision behind the creation of TM' [7:88, 84]".

The application of the theory of change approach culminated in the clarification of the mandate of TM as an interorganisational partnership beyond just an aspirational vision statement, as demonstrated by this response: *"The TM theory of change says: if you stimulate demand, if you build capacity, if you learn and share from each other, if you collaborate on tools – and new systems should be developed together and there should be an appetite to implement those – that should lead to better use of evidence from monitoring and evaluation systems. And that should lead to better quality of policies and programmes and should hopefully lead to better development… We had key activities under each of those outputs which were directly linked to the budget [4:17, 35]".* The emphasis on 'agreement' and joint effort in terms of developing this detailed vision and objectives came across as a foundational practice for members of TM, which served as the mechanism behind certain types of relational leadership practices.

(b) Leadership Mechanism 2: Trust-building

The data demonstrated building trustful relationships as a second leadership mechanism. In literature, Brower, Schoorman & Tan (2000, p. 229) note that the construct of trust is deemed fundamental to the study of human relations. Correspondingly, Sánchez *et al.*, (2020, p. 9) observe that 'trust has been identified as key to understanding relational leadership'. The findings of this research confirm that the trust-building practice is quite pervasive in the data and it is also connected to the 'visioning' leadership mechanism discussed above, as demonstrated by the following quotation: *"…relationships are built on people talking to each other and becoming familiar with each other, people trusting each other and people committing to each other's vision and mission' [3:62, 46]".* The notions of 'talking' and becoming familiar 'with each other' denote the relational nature of the trust-building construct as demonstrated in partnership settings. Furthermore, the emphasis on 'committing' serves as a demonstration of intentionality to achieve a specific 'vision and mission'.

In this interorganisational partnership, trust-building is also considered as a specific action towards achieving certain implicit goals: *"At the end of the day things work because of relationships…Things like TM work because of mutual trust… We used our resources to ensure*

optimal participation in physical events, formally and informally. We had to be very careful not to operate like some big brother as South Africa [4:22, 47]". This quotation demonstrates the element of intentionality in addition to relationality in terms of the leaders consciously building relationships of mutual trust via informal and formal deliberate actions. The extent to which relationship-building is used to mitigate reputational risks is quite telling in the sense that the leaders entered into the relationship knowing that if they related in a particular manner, that would result in a negative perception of their country of origin. So, they intentionally invested 'resources to ensure optimal participation' in order to achieve genuine trust and rapport among the partners.

The centrality of trust-building in relationality resonates with both responsible leadership and relational leadership literature. Doh and Quigley (2014) put trust at the centre of the psychological influence pathway to how responsible leaders engage with stakeholders in an ethico-moral way. Sánchez *et al.* (2020:10) compares operationalisation of the trust construct in entity versus RSCL literature. On the one hand, entity scholars conceptualise trust as a 'psychological state' of reciprocity and intentionality among individuals. On the other hand, RSCL scholars conceive trust as 'an interactional orientation' which intersubjectively foregrounds 'the relationship between the self and the other' as grounded on the beliefs of reciprocity and 'morally' responsible behaviour on the part of the partners (Sánchez *et al.*, 2020:10).

(c) Leadership Mechanism 3: Collective responsibility
Collective responsibility emphasises joint-ownership of the programme and what it seeks to achieve, as demonstrated by the following interview excerpt: *"Through rotational leadership, we deliberately created a sense of shared ownership… Overall rotational leadership has been a good thing for TM to create a sense of collective ownership and common purpose [4:32, 68].* From this quotation there is a sense of putting forward collective responsibility as not just an antecedent leadership mechanism, but also as an outcome of a certain type of governance that TM founders internally adopted to enhance ownership of the partnership, that is, rotational chair-ship. The respondent characterised rotational chair-ship as 'rotational leadership' that they socially constructed to achieve a certain purpose.

6.3.2.2 Relational leadership content and manifestation
Leadership Practice 1: Leading through champions
Almost all the respondents interviewed mentioned several times the construct of 'champions' to define various aspects of how leadership emerges and gets enacted within TM as an

interorganisational partnership. Analytically, the construct emerged as an aggregation of similar leadership practices that were mentioned in the coded responses, such as: "*In my conversations with people, champions are regarded as leaders of a sort. They can be positional such as the Prime Minister… as a champion for evaluations. These are people who value the TM mission and try to influence change in their own spheres [2:62, 85].*" In this case, a champion is identified as someone who is very prominent in society in the form of a prime minister, but is also external to the partnership itself. The emphasis is that they use their influence to promote the evaluation practice for positive change in support of the value proposition of the TM partnership.

The point of difference between Endres & Weibler's (2017) model and this analysis is that in practice it becomes almost impossible to disentangle the 'content' of leadership from its 'manifestation' as an influence phenomenon. That champions (championing as a content of leadership) seek to 'influence change in their own spheres' (influencing change as manifestation of leadership) become two sides of the same coin. The explanatory concept from an RSCL perspective and practice approach is 'intersubjectivity'. In the context of RSCL, Cunliffe (2008:120) argues that it denotes that 'we are always selves-in-relation-to-others' or the coming together of subjectivities that become inseparable. One of the core principles of the practice approach that is connected to the principle of intersubjectivity is 'dualities', which demands rejection of dichotomies in favour of 'mutually constituted dualities' understood via empirical analysis of repeated relational leadership practices (Feldman & Worline, 2016, p. 309).

In this context, the relational practice of leading through champions demonstrates how on a day-to-day basis the work of leadership combines elements of leadership content and influence as leadership manifestation. The next excerpt confirms the above analysis and provides additional insights to the interpretation of relational leadership practice of 'leading through champions': "*Champions would be like individuals who were movers and shakers within their countries… I think once those individuals were highlighted, they became friends of TM and were often used to participate in keynote lectures or in learning conferences and seminars to share their experiences. They became spokespersons of TM in a way in terms of showing confidence in terms of how to drive change in their own countries. And how to inspire others who did not have confidence in terms of understanding steps that were required to move their national M&E systems forward [7:21, 38]".* Here champions are not on the executive branch of government, but on the legislative side 'as movers and shakers' who 'are pushing' and 'became friends of TM' and 'spokespersons of TM' who demonstrate 'how to drive change' and 'how to inspire others'. The notion of 'friends'

and 'spokespersons' of TM expresses a sense of the depth of the relationship. The fact that the champions do not invite themselves also demonstrates intentionality on the part of the TM members to cultivate this special type of a socially constructed relational leadership practice.

The next quotation brings another conceptualisation of a champion as the leader from within the partnership: "*So, even within TM, people who are involved are recognised within the evaluation ecosystem. Having those recognised champions, it assists with fostering inter-connectedness between the various organisations [8:66, 55]".* The prominence of the TM leaders within the broader 'evaluation ecosystem' is mentioned and its purpose is to 'foster interconnectedness', which has a strong sense of influence and relationality within this partnership.

(a) <u>Leadership Practice 2: Leading with integrity and respect</u>
The respondents emphasised the two ethical constructs of 'honesty', 'integrity' and 'respect' as central to how members conducted themselves when relating to each other and their work of leading, as demonstrated by the following quotation: "*The whole peer-learning approach in TM is very unique…It operates in a much more collective way, respecting each other. It works in a more positive and relational manner [4:25, 53]".* The practice of leading with integrity and respect resonates with both relational and responsible leadership literatures, such as the concept of 'relational integrity' proposed by Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) and the conceptualisation of responsible leadership as a 'social-relational and ethical phenomenon' by Maak & Pless (2006).

6.3.3 The implications of relationality for the application of the RSCL model
This section seeks to embed the foregoing discussion from a perspective of drawing implications of relationality for the RSCL model presented in Figure 6.19. According to Feldman and Worline (2016:310), relationality demands that we ask the following analytical questions: "How is one aspect of this issue creating another aspect of this issue? What am I viewing as separate that may not be separable?" By way of an example, the RSCL Model makes a distinction or separation between leadership mechanism, content and manifestation (Endres & Weibler, 2017). In the discussion, the RLP of serving the greater good was classified as a leadership mechanism. In line with the logic of relationality, how is serving the greater good creating another aspect of this issue besides being categorised as a leadership mechanism? As an RLP someone else could be influenced positively by the act or practice of observing or learning about a group/partnership that effectively serves the greater good. The influence factor is regarded as a content of leadership rather than a mechanism in the RSCL Model by Endres and Weibler (2017). But in this illustration,

the two could be deemed as mutually constituted meanings of the same RLP based on the inter-subjective meaning drawn by the influenced party. Hence, heading 6.3.2.2. presents relational leadership content and manifestation as a combined section.

6.4   IMPLICATIONS FOR RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP THEORISING

6.4.1   Comparison of the RLPs to corresponding themes from key responsible leadership literature

In addition to employing the key tenets of responsible leadership to evaluate the findings of this study, it was deemed imperative also explore how the findings (RLPs) align and add to practices identified in the extant responsible leadership literature. The exploration was done by comparing the 77 RLPs with key responsible leadership literature that was reviewed in this thesis. More weight was given to scholarly papers whose core argument and findings related to the RLPs. Only one paper was selected per RLP, since in some cases such as the RLP on 'definition of a [responsible] leader', almost all the papers would qualify, but the difference would be that some use a definition that is a refinement or a direct citation of the included paper. Table 6.3 presents the results of the assessment:

Table 6.3:   Comparing the RLPs to the corresponding themes from key responsible leadership literature

Relational Leadership Practice of interest	Intersecting Relational Leadership Practice	Corresponding theme from responsible leadership	Source
a) Achieving	1) Cost-benefits	Strategist vs instrumental responsible leaders	Waldman, Siegel & Stahl (2020)
	2) Serving a greater good	Competency assessment of responsible leadership performance	Muff, Delacoste & Dyllick (2021)
b) Agreeing	3) Rotational leadership	Shared leadership; Co-responsible leadership	Pearce, Wassenaar & Manz (2024); Carroll (2016)
	4) Collective responsibility	Social capital and seeking common good	Maak (2007)
	5) Trusting	Trustworthy leadership	Gustafsson & Hailey (2016)
c) Changing	6) Facilitating change	Radical responsible leadership actions	Blakeley (2016)
d) Characterising leadership	7) Leadership Behaviours	Leader behaviours (doing good or avoiding harm)	Stahl & De Luque (2014)
	8) Leadership Traits	Authenticity	Freeman & Auster (2011)
e) Defining	9) Defining a leader	Definition of a responsible leader	Maak & Pless (2006)
	10) Defining leadership	Comparing various definitions of responsible leadership	Mirvis, De Jongh, Googins & Van Velsor (2010)

Relational Leadership Practice of interest	Intersecting Relational Leadership Practice	Corresponding theme from responsible leadership	Source
	11) Clarifying roles	Roles model of responsible leadership	Maak & Ples (2006)
f) Following	12) Leading at different levels	Shared leadership	Pearce, Wassenaar & Manz (2024).
g) Governing	13) Fostering accountability	Monitoring and incentives	Filatochev & Nikajima (2014)
	14) Managing	Managerial phronesis	Steyn & Sewchurran (2018)
h) Identifying	15) Unique identity	Model of a responsible leader and their identity	Pless (2007)
i) Influencing	16) Engaging stakeholders	Responsibilities of leaders	Kempster & Carroll (2016)
	17) Influencing culture	Influencing culture via daring and caring	Ketola (2010)
	18) Influencing others	Influence pathways	Doh & Quigley (2014)
	19) Leading ethically	Virtuousness; Moral imagination	Cameron (2011); Pless *et al.* (2022).
	20) Leading with respect	Values	Lee & Higgs (2016)
	21) Presenting a perspective	Responsible leadership vs other leadership theories; Alternative perspectives on responsible leadership	Pless & Maak (2011); Waldman & Glavin (2008).
j) Recognising	22) Paradox	Paradox of complexity leadership	Gibeau, Langley, Denis & Schendel (2020)
	23) Acknowledging risks	Irresponsible leadership behaviours	Pearce, Wassenaar & Manz (2024).
	24) Brand legitimacy	Brand purpose and responsible leadership	Enslin, Wolfswinkel & Terblanche-Smit (2023)

According to Table 6.3, twenty-four (thirty-one percent) out of seventy-seven sub-themes (intersecting RLPs), belonging to 10 out of the 11 main themes (RLPs of interest), were found to align closely with the key responsible leadership scholarly articles. This implies that more than two-thirds of the findings of this thesis are filling a gap in responsible leadership theory that extant literature has not adequately addressed.

Moreover, it is surprising that there has been no paper written that could be closely aligned to the five RLPs under the 'organising' main theme, namely, 'following through', 'managing time', 'networking', 'organising meetings', and 'organising people'. As Schatzki (2006:1863) puts it, "the happening of an organisation has two basic components: the performance of its constituent actions and practices and the occurrence of events whereby its material arrangements causally support these activities". These RLPs represent a set of practices that allow interorganisational partnership's operations on a day-to-day basis, as their happenings. Similarly, Vangen and

Huxham (2003:62) argue that collaborative theory "conceptualises leadership as the mechanisms that make things happen" in interorganisational partnerships. In agreement, Müller-Seitz (2012:429) define leadership practices in interorganisational partnerships as "the exertion of influence in order to make things happen…despite lack of formal authority". For instance, 'following through' and 'managing time' are crucial RLPs to ensure efficient implementation of resolutions in order to "make things happen" in interorganisational partnerships (Vangen & Huxham, 2003:62; Müller-Seitz, 2012:429).

Likewise, 'organising people' and 'organising meetings' of the committees serve as very central RLPs for collective engagement and decision-making. Otherwise, partnerships like the ones that are being studied in this research would be deemed dysfunctional without such operations. This points to the fact that responsible leadership research has not paid adequate attention to 'mundane' activities that make organisations functional or such activities are deemed to be very low-level operational matters that should not be the concern of the higher echelons such as responsible leaders. However, experience demonstrates that boards of companies that do not pay attention to these basics of organising cannot be regarded as effective, as demonstrated by performance measurement metrics that are used in annual reports of companies. As pointed out by Whittington (2018:343), the practice approach "offers a broad understanding of how life tends to work, with pointers about how to get things done." Consequently, the RSCL lens and practice approach employed in this thesis have helped to discover often ignored aspects of leadership practices from which the responsible leadership theorising is being advanced, as further expounded in the next section.

6.4.2   The proposed responsible leadership-as-practice theoretical framework

In this section, a theoretical framework called 'Responsible-Leadership-As-Practice' is proposed based on the analysis of literature and empirical data in this thesis. The concept emerged from a paper by Ntakumba and De Jongh (2023:7) who argued that, "the practice approach as a methodology could be employed in responsible leadership research to strengthen its action-orientation by means of investigating 'shared patterns of how to carry out and perform' responsible leadership practices as 'dispersed practices' (citing Alpenberg & Scarborough, 2021, p. 417). Responsible-leadership-as-practice (R-L-A-P) could emerge alongside L-A-P studies (citing Raelin, 2020)." As such, Table 6.4 presents key concepts that form the building blocks of the R-L-A-P theoretical framework:

Table 6.4: **Towards a five-component theoretical framework for responsible leadership-as-practice**

	1) PHILOSOPHICAL STANCE		
Ontology	Objective reality	Intersubjective reality	Subjective realities
Epistemology	Positivist	Interpretive/ pragmatist	Constructivist
	2) METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH		
Practice approach	Entities	Relational practices (relational dynamics, ethics, values, norms, principles, materials)	Social practices
Reasoning	Deductive logic	Abductive logic	Inductive logic
Unit of analysis	Individuals	Relational leadership practices	Individuals and social practices
	3) LEADERSHIP APPROACH		
Relational leadership	Individualism/ Entity	Relational social constructionism	Social constructivism
Responsible leadership	RL quantitative research designs	**Responsible leadership practices (Responsible-Leadership-As-Practice)**	RL qualitative approaches
	4) WORLDVIEW		
***Ubuntu* perspective**	Normative values and ethics	*Ubuntu* relational values and ethics as practices	Realised *Ubuntu* values and ethics
	5) RESEARCH CONTEXT		
Unit of observation	Hierarchies and markets	Communities/interdependencies (interorganisational partnerships)	Complex systems and networks
Foci	Shareholders	Relation-holders	Stakeholders

According to Table 6.4, the proposed theoretical framework for R-L-A-P contains five domains, namely: philosophical stance, methodological approach, leadership approach, worldview and research context.

The analysis done in this thesis containing the ideas for R-L-A-P is located in the middle column of Table 6.4 and highlighted in green. In summary, the thesis employed the RSCL lens, which is underlined by the intersubjective ontology and interpretive epistemology. It applied the practice approach as its methodology, wherein the relational leadership practices were used as the unit of analysis. The abductive logic of inquiry was adopted and the dialogic interviews and focus groups were employed as research methods. The *Ubuntu* perspective as an African moral and ethical worldview was used to complement the relationality and ethical orientation of the responsible leadership theory. The *Ubuntu* inspired "Relationholder Theory" put forward by Woermann and Engelbrecht (2019:32), which serves as an alternative to "Freeman's libertarian-based stakeholder theory", was used to complement the relationality analysis done via the core tenets of the responsible leadership theory. The two samples of interorganisational partnerships were used as units of observation.

The ideas put forward for the R-L-A-P theoretical framework are compared with existing and other potential avenues (i.e. left and right columns in Table 6.4) that could be pursued for responsible

leadership research that employs the practice approach based on either positivist or constructivist onto-epistemologies and related methodological frameworks. Schmidt (2022:664) argue that praxeology "seeks to create a distance from participants' 'inner' motives, convictions, and deliberations (while still taking their referencing of such mental aspects seriously) and instead privileges types of data that account for everything that is manifest, public, and observable in what participants do." Extant responsible leadership research is starting to make a shift from focusing on the "inner theatre" and "motivational drivers" within individual responsible leaders (Pless, 2007) to the "moral imagination" and responsibilities of individual responsible leaders (Pless *et al.,* 2022). The proposed R-L-A-P approach seeks to facilitate another shift to methodological situationalism, which means shifting analyses of responsible leadership practices "away from the individual level and on to the [relational leadership] practice[s] as consisting of interconnected elements and routinised performances, and does so without relating them to the individual again by studying individual experiences" (Heidenstrøm, 2022:242).

Additionally, and as an illustration, if the instrumental economic perspective of responsible leadership is a preferred worldview, the focus would be on shareholder primacy within organisational hierarchies based on normative ethics, using quantitative research designs, prioritising profit margins and gross sales revenues as practices of interest (Waldman *et al.,* 2020). In contrast, if the CSR perspective of responsible leadership is preferred, the focus would be on salient internal and external stakeholders of the organisation, using qualitative research designs, prioritising sustainable development issues as practices in the context of the complex environment within which research is being undertaken (Pless *et al.*, 2022). Politics and power dynamics could be analysed based on the postmodernist lens and other critical theories that are aligned to the PCSR perspective of responsible leadership (See Scherer *et al.,* 2016). Lastly, social-materiality of responsible leadership practices would be analysed in line with what Gherardi and Laasch (2022:271) viewed as an attempt to "to de-centre" an individual leader "as the main source of meaning and action and focus rather on how ethics, responsibility, and sustainability are entangled in the materiality and discursivity of situated practices."

6.5   CONCLUSION OF THE SIXTH CHAPTER

The chapter started by putting forward the main research questions and three questions that served to guide the discussion of the findings. The discussion of the findings was located in the broader structure of this research project by demonstrating relationships between the various research components and the research questions via the use of a conceptual diagram (Figure 6.2). Then the discussion of the findings was conducted in two major sections. The first section

discussed the findings on the definitions of the leadership construct. The second section discussed the main themes presented as the RLPs. Each of the sub-sections of the discussion of the findings employed the three guiding questions to guide the interpretation of the findings, which were summarised in the form of sketch diagrams. Additionally, the RLPs of agreeing were discussed from *Ubuntu* perspective as a relational African moral and ethical theory.

On the basis of the discussion of the findings, implications for leadership theory were articulated. This first implication is that the DAC Framework is modified and reinterpreted to explicitly reflect antecedents versus outcomes of leadership. The second implication is that the RSCL Model is redesigned by highlighting the implications of the intersubjectivity principle of relational social constructionism, which is not emphasised (i.e. mentioned only once in passing) in the source paper by Endres and Weibler (2017). The third implication is that the findings of this thesis discovered more than two thirds of new content (i.e. relational leadership practices) that is not given adequate attention in the extant responsible leadership scholarly literature. Lastly, a comprehensive theoretical framework on R-L-A-P was proposed based on the insights from the literature and empirical analysis based on this thesis.

The next chapter, Chapter 7 will draw conclusions and make recommendations.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

7.1   INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Chapter 7 presents the concluding summary and recommendations of this research. The main research question was, *how do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?* The guiding questions for Chapter 7 are:

(1) What are the reflections on the occurrence of RPLs in interorganisational partnerships?

(2) How has the study answered the main research question?

(3) How has the study addressed the identified gaps in literature?

(4) What were the limitations of this study?

(5) What are the conclusions and recommendations of this study?

(6) What are the key contributions of this research to leadership theory and practice?

7.1 Introduction to the seventh chapter	7.2 Understanding the leadership construct	7.3 Contribution of the thesis to the understanding of the RLPs	7.4 Answering the research question
7.5 Addressing the gaps in literature	7.6 Limitations of the study	7.7 Recommendations for future research	7.8 Concluding remarks on the key contributions of this thesis
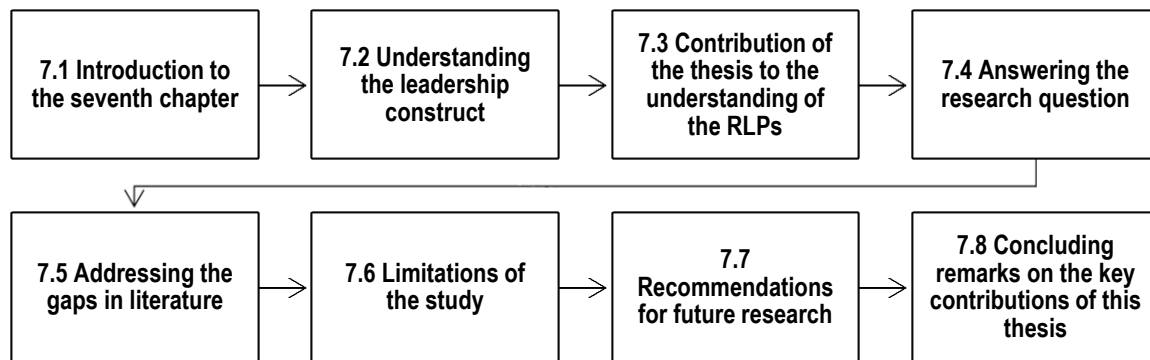
Figure 7.1:   Outline of Chapter 7

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on leadership studies in general and then paid special attention to literature on responsible leadership theory. Chapter 3 reviewed literature on interorganisational partnerships and situated them within relational and collective leadership research. Chapter 4 presented the research design, which comprised of the relational social constructionist leadership ontology and epistemology. Chapter 4 also included the practice approach as the methodology for this study, which was implemented in two interorganisational partnerships, namely, national and international interorganisational partnerships. Chapter 5 presented the findings of the research which analysed the leadership construct and relational leadership practices. Chapter 6 discussed the findings and drew implications for leadership theory. In Chapter 7, each of the

aspects of this study are summarised, the gaps in literature filled and research conclusions drawn. On the basis of these conclusions, research recommendations are made.

7.2   UNDERSTANDING THE LEADERSHIP CONSTRUCT

7.2.1   Reflecting on the insights from the literature review

Leadership was the main construct of interest in this research and relational leadership practices became the unit of analysis. In Chapter 2, the literature review started by tracing the evolution of leadership research over the decades. The leadership construct was found to be predominantly conceptualised in entity or individualistic terms as the influence of individual leaders on their followers and the mutual transformation that results from that relationship (Yukl, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Drath *et al.*, 2008; Vivier, 2019). There is wide agreement in the reviews of extant leadership studies that this field of study has been around for more than a century (Yukl, 2010; Dionne *et al.,* 2011; Hernandez *et al.,* 2011; Wilson, 2013; Markham; 2012; Vivier, 2019; Olley, 2021). Scholars present their different categorisations and articulations of various paradigms of leadership research. Hernandez *et al.* (2011) developed a loci and mechanisms' model, which traced the evolution of leadership research from leader-centric studies to relationships between leaders and followers, and then the relationship between leaders and their situation or context – all juxtaposed against leadership traits, behaviours, cognitions and affects. Uhl-Bien *et al.* (2014) classifies leadership research into leader-centric, follower-centric and relational leadership models. Miska and Mendenhall (2018) classify responsible leadership research in terms of levels of analysis versus antecedents and outcomes.

A range of leadership approaches and paradigms were discussed. The responsible leadership approach, as the main leadership theory of interest for this research was located among the emerging leadership theories that were introduced in the 2000s. The emergence of such leadership theories was triggered by developments in other disciplines, like psychology, and they also emerged as a response to particular social issues, such as public scandals. As such, responsible leadership theory was found to have been largely influenced by developments in CSR research, stakeholder theory and contemporary leadership approaches, such as ethical leadership, servant leadership, shared leadership, transformational leadership and authentic leadership (Maak & Pless, 2006; Waldman & Galvin, 2008; Pless, Maak & Waldman, 2012; Kempster & Carroll, 2016; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018; Haque *et al.*, 2019; Waldman *et al.*, 2020).

In their review of responsible leadership research, Miska and Mendenhall (2018:130) conclude that the core mission of responsible leadership theory is to infuse stakeholder and ethical perspectives into leadership theory. These two contributions are viewed as the core tenets of responsible leadership theory, namely, values and ethics orientation and incorporation of external stakeholders. The stakeholder aspect is cast as "social-relational" or the relationality component of the responsible leadership construct (Maak & Pless, 2006). The literature review discussed various perspectives to responsible leadership theory. The review noted this relationality as an important similarity between responsible leadership and relational leadership theories, as well as how collective leadership is conceptualised in participative literature on interorganisational partnership contexts. As such, it was decided to adopt the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) lens as the preferred theoretical framework for this research, as presented in Chapter 4.

In summary, through the literature review it was established that, while there is plenty of leadership research from time immemorial and across many disciplines, there is still more than enough room for further empirical research to contribute towards the advancement of the understanding of the leadership construct in theory and practice. This research contributed towards the understanding of the leadership construct empirically from the perspective of the participants and evaluated its epistemological implications for the advancement of leadership theory in interorganisational contexts, as discussed in the next section.

7.2.2   Contribution of this research to the understanding of the leadership construct

The understanding of the constructs of a leader, leadership and followers is discussed in two parts in this research. Part one deals with the definitions of leadership provided by the research participants when they were specifically asked to do so during the dialogic interviews and focus group discussions. Part two deals with the definitions of leadership that emerged indirectly during the responses provided by the research participants to other questions during the dialogic interviews and focus group discussions. The reflections in the next paragraphs will separate between the part one analysis known as normative definitions and the part two analysis referred to as empirical definitions.

7.2.2.1 Reflecting on the normative definitions of the leadership construct

The research participants were highly educated people who have spoken about leadership in the course of their knowledge work as evaluation practitioners and senior leaders of various

organisations, as one participant argued: *'In the first instance, I think it is about the values that are held by the individual leaders in the partner organisations. The partnership consists of people who are professionals, people who have worked in development…" [3:49, 40].* Therefore, it is not surprising that when they were asked to provide their own definitions of the leadership construct such definitions were fairly aligned to the normative views of the constructs of leaders, leadership and followers in the mainstream leadership scholarship, which is characterised as the "tripod ontology" (Drath *et al.*, 2008). As such, this aspect of empirical findings was confirmatory of the normative view of the leadership construct in extant leadership theory as mainly a positive phenomenon (positive qualities and characteristics of individuals) and hierarchical in nature (supervisory relations between leaders and their followers within organisations). The next paragraphs reflect on the aspects of the findings on the leadership construct that are viewed as surprises.

The characterisation of organisations as leaders in their own right is something that did not emerge strongly in the literature review on leadership research. Freeman and Auster (2011:22) "believe that…[they] can conceptualise the 'poetic organisation' much along the lines of the poetic self. Authenticity in organisations becomes a process of starting with where the organisational values are thought to be. Second, organisations must become aware of their history and their historical routines. Third, every organisation is embedded in a network of stakeholder relationships. Finally, most organisations have some kind of purpose or aspiration". As such, the notion of authentic poetic organisations (Freeman & Auster, 2011) that are imbued with responsible leadership values implies that in the context of interorganisational partnerships the relational nature of such values could be cultivated within the stakeholder relationships.

Furthermore, the notion of leadership traits, such as gravitas, being viewed as part of both an organisation as an entity (brand legitimacy) and its individual leaders as representatives in an interorganisational partnership was quite surprising. Similarly, the expectation that leaders would use artefacts like "evidence" and 'evaluation systems; as epistemic materials (Werle & Sedl, 2015) that serve as common objectives for the partners, was quite interesting. The mining of the data using the practice approach concepts such as the acknowledgement of "things and their use" (materiality) (Reckwitz, 2002) helped to point towards the social-materiality. Therefore, social-materiality of leadership in interorganisational settings presents an opportunity for further research.

The levels of analysis of the leadership construct usually present the organisational level as the meso-level of analysis, but still focus on individual leaders as the core construct (Miska & Mendenhall, 2018). The discussion of these findings acknowledged, however, that in strategy literature the focus is usually on categorising organisations in a competitive sense as either winners (leaders) or laggards (followers). As such, this aspect of the findings points to an important interface between leadership research and strategy research. This is particularly relevant to interorganisational partnership settings where representation is primarily conceived as that of organisational entities as the partners and less about the individual leaders as the participants. As such, these findings point to the opportunity for RSCL scholarship to employ "paradigm inter-play" (Sànchez *et al.*, 2020) in terms of linking leadership research to other domains of organisational science, such as strategy research.

7.2.2.2 Reflecting on the empirical definitions of the leadership construct from the RLPs

With regards to the definitions of leadership that emerged from the articulation of various leadership practices, there are two categories of relevant RLPs. The first category is around the RLP of "defining", where the definitions of a leader and leadership were presented as some of the sub-themes; as well as the RLP of "characterising leadership" as traits and behaviours. The second category is about the sub-themes where the construct of "leading" was made explicit, namely, leading-as-dialogue and rotational leadership (under the "agreeing" RLP); leading ethically and leadership with respect (under the "influencing" RLP); leaders-as-champions (under the "identifying" RLP); leading as deferring to a higher authority and leading at different levels (under the "following" RLP); and hierarchical approach (under the "governing" RLP).

In terms of the first category, the research participants indirectly defined the leadership construct and characterised leadership as traits and behaviours during the processes of answering other questions as part of their explanation of what leaders are expected to do or actually do in practice within the interorganisational partnerships. The findings demonstrated a different approach that was not just normative as per the above prompted definitions, but practical in terms of citing specific cases or aligning how the work of leadership was accomplished in action. One significant finding was the extent to which the construct of moral values and ethics – as well as the related sub-constructs of trust, integrity, honesty and good conduct – were articulated as integral to how leadership occurs in the context of the interorganisational partnerships. Furthermore, the notion of stakeholder concerns and how collective leadership seeks to achieve collective responsibilities and common goals, demonstrated the centrality of the intentionality and relationality in practice.

This showed the value of the practice approach in terms of elucidated practical understandings of how leadership is enacted and emerges in the interorganisational settings, which is something that is still rare in current empirical leadership studies and conceptualisations (Endres & Weibler, 2020; Sànchez *et al.,* 2020).

In terms of the second category, the research found a set of sub-themes as intersecting RLPs that could be classified as first-order leadership practices since they bear the construct of leadership in their nomenclature. The only RLP that did not contain the leadership construct, but was included in this category is the "hierarchical approach", which implicitly refers to positional leadership in the context of "governing" wherein authoritative roles are distinguishable. In the context of these RLPs, the leadership construct has centrality as a form of leadership at the same level as extant leadership approaches and theories like servant leadership, transformational leadership and authentic leadership. While there is evidence of existing RSCL scholarship on leadership approaches such as "dialogic leadership" (Reitz, 2017; Hersted & Gergen, 2013) and "followership" (Uhl-Bien *et al.,* 2014), it is beyond the scope of this study to elaborate on such leadership theories.

7.3   CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE RLPS

In this section, a critical reflection is done regarding each of the eleven RLPs of interest and their intersecting practices in terms of their implications for leadership scholarship and practice. In order to avoid repetition of the analytical discussion already done in Chapter 6, in this section each reflection is structured into two paragraphs, in which the first one focuses on research implications and the second one reflects on the implications for practice.

7.3.1   Reflecting on the RLP of achieving

Leadership scholarship has long been preoccupied with organisational performance as the purpose of leading (Yukl, 2010, Hernandez *et al.,* 2011). In these interorganisational partnerships, the RLP of achieving comprised of celebrating achievement, cost-benefits, serving the greater good, strategising and visioning, as key practices. This demonstrates that more research is required to unpack the meaning of achievement in collective settings, which do not lend itself to quantitative metrics like sales revenues and profit measures.

Leadership development programmes could start incorporating the practice of achieving as part of leadership training. This could be done via requiring trainees to express their own understanding of what it means to achieve as a leader within their own (inter) organisational environments in an inductive manner that would capture such understanding as a practice.

7.3.2 Reflecting on the RLP of agreeing

The RLP of agreeing comprised of a varied set of practices, some of which are fairly common in leadership research (e.g. collaborating and trusting), whilst others are quite rare (e.g. hosting partners and fostering agreements). The inter-subjectivity inherent in the practice of agreeing was made possible by the RSCL onto-epistemology and the practice approach, since they are both embedded in the inter-subjectivism worldview (Ospina & Foldy, 2010, Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011).

Approaching leadership from an inter-subjective view of agreeing calls for more RSCL research and training in post-heroic paradigms of leadership wherein the leadership phenomenon is conceptualised as a practice in terms of "what should leaders do if they understand their relationality" (Reitz, 2017:517). This understanding aligns to the classical foundations of relational leadership as seeking to attend to a "public goods dilemma" that contends that many problems in society are about reconciling conflicts of interests, and a leader usually emerges to facilitate agreement between individual interests with public goods in the interest of the collective (De Cremer & van Vugt, 2002:217). Practitioners, would therefore, benefit from the inculcation of the inter-subjectivity inherent in leading, especially in terms of proactively managing multiple stakeholder concerns.

Additionally, the application of the *Ubuntu* perspective on the analysis of RLPs of agreeing confirmed the relational and ethical nature of this perspective. This resonated with the tenets of responsible leadership, but with a unique emphasis on the African context and associated values of harmony, humaneness and hospitality. The *Ubuntu* perspective is seen as crucial in terms of using dialogue for large scale social action like restorative justice and mutual restitution, such as in the case of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission process of South Africa (Tutu, 1999). It is also suited for large scale multiple stakeholder engagements such as the management of pandemics like the COVID-19 (Abubakre, Faik & Mkansi, 2021:843; Sulamoyo, 2022). Lastly, the *Ubuntu* perspective is particularly relevant for dealing with cultural complexity and associated challenges of building trust among stakeholders and collaborative actions via balancing informality with professionalism.

7.3.3 Reflecting on the RLP of changing

Similar to the practices of achieving, changing is already viewed as the purpose of leadership in mainstream leadership scholarship (Vivier, 2019). It is when one starts opening up the treasure throve of various intersecting practices that one begins to appreciate that the construct of "changing" is contextual and varied, as demonstrated by the findings of this research. For example, the sub-theme RLP of "tacit emergence" points to the surprising findings that are typical of the practice approach methodology. It therefore becomes critical that leadership scholarship is advanced in this direction of unpacking the RLP of changing rather than just taking it for granted as a black-box construct.

In practice, people who are tasked with establishing and operating interorganisational partnerships should be more conscious of what "change" means in their respective contexts. This would help with unpacking the work of leadership within those organisational forms. For instance, one participant noted that, "*When we appoint somebody into a leadership position we assume that somebody knows these things. We don't necessarily unpack these things as organisations and say this is going to be our strategy" [3:126, 98].* As such, recruitment of fit-for-purpose positional leaders would be easier if expected RLPs of changing are examined and known upfront and incorporated into the organisational strategies.

7.3.4 Reflecting on the RLP of characterising leadership

As demonstrated by the literature review on leadership studies, the characterisation of the leadership phenomenon is an ongoing exercise that continues to grow. The findings of this research demonstrate that, instead of prescribing our normative views of leadership; the leadership scholarship would be better served if we were to base our characterisations of leadership on the empirical data. For instance, the consensus in evolutionist leadership research (see Wilson, 2013; Olley, 2021) that the notion of leadership traits is a thing of a distant past is not true, since in practice people still believe that certain qualities of leaders are innate, for example gravitas (Jackson, 2020).

The characterisation of the leadership construct is fairly well-appreciated in leadership practice. However, the unintended consequence is pre-occupation with standardised quantitative-based competencies and characteristics, which bear no reference to organisational context, relationality and unique circumstances. For instance, Endres and Weibler (2017:228) decry the "tendency towards idealistic or prescriptive argumentation (e.g. concerning high leader-member exchange

ratings) without sufficiently revealing the conditions that help to develop high-quality exchange." The findings of this research call for leadership development programmes that are sensitive to the unique context of interorganisational partnerships, relationality, intentionality and how leadership occurs.

7.3.5 Reflecting on the RLP of defining

The RLP of defining is crucial for clarifying parameters of concepts upfront before engaging in other leadership work. The intersecting RLPs of defining comprised of defining a leader, defining leadership, mapping stakeholders, clarifying roles, and defining a national evaluation system. These definitions served the fundamental quest for expatiating the participants' view of reality and truth claims, as an ontological labour within interorganisational partnerships as "communities of people and conversations" in RSCL terms (Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011:1431). Therefore, more leadership scholarship is required that explores the emergence and enactment of the practice of defining as the work of leadership.

Similar to the practice of characterising leadership, the RLP of defining helped to elucidate the meanings that were attached by the participants to their interorganisational partnership in terms of its purpose and understanding of the work of leadership. Therefore, spending more time in terms of definitions of both the constructs of leading and specific terminology that is important to the members of each organisation is a crucial task in RSCL and praxeological terms since it lays the onto-epistemological foundation for other leadership tasks. If there is no understanding of the definitions of key concepts among various members of an organisation, moving the organisation forward would become an exercise in futility. At least, the leaders must have a firm grasp of their own definition of success.

7.3.6 Reflecting on the RLP of following

The RLP of following comprised of leading as deferring to a higher authority and leading at different levels, which are fairly unique conceptualisations of the phenomenon of following. The uniqueness arises out of the fact that in interorganisational partnerships leadership is primarily enacted in a horizontal way (Pearce *et al.*, 2014). The limited hierarchical structures that exist through mechanisms like the role of the chairperson, members of committees and the secretariat do not necessarily imply the existence of followers in the supervisory manner as prevalent in command-and-control bureaucracies. As such, the practice of deferring upwards was not a pre-defined phenomenon, but emerged in context. Similarly, the practice of leading at different levels

did follow a predetermined pattern, but was a form of improvisation. The practice of following denotes the "creation of leadership through informal authority" (Jackson, 2019:214), which is not a common construct in extant literature.

This emergent form of understanding the RLP of following in interorganisational settings could be the "oil that makes the complex machine work", in metaphorical terms. This is said in light of the fact that the role of leadership in interorganisational partnerships is not well-understood since they are usually established to address specific wicked problems that require non-standardised ways of organising in order to leverage "collaborative value" (Huxham & Vangen, 2001:1160) and "collaborative advantage" (Lowndes & Skeltcher, 1998:313). According to Scott *et al.* (2018:465), networked leadership in interorganisational contexts is an "emergent relational process of mutual influence between team members, and can be conceptualised as the property of the whole system." The "mutual influence" is something that leadership practitioners could find ways of enabling and developing among their trainees and practicing leaders in a post-heroic leadership paradigm. System-wide and holistic approaches would be preferable since this practice of following is not the property of individuals, but an (inter)organisational ethos as the "property of the whole system" (Scott *et al.,* 2018:465). These findings indicate that responsible leadership scholarship still has more room to engage explicitly with how the RLP of following or followership emerges and is enacted in interorganisational partnership contexts.

7.3.7   Reflecting on the RLP of governing

In literature, governance is a distinct area of research that has direct links to leadership (Huxham & Vangen, 2001). However, in this context the processual ontology of the RLP of "governing" was found to be the work of leadership. The joined-up government type of interorganisational partnership foregrounds the centrality of governing as confirmed by the emergence of "new" types of organising, ways of working across boundaries, ways of delivering services, accountabilities and incentives (Ling, 2002:262). More research is required to understand the interface between leading and governing as mutually constituted phenomena beyond the joined-up government forms of interorganisational partnerships, for example public-private partnerships.

In practice, this implies the need for consciousness on the part of the leadership practitioners when training people on leadership and conducting leadership research. Such research and training would be deemed inadequate if it omits the understanding of good governance as a leadership practice. Specificity is also crucial to elucidate the different kinds of such governing

practices and their implications for different contexts. The intersecting practices of the governing RLP, such as managing, fostering accountability, governance structures, hierarchical approach and delimiting boundaries demonstrated the critical importance of paying attention to the RLP of governing as an integral part of doing leadership in interorganisational settings.

7.3.8   Reflecting on the RLP of identifying

Identity-formation is an under-research area of leadership scholarship (Kwok *et al.,* 2018), albeit widely researched in organisational and management studies more broadly. This study did not seek to elaborate on, nor test, identity theory, but the processual nature of "identifying" emerged empirically from the data. The RSCL lens and the practice approach cast the net of the construct of identity much wider than current approaches to leadership research. This offers opportunities for further in-depth leadership studies on the social construction and value of identify-formation in interorganisational partnership settings (Clifton *et al.*, 2020:518).

From the RSCL lens, "leader identity is neither something that people have and which they bring along to an interactional event, nor is it necessarily commensurate with hierarchal position, rather it is something that people do – and this doing takes place in and through interactions with others" (Clifton *et al.,* 2020:515). From this perspective, leadership development programmes have to invest in the understanding of the practice of identifying, not only in terms of leadership or followership identities, but also how it relates to aspects of the organisational context. As one research participant reported, *"Even when we [they] met in conferences there was this sense that we [they] were the A-team" [4:25, 53].* Practitioners could inculcate the competencies of building a collective identity of being an "A-Team" among their trainees. A risk could be that such an identity-based approach could lead to formation of cliques and cementing of toxic identities if not critically examined from gender, race, power and other forms of identities.

7.3.9   Reflecting on the RLP of influencing

Leadership as influence is the most common conceptualisation of the leadership construct in literature and practice (Yukl, 2010; Vivier, 2019). The RSCL lens and the practice approach have added value in terms of unpacking the practice of influencing in practical terms. The fourteen intersecting RLPs of influencing depicted an interesting story in the sense that the RLP of communicating, for example, is normally treated as a distinct topic in literature, yet in practice people influence each other through communicating verbally and non-verbally. Leading ethically was also categorised under this RLP since it is a relational practice of promoting goodness,

righteousness and moral values. Therefore, the findings of this study demonstrated that there could be many other ways in which practitioners could understand leadership-as-influence in order to advance current leadership scholarship.

There is unlimited training, leadership development and recruitment programmes that pay special attention to the influence factor of leaders from different perspectives. However, the RSCL lens and practice approach emphasise the processual, emergent and contextual nature of influence. In other words, influencing cannot be generalised, as it is the property of a specific organisational context and how leadership emerges and is enacted in such settings. The classification of all fourteen RLPs of identifying via the RSCL Model as "leadership manifestation", demonstrated the centrality of this phenomenon in terms of understanding how influence plays out in interorganisational partnerships. Training could focus on the manifestation of influence at the interface between individuals or within collectives or between individuals versus organisations.

7.3.10 Reflecting on the RLP of organising

From the RSCL perspective, organisations could be conceptualised as sites of organising and leadership as a form of organising (Uhl-bien, 2006:665). As such, the practice of organising helped to unpack how the process of organising as the work of leadership was accomplished in the interorganisational partnership contexts. Most critically, the act of organising expressed the mutual constitution of the leadership construct and its (inter) organisational context as inseparable in practice. In other words, the boundary between the unit of analysis and unit of observation merged as two sides of the same coin. Added to the duality in relationality terms, the actual RLPs had a sense of intentionality, as demonstrated by their evaluation in Chapter 6 through the responsible leadership theory (Maak & Pless, 2006).

In practical terms, asking a simple question like, "How are we organised to deliver on this objective?" is a significant work of leadership in interorganisational settings. As per the findings of this study, such a question invokes the identification of RLPs such as managing time, networking, organising meetings, organising people and following through on decisions made. While these are often taken-for-granted mundane actions and sometimes relegated to the realm of lower-level administrative operational matters; in the context of interorganisational partnerships they are the make or break of their functionality. For instance, there is no partnership that could be deemed functional if its members are not organised into some form of meetings, or time

management is not respected or decisions are not followed through. Hence, empowering new leaders and members of interorganisations on the RLPs of organising is deemed vital.

7.3.11 Reflecting on the RLP of recognising

The various connotations of the RLP of recognising demonstrate its complex nature. The importance of this practice was not explicit in the literature that was reviewed, except from the point of view of recognising individuals as a form of reward for good performance. The day-to-day practices of recognising risks, difference, brand legitimacy, paradox, and dealing with frustration were not found to be part of the research agenda of analysed relation leadership and responsible leadership literature. As such, they present an avenue for future leadership studies in this direction.

The practice of recognising is a practical intellectual exercise or a "form of mental activity" (Reckwitz, 2002). While risk management, for example, is a standard organisational practice with its methodologies, rules and rituals; viewing it as an RLP stimulates a different perspective and engagement with its application (Heidenstrøm, 2022). For instance, the implications of recognising the risk of the expiry of funding are that the leaders should prioritise the role of mobilising funding as their primary duty in order to ensure impact of their interorganisational operations and sustainable development. As literature demonstrated, most public-private partnerships fail due to poor risk mitigation measures (Kyei *et al.*, 2020).

7.4   ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

The main research question for this study was: '*How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?'* Guiding questions for each chapter were employed to ensure that each chapter contributed towards answering the main research question, as per Table 7.1:

Table 7.1:   The main research question and the list of guiding questions per chapter

QUESTION NUMBER	NAME OF THE CHAPTER AND LIST OF THE GUIDING QUESTIONS
MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: *How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships and what are the implications for responsible leadership theory?*	
#	**CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ON LEADERSHIP RESEARCH, RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND RELATIONALITY**
1	What is leadership and how has it been studied over the years?

QUESTION NUMBER	NAME OF THE CHAPTER AND LIST OF THE GUIDING QUESTIONS
2	What are the various perspectives on responsible leadership?
3	What are other key relationality constructs that are related to responsible leadership and are relevant to this thesis?
#	**CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW ON INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND THE INTERFACE WITH LEADERSHIP RESEARCH**
1	What are interorganisational partnerships?
2	What are the different ways in which scholars have studied interorganisational partnerships in literature?
3	How does research on interorganisational partnership interface with leadership research?
#	**CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN**
1	What does the relational social constructionist leadership (RSCL) epistemology and ontology entail? (theoretical framing)
2	How can the RSCL lens be operationalised through the practice approach? (methodological framing)
3	What were the research methods and techniques that were employed to generate, analyse and interpret the data? (empirical framing)
4	What are the ethical considerations that were taken into consideration when conducting this study? (ethical framing)
#	**CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS**
1	How is the leadership construct understood in interorganisational partnerships?
2	How do relational leadership practices occur in interorganisational partnerships?
#	**CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**
1	How is leadership socially constructed in interorganisational partnership contexts?
2	What are the outcomes of socially constructed RLPs?
3	How can we evaluate relationality and purpose of RLPs using responsible leadership theory and *Ubuntu* perspective?
4	What is the contribution of this thesis to knowledge and practice?
#	**CHAPTER 7: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS**
1	What are the reflections on the occurrence of RPLs in interorganisational partnerships?
2	How has the study answered the main research question?
3	How has the study addressed the identified gaps in literature?
4	What were the limitations of this study?
5	What are the conclusions and recommendations of this study?
6	What are the key contributions of this research to leadership theory and practice?

Chapter 6 on the discussion of the findings served as the basis for answering the main research question by means of integrating insights from the literature review in Chapters 2 and 3, the research design in Chapter 4, with the research findings presented in Chapter 5. The next section reflects on how the analysis in Chapter 6 was undertaken to answer the main research question. The implications of RLPs in interorganisational partnership contexts are discussed under the following three headings: the social construction of leadership, the outcomes of the social construction and relationality and purpose.

7.4.1   Social construction of leadership

The bottom-up application of the constructs of "leadership mechanism", "leadership content" and "leadership manifestation" through the RSCL Model has achieved a degree of rigour in terms of ensuring that such analysis is grounded in the empirical data through the coding processes. In

that way, the study was able to demonstrate social construction of leadership in interorganisational settings. This was done through, firstly, the discussion of the definitions of the leadership construct as provided by the participants and, secondly, in terms of the discussion of the themes in the form of RLPs of interest and their intersecting RLPs.

The use of the RSCL lens, particularly to application of the RSCL Model helped with answering this 'how' question. Firstly, by framing some of the findings as 'leadership mechanisms' – which are socially constructed realities through ongoing interaction (Endres & Weibler, 2017) – the analysis was able to separate emergence of leadership practices from the enactment of such practices. In other words, the leadership mechanisms are not viewed as causal structures for leadership, but the background against which leadership occurred in the two interorganisational partnerships. The examples depicted in Figure 6.19 such as 'common visioning', 'trustful relations' and 'collective responsibility' could apply in many other domains of leadership research and practice such as strategy, marketing and governance. Therefore, it might not be correct to merely limit these practices as the definition of leadership per se, but better to qualify them as the leadership mechanisms that enable or serve as antecedents for the emergence of relational leading.

The implications are that responsible leadership research should appreciate the relational contextual factors which socially construct an environment for leadership to occur, such as 'trustful relationships' and 'collective responsibility'. This consciousness allows to better diagnosis of how 'responsible leaders' would perform their socially responsible activities of doing the right thing right. Put differently, how one can become a responsible leader in an (inter)organisational setting that is not geared towards conducive relational leadership practices as its leadership mechanisms. Otherwise, individuals at upper echelons would be changed now and again, but the mechanisms would persist to churn out a certain type of leaders.

Secondly, by framing some of the findings as relational leadership 'content' and 'manifestation' – which is about high quality relating and influencing acts (Endres & Weibler, 2017; Ntakumba & De Jongh, 2023) – the analysis was able to specify the essence of leadership. In other words, the content and manifestation of leadership pays attention to the enactment of leadership in practice. The examples that are depicted in Figure 6.19, such as 'leading through champions' and 'leading with respect and integrity' demonstrate the unique ontology of the leadership phenomenon in the context of these interorganisational partnerships.

The implications are that responsible leadership research should complement the heroic and entity focus by paying more attention to how social responsibilities occur in practice as relational leadership practices. For instance, the ethical practices of 'leading with respect and integrity' were not defined a priory as normative ethical expectations from the leaders, but emerged as practical enactments of the leadership phenomenon.

It is therefore recommended that the RSCL Model could be a useful approach to understanding social construction of leadership and should be tested further in different contexts beyond the interorganisational settings. This would serve as a springboard for the advancement of leadership scholarship that is based on the RSCL lens and operationalised through the practice approach.

7.4.2   Outcomes of the social construction

This question sought to introduce the outcomes orientation using the DAC Framework proposed by Drath *et al.,* (2008) and move beyond merely describing the RLPs as per the presentation of the findings in Chapter 5 and their categorisation as relational social constructs. The discussion of the RLPs from the outcomes approach was based on the rigorous theoretical coding of each of the RLPs as direction, alignment or commitment leadership beliefs and leadership practices (i.e., the DAC Framework). This has proven to be a useful approach since it helped to categorise the leadership constructs and practices in interorganisational settings in a more meaningful way in onto-epistemological terms, thereby building a case for drawing their implications for leadership theory.

7.4.3   Relationality and purpose

The need to get a sense of whether the identified RLPs served any purpose was evaluated using insights from responsible leadership literature. On the basis of applying the key tenets of responsible leadership theory, such as the principles of ethics and values-orientation, as well as external stakeholder incorporation, it was possible to interpret the findings by highlighting applicable responsible leadership studies. In this way, the purposes of each of the RLPs could be analysed. On the basis of that interpretation, responsible leadership theory was deemed to have been useful with regards to evaluating the purpose and relationality of the identified RLPs in terms of understanding the social construction of leadership in interorganisational partnership contexts.

The gap remains, however, that it is not only responsible leadership theory that could be employed to interpret the findings of this nature. Hence, other leadership researchers are hereby encouraged to use a similar approach, but apply different leadership theories which would provide a different angle to understanding the purpose of leadership in interorganisational settings.

On the basis of the discussion of the findings, reflections and recommendations are made in the following section.

7.5   ADDRESSING THE GAPS IN LITERATURE

Firstly, there is a gap in leadership research regarding an empirical understanding of how the leadership construct is understood in interorganisational partnership contexts since there is limited literature that examines leadership in such contexts or the "collaborative domain". (Connelly, 2007:1253). Instead, in interorganisational contexts leadership is "mentioned but rarely studied empirically" (Huxham & Vangen, 2001:1160; Endres & Weibler, 2020:276). The RSCL lens was adopted to guide the onto-epistemological understanding of how leadership is socially constructed in interorganisational partnership contexts (Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Cunliffe, 2008; Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Cunliffe & Ericksen, 2011; Endres & Weibler, 2017; Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018; Endres & Weibler, 2020). The RSCL lens was operationalised using the practice approach methodology (Ospina & Foldy, 2010; Feldman & Worline, 2016, Janssens & Steyaert, 2019). This gap was addressed through the discussion of the findings on the definitions of the leadership construct and the RLPs. Furthermore, the use of the RSCL Model helped to categorise the RLPs in terms of leadership mechanisms, content and manifestation, which made the RSCL onto-epistemology explicit in the discussion of the research findings.

Secondly, there is a gap in literature in terms of understanding the outcomes of leadership, since the RSCL lens primarily pays attention to the processual onto-epistemological questions of how the leadership phenomenon emerges and is enacted (Drath *et al.*, 2008). Hence, in this discussion, there is a special focus on analysing the outcomes of leadership using the leadership outcomes ontology proposed by Drath *et al.* (2008). This gap was addressed via the application of the DAC Framework. This framework classified each of the RLPs in terms of whether they were leadership beliefs or leadership practices of direction, alignment and commitment outcomes.

Thirdly, there is a gap in literature that analyses relational leadership practices based on the practice approach in terms of understanding the purpose of the identified practices. Chapter 2 discusses the conceptual foundations of the responsible leadership theory and how they can be employed to understand the relationality and purpose of the relational leadership practices as "social-relational and ethical" phenomena (Maak & Pless, 2006:99; Miska & Mendenhall, 2018:130). This gap was addressed through the application of the key tenets of the responsible leadership theory, such as ethical and moral values and stakeholder orientation. There were high levels of alignment between the findings and responsible leadership theory, particularly with regards to the idea of responsible leadership behaviours and multiple stakeholders' orientation. In fact, most of the RLPs could be viewed as leadership behaviours. The responsible leadership theory provided such relational leadership behaviours-as-practices a sense of purpose through interpretation.

7.6   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Firstly, this thesis employed data generated from the international interorganisational partnership and data on the national interorganisational partnership was only used for validation purposes. Both of these samples are closely related to the 'joined-up government' and 'international development cooperation' forms of interorganisational partnerships and PPPs, for instance, are not covered. Secondly, given the use of the qualitative design form of the practice approach methodology, this research does not make any claims regarding generalisability of its findings. Thirdly, this thesis emphasises the snapshots of "thick descriptions" of various relational leadership practices in line with the phenomenological[6] methodology upon which the practice approach draws its influence (Raelin, 2020). This was done at the expense of the extensive examination of single practices in terms of the genealogy and evolution of such practices over a period of time. According to Nicolini and Monteiro (2017), the practice approach's genealogical strategy focuses on the history of specific practices and how they have emerged, evolved, changed and disappeared over a period of time. In future research, this limitation could be remedied via complementing dialogic interviews and focus group discussions with

---

[6] "My own take is from the phenomenological tradition in which the intersubjective production and re-production of meaning arise through social interaction and from knowledge emanating from our social reality. Accordingly, we see practice as continually unfolding in what appears to be a constantly shifting and evolving dynamic" (Raelin, 2020:482).

ethnomethodology via extended field observations and reflexivity to generate real-time longitudinal data (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012:1053).

7.7   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The foregoing discussion summarised various aspects of the research process and reflected on the study limitations. Finally, in this section specific conclusions and recommendations are made as presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2:   Broad contributions of this thesis and recommendations for future research

#	CONTRIBUTIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
1.	Leadership research has evolved from time immemorial and in about the past one hundred years leadership studies have obtained recognition as a discipline. In its evolution as a research vista, certain key phases are noticeable, although they are not mutually exclusive, such as the focus on traits, behaviours, competencies, and contingencies, and the response to emerging societal challenges (Wilson, 2013; Olley, 2021). Empirical evidence demonstrates the understanding of the leadership construct from the experiences of the participants was relational (relationality and inter-subjectivity) rather than based on prescriptive norms (normativity).	It is recommended that more research should be conducted on how leadership emerges and is enacted in interorganisational partnership contexts from the RSCL lens and the practice approach methodology in order to understand the leadership construct in more practical and nuanced manner rather than idealistic ways.
2.	In this research, leadership was found to apply to people and organisations. The notion of organisations as leaders does not receive much attention in extant leadership research since the focus is mainly on the individual leaders, leadership practices, processes and outcomes.	Leadership scholarship needs to interface more closely with the strategy discipline to explore the relationship between strategy practices and leadership practices as meso-organisational practices in interorganisational partnership contexts.
3.	The practice approach unearthed the socio-materiality of leadership over and above the social construction of the leadership phenomenon. However, this theme did not receive focused attention due to the fact that it did not directly respond to the main research question.	Further research should explore the social-materiality of the leadership construct and leadership practices as artefacts in interorganisational partnership contexts. This would exhaust the power of the practice approach as a methodology (in post-humanistic terms (Gherardi & Laasch, 2022)). since it already pays attention to the dimension of materiality of practices as "things and their use" (Reckwitz, 2002: 249-250).
4.	When specifically asked to define leadership, the research participants tended to define the construct of leadership and a leader in normative terms, which confirms the conceptualisation of leadership in the mainstream leadership scholarship. That is, the definition of a leader versus followers and their common objectives, instead of	Leadership development programmes should start engaging with the RSCL onto-epistemology in terms of social construction of leadership so as to be able to characterise the phenomenon beyond the traditional view of individual leaders and their followers (person-centric). In such programmes the

#	CONTRIBUTIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH
	social constructionist terms as per the RSCL lens. Such definitions were also not aligned to the key tenets of responsible leadership theory in terms of the incorporation of external stakeholders and ethical and values-orientation.	in-depth comprehension of the relationality and purpose of leadership would benefit from training in responsible leadership theory.
5.	Empirical evidence from this research demonstrates that leadership behaviours and traits still matter in terms of how leadership is socially constructed in practice in interorganisational partnership contexts. The notion of "behavioural ambidexterity" is an important consideration for the purposes of balancing contradictory interests and worldviews of various stakeholders in interorganisational partnership contexts (Voegtlin *et al.*, 2019).	First, RSCL theoretical frameworks would be deficient if they completely ignored the characteristics of individuals leaders because it so happened that such considerations are the preoccupation of the opposing leader-centric schools of thought in leadership studies. Second, responsible leadership research should also pay attention to leadership traits in addition to its extensive examination of responsible leadership behaviours and roles.
6.	Empirical evidence confirmed that leadership is about changing one state to another for the common good.	The question of leaders as individuals who bring about transformation remains a critical consideration for leadership research in interorganisational partnerships that are known to be usually established to address wicked problems in society.
7.	Responsible leadership theory contributes to the evolving and rich leadership scholarship by adding moral values and ethical orientation, as well as the incorporation of external stakeholder interests. As an emerging leadership theory, it was deemed useful for analysing the relationality and purpose of leadership.	It is recommended that, in addition to what this research has done in terms of employing the responsible leadership theory to evaluate the purpose of the leadership practices, other researchers could do a similar exercise through employing other leadership theories like transformational and charismatic leadership theories.
8.	The RSCL lens helped to characterise leadership as a social construction of people in interaction in the context of interorganisational contexts as collective settings. However, the findings of this research demonstrated that hierarchy does not disappear in interorganisational partnerships since governance still requires authorities to configure and structure processes and make decisions.	The current dichotomies in leadership research in terms of heroic versus post-heroic paradigms do not help in terms of understanding leadership as it happens in practice. Therefore, more research is required in terms of unpacking how the individualistic (entity) approaches to leadership compare to collective and relational approaches (social constructionist) in empirical terms.
9.	Most of the responsible leadership theory is based on the tripod ontology (Drath *et al.*, 1998) in terms of focusing on the (responsible) leader, followers (stakeholders) and their common purposes.	Responsible leadership theory could be advanced through the use of RSCL theoretical frameworks and the practice approach, which would bring about the dimension of viewing responsible leadership practices as the units of analysis instead of just focusing on individuals as responsible leaders.
10.	Participative literature and leadership literature evolved parallel to each other without having major intersections and cross-fertilisation. This research has contributed towards bridging this gap in literature.	More research is required that situates the interorganisational partnership studies within the leadership studies and examines both phenomena in their totality as mutually constituted dualities.

7.8   CONCLUDING REMARKS ON THE KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS THESIS

This last section crystallises the key contributions that are made by this thesis to leadership scholarship and praxis, as follows:

Firstly, the contribution of the thesis towards responsible leadership research is two-fold: (1) responsible leadership research should adopt the relational social constructionist lens and practice approach wherein leadership practices are employed as a unit of analysis rather than merely analysing individual leaders, their followers and organisations as entities; (2) The findings of this research in terms of the eleven themes that serve to cluster the relational leaderships practices demonstrated a wider and more nuanced view of how leadership occurs in interorganisational partnerships, of which most responsible leadership scholarship has not yet considered.

Secondly, the findings of this research demonstrated that, contrary to conventional expectations in literature, hierarchy does not disappear in interorganisational partnerships since governance imperatives still require positional leaders to configure and structure decision-making processes. Therefore, responsible leadership should complement its heroic and entity focus by paying more attention to how collective social responsibilities occur in interorganisational settings as relational leadership practices.

Thirdly, this thesis has revealed that relational leadership practices, such as those with a higher degree of intersubjectivity like building trust, fostering agreements and leading through dialogue, are essential leadership activities in interorganisational partnerships. Such relational practices of 'agreeing' also resonate with *Ubuntu* as an African moral and ethical philosophy that is anchored in the relational values of humaneness and harmony.

Fourthly, this thesis has advanced relational leadership scholarship through the application and subsequent modification of two conceptual models of relational leadership, namely (1) the Three-Component Relational Social Constructionist Model (RSCL) (after Endres & Weibler, 2017) and the Direction, Alignment and Commitment (DAC) outcomes of leadership framework based on the empirical findings of this study.

Fifthly, insights from this thesis could inform the redesign of leadership development curriculum and research activities to incorporate social-relationality and practice of leadership in interorganisational partnerships.

Sixthly, the Western-oriented articulation of universal values and ethics that are mentioned in responsible leadership literature should be advanced through the incorporation of the *Ubuntu* perspective, which provides a nuanced understanding of the implications of cultural dynamics for leadership in interorganisational partnerships operating in Africa. This could be achieved through the adoption of new (inter)organisational codes of ethics and responsible leadership curriculum.

Lastly, a comprehensive theoretical framework on R-L-A-P was proposed based on the insights from the literature and empirical analysis drawn from this thesis. The ideas contained in this R-L-A-P framework will inform further responsible theorising.

Finally, I would like to end this thesis with a quotation from some of the pioneers of relational social constructionist thinking:

> *"The reality of everyday life… presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others. This intersubjectivity sharply differentiates everyday life from other realities of which I am conscious. I am alone in the world of my dreams, but I know that the world of everyday life is as real to others as it is to myself" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966:37).*

LIST OF REFERENCES

Abubakre, M., Faik, I., & Mkansi, M. 2018. Digital entrepreneurship and indigenous value systems: an *Ubuntu* perspective. *Information Systems Journal, 31: 838–862.*

Acher, D., & Cameron, A. 2014. *Collaborative Leadership: Building Relationships, Handling Conflicts and Sharing Control, Downloadable Chapter 12.* [Online] Available at: https://www.social.co.uk/books/ [Accessed on 26 July 2020].

African Union Commission. 2015. *Africa Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.* [Online] Available at: https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview [Accessed on 06 June 2023].

Afsar, B., Maqsoom, A., Shahjehan, A., Afridi, S.A., Nawaz, A., & Fazliani, H. 2020. Responsible leadership and employee's pro-environmental behaviour: the role of organisational commitment, green shared vision, and internal environmental locus of control. *CSR & Environmental Management, 27:297-312*.

Aggrawal, V.A. 2019. *Resource Congestion in Alliance Networks: How a Firm's Partners Influence the Benefits of Collaboration.* Working Paper 2019/54/EFE, INSEAD: Forthcoming Paper in *Strategic Management Journal*, [Online] Available at: https://www.insead.edu/faculty-research/research/, [Accessed on 12 August 2020].

Anfara Jr., V.A., & Mertz, N.T. 2006. *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Ansell, C. & Gash, A. 2008. Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 18(4):543-571.*

Aravind, D. & Arevalo, J.A. 2015. Multi-stakeholder CSR initiatives: the case of engagement in Global Compact Local Networks. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship, 58:57-81.*

Armistead, C. 2007. Exploring leadership in multi-sectoral partnerships, *Leadership* [Authors Copy] [Online available at] www.up.ac.za/library; [Accessed] on 30 May 2023.

Armistead, C., Pettigrew, P. & Aves, S. 2007. Exploring leadership in multi-sectoral partnerships, *Leadership 3(2)* https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715007076214

Askim, J., Christensen, T., Fimreite, A.L., & Lægreid, P. 2009. How to carry out joined-up government reforms: lessons from the 2001-2006 Norwegian welfare reform. *International Journal of Public Administration, 32:12, 1006-1025.*

Austin, J.E. 2000. Business leadership coalitions. *Business and Society Review, 105, 3:305-322.*

Banks, G.C., Gooty, J, Ross, R., Williams, C.E., & Harrington, N. 2018. Construct redundancy is leader behaviours: a review and agenda for the future. *The Leadership Quarterly, 29(1),* 236–251.

Barney, J.B., & Harrison, J.S. 2020. Stakeholder theory at crossroads. *Business & Society, 59(2), 203-2012.*

Bennis, W. G. 2007. The challenges of leadership in the modern world: an introduction to the special issue. *American Psychologist, 62(1), 2−5.*

Berger, P.L., & Luckmann, T. 1966. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Penguin Books.

Berger, R., Choi, C.J., & Kim, J.B. 2011. Responsible leadership for multinational enterprises in bottom of pyramid countries: the knowledge of local managers. *Journal of Business Ethics, 101:553–561.*

Bester, A. 2016. *National mutual accountability and transparency in development cooperation: study on the findings of the fourth DCF survey,* ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum, [Online] Available at: https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/dcf/UNDESA_2018%20DCF%20Study%20on%20mutual%20accountability.pdf, [Accessed on 10 August 2020].

Biygautane, M., Neesham, C., & Al-Yahya, K.O. 2019. Institutional entrepreneurship and infrastructure public-private partnership (PPP): unpacking the role of social actors in implementing PPP projects. *International Journal of Project Management, 37:192–219.*

Blakeley, K., & Higgs, M. 2014. Responsible leadership development – crucible experiences and power relationships in a global professional services firm. *Human Resource Development International, 17, (5), 560–576.*

Blakeley, K., 2016. Responsible leadership: a radical view. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (Eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Bogason, P., & Toonen, A.J. 1998. Introduction: networks in public administration. *Public Administration, 76:205–227.*

Borgatti, S.P., Mehra, A., Brass, D.J., Labianca, G. 2009. Network analysis in the social sciences*. Science, 323:892-895.*

Bourdieu, P. 1990. *The Logic of Practice*, Translated by Nice, R. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bradbury, H., & Lichtenstein, B.M.B. 2000. Relationality in organizational research: exploring the space between. *Organisational Science, 11(5)551–564.*

Bradley, E.H., Brewsterm A.L., McNatt, Z., Linnander, E.L., Cherlin, E., Fosburgh, H., Ting, H.H., & Curry, L.A. 2018. How guiding coalitions promote positive culture in hospitals: a longitudinal mixed methods interventional study, *BMJ Qual Saf., 27:218–2025.*

Brower, H.H., Schoorman, F.D., & Tan, H.H. 2000. A model of relational leadership: the integration of trust and leader-member exchange. *The Leadership Quarterly, 11(2)227–250.*

Brown, M.E., Treviño, L.K., & Harrison, D. A. 2005. Ethical leadership: a social learning perspective for construct development and testing. *Organisational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes, 97(2), 117–134.*

Bucelli, I., Gatti, S., & Soro, F. 2020. *Worker Participation, Employee Ownership and Representation.* Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance. [Online] Available at: https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2020/01/23/worker-participation-employee-ownership-and-representation/ [Access on 15 April 2023].

Burns, J.M. 1978. *Leadership.* New York: Harper & Row.

Cameron, K. 2011. Responsible leadership as virtuous leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics, 98:25–35.*

Campion, L., & Wang, C.X. 2019. Collectivism and individualism: the diffusion of leadership. *TechTrends, 63:353–356.*

Carey, G., Crammond, B. 2015. What works in joined-up government? An evidence synthesis. *International Journal of Public Administration, 38:1020–1029.*

Carpenter, M.A., Li, M, & Jiang, H. 2012. Social network research in organisational contexts: a systematic review of methodological issues and choices. *Journal of Management, 38(4) 1328–1361.*

Carroll, B., & Simpson, B. 2012. Capturing sociality in the movement between frames: an illustration from leadership development. *Human Relations 65:(10) 1283–1309.*

Carroll, B., 2016. From responsibility to responsibilities: towards a theory of co-responsible leadership. In: Kempster, S, and Carroll, B. (eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism,* London and New York: Routledge.

Castillo, M.M., Sánchez, I.D., Dueñas-Ocampo, S. 2020. Leaders do not emerge from a vacuum: toward an understanding of the development of responsible leadership. *Business & Society Review, 125:329–348.*

Chakraborty, C., Sharma, A.R., Sharma, G., Bhattacharya, M., Saha, R.P., & Lee, S.S. 2020. Extensive partnership, collaboration, and teamwork is required to stop the Covid-19 outbreak. *Archives of Medical Research, In Press: 1-3.*

Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative data analysis. London: SAGE Publications.*

Chee, C.Y., & Zainal, S.R.M. 2022. An integrative review of past prominent leadership literature: future research directions in Malaysia. *Global Research and Management: An International Journal, 14(3), 1605–1620.*

Chen, B. 2008. Assessing interorganisational networks for public service delivery: a process-perceived effectiveness framework. *Public Performance & Management Review, 31(3):348-363.*

Chreim, S. 2015. The (non)distribution of leadership roles: considering leadership practices and configurations. *Human Relations, 68(4):157–543.*

Ciulla, J.B., Knights, D., Mabey, C., & Tomkins, L. 2018. Guest editors' introduction, philosophical approaches to leadership ethics II: perspectives on the self and responsibility to others. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 28, 3:245–250.*

Clark, T. 2002. New Labour's big idea: joined-up government. *Social Policy & Society, 1:(2)107–117.*

Clarke, N., 2018. Relational leadership: theory, practice and development. Routledge: New York, NY. (p. 2-3) [Online] Available at: https://www.amazon.com/Relational Leadership Theory-Practice-Development/dp/113865910X/ref=sr_1_19?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1525373200&sr=1-19 [Accessed: 15 on July 2020].

Clifton, J., Larsson, M., & Schnurr, S. 2020. Leadership in interaction: an introduction to the special issue. *Leadership, 16(5)511–521.*

Connelly, D.R. 2007. Leadership in the collaborative interorganisational domain. *International Journal of Public Administration, 30:11, 1231–1262.*

Contractor, N. S., DeChurch, L. A., Carson, J., Carter, D. R., & Keegan, B. 2012. The topology of collective leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 23, 994–1011.*

Creswell, J.W. 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches,* 2nd edition, London: SAGE Publications.

Cunliffe, A.L. 2008. Orientations to social constructionism: relationally responsive social constructionism and its implications for knowledge and learning. *Management Learning, 39(2):123–139.*

Cunliffe, A.L. 2011. Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich twenty years on. *Organisational Research Methods, 14:(4)647–673.*

Cunliffe, A.L., & Ericksen, M. 2011. Relational leadership. *Human Relations, 64(11) 1425–1449.*

Dachler, H.P., & Hosking, D.M. 1995. The primacy of relations in socially constructing organisational realities, In: Hosking, D.M., Dachler, H.P., & K.J. Gergen (eds), *Management and Organisation: Relational Alternatives to Individualism.* A Toas Institute Publication: Avebury, Aldershot.

Das, T.K., & Teng, B.S. 2000. A resource-based theory of strategic alliances. *Journal of Management, 26(1):31–61.*

Day, D.V, Riggio, R.E., Tan, S.J., Conger, J.A. 2021. Advancing the science of 21st-centrury leadership development: theory, research and practice. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *32:1–9.*

Day, D.V., Fleenor, J.W., Atwater, L.E., Sturm, R.E., & McKee, R.A. 2014. Advances in leader and leadership development: a review of 25 years of research and theory. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25, 63–82.*

De Cremer, D.; & Van Vugt, M. 2002. Intergroup and intragroup aspects of leadership in social dilemmas: a relational model of cooperation, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 38:126–136.*

De Jongh, D. & Ntakumba, S.S. 2023. Cultural complexity and relational leadership. Manuscript submitted in May 2023 as a book chapter to a Springer publication summarising the discussion during the 'Relational Economics Conference in Paris/Cergy in 2022'. The unpublished book is entitled: "Cooperation in Value-Creating Networks: Relational Perspectives on Governing Economic and Social Value Creation in the 21st century", Springer.

DeCarlo, M. 2018. *Scientific Inquiry in Social Work.* [Online] Available at: http://opensocialworkeducaiton.com [Accessed 14 August 2020].

Dentoni, D, Bitzer, V., & Schouten, G. 2018. Harnessing wicked problems in multi-stakeholder partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics, 150, 333–356.*

Dépelteau, F. 2018. Relational thinking in sociology: relevance, concurrence and dissonance, In: Dépelteau, F. *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology*. Palgrave Macmilan: Switzerland. [Online] Available at: https://www.relationalsociology.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Donati_ch-22-in-Handbook-of-Relational-Sociology.pdf [Accessed on 20 August 2020].

Dhillon, J.K. 2015. Social capital in interorganisational partnership research, In: Li, Y. 2015. *Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Social Capital.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Dione, S.D., Gupta, A., Sotak, K.L, Shirreffs, K.A. Serban, A., Hao, C., Kim, D.A., & Yamarino, H.J. 2014. A 25-year perspective on levels of analysis in leadership research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *25:6–35.*

Doh, J.P. & Quigley, N.R. 2014, Responsible leadership and stakeholder management: influence pathways and organisational outcomes. *The Academy of Management Perspectives, 28:3, 255–274.*

Drath, W.H., McCauley, C.D., Palus, C.J., van Velsor, E., O'Connor, P.M.G., & McGuire, J.B. 2008. Direction, alignment, commitment: toward a more integrative ontology of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 19:635–653.*

Eldeman Trust Barometer, 2023. Global Report. Eldeman Trust Institute: Daniel J. Edelman Holdings, Inc., Washington DC (Online) Available at: https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2023-03/2023%20Edelman%20Trust%20Barometer%20Global%20Report%20FINAL.pdf [Access on 06 June 2023].

Endres, S., & Weibler, J. 2017.Towards a three-component model of relational social constructionist leadership: a systematic review and critical interpretive synthesis. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 19, 214–236.*

Endres, S., & Weibler, J. 2020. Understanding (non)leadership phenomena in collaborative interorganisational networks and advancing shared leadership theory: an interpretive grounded theory study. *Business Research, 13:275–309.*

Enslin, C., Wolfswinkel, M., & Terblanche-Smit, M. 2023. Responsible leadership through purpose-driven brand building: guidelines for leaders in Africa. *South African Journal of Business Management, 54(1), a3427.*

Eva, N., Wolfram Cox, J., Tse, H.H.M., & Lowe, K.B. 2019. From competency to conversation: a multi-perspective approach to collective leadership development. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *Article In Press.*

Fagan, M.B. 2010. Social construction revisited: epistemology and scientific practice. *Philosophy of Science, 77, 92–116.*

Fairhurst, G.T., & Uhl-Bien, M. 2012. Organizational discourse analysis (ODA): examining leadership as a relational process. *The Leadership Quarterly,* 23(6):1043–1062.

Fairhurst, G.T., Jackson, B., Foldy, E.G., and Ospina, S.M. 2020. Studying collective leadership: the road ahead. *Human Relations*, *68, 4:545–560.*

Fatima, T., & Elbanna, S. 2023. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) implementation: a review and a research agenda towards an integrative framework. *Journal of Business Ethics, 183:105–121.*

Feldman, M., & Worline, M. 2016. The practicality of the practice theory. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *15(2), 304–324.*

Ferlie, E., Fitzgerald, L, McGivern, G., Dopson, S, & Bernnet, C. 2011. Public policy networks and 'wicked problems': a nascent solution? *Public Administration, 89(2) 307–324.*

Filatotchev, I., & Nakajima, C. 2014. Corporate governance, responsible managerial behaviour, and CSR: organisational efficiency versus organisational legitimacy. *The Academy of Management Perspectives, 28(3) 289–306.*

Fisher, J. 2004. Social responsibility and ethics: clarifying the concepts. *Journal of Business Ethics, 52:391–400.*

Flaherty, M.F., & Rappaport, A. 2017. Operationalising sustainability practice: the role of industry trade associations. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship, 65:98–131.*

Ford, J., Harding, N., & Gilmore, S. 2023. Re/searching leadership: A critique in two agonies and nine fits. *Human Relations, 76(6) 809–832.*

Fox, J.A. 2010. *Coalitions and Networks.* UC Santa Cruz Working Papers, [Online] Available at: https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1x05031j [Accessed 08 August 2020].

Freeman, R.E., & Auster, E.R. 2011. Values, authenticity and responsible leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics, 98:15–23.*

Freeman, R.E., Phillips, R., & Sisodia, R. 2020. Tensions in stakeholder theory, *Business & Society, 59(2), 213–231.*

Friedrich, T.L., Griffith, J.A., Mumford, M.D. 2016. Collective leadership behaviours: evaluating the leader, team network, and problem situation characteristics that influence their use. *The Leadership Quarterly, 27:312-333.*

Fusch, P. I., & Ness, L. R. 2015. Are we there yet? data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 20(9), 1408–1416.*

Gartrell, C.D., 1987. Network approaches to social evaluation. *Annual Review of Sociology, 13:49-66.*

Geiger, D. 2009. Revisiting the concept of practice: toward an argumentative understanding of practicing. *Management Learning, 40, 129–144.*

Georgakakis, D., Heyden M.L.M., Oehmichenc, J.D.R., Ekanayake, U.I.K. 2022. Four decades of CEO–TMT interface research: A review inspired by role theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *33:1–13 [101354].*

Gherardi, S., & Laasch, O. 2022. Responsible management-as-practice: mobilising a post-humanist approach. *Journal of Business Ethics, 181:269–281.*

Gibeau, É., Langley, A., Denis, J., van Schendel, N. 2020. Bridging competing demands through co-leadership? potential and limitations. *Human Relations, 73(4) 464–489.*

Gray, B. & Stites, J. 2013. Sustainability through Partnerships: Capitalising on Collaboration. Network for Business. [Online] Available at: www.sustainabilitynbs.net/knowledge [Accessed on 20 May 2023].

Greenleaf, R.K. 1970. *The Servant Leader*. Robert K Greenleaf Centre for Servant Leadership.

Greenwood, M., & Freeman, R.E. 2018. Deepening ethical analysis in business ethics. *Journal of Business Ethics, 147:1–4.*

Gronn, P. 2009. Leadership configurations. *Leadership, 5(3):381–394.*

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. 2006. How many interviews are enough? an experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18(1), 59–82.*

Gustafsson, S., & Hailey, V.H. 2016. *Responsible leadership, trust and the role of human resource management*. In: Kempster & Carroll (eds) 2016. *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Haque, A., Fernando, M., & Caputi, P. 2019. The relationship between responsible leadership and organisational commitment and the mediating effect of employee turnover intentions: an empirical study with Australian employees. *Journal of Business Ethics, 156:759–774.*

Harris, A., 2021. Corporate governance and *Ubuntu*: A South African and Namibian perspective. Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Cape Town. [Online] Available at: www.uct.ac.za, [Accessed on 5 May 2023].

He, J., Morrison, A.M., & Zhang, H. 2020. Being sustainable: the three-way interactive effects of CSR, green human resource management, and responsible leadership on employee green behaviour and task performance. *CSR and Environmental Management, 28: 1043–1054*.

Heidenstrøm, N. 2022. The utility of social practice theory in risk research. *Journal of Risk Research*, *25(2):236–251*.

Hermans, F., Geerling-Eiliff, F., Potters, J., & Klerkx, L. 2019. Public private partnerships as a systemic agricultural innovation policy instruments – assessing their contribution to innovation system function dynamics. *Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences, 88:76–95.*

Hernandez, M., Eberly, M.B., Avolio, B.J., & Johnson, M.D. 2011. The loci and mechanisms of leadership: exploring a more comprehensive view of leadership theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *22:1165–1185.*

Hersted, L., & Gergen, K.J. 2013. *Relational leading, Practices for Dialogically-based Collaboration,* Ohio: Taos Institute Publications.

Hesse-Biber, S.N., & Leavy, P. 2006. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Hibbert, P., Sillince, J., Diefenbach, T., & Cunliffe, A.L. 2014. Relationally reflexive practice: a generative approach to theory development in qualitative research. *Organisational Research Methods, 17(3), 278–298.*

Hodge, G.A., & Greve C. 2007. Public-private partnerships: an international review. *Public Administration Review, 67 (3) 545–558.*

Hoppe, B., & Reinelt, C. 2010. Social network analysis and the evaluation of leadership networks. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *21:600–619.*

Horlings L., Collinge C., & Gibney J. 2017. Relational knowledge leadership and local economic development. *Local Economy 0(0)1–15.*

Hosking, D.M. 1995. Constructing power: entitative and relational approaches. In: Hosking DM, Dachler, H.P., & Gergen K.J. (Eds) *Management and Organization: Relational Alternatives to Individualism.* Aldershot: Avebury Press, (pp. 51–71).

House, R. J. 1971. A path-goal theory of leader effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 16(3), 321–339.*

Hunt, E.K. 2017. Humane orientation as a moral construct in ethical leadership theories: a comparative analysis of transformational, servant, and authentic leadership in the United States, Mexico and China. *International Journal of Leadership,* 5(2):1–11.

Hexham, C., & Vangen, S. 2001. Leadership in the shaping and implementation of collaboration agendas: how things happen in a (not quite) joined up world. *Academy of Management Journal*, *43(6):1159–1175.*

Irfan, S., Salman, Y., Jabeen, N., Ahmad, S.I., & Ansari, N.G. 2017. Towards understanding relational aspects of inter-or interorganisational collaboration: an exploration of public-private partnerships in Pakistan. *Pakistan Economic Review, 55(1) Summer:53-79.*

Iszatt-White, M. 2016. Mapping the terrain of responsible leadership: something old, something new, something borrowed, something green. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Jacklin-Jarvis, C., & Potter, K. 2019. Exploring the potential for collaborative leadership through a policy lens: a comparative analysis of children's services and flood risk management. *International Journal of Public Administration*, [Online] Available at: https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2019.1669176 [Accessed 10 August 2020].

Jackson, B. 2019. The power of place in public leadership research and development. *Public Leadership Research and Development, 15(4):209–223.*

Jackson, C. 2020. Transformational leadership and gravitas: 2000 years of no development? *Personality and Individual Differences, 156:1-5.*

Jaén, M.H., Refcco, E., & Berger, G. 2021. Does integrity matter in BOP ventures? The role of responsible leadership in inclusive supply chains. *Journal of Business Ethics, 173:467–488.*

Janssens, K. L., & Steyaert, C. 2019. A practice-based theory of diversity: re-specifying (in)equality in organisations. *Academy of Management Review, 44(3), 518–537.*

Jarbaskwoski, P., & Spee, A.P. 2009. Strategy-as-practice: a review and future directions for the field. *International Journal of Reviews, 11 (1) 69–95*.

Javed, M., Rashid, M.A., Hussain, G., & Ali, H.Y. 2019. The effects of CSR on corporate reputation and firm financial performance: moderating role of responsible leadership. *CSR and Environmental Management, 27:1395–1409.*

Jiang, X., Prokopovych, B., & DiStefano, G. 2021. Leveraging a lenient category in practicing responsible leadership: a case study*. Journal of Business Ethics,* [Online] Available: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-021-04978-y [Accessed on 04 October 2022].

Kang, S., Mulaphong, D., Hwang, E., & Chang, C.K. 2019. Public-private partnerships in developing countries. *International Journal of Public Sector Management,* 32(4):334–351.

Keast, R. 2011. Joined up governance in Australia: how the past can inform the future. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *34:4, 221-231.*

Kempster, S., & Carroll, B. 2016. Introduction: responsible leadership – realism and romanticism. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Kempster, S., Gregory, S., & Watson, E. 2016. Developing responsible leadership through discourse ethics. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Ketola, T., 2010. Editorial, responsible leadership. *CSR and Environmental Management, 17:123–124.*

Korab-Karpowicz, W.J. 2020. The United Citizens Organisation: public private partnerships in global governance. *Research in Globalisation, 2:1–5.*

Kotter, J.P. 1995. Leading change: why transformation efforts fail? *Harvard Business Review*, *March-April: 59–67.*

Kramer, M.W., Day, E.A., Nguyen, C., Hoelscher, C.S., & Cooper, O.D. 2019. Leadership in an interorganisational collaboration: a qualitative study of a state-wide interagency taskforce. *Human Relations, 72(2)397–419.*

Küpers, W. 2020. Embodied "inter-practice" in organisations – the contribution of Merleau-Ponty to carnal organisational practices and studies. *Journal of Organisational Change Management 33(7):1449–1469.*

Kurucz, E.C., Colbert, B.A., Lüdeke-Freund, F., Upward, A., & Willard, B. 2017. Relational leadership for strategic sustainability: practices and capabilities to advance the design and assessment of sustainable business models. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 140:189–204.*

Kwok, N, Hanig, S., Brown, D.J., & She, W. 2018. How leader role identity influences the process of leader emergencies: a social network analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly, 29:648–662.*

Lammi, I. J. 2018. A Practice Theory in Practice, Analytical Consequences in the Study of Organisation and Socio-technical Change. Doctoral thesis / Företagsekonomiska Institutionen, Uppsala Universitet 190. 277 pp. Uppsala: Företagsekonomiska Institutionen, Uppsala Universitet. [Online] Available at: http://libris.kb.se/hitlist?q=numm:9789150626889&r=&g=&p=1&spell=true&d=libris&s=r&t=v&m=10&f=ext [Accessed on 30 August 2022].

Lee, S., & Higgs, M., 2016. This green pastoral landscape: values, responsible leadership, and the romantic imagination. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, *London and New York: Routledge.*

Lee, T.W. 1999. Using qualitative methods in organisational research. London: SAGE Publications.

Lewis, J.M. 2005. A network approach for researching partnerships in health. *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy, 2(22):1–11.*

Ling, T. 2002. Delivering joined-up government in the UK: dimensions, issues and problems. *Public Administration*, *80,4:615–642.*

Lips‑Wiersma, M., Haar, J., & Wright, S. 2020. The effect of fairness, responsible leadership and worthy work on multiple dimensions of meaningful work. *Journal of Business Ethics,* 161:35–

52.

Locke, K., Feldman, M., & Golden-Biddle, K. 2020. Coding practices and iterativity: beyond templates for analysing qualitative data. *Organisational Research Methods, 1–23.*

Loscher, G., Splitter, V., & Seidl, D. 2019. *Theodore Schatzki's Practice Theory and its Implications for Organisation Studies,* [Online] Available from: www.researchgate.net [Accessed on 15 September 2022].

Lovelace, J.B., Neely, B.H., Allen, J.B., Hunter, S.T. 2019. Charismatic, ideological, & pragmatic (CIP) model of leadership: a critical review and agenda for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *30, 96–110*.

Lowndes, V., & Skelcher, C. 1998. The dynamics of multi-organisational partnerships: an analysis of changing modes of governance. *Public Administration*, *76: 313–333.*

Maak, T. 2007. Responsible leadership, stakeholder engagement, and the emergence of social capital, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *74: 329–343.*

Maak, T. 2016. Foreword: The romance and realism of responsible leadership. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (Eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Maak, T., & Pless, N.M. 2006. Responsible leadership in a stakeholder society – a relational perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *66:99–115.*

Maak, T., Pless, N.M., & Voegtlin, C. 2016. Business statesman or shareholder advocate? CEO responsible leadership styles and the micro-foundations of political CSR. *Journal of Management Studies, 53(3), 463–493.*

Maak, T; & Pless, N. 2006. Responsible leadership in a stakeholder society – a relational perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics, 66:99–115.*

Macciò, L., & Cristofoli, D. 2017. How to support the endurance of long-term networks: the pivotal role of the network manager. *Public Administration, 95:1060–1076.*

Malan, D. 2016. Corporate support for the SDGs: A South African perspective. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, *64: 98–120.*

Mamawi, O. 2012. Foundations of competitive intelligence systems to form business coalitions. *Journal of Intelligence Studies in Business, 2:35–41.*

Mango, E. 2018. Rethinking leadership theories. *Open Journal of Leadership, 7:57–88.*

Maritz, R., Pretorius, M., & Plant, K. 2011. Exploring the interface between strategy-making and responsible leadership, *Journal of Business Ethics, 98:101–113.*

Markham, S.E. 2012. The evaluation of organisations and leadership from the ancient world to modernity: a multi-level approach to organisational science and leadership (OSL). *The Leadership Quarterly, 23:1134–1151.*

Marques, T., Reis, N., & Gomes, R.J.S. 2018. Responsible leadership research: a bibliometric review. *Brazilian Administrative Review, 15(1):1–25.*

Matten, D., & Moon, J. 2020. Reflections on the 2018 decade of award: the meaning and dynamics of CSR. *Academy of Management Review,* 45(1), 7–28*.*

Mekling, J. 2011. The globalisation of carbon trading: transnational business coalitions in climate politics. *Global Environmental Politics*, *11, 2: 26–50.*

Mendenhall, M.E. 2013. Leadership and the birth of global leadership. In: Mendenhall, M.E. Osland, J.S., Bird, A., Oddou, R., Maznevski, M.L., Stevens, M.J., & Stahl, G.K. (Eds.), *Global Leadership: Research Practice and Development* (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge.

Metz, T. 2007. Toward an African moral theory. *The Journal of Political Philosophy, 15(3), 321–341.*

Meynhardt, T. & Gomez, P. 2019. Building blocks for four-dimensional pyramids of CSR. *Business & Society, 58(2):404–438.*

Milward, H.B., & Provan, K.G. 1998. Measuring network structure. *Public Administration, 76 Summer: 387–407.*

Mirvis, P. & Googins, B. 2017. The New business of Business: Innovating for a Better World, The Conference Board, [Online] Available at: www.conferenceboard.org [Accessed on 15 May 2023].

Mirvis, P.H., De Jongh, D., Googins, B. Quinn, L & Van Velsor, E. 2010. *Responsible Leadership Emerging: Individual, Organisational, and Collective Frontiers.* Monograph. [Online] Available: www.up.ac.za [Accessed: 16 December 2018].

Miska, C., & Mendenhall, M.E. 2018. Responsible leadership: a mapping of extant research and future directions. *Journal of Business Ethics, 148: 117–134.*

Miska, C., Hilbe, C., & Mayer, S. 2014. Reconciling different views on responsible leadership: a rationality-based approach. *Journal of Business Ethics, 125:349–360.*

Molefe, M. 2017. Relational ethics and partiality: a critic of Thad Metz's 'towards an African moral theory'. *Theoria, 152(64), 3:53–76.*

Moliterno, T.P., & Mahony, D.M. 2011. Network theory of organisation: a multilevel approach. *Journal of Management,* 37(*2*)*, March:443–467.*

Molose, T., Goldman, G., & Thomas, P. 2018. Towards a collective-values framework of *Ubuntu*: implications for workplace commitment. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economic Review, 6(3)193–206.*

Molose, T., Thomas, P., & Goldman, G. 2019. A qualitative approach to developing measurement scales for the concept of *Ubuntu. Acta Commercii – Independent Research Journal in the Management Sciences, 1684–1999.*

Moore, G., & Stückelberger, C. 2009. Global and contextual values for business in a changing world: editorial. *Journal of Business Ethics, 84:279–280.*

Morra Imas, L.G., & Rist, R.C. 2009. *The road to results: Designing and conducting effective evaluations.* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank.

Muff, K., Delacoste, C., & Dyllick, T. 2022. Responsible Leadership Competencies in leaders around the world: Assessing stakeholder engagement, ethics and values, systems thinking and innovation competencies in leaders around the world. *Corporate Social Responsibility & Environmental Management, 29:273–292.*

Müller-Seitz, G. 2012. Leadership in interorganizational networks: a literature review and suggestions for future research. *International Journal of Management Reviews,* 14:428–443.

Mwita, K.M. 2022. Factors influencing data saturation in qualitative studies. *International Journal of Research in Business and Social Science, 11 (4) 414–420.*

Naik, A. 2018. Lessons of community partnership in international development. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Partnership Studies, 5(2) Spring/Summer:1-9.*

Nicholson, J., & Kurucz, E. 2019. Relational leadership for sustainability: building an ethical framework from the moral theory of 'ethics of care'. *Journal of Business Ethics, 156:25–43.*

Nicolini, D., & Monteiro, P. 2017. The practice approach: for a praxeology of organisational and management studies. In Langeley, A., & Tsoukas, H. (Eds), *The Sage Handbook of Process Organisational Studies,* Sage: London, [Online] Available: www.researchgate.net [Accessed on 24 December 2020].

Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. 2011. The big idea: the wise leader, *Harvard Business Review,* [Online] Available: https://hbr.org/2011/05/the-big-idea-the-wise-leader, [Accessed on 29 November 2020].

Nowell, B.; & Harrison, L.M. 2011. Leading change through collaborative partnerships: a profile of leadership and capacity among local public health leaders. *Journal of Prevention and Intervention in the Community, 39:19–34.*

Ntakumba, S.S., & De Jongh, D. 2023. RSCL onto-epistemology and practice approach to reconceptualise responsible leadership theory. *South African Journal of Business Management, 54(1), a3446.*

O'Flynn, J., Buick, F., & Blackman, D. 2011. You win some, you lose some: experiments with joined-up government, *International Journal of Public Administration*, *34:244-254.*

Okoliko, D.A., & David, J.O. 2020. *Ubuntu* and climate change governance: moving beyond conceptual conundrum. *Journal of Public Affairs, 21: e2232.*

Oliver, A.L., & Ebers, M. 1998. Networking network studies: an analysis of conceptual configurations in the study of interorganisational relationships. *Organisational Studies, 19, 4:549-583.*

Olley, R. 2021. A focused literature review of power and influence leadership theories. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Health Management, 16(2), 7–15.*

Osei-Kyei, R., & Chan, A.P.C. 2015. Review of studies on the critical success factors for public-private partnership (PPP) projects from 1990 to 2013. *International Journal of Project Management, 33:1335–1346.*

Osei-Kyei, R., & Chan, A.P.C. 2016, Developing transport infrastructure in Sub-Saharan Africa through Public Private Partnerships: policy practice and implications. *Transport Reviews*, *36(2):170–186.*

Osei-Kyei, R., Chan, A.P.C., Yu, Y., Chen, C., & Dansoh, A. 2019. Root causes of conflict and conflict resolutions mechanisms in the public-private partnerships: comparative study between Ghana and China. *Cities, 87:185–195.*

Ospina, S., & Foldy, E. 2010. Building bridges from the margins: the work of leadership is social change organisations. *The Leadership Quarterly, 21, 292–307.*

Ospina, S.M., & Uhl-Bien, M. (2012). *Introduction: Mapping the terrain: Convergence and divergence around relational leadership.* In M. Uhl-Bien & S.M. Ospina (Eds.), Advancing relational leadership research: A dialogue among perspectives. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Papageorgiou, E., Fortuin, G., Shamsoodien, S., Mothelisi, C., Khoza, T., Plant, K. 2022. Preparing first-year students in higher education for ethical decision-making: identifying and understanding personal values in a South African *Ubuntu* context. *Southern African Journal of Accountability and Auditing Research, 24: 51–63.*

Parker, D.W., Dressel, U., Chevers, D., & Zeppetella, L. 2018. Agency theory perspective on public-private-partnerships: international development project. *International Journal of Performance and Productivity Management*, *67(2):239–259.*

Parry, K. & Jackson, B. 2016. Promoting responsibility, purpose and romanticism in business schools. In: Kempster, S. and Carroll, B. (eds). *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism*, London and New York: Routledge.

Patzer, M., Voegtlin, C. & Scherer, A.G. 2018. The normative justification of integrative stakeholder engagement: a habermasian view of responsible leadership. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 23(8):325–354.*

Pearce, C.L., & Conger, J.A. 2002. Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership. *Thousand Oak: SAGE Publications.*

Pearce, C.L., Wassenaar, C.L., & Manz, C.C. 2014. Is shared leadership the key to responsible leadership? *The Academy of Management Perspectives, 28(3):275–288.*

Pérezts, M., Russon, J., & Painter, M. 2020. This time from Africa: developing a relational approach to values-driven leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics 161:731–748.*

Petit, S.C., & Huault, I. 2008. From practice-based knowledge to the practice of research: revisiting constructivist research works on knowledge. *Management Learning, 9(1):73–91.*

Pineda-Escobar, M.A., & Garzon-Cuervo, F., 2016. Improving post-2015 development cooperation through donor support for inclusive business, lessons from the great recession: at the crossroads of sustainability and recovery. *Advances in Sustainability and Environmental Justice*, *18:141–163.*

Pless, N. 2007. Understanding responsible leadership: role identity and motivational drivers, the case of Dame Anita Roderick, founder of The Body Shop. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *74:437–456.*

Pless, N.M., & Maak, T. 2011. Responsible leadership: pathways to the future, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *98: 3–13.*

Pless, N.M., Maak, T. & De Jongh, D. 2011. Foreword to a special issue on responsible leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics, 98:1.*

Pless, N.M., Maak, T., & Waldman, D.A. 2012. Different approaches toward doing the right thing: mapping the responsibility orientations of leaders. *Academy of Management Perspectives, November, 51–65.*

Pless, N.M., Sengupta, A., Wheeler, M.A., & Maak, T. 2022. Responsible leadership and the reflective CEO: resolving stakeholder conflict by imagining what could be done. *Journal of Business Ethics, 180:313–337.*

Pope, J. & Lewis, J.M. 2008. Improving partnership governance: using a network approach to evaluate partnerships in Victoria, *The Australian Journal of Public Administration, 67(4): 443–456.*

Popper, K. 1957. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery.* London: Routledge.

Prinsloo, P., Beukes, C., & De Jongh, D. 2006. Corporate citizenship education for responsible business leaders. *Development Southern Africa*, *23(2) 197–211.*

Raelin, J.A. 2020. Toward a methodology for studying leadership-as-practice. *Leadership, 16(4):480–508.*

Raffo, D. 2012. Blogging as a reflective tool for leadership development: an exploratory study of leadership practicum grounded in the relational leadership model. *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal, LIV, No.2, 39–51.*

Rapley, T. 2014. Sampling strategies in qualitative research, In: Flick, U (Editor). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, London: SAGE Publications [Online] Available at: https://methods.sagepub.com/book/the-sage-handbook-of-qualitative-data-analysis [Accessed on 17 May 2021].

Reality of Aid. 2018. *The Changing faces of Development Aid and Cooperation: Encouraging Global Justice or Buttressing Inequalities*, IBON International, Quebon City, Philippines. [Online] Available at: https://realityofaid.org/, [Accessed on11 August 2020].

Reckwitz, A. 2002. Toward a theory of social practices: a development in cultural theorising, *European Journal of Social Theory,* 5(2):243–263*.*

Regine, B. 2009. *Ubuntu*: a path to cooperation. *Interbeing, 3(2)17–22.*

Reichertz, J. 2014. Induction, deduction, abduction In. Flick, U. (Editor), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis,* London: SAGE Publications [Online] Available at: https://methods.sagepub.com/book/the-sage-handbook-of-qualitative-data-analysis [Accessed on 17 May 2021].

Reis, R.F., & Sarmento, J.M. 2019. "Cutting costs to the bone": the Portuguese experience in renegotiating public private partnerships highways during the financial crisis. *Transportation*, *46:285 302*.

Reit, E.S., & Halevy, N. 2020. Managing hierarchy's functions and dysfunctions: a relational perspective on leadership and followership. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 33:126–130.*

Reitz, M. 2017. Leading questions: dialogue in organisations: developing relational leadership. *Leadership*, *13(4):516–522.*

Sánchez, I.D., Ospina, S.M., & Salgado, E. 2020. Advancing constructionist leadership research through paradigm interplay: an application in the leadership-trust domain. *Leadership*, 16(6), 683–711.

Schatzki, T. 2006. On organisations as they happen. *Organisation Studies, 27(12):1863–1873*.

Schatzki, T.R. 1996. *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Scherer, A.G., Roche, A., Palazzo, G., & Spicer, A. 2016. Managing for CSR: new challenges and directions for PCSR 2.0. *Journal of Management Studies, 53(3) 273–298.*

Schmidt, R. 2022. Toward a culture-analytical and praxeological perspective on decision-making. *Human Studies, 45:653–671.*

Scott, C.P.R., Jiang, H., Wildman, J.L., & Griffith, R. 2018.The impact of implicit collective leadership theories on the emergence and effectiveness of leadership networks in teams. Human Resource Management Review 28:464–481.

Seehawer, M.K. 2018. Decolonising research in a Sub-Saharan African context: exploring *Ubuntu* as a foundation for research methodology, ethics and agenda. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 21(4): 453–466.*

Selsky, J.W., & Parker, B. 2005. Cross-sector partnerships to address social issues: challenges to theory and practice. *Journal of Management, 31(6), 849–873.*

Sklaveniti, C. 2020. Moments that connect: turning points and the becoming of leadership. *Human Relations*, *73(4), 544–571.*

South Africa, 2012. National Development Plan, Vision 2030: makes this work. [Online] Available at www.gov.za [Accessed on 20 July 2020].

South Africa. 2020. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2020–2030. [Online] Available: https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/202105/national-anti-corruption-strategy-2020-2030.pdf [Accessed on 30 November 2020].

Stadler, L., & Lin, H. 2019. Leveraging partnerships for environmental change: the interplay between the partnership mechanism and the targeted stakeholder group. *Journal of Business Ethics, 54:869–891.*

Stahl, G.K. & de Luque, M. 2014. Antecedents of responsible leader behaviour: a research synthesis, conceptual framework, and agenda for future research. *The Academy of Management Perspectives*, *28:3, 235–254.*

Steyn, F., & Sewchurran, K. 2021. Towards a grainier understanding of how to encourage morally responsible leadership through the development of phronesis: a typology of managerial phronesis. *Journal of Business Ethics, 170:673–695.*

Sulamoyo, D.S., 2022. The dichomisation of *Ubuntu* as a cultural strategy for large system change during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Organisational Development Journal, 28–37.*

Tobia-Miersch, Y., 2017. Beyond trust: towards a practice-based understanding of governing 'network organisations. *Journal of Management & Governance, 21:473–498.*

Tomlinson, B., n.d. *Fit for purpose: ODA and the Financing of the Post-2015 Development Agenda* [Online] Available at: https://www.realityofaid.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/1.Fit-for-Purpose.pdf [Accessed 09 August 2020].

Tsui, A.S. 2021. Responsible research and responsible leadership studies. *Academy of Management Discoveries, 7(2):166–170.*

Tutu, D. 1999. *No Future Without Forgiveness,* New York: Doubleday.

Twende Mbele. 2020. [Online] Available: www.twendembele.org [Accessed on 20 May 2020].

Uhl-Bien, M. 2006. Relational leadership theory: exploring the social processes of leadership and organising. *The Leadership Quarterly, 17(6)654–676.*

Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R.E., Lowe, K.B., & Carsten, M.K. 2014. Followership theory: a review and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25:83–104.*

United Nations. 2023. Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals, Why They Matter? [Online] Available at: https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/17_Why-It-Matters-2020.pdf [Accessed on 06 June 2023].

Utting, P., & Zammit, A. 2009. United Nations-business partnerships: good intentions and contradictory agendas. *Journal of Business Ethics, 90(1):39–56.*

Välilä, T. 2020. An overview of economic theory and evidence of public-private partnership in the procurement of (transport) infrastructure. *Utilities Policy*, *62:1–11.*

Van Norren, D.E. 2022. African *Ubuntu* and Sustainable Development Goals: seeking human mutual relations and service development. *Third World Quarterly, 43:12, 2791–2810.*

Vangen, S., & Huxham, C. 2003. Enacting leadership for collaborative advantage: dilemmas of ideology and pragmatism in the activities of partnership managers. *British Journal of Management, 14: 61–76*.

Varma, T.M. 2021. Responsible leadership and reputation management during a crisis: the cases of delta and united airlines. *Journal of Business Ethics, 173:29–45.*

Vivier, E. 2019. *Public Leadership Practices in Participation: A Social Constructionist Analysis of Local Government*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Pretoria: University of Pretoria.

Voegtlin, C. 2011. Developing a scale to measure discursive responsible leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics, 98:57–73.*

Voegtlin, C., & Pless, N.M. 2014. Global governance: CSR and the role of UN Global Compact. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *122: 179–191.*

Voegtlin, C., Frisch, C., Walther, A., & Schwab, P. 2019. Theoretical development and empirical examination of three roles model of responsible leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics. Forthcoming* [Online] Available: https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-019-04155-2. [Accessed: 15 September 2019].

Voegtlin, C., Patzer, M. & Scherer, A.G., 2012. Responsible leadership in global business: a new approach to leadership and its multi-level outcomes. *Journal of Business Ethics, 105:1–16.*

Vogel, B., Reichard, R.J., Batistič, S., and Černe, M. 2021. A bibliometric review of the leadership development field: How we got here, where we are, and where we are headed. *The Leadership Quarterly, 803:1–19 [101381].*

Waldman, D., Siegel, D., & Javidan, M. 2006. Components of CEO transformational leadership and CSR. *Journal of Management Studies, 43(8):1703–1725.*

Waldman, D.A. 2011. Moving forward with the concept of responsible leadership: three caveats to guide theory and research. *Journal of Business Ethics, 98:75–83.*

Waldman, D.A., & Balven, R.M. 2014. Responsible leadership: theoretical issues and research directions, *Academy of Management Perspectives, 28(3), 224–234.*

Waldman, D.A., & Galvin, B.M. 2008. Alternative perspectives of responsible leadership. *Organisational Dynamics, 37(3):327–341.*

Waldman, D.A., & Siegel, D. 2008. Defining the socially responsible leader. *The Leadership Quarterly, 19:117–131.*

Waldman, D.A., Siegel, D.S., Stahl, G.K. 2020. Defining the socially responsible leader: revisiting issues in responsible leadership. *Journal of Leadership and Organisational Studies*, 27(1):5–20.

Wang, N., Gong, Z., Liu, Y., & Thompson, C. 2020. The influence of governance on the implementation of public-private partnerships in the United Kingdom and China: a systematic comparison. *Utilities Policy, 64:1-11.*

West, A. 2014. *Ubuntu* and business ethics: problems, perspectives and prospects. *Journal of Business Ethics, 121: 47–61.*

Whelan, C. 2011. Network dynamics and network effectiveness: a methodological framework for public sector networks in the field of national security. *The Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 70(3):275-286.

Whittington, R., 2018. Greatness takes practice: on practice theory's relevance to "great strategy". *Strategy Science 3(1):343–351.*

Wilson, S.E. 2013. *Thinking Differently about Leadership: A Critical History of the Form and Formation of Leadership Studies.* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wellington: Wellington [Online] Available from www.researchgate.net [Accessed on 10 July 2019].

Woermann, M., & Engelbrecht, S. 2019. The *Ubuntu* challenge to business: from stakeholders to relationholders. *Journal of Business Ethics, 157:27–44.*

Wolfgram, R., Flynn-Coleman, S. & Conroy, D. 2015. Dynamic interactions of agency in leadership (DIAL): an integrative framework for analysing agency in sustainability leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *126:649–662.*

Wolfram Cox, J., & Hassard, J. 2018. From relational to relationist leadership in critical management education: recasting leadership work after the practice turn. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *17(4), 532–556.*

Wood, A. 2007. Cross-cultural moral philosophy: reflections on Thaddeus Metz: "toward an African moral theory". *South African Journal of Philosophy, 26(4):336–346.*

Worley, C.G. & Mirvis, P.H. 2013. Studying networks and partnerships for sustainability: lessons learned, In: *Building Networks and Partnerships (Organizing for Sustainable Effectiveness, Vol. 3),* Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited (pp.: 261-291).

Xiao, Z., & Lam, J.S.L. 2020. The impact of institutional conditions on willingness to take contractual risk in port public-private partnerships of developing countries. *Transportation Research Part A, 133:12–26.*

Xiong, W., Chen, B., Wang, H., & Zhu, D. 2020. Public private partnerships as a governance response to sustainable urbanisation: lessons from China. *Habitat International, 95:1–9.*

Yehuda, E. 2018. Responsible leadership and the climate of quality service in public organisations in Israel, *Analele Universitatii 'Eftimie Murgu' Resita. Fascicola II. Economic Studies* XXV, 2344–6315.

Yukl, G. 2010. *Leadership in Organisations, (7*th edition), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Zhang, Y., & Huxham, C. 2009. Identity construction and trust-building in developing international collaborations. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science, 45(2):186–211.*

Zhao, L., Yang, M.M., Wang, Z., & Michelson, G. 2023. Trends in the dynamic evolution of CSR and leadership: a literature review and bibliometric analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics, 182:135–157.*

Zhu, J., Liao, Z., & Johnson, R.E. 2018. Shared leadership: a state-of-art review and future research agenda. *Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, *39:834–852.*

ANNEXURE 1: FRAMEWORK FOR THE DESIGN OF THE DIALOGIC INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

RESEARCH QUESTION	RSCL PRACTICES	SOURCES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SUMMARY/PRIORITY QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS
What do participants view as the leadership construct in their day-to-day situations? How do such socially constructed leadership practices manifest in reality?	According to Reitz (2017:517), from a social constructionist perspective the relational leadership lens pays attention to the "constructs of leader, follower and leadership" by examining the meaning of these for research participants.	Reitz (2017) Jackson (2019:214)	What is your understanding of the concept of leadership? What do you consider to be leadership practices in the context of your interorganisational partnership?	What is your definition of leadership? What do you consider to be leadership practices in the context of your interorganisational partnership?	Given the generic nature of these questions, care will be taken not to dwell on the initial responses. The initial responses will be used as a point of reference for the later more specific questions.
	Clifton et al., (2020:514) advocate for "seeing leadership as essentially a question of interpersonal influence, and identifying influence in interactional sequences" and "focusing on consequences of such influence in the context of how leadership organises action." As well as "focusing on the construction of leader and follower identities".	Clifton et al. (2020).	In your view, how does influence manifest itself in this partnership? What kind of influence is emphasised in this interorganisational partnership? Who do you consider to be leaders versus followers?	In light of your definition, how do leaders influence others in the context of your interorganisational partnership?	The notion of leadership as influence is dominant in literature as per the first literature review chapter on leadership approaches. In the context of relational social constructionist leadership lens, it is deemed useful to probe for the underlying views of how influence occurs and whether it is indeed associated with the leadership phenomenon.
	Ospina and Foldy (2010:294) argue that relational leadership as a lens could be used as "a way to characterise the phenomenon in all its forms, whether hierarchical, shared or networked", particularly in partnership contexts.	Ospina & Foldy (2010)	How would you define relational leadership practices in your operational environment? Follow-up: how do leaders relate with followers and with others in your interorganisational partnership context?	How would you define relational leadership practices in your operational environment?	This question seeks to shift from the broad understanding of a leadership construct to a more focused discussion of the construct of relational leadership practices, which is the unit of analysis for this research.
How can we apply the core principles or key tenets of social constructionist orientation of the relational leadership lens to investigate leadership practices in interorganisational partnership contexts?	Multi-realities and self as socially constructed (relational worldview/relationality). According to Feldman and Worline (2016:308-310) relationality means "phenomena have meaning in relation to one another rather than in isolation".	Endres & Weibbler (2017) Feldman & Worline (2016)	How would you characterise the practice of leadership in collective contexts or interorganisational partnerships? How would you respond to a person who argues that a leadership is about mutual relations among two or more people?	With the support of practical examples, how is relational leadership practiced in the context of your interorganisational partnership?	The depth of this engagement lies at the extent to which the researcher is able to understand if the participants could explore various dimensions of relational leadership perspective in practice (social constructionist lens). It further probes for the participant's perspective on the notion of relationality.

RESEARCH QUESTION	RSCL PRACTICES	SOURCES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SUMMARY/PRIORITY QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS
			Follow-up: Please use practical examples to support your views.		
	In terms of relational leadership, "meaning emerges through the dialectical inter-relationships of speakers/listeners, body/language, speech/silence, etc." (Cunliffe, 2008:131).	(Cunliffe, 2008)	In your opinion, what demonstrates the practice of leadership in interorganisational partnership contexts? On reflection, what has been the role of leadership in making significant decisions in this interorganisational partnership? Follow-up: Researcher observes both verbal and non-verbal language of the participants and follows up on such.	What do you deem as significant verbal or non-verbal manifestations of leadership in your context?	The concern here is about how meaning is constructed. Probing and observations/listening by the researcher in a dialogic manner will elucidate a wide spectrum of how meaning is constructed and what is prioritised and why? The researcher is also conscious of his own influence in meaning-making.
	"Socio-material perspective" of relational leadership or "relationist leadership". (Wolfram Cox & Hassard, 2018; Eva et al., 2019).	Wolfram Cox & Hassard (2018) Eva et al. (2019)	In your view, to what extent does technology and other materials influence how leadership is practiced in your interorganisational partnership? What value does social media add to how leadership is enacted in your interorganisational partnership context? Follow-up: What other materials influenced how leadership is practiced?	What value does social media add to how leadership is enacted in your interorganisational partnership context?	In the context of COVID-19 and interorganisational partnerships where people are spread out in many locations, online meetings and social media become very important. It is therefore critical to assess the concept of socio-materiality in relation to online platforms and social media as major tools of engagement for organisations nowadays.
How can we apply the practice approach through the use dialogic interviews to understand day-to-day relational leadership practices in interorganisational partnership contexts?	The practices that Ospina and Foldy, (2010:295) report include: "prompting cognitive shifts; naming and shaping identity; engaging in dialogue about difference; creating equitable governance mechanisms; and weaving multiple worlds together through interpersonal relationships".	Ospina & Foldy, (2010)	In your view, how are new ways of thinking encouraged in this partnership? Are there any specific ways of doing things that demonstrate shifts in thinking? What has been the role of leadership in terms of influencing this change?	In your view, how are new ways of thinking encouraged in this partnership?	Cognitive shifts are the manifestation of new collective ways of thinking and therefore deemed a good indicator of how relational leadership contributes to this change. So are other changes in how things are done and goals realised.
			How do people identify themselves in this partnership context? Are there any examples of collective identities that are unique to this partnership? What is the role of leadership in terms of shaping such identities?	Are there any examples of collective identities that are unique to this partnership?	Leadership identity and how identity formation is influenced by leadership is a topic of interest. Emergence of collective or shared identity is also critical as a relational leadership practice in partnership contexts.
			To what extent is difference recognised in this partnership context? Follow-up: please give examples of differences that are quite salient	To what extent is difference recognised in this partnership context?	Here difference could be in terms of organisational cultures, demographics, geographical background and so forth. The important issue is the extent to which

RESEARCH QUESTION	RSCL PRACTICES	SOURCES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SUMMARY/PRIORITY QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS
			among the members of this partnership. Follow-up: probing for more understanding on each example provided.		difference is appreciated and engaged with dialogically.
			What are the governance arrangements in this partnership? In your view, are they assisting with ensuring equitable participation among the partners? What is the role of leadership in terms of how governance structures function in this partnership?	What is the role of leadership in terms of how governance structures function in this partnership?	Leadership and governance, although conceptually distinct, tend to be viewed as not mutually exclusive in participative literature. So, this becomes a special area of focus in terms of exploring how leadership is manifested in terms of the partnership governance. This question is discussed extensively in the second literature review chapter.
			In terms of interpersonal relations, how do partners work together? How would you characterise the communication style at an informal level among the leaders in this partnership?	In terms of interpersonal relations, how do partners work together?	The interpersonal dimension embodies the concept of relationality. Therefore, it is deemed essential to understand how interpersonal communication happens and pay attention to its implications for relational leadership manifestation.
	Connelly's (2007:1248) list of key (relational) leadership practices/principles in interorganisational contexts are: (1) establishment of a common interorganisational culture; (b) development of common goals; (c) promotion of openness in communication, (d) encouragement of trust and commitment among stakeholders; (5) flexibility of processes and envisaged results; and (6) adherence to the view that partnerships beget or build partnerships/ alliances.	Connelly (2007)	What measures have been put in place to develop a common interorganisational/ partnership culture among the partners? How would you characterise the current or emerging common interorganisational/ partnership culture? What is the contribution of leadership in terms of influencing such interorganisational culture?	What is the contribution of leadership in terms of influencing interorganisational culture?	Here the emphasis will be on the collective dimension of the organisational culture. The key is to assess if leadership plays any role in changing the culture or whether it is influenced by factors deemed to be beyond control of the organisations in the partnership.
			What is the role of leadership in terms of developing common goals? Follow-up: what are those common goals?		This relational leadership practice is related to organisational culture but more specifically to the joint-development of common goals (co-creation). If one organisation imposes its goals on the other partners, that might be a negative manifestation of relationality.
			How would you characterise the communication style of the partners in this context? What is the role of	What is the role of leadership in relation to communication in this interorganisational partnership?	Communication is probably the core relational leadership practice based on the literature reviewed since it is the means

RESEARCH QUESTION	RSCL PRACTICES	SOURCES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SUMMARY/PRIORITY QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS
			leadership in communication? In your view, what becomes the most important issues to be communicated? What is the medium/ platform that is used for communicating new things? Do you think that communication is prioritised in this partnership?\n\nFollow-up: are there any specific communication products for this partnership? (e.g. publications, use of electronic media, internet, etc.)		through which leadership influence is enacted. The core interest is if there are specific unique characteristics of communication that take place in interorganisational partnership contexts. The way leaders communicate with others is deemed important. Similarly, communication tools assist with checking how communication is prioritised in the partnership.
			How is trust built in this partnership? What is the role of leadership in trust-building?	What is the role of leadership in trust-building?	It is important to get a sense if there are measures in place to build trust among the partners and the role of leadership therein.
			How is commitment ensured in this interorganisational partnership? What is the role of leadership in ensuring commitment?	What is the role of leadership in ensuring commitment?	In this instance, the question of commitment might mean investment of resources or solidarity in terms of specific objectives. There might be visible products that demonstrate mutual commitment such as use of memoranda of understanding/agreements, etc.
			How flexible or rigid are processes in this partnership? What is the contribution of leadership in this regard?	What is the contribution of leadership in terms of ensuring efficiency of processes?	This relational leadership practice focuses on operations and how leadership allows for flexibility to accommodate unforeseen circumstances. In some cases, there might be very rigid protocols and bureaucratic processes. In some, the laissez-faire leadership style might dominate. Therefore, it is important to understand how these processes affect and are influenced by leadership.
	Hersted and Gergen (2013:30) argue that the biggest challenge of leadership is to strengthen relationships among their stakeholders or followers through relational "practices of collaboration, empowerment, horizontal decision-making, information sharing, networking,	Hersted & Gergen (2013)	How is collaboration promoted in this interorganisational partnership? What is the role of leadership in ensuring collaboration among various stakeholders?	What is the role of leadership in ensuring collaboration among various stakeholders?	Sometimes collaboration is used as a synonym of partnership. So, it is deemed critical to understand how collaboration manifests itself in the context of interorganisational partnerships. The role of leadership in this regard is also crucial.
			How are individuals empowered by others in this partnership? What is the contribution of leadership?	What is the contribution of leadership in terms of empowerment of others in this	Empowerment might come in many forms such as on-boarding of new members and support by leaders to other people or staff.

RESEARCH QUESTION	RSCL PRACTICES	SOURCES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SUMMARY/PRIORITY QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS
	continuous learning, appreciation, and connectivity."			interorganisational partnership context?	So, it is deemed important to understand if the organisational culture is empowering and how leadership contributes to this practice?
			How does decision-making take place in this interorganisational partnership?	How does leadership make decisions in this interorganisational partnership?	Decision-making in this regard might relate closely to the functioning of the governance structures. The mode of decision-making that is of interest here is the horizontal approach.
			How is information shared among the partners? What is the contribution of leadership towards a culture of information sharing? Follow-up: are there any common information systems in place? What information products are being generated?	What is the contribution of leadership towards a culture of information sharing?	Information sharing is related to communication. However, it might also add more technical dimensions such as knowledge management systems and publications. It would be useful to get a sense of how this is done and whether there are specific information products in place.
			How is networking done in this interorganisational partnership?	How is networking done in this interorganisational partnership?	Partnerships are sometimes viewed as networks. So, it is important to know how relational leadership encourages or impedes networking.
			How is continuous learning promoted in this partnership? What are the measures put in place by leadership to promote learning in this partnership?	What are the measures that are put in place by leadership to promote learning from experience in this partnership?	A learning organisation is a growing organisation. In some instances, research and formal training programmes might be used as part of a learning package.
			What are the incentives that are put in place by leadership to appreciate good practices in this partnership?	What are the incentives that are put in place by leadership to appreciate good practices in this partnership?	Appreciation might be used as a motivation for employees or encouragement of each other among the leaders. If there are awards, these may serve as an example of an incentive. Or written notes to congratulate or thank people via text or voice.
			How connected are people in this partnership? What is the role of leadership in this regard?	What is the role of leadership in terms of ensuring connectedness of people in this partnership?	Connectivity was identified a one of the key tenets of relational social constructionist leadership. It does cover aspects like trust-building and collaboration, as well as interpersonal communication. So, it is important to understand if there are practices that enhance connectivity.

RESEARCH QUESTION	RSCL PRACTICES	SOURCES	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	SUMMARY/PRIORITY QUESTION	RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS
What are the views of research participants with regards to the ethical and moral responsibilities of relational leaders towards others in interorganisational partnership contexts?	Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011:1439) introduce the concept of "relational integrity" whereby moral responsibility is viewed as fundamental to how relational leaders interact in their everyday situations. Responsible leadership is a "…social-relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction" (Maak & Pless, 2006:99) in order to achieve societal and environmental targets and objectives of sustainable value creation and positive change on a global scale. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011) leadership practices of phronetic leaders are the ability of the leader to: (1) judge goodness; (2) grasp the crux of things; (3) create collaborative contexts; (4) communicate the essence; (5) exercise power via mobilising people towards action; and (6) cultivate practical wisdom in others	Cunliffe & Eriksen (2011) Maak & Pless (2006) Nonaka & Takeuchi (2011)	How would you characterise the moral orientation of partners in this context? How are ethical considerations managed? What is the role of leadership? Follow-up: to use the various concepts espoused by Nonaka and Takeuchi, as well as key elements of the responsible leadership approach from a relational social constructionist leadership lens.	What is the role of leadership in terms of ensuring ethics in this interorganisational partnership? Follow-up: probe for application of the various concepts espoused by Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011), as well as key elements of the responsible leadership approach from a relational social constructionist leadership lens.	This aspect draws from the responsible leadership approach as reviewed in literature and how as a social-relational and ethical phenomenon it could be viewed as part of the relational leadership perspective. Probing will be done to understand various dimensions of moral integrity or controls in this partnership from a relational social constructionist leadership lens.

ANNEXURE 2:   THE INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

	THE QUESTIONS
1.	What is your definition of leadership? What do you consider to be leadership practices in the context of your interorganisational partnership?
2.	In light of your definition, how do leaders influence others in the context of your interorganisational partnership?
3.	How would you define relational leadership practices in your operational environment?
4.	With the support of practical examples, how is relational leadership practiced in the context of your interorganisational partnership?
5.	What do you deem as significant verbal or non-verbal manifestations of leadership in your context?
6.	What value does social media add to how leadership is enacted in your interorganisational partnership context?
7.	In your view, how are new ways of thinking encouraged in this partnership?
8.	Are there any examples of collective identities that are unique to this partnership?
9.	To what extent is difference recognised in this partnership context?
10.	What is the role of leadership in terms of how governance structures function in this partnership?
11.	In terms of interpersonal relations, how do partners work together?
12.	What is the contribution of leadership in terms of influencing interorganisational culture?
13.	What is the role of leadership in relation to communication in this interorganisational partnership?
14.	What is the role of leadership in trust-building?
15.	What is the role of leadership in ensuring commitment?
16.	What is the contribution of leadership in terms of ensuring efficiency of processes?
17.	What is the role of leadership in ensuring collaboration among various stakeholders?
18.	What is the contribution of leadership in terms of empowerment of others in this interorganisational partnership context?
19.	How does leadership make decisions in this interorganisational partnership?
20.	What is the contribution of leadership towards a culture of information sharing?
21.	How is networking done in this interorganisational partnership?
22.	What are the measures that are put place by leadership to promote learning from experience in this partnership?
23.	What are the incentives that are put in place by leadership to appreciate good practices in this partnership?
24.	What is the role of leadership in terms of ensuring connectedness of people in this partnership?
25.	What is the role of leadership in terms of ensuring ethics in this interorganisational partnership? Follow-up[7]: probe for application of the various concepts espoused by Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011), as well as key elements of the responsible leadership approach from a relational social constructionist leadership lens.

---

[7] Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011:1439) introduced the concept of "relational integrity" whereby moral responsibility is viewed as fundamental to how relational leaders interact in their everyday situations. Responsible leadership is a "…social-relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction" (Maak & Pless, 2006:99) in order to achieve societal and environmental targets and objectives of sustainable value creation and positive change on a global scale. According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2011), leadership practices of phronetic leaders are the ability of the leader to: (1) judge goodness; (2) grasp the crux of things; (3) create collaborative contexts; (4) communicate the essence; (5) exercise power via mobilising people towards action; and (6) cultivate practical wisdom in others.

ANNEXURE 3: COPY OF THE LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT PROVIDED TO THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Letter of Introduction and Informed Consent

Dept. of Business Management. Albert Luthuli Institute of Leadership

Title of the study
On Responsible Leadership and the Partnership Phenomenon

<u>Research conducted by</u>:
Mr S.S. Ntakumba, Student number: u27423850, Mobile number: 0716838187

Dear Participant

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Mr Stanley Sixolile Ntakumba Doctoral student from the Department Business Management, Albert Luthuli Leadership Institute at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the following question: What are relational leadership practices in inter-organisational partnership contexts?

Data will be collected though:
- Online/face-to-face interviews and
- Focus group discussions with key informants, and
- Document analysis

Please note the following:
- This is an <u>anonymous</u> study survey as your name will not appear on the questionnaire. The answers you give will be treated as strictly <u>confidential</u> as you cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer the questions in the attached questionnaire as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 1 hour 30 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader (PhD supervisor), Professor Derick de Jongh, who is the Director of the Albert Luthuli Leadership Institute (derick.dejongh@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

In research of this nature the study leader may wish to contact respondents to verify the authenticity of data gathered by the researcher. It is understood that any personal contact details that you may provide will be used only for this purpose, and will not compromise your anonymity or the confidentiality of your participation.

Please sign the form to indicate that:
- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.
- I am happy for Twende Mbele to be named in the study

(signature)

Participant's signature

11 January 2022

Date

ANNEXURE 4: COPY OF THE LETTER CONFIRMING PROFESSIONAL EDITING OF THE THESIS

Kim N Smit Editorial Services

Declaration of Professional Editing

27 June 2023

This letter serves to confirm that Stanley Sixolile Ntakumba submitted a thesis to me for editing. The thesis is entitled, '**RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND INTERORGANISATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: A RELATIONAL SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST LEADERSHIP LENS**'.
The following aspects were edited:

- Spelling
- Grammar
- Consistency of layout
- Sentence structure
- Logical sequencing
- References (Reference checking involves proofreading and perhaps some editing with regards to the simple formatting of the references into the referencing style required i.e. changing the order of the elements - author, date, title, series, place, publisher, journal, volume, issue, pagination etc.)

The following aspects were excluded at the request of the student

- All preliminary material (Dedication, Acknowledgements, Declaration, Table of Contents, List of Figures, List of Tables, List of Abbreviations)

My involvement was restricted to language use and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style, and formatting of headings, and captions. I did no structural re-writing of the content and did not influence the academic content in any way.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,

Kim Smit

Tel: +27 (0)78 493 6554
kimnsmit@gmail.com
Member of the Freelance panel for the University of South Africa
Member of the Freelance panel for the University of Pretoria
Full Member of the Professional Editor's Guild

Email: