

# Sheffield Hallam University

*Felicity conditions of a theory of expert leadership in professional football*

MIGHTEN, Eddie

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**Felicity Conditions of a Theory of Expert  
Leadership in Professional Football**

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements of Sheffield Hallam University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Eddie Mighten**

**May 2020**

## Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

1. I have not been enrolled for another award of the University, or other academic or professional organisation, whilst undertaking my research degree.
2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
3. I am aware of and understand the University's policy on plagiarism and certify that this thesis is my own work. The use of all published or other sources of material consulted have been properly and fully acknowledged.
4. The work undertaken towards the thesis has been conducted in accordance with the SHU Principles of Integrity in Research and the SHU Research Ethics Policy.
5. The word count of the thesis is 86,777.
6. *Eddie Mighten.*

Name	Eddie Mighten
Date	May 2020
Award	PhD
Faculty	Sheffield Business School
Director(s) of Studies	Dr. Emma Martin

## Abstract

This thesis is a critical investigation of a theory of expert leadership (hereafter TEL) and has the central aim of theory development. In proposing a TEL, Goodall (2012) argues that those at the top of organisations should be among the best experts in their industry, as opposed to general, professional managers. Empirical support for the TEL and its effects are reported in a small number of studies that show positive correlations between expert leadership and organisational performance. Moreover, expert leaders are thought to gain credibility and respect and are better able to understand motivations and values of followers having *been one of them*. Whilst these findings are interesting and imply something important in terms of what we might look for when choosing leaders, they raise conceptual and methodological concerns that were the starting point for this study.

My approach draws on Gadamer's (1989) conceptualisation of hermeneutics and Josselson's (2011b) narrative approach in what I described as hermeneutic storytelling to account for the lived experiences of managers in the backdrop of men's professional football, on the assumption that stories about our lives are representations of reality. To explore this phenomenon, I borrow from J. L. Austin's (1962) work, *How to Do Things With Words*, and the idea of felicity conditions, as a theoretical lens to understand expert leadership influence. Felicity conditions refer to criteria that must be in place and satisfied for performative acts to achieve their purpose.

As a theoretical contribution to knowledge I found first that, for expert leadership influence to be felicitous, football managers need to meet, in the requisite way, conditions of; authority and be authorised beyond the position they hold; which is granted by virtue of authenticity, in the way they operate in relation to others; and sincerity, with thoughts, intentions and motivations that embodied the virtue. This is mediated by interplay of thoughts, beliefs and expectations of people who interact with football managers and also what is rooted in historically affected cultures and traditions.

Second, there is a dark side to this leadership that undeniably exists and in any study involving people who have great authority and hold powerful positions this reality needs to be truthfully told.

Third, as a practical contribution my thesis proposes the Human Resources (HR) profession, and recruitment in general, moves away from traditional competency and behavioural practice, to selecting leaders on a values-based process, that assesses the fit of human values and the cultural of an organisation.

My thesis allows the reader to reimagine expert leadership and proposes the need to examine what is human about the phenomenon in question. I conclude, the TEL is a paradoxical mix of perceptions of leadership qualities, human conditions and performativity in context.

## **Acknowledgements**

I begin with special thanks to my supervisory team, Dr. Emma Martin and Dr. Paul Allan, who by way of their guidance and support throughout, embody what this study is about. Expert leadership. Equally, I'm sincerely grateful to Professor Tony Blackshaw, a formidable philosopher, for showing me where *truth* is really found.

Next, embarking on a journey of this nature means there are people who were omnipresent over the years it took to complete. So, where I go next is to thank a group of friends who were there from the start and have not gone away. When finding my philosophical feet, Dave, Olivia, Darryl, Jo and Sian (in no particular order), you must have thought I was losing it, but you still listened to my half-baked ideas and, in your own ways, turned it into the encouragement I needed to keep going, no matter what.

Sincere thanks go to Omari, who, without his invaluable help none of this would have been possible, as gaining access to participants in this environment proved to be difficult. Also to each participant for their time and generosity.

Importantly, I'm grateful to my family. Mum, Dad, brothers and sister who are always supportive of anything I turn my hand to. And finally, the driving force behind this thesis are my three boys, Jaime, David and Alex, who (without perhaps knowing it), gave me the tacit strength and inspiration to find this voice. Patting my bald head whilst I was working away on my laptop and quizzing me as to how many words I had still to write, was in a way, the motivation I needed to keep pushing on to, crucially, being that role model they may need in later life.

I hope I made you all proud.

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## Introduction

*We are delighted to announce the appointment of Jose Mourinho as Head Coach on a contract that runs until the end of the 2022/23 season. Jose is one of the world's most accomplished managers having won 25 senior trophies. He is renowned for his tactical prowess and has managed FC Porto, Inter Milan, Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester United. He has won a domestic title in a record four different countries (Portugal, England, Italy and Spain) and is one of only three managers to have won the UEFA Champions League twice with two clubs, FC Porto in 2004 and Inter Milan in 2010. He is also a three-time Premier League Champion with Chelsea (2005, 2006, 2015).*

*Commenting on the appointment, Chairman Daniel Levy said: "In Jose we have one of the most successful managers in football. He has a wealth of experience, can inspire teams and is a great tactician. He has won honours at every club he has coached. We believe he will bring energy and belief to the dressing room."*

### **Jose Mourinho Appointed New Head Coach November 2019**

Following the dismissal of one high profile football manager and the swift appointment of another this statement was issued via the website of a leading club in the English Premier League (EPL). The relevance is first, to introduce the context of this study that is British professional football and second, to highlight the main focus which is football managers and the influence they are thought to have on those they interact with. If we read into the words and sentences, what we find is ideological thinking that concerns individuals who are considered experts in this arena, a main decision maker and the person ultimately responsible for the success or failure of their organisations (Arnulf, Mathisen, & Hærem, 2012). You also find discourse that alludes to requisite knowledge and experiences, essential attributes and, importantly, significant achievements that football managers are thought to bring to successful organisations (Goodall, 2012). However, the main significance of the extract is that it introduces what this thesis is all about and the theoretical exploration to come.

As previously mentioned, my study is be located in the unique context of professional football, where, despite ongoing debate mixed with inconclusive evidence, there is strong support for the idea that the best football players make the best managers (Bridgewater, Kahn, & Goodall, 2011; Dawson & Dobson, 2002). Football managers are considered experts,

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with the majority being former professional players or individuals who are developed through years in the coaching ranks. Arguably, they are now analysed as much as players and teams, and although the main focus remains on the many teams, clubs and players worldwide, there is growing academic research on the paragons of football leadership (Potrac, Jones, & Cushion, 2007). What this means is that the mainstay of research is focused on their performance, actions and words, on and off the field of play. At the highest level, football managers are high profile figureheads who are often held up for crucial lessons on issues of leadership on the assumption that findings might be edifying (Elberse, 2013). Therefore, it is accurate to say that this thesis is located in a leadership debate and explores football managers from a particular leadership perspective in hope that there is much to be learned that might be applied elsewhere (Brady, Bolchover, & Sturgess, 2008).

In saying that, this thesis is a critical investigation of a theory of expert leadership (TEL). In developing a TEL, Goodall (2012) raises controversy arguing those at the top of organisations should be among the best experts in their field as opposed to general, professional managers. The proposition being, the most important decision maker in an organisation should be among the best in the industry with an outstanding track record (Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). The issue emanates from evidence that shows a move away from recruitment of so called 'specialists' to the appointment of general managers, with skills that are transferable across companies and industries (Bertrand, 2009; Custodio, Ferreira, & Matos, 2013; Frydman, 2007). For instance, in a reversal, most hospitals in both the United States and United Kingdom are predominately led by chief executive officers (CEO) who are not doctors or medically trained (Falcone & Satiani, 2008; Goodall, 2009, 2009a, 2009b, 2015; Goodall, Bastiampillai, Nance, Roeger, & Allison, 2015; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015; Goodall & Stoller, 2017; Gunderman & Kanter, 2009). What is more, Goodall (2014) points out the proportion of leaders of top Universities in the US (Presidents) who come from industry rose from 17% to 23% in 2014. Coupled with the fact that 40% the UK's equivalent (Pro Vice-Chancellors) spent significant time in roles outside of academia, suggests a general trend across some sectors, such as education and healthcare.

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Moreover, statistical analysis of quality measures in the top 100 US hospitals show that those led by doctors score 25% higher on average (Goodall, Kahn, & Oswald, 2011). Stoller, Goodall, and Baker (2016) draw on a similar evidence base and add that according to the 2016 US News and World Report Ranking, the best two hospitals are led by highly skilled physicians. They contend these figureheads earn credibility and respect based on their expertise and considerable experiences and they understand how to lead in their environment. In short, they have *walked the walk*.

Taken all together, the suggestion is this idea has important implications for the way in which we recruit, select, develop and evaluate the performance of leaders. By way of an example, in the first national leadership audit in the UK it is estimated that at least £120 million was spent on leadership training and development (Owen, 2012). Further, \$14 billion to \$50 billion a year is spent on leadership development in the United States alone (Pfeffer & Dee, 2016) to fill implied skills gaps and produce more and better leadership (Hunter, Bedell-Avers, & Mumford, 2007; Pye, 2005). Therefore, the importance of a TEL lies at the heart of understanding the nexus between leadership and performance and suggests that greater understanding could potentially guide actions, such as new ways of choosing top leaders (Fitza, 2016).

Empirical support for the TEL and its effects are reported in a small number of studies that show correlations between expert leadership and organisational performance (Bridgewater et al., 2011; Goodall, 2009, 2009a, 2012; Goodall, 2013; Goodall, 2015; Goodall et al., 2015). Added to this, statistical analysis shows the 'expert leader effect' can account for between a 15-20% increase in performance levels in knowledge intensive organisations, such as universities and hospitals (Goodall, 2012). The thinking is that expert leaders gain credibility and respect as they are better able to understand motivations and values of followers, having been *one of them*, over more general managers and thereby improve performance outcomes (Goodall, 2009, 2009a, 2009b, 2012; Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002).

Whilst these findings are certainly interesting, seem plausible and imply something important, they raise conceptual and methodological concerns that give me reason to be cautious. By this I mean that the process by which these outcomes are achieved and, crucially,

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how this translates to leadership, requires justification for what is being claimed. Methodologically, associations between expert leaders and performance outcomes employ statistical methods that can only reveal what is found in a data set and present descriptive features that tell one side of the story. In other words, current approaches to the TEL only identify, what Brown and Treviño (2006) refer to as antecedents and consequences of leadership, and do not tell us how supposed performance improvements are achieved. Alvesson (2019, p. 31) points out this *input-output* way of thinking raises questions of how much of what goes in, results in what comes out. Simply put, untangling leader contribution to organisational success is problematic and normative claims, without rigorous understanding of context and conditions in which leaders operate, lead to tenuous assumptions about cause and effect (Flanigan, 2017).

This does, however, present an opportunity for theory development as it identifies gaps in knowledge as to why, but more importantly, how expert leaders are able to achieve such impressive performance outcomes (Flanigan, 2017). It also might go some way to answering the fundamental question of whether organisations should be led by someone who is considered an expert in their field. It suggests to me that new questions and different approaches are needed to build on what we currently know. Moreover, current research concentrates on successful performance without consideration of what can be learned from failures of leadership which, arguably, can be equally as important. So it follows, an understanding of negative views of leadership which can impact on effectiveness and performance is also necessary (Schyns & Schilling, 2010).

Finally, Goodall (2012) makes the bold claim that the TEL can be advanced to a generalisable theory of leadership. However, this is overstated and, as it stands, the TEL is incomplete as it oversimplifies intrinsic complexity of the phenomenon. And critically, it does not account for what is essentially a socially constructed process that can be traced back as far as Nietzsche (1974) who talks about the importance of social phenomenon as the key to understanding the mystery of human life and all its possibilities. His perspectivism (world of perspectives) argues that when it comes to understanding social phenomenon there is a mode of knowing where facts do not matter as there are only interpretations. Adopting this way of thinking,

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and as a philosophical contribution, I draw on a theory of interpretation to explore what those statistics cannot tell us. That is the real human stories behind the figures. In other words, in opposition to approaches that seek objective truth, this thesis concerns a form of truth that is worked out by interpretation of lived experiences as it emerges in context. As such, the TEL is investigated using a hermeneutic framework to uncover why this relationship exists and, importantly, to uncover the underlying leadership process.

Thus, the central aim of this thesis responds to the aforementioned limits of what has been discussed. In an under-researched area, this study seeks to make a contribution to senior level leadership by addressing gaps in what is currently understood about a nascent theory. Borrowing from Gadamer (1989, p. 302), who says, *acquiring the right horizon of inquiry for the questions evoked by the encounter with tradition*. What this means is that I aim to show the TEL in its true light by working out what he calls the *hermeneutic situation* from lived experiences of football managers to understand leadership influence. To fulfil this overarching aim, four key objectives were also developed. These were to:

1. Provide empirical description of British football managers
2. Interpret lived experiences of expert leaders with a hermeneutic framework
3. Explain the TEL using by way of a linguistic pragmatic framework
4. Re-conceptualise the TEL

Throughout, the reader is taken through a philosophical inquiry that culminates with theory development. The next chapter locates the debate in terms of contemporary leadership in an attempt to understand limits and possibilities. This is followed by exploration of the TEL, where I unpack what is currently known, to highlight gaps that exist. As the reader will then come to see, I argue for a different approach to knowing, as research to date adopts traditional methods that put forward constructs for measurement against organisational outcomes (Artz, Goodall, & Oswald, 2017; Goodall, 2009, 2012; Goodall et al., 2015; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Chapter three brings in the idea of felicity conditions to understand the essence (human experience) of the phenomenon and examines performativity within context. The focus is on a linguistic pragmatic framework that concerns the use of words and

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language that gets people to act (Austin, 1962). This is then followed by a methodology chapter that explains the approach and key decisions I took. The chapter discusses Gadamer's conceptualisation of hermeneutics and Josselson's narrative approach in what I describe as hermeneutic storytelling. This was done to account for lived experiences and perceptions of research participants (Gadamer, 1989) on the assumption that stories about our lives are representations of reality (Josselson, 2011b). I also detail the research design, what I did in the field, and address my own preunderstandings which were brought to this interpretivist process (Gadamer, 1989).

After that I go on to present the first of three findings chapters that build terminology and a narrative of managers in men's professional football in terms of their role, important attributes and finally, emotions that imply leadership influence. This is followed by hermeneutic interpretation of lived experiences to facilitate new meaning. The final findings chapter is where my unique contribution to knowledge is articulated and is the first time the concept of the TEL has been investigated through the lens of Austin's felicity conditions. This is represented by a framework of ideas that explain leadership influence, not performance outcomes, by individuals who are considered vanguards in their field. This is followed by a conclusion that brings the thesis to a close and discusses what has been achieved, how it contributes to new knowledge, and reflections on the research process.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

The purpose of this chapter is to adumbrate and critically review the very broad theoretical field of leadership and then, more specifically, the same idea as it pertains to the context of this study. This is undertaken to situate my thesis within this extensive discipline and to show the reader how the aims and parameters of my project contribute to conceptual understanding.

Alvesson (2019) contends that leadership remains of utmost importance to organisations, the field of management, and society in general. He also argues that common approaches to the study of leadership suffer from age-old problems that fail to advance what is already known. Concomitant with increasingly complex organisations and management structures with regard to individuals, groups and teams, it suggests that advancement of theoretical and practical understanding is still needed (Dionne et al., 2014). Continuing along with this thinking, this chapter argues that there is so much more to understand about leadership than simple integrations of heuristic attributes and behaviours that are thought to affect performance outcomes (Alvesson, 2019). As such, this literature review navigates and reviews ideas and contextual factors that are relevant to this research to set out the direction of my overarching aim (Gill, Johnson, & Clark, 2010).

Leadership researchers contribute to a thriving body of knowledge that seeks to provide explanations of how leadership works (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). Hunt (2005 p.1) refers to the substantial number of studies conducted since the turn of the century as *an explosion of the leadership field*. However, despite a wealth of literature, what we know to be true remains contentious and a source of academic debate (Grint, Jones, & Holt, 2017). New theories claim to bring us closer to genuine knowledge yet continue to emanate from grand theory assumptions (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). However, this form of syncretism (building on what has gone before) adopt mainstream philosophical assumptions that bring us no closer to understanding (Takala, 1998). Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is to highlight ambiguities, contradictions and challenges of leadership research with a view to developing a new idea, the theory of expert leadership (TEL).

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

The review is used to support the focus of this study in order to justify the intended lines of inquiry and also sets the tone to provide the foundation to evaluate lived experiences of football managers. The consideration offers critical analysis of relevant theories and research to first, establish the significance and second, highlight gaps in understanding where this thesis might contribute (Bryman, 2016). The chapter begins with a discussion of contemporary leadership and its associated problems. This is followed by a review of leadership in professional football to provide necessary context. It then focuses on the leadership of managers in professional football and how it is commonly researched. The chapter argues that ideas of contemporary leadership could benefit from reconsideration of the way studies are designed and embrace more nuanced approaches that move the debate beyond conventional ways of theory development.

### **1.1: Contemporary Leadership**

Researchers continue to contribute to a thriving body of knowledge in the field of organisation and management, and leadership that seeks to provide explanations to the phenomenon (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). It is also not new to hear that the disciplinary field has received dramatic scholarly interest over the last decade that has resulted in the advancement of existing ideas and the development of a number of new theoretical perspectives (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, et al., 2014; Hunter et al., 2007; Pye, 2005). Moreover, the proliferation of leadership research, coupled with changing organisational and management structures, is thought to offer opportunities to advance theoretical and practical understandings (Dionne et al., 2014). In this sense, on one level, this study is no different in that the grand ambition is to develop another new theory that, on the face of it, has potential to add to theoretical understandings. However, on another level, I argue that my approach will outline new ways of thinking on the subject matter, as the reader will come to see.

Notwithstanding the exponential increase in research interest, the popularity and, in turn, the significance of leadership should also not be underestimated (Grint, 2005). Perhaps overstating the issue, Alvesson and Spicer (2011, p. 233) state, *we live in a leadership-obsessed society*, suggesting a natural turn to leadership as a solution to problems of our times. In contrast, Pfeffer (2015) suggests demand for leadership studies stems from frequent leadership failures that lead to a lack of trust in leaders. For instance, concerns over the



## Chapter 1: Literature Review

world's economy in 2008 were attributed to leadership or a failed leadership in this case (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011; Sadler, 2003).

Such claims are familiar in modern society where the presumed importance of leadership is cited in almost every sphere of organisations and management (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011; Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Sadler, 2003; Western, 2013) on the underlying assumption of leadership as a solution to human endeavours (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). This perceived importance is matched by rapid and growing demand for leadership training and development to fill implied skills gaps and produce more and better leadership (Hunter et al., 2007; Pye, 2005). However, Owen (2012) argues that these initiatives fail to unlock leadership potential and have no lasting effect on individuals or organisations overall. Paradoxically, there is evidence to suggest that fewer people trust business and government leaders. Survey data shows that less than a fifth of people believe leaders tell the truth when confronted with a difficult issue (Edelman, 2013). Therefore, if leadership is recognised as the key to the success or failure of organisations it might then seem that scholarship is not meeting the need and suggests a disconnect from the reality (Alvesson, 2019).

Likewise, how leadership is portrayed fuels its perceived significance in the way leaders are scrutinised, privileged and revered in heroic mythology (Hunter et al., 2007; Kelly, 2013). A perceived positive force and desirable traits celebrate leadership in a way that it is conceived as a panacea (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011; Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). Romanticism that suggests complex organisational problems are best left to larger than life leaders is challenged by Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich (1985) who argue the perspective stems from ideological belief rather than what leaders actually do. In general, leadership is assumed to provide individuals, who are not lucky enough to occupy such privileged status, with direction, reason and a sense of purpose in the workplace (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011; Kelly, 2013; Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Put differently, we believe in leadership and its effects and as a result are equally prepared to follow. For Alvesson and Spicer (2011), this assumption is a form of cognitive dissonance that offers simplistic and questionable foundations and obscure the complexities and contradictions of leadership theory.

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

Moreover, Alvesson (2019) argues the study of leadership research represents an illusion that elevates the work of managers on ideological grounds to something much more. What this means is that leaders are viewed as grand, impressive figures as opposed to straight-forward, humdrum managers. Further, published work feeds into a crowded space and the sprawling field is fragmented and confusing. He criticises the level of scholarship for both theoretical and methodological shortcomings which contribute to substandard knowledge claims that rarely investigate relations and interactions that are central to the idea. In other words, the suggestion is, despite some diversity in the field represented by interpretive studies, the discipline is dominated by quantitative research that seeks to measure correlations between leadership, variables and positive performance outcomes. That said, this may in fact have very little to do with researchers themselves and have more to do with the conceptual difficulty of how we unpack leadership. Therefore, the ubiquity of literature and potential impact of leadership as a discipline arguably is unwarranted as there have been no ground-breaking developments (Rumsey, 2013; Sadler, 2003). What this means is that instability in society, interest in successful companies, and anecdotal evidence from management gurus who purport to have the answers, assume it can be taught and developed and equally sustain interest (Sadler, 2003).

### 1.2: Defining Leadership

What has been said before inevitably brings me back to what leadership theorists have been grappling with for over a century. What we understand as truth in leadership amounts to anything, everything or nothing (Alvesson, 2019). Hoye, Smith, Westerbeek, Stewart, and Nicholson (2006) state, *leadership is the most researched yet least understood topic in the context of management. What we define as excellent leadership and who are great leaders remain points of serious academic debate.* Dubrin (2000) approximates there are 35,000 definitions of leadership in academic literature illustrating, not only the measure of interest, but its contested nature. Multiplicity in meaning contributes to the confused nature of the subject prompting critics to claim that leadership amounts to nothing more than a language game (Pye, 2005) and fuels the well-known claim by Stogdill (1974) that *there are as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept* (Bass, 1990, p. 11). Therefore, it is accurate to say that, what we understand by leadership remains

## Chapter 1: Literature Review

problematic, ill-defined and, what is truth, is essentially a philosophical debate (Grint et al., 2017).

By way of an example, a brief chronology of definitions highlight conceptual ambiguity and why study of leadership is so problematic. Jacobs and Jaques (1990) see leadership as a process of giving purpose to collective effort; whereas Lenz (1993) views it as involving diagnosing situations to achieve a desired future or avert significant problems; Northouse (1997) considers it as the process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal; Edwards, Winter, and Bailey (2002) introduce the concept of power to win the hearts and minds of people to achieve a common purpose; whereas Mullins (2004) sees it as a relationship to influence; and finally, Grint (2005) sees it simply, as having followers. On the face of it the above definitions sound positive indeed and suggests that the idea of leadership is something good. However, on closer inspection it shows, on one level, what people mean by leadership is unclear as it can refer to behaviours, interactions, relationships or a particular ideal. On the other, and more serious level, it shows that making firm claims about leadership and its positive impact on performance outcomes is unwise.

In light of the examples above, I go back to W. B. Gallie (1955) who claims leadership is an essentially contested concept that relies on agreement as to the most appropriate use of the idea. The point he makes is that when agreement cannot be reached as to the correct use of the term this results in philosophical debate. For Gallie (1955), contested concepts are complicated and are settled in various ways that attempt to convince others of the merits of a respective position. One of these ways concerns the phenomenon in question, the TEL, where researchers maintain they have proved that leaders who are considered experts in their field perform better than general managers (Goodall, 2012). Yet, we know that philosophical elucidations are far from straightforward to be accepted on face value and conceptual confusion often arises. Gallie (1955) reminds us these conceptual disputes are understandable as they typically depend on evidence or convincing arguments that users put forward. He gives the example of *works of art* and *democracy* where tastes, attitudes or perceptions contribute to their contested nature. When it comes to concepts that cannot be easily measured or appraised, conceptual disagreement is inevitable. Different uses by

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different users is what contributes to this lack of agreement and, in turn, conceptual confusion.

Grint et al. (2017) make an interesting proposition and suggest the starting point to understanding leadership is to firstly clarify the leadership in question. In introducing a typology, he argues, when discussing leadership, conceptual confusion arises when distinctions between the person, position, processes, outcomes or the purpose of leadership are not clear. This means that we are often talking at cross purposes and, therefore, before we look to define leadership we should decide on the main focus of the discussion. Following along with this thinking, Alvesson (2019, p. 28) describes leadership as a *maddening concept* and suggest that even though we know there are conceptual differences we either give up trying to understand what leadership is or accept that a consensus cannot be reached and find new ways of knowing.

Management agendas typically have leadership as a central focus leading to long debate as to whether management and leadership are one and the same (Takala, 1998). The terms are often used synonymously and interchangeably but evoke different meanings (Western, 2013). Strong supporters for management view it as a necessary function citing a lack of management as a threat to organisations (Dubrin, 2000; Mintzberg, 1973; Quinn, Faerman, Thompson, & McGrath, 2002). Whereas a consensus clearly demarcate management from leadership viewing leadership as essential to organisations (Adair, 2004; Kotter, 1999; Lussier & Kimball, 2010). Mintzberg (2004 p.6) writes; *leadership is supposed to be something bigger, more important. I reject this distinction, simply because managers have to lead, and leaders have to manage. Management without leadership is sterile; leadership without management is disconnected and encourages hubris.* This suggests to me that understanding the underlying process that is essential to both is a key to further understanding (Grint et al., 2017).

Examination of various roles in practice allow us to grasp the differences between managers and leaders but equally is rebuffed by the argument that managers embody both functions and acts of leadership often go unnoticed (Bratton, 2010; Mintzberg, 1973). The general view, however, is that management is seen as the lesser other to leadership (Western, 2013). Put bluntly, the complexity of differentiating between the two becomes apparent as commonly

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held views of management activity, such as planning and coordination, are more easily recognised whereas what occurs between people and the process of leadership can be more difficult to spot. With that said, the reader will come to see that this study has a single focus on managers in professional football who are assumed to be leaders and has the ambition of trying to understand their influence (Mullins, 2004).

### **1.3: Major Theory Development**

In regard to significant theory developments the proliferation of literature is commonly divided into major categories, theories and models which attempt to make sense of various perspectives (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011; Welty Peachey, Damon, Zhou, & Burton, 2015). Understanding leadership is said to begin with trait theories that focus on individual leaders and the traits and characteristics they possess (Bass, 2008; Bryman, 1992). Behavioural theories then focus on what effective leaders do (McGregor, 1966) and their leadership style (Tannenbaum, 1961). Situation and contingency theory explore the interaction between the behaviours and the context in which leadership is thought to exist (Fiedler, 1967). These early theories essentially refer to leadership as something that is done to others with the leader thought of as the source of influence through the process of leadership (Pye, 2005).

As theory development has continued there are unquestionably many theoretical perspectives that inform understanding. For example, transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1998) is the most widely researched area that assumes trust and respect for a leader provides the motivation for followers to achieve (Jones, 2019; Yammarino, 2013). Extant research contains an array of theories that focus on attributes and behaviours of leaders and place qualities or behaviours at the heart of the act (Bass, 1990; Bryman, 1992; McGregor, 1966; Tannenbaum, 1961). Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, et al. (2014 p.40) categories these neo-charismatic theories, which include transformational (Bass, 1998) and charismatic leadership (Bryman, 1992). Essentially, these ideas are not the focus of this study, however, the point to make is that some new theories contain traces of old ideas that reappear in fragmented ways (Takala, 1998) and serve to contribute to continued contradictions (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Western, 2013). As such, chapter two critically reviews the TEL where the same criticism might equally apply.

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In saying that, the number of leadership theories has grown in the last decade and the field has advanced from focus on general leadership processes to theories that help to understand leadership that are contingent on the level of leadership under investigation (Gardner, Lowe, Moss, Mahoney, & Cogliser, 2014). This, however, is problematic in that what is considered the 'best' leadership accepts theories as universal and in perpetuity, and does not consider appropriate leadership at a point in time and in a certain context (Grint, 2005; Wilson, 2013). New theory tends to plug leadership into frameworks or paradigms that ignore the context where the leadership occurs or is needed and assume no end until support for new forms of leadership gathers (Grint, 2005).

Furthermore, Zaccaro and Horn (2003) claim studies lack meaningful integration of theory and practice and argue a leadership theory and practice symbiosis (LTPS) is what captures the imagination and helps resolve challenges found in organisations. Taking these arguments together and bringing this section to some sort of a close, it is fair to say that what we assume to be leadership remains contested and equally unclear. Accepting this then raises an important question in terms of originality and what else can be understood from future study. The reader will see that my thesis addresses the concern, goes against convention and seeks to make its contribution by investigating the idea of appropriateness in context to provide new insight (Austin, 1962).

With all that said, a small but growing body of literature on leadership in professional football, in general, mirrors the previously discussed landscape in terms of a focus on leader disposition and effectiveness. To date extant research focuses on the role and behaviours of football managers (Kelly, 2008); the impact managers have on organisational outcomes (Bridgewater et al., 2011); impact of managerial change (Audas, Dobson, & Goddard, 2002); and leadership influence on and off the field of play (Molan, Matthews, & Arnold, 2016). Professional football does, however, offer a unique environment to study the TEL as football managers are considered to hold expert status (Mills & Boardley, 2016). For Avolio (2007) leadership is the combination of leaders, followers and complex contexts. It follows that this thesis aims to uncover the leadership influence expert football managers have on the people they interact

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with in this unique context, drawing on theoretical consideration and interpretation of lived experiences.

### 1.4: Leadership and Professional Football

Said to be popularised by iconic Brazilian football international Pele, *o jogo bonito* or *the beautiful game* is a well-known phrase in the game that refers to association football (also known as soccer, futbol or football in various parts) (Kelly, 2008). Such is football's standing as the world's most popular sport, there is intense public interest in a game that has great historical and socio-cultural significance (Chadwick & Hamil, 2010; Ogbonna & Harris, 2014). Although the main focus is on the many teams, clubs and those who play the game worldwide, there is growing interest in examples of leadership. Commonly referred to as the manager (more recently head coach) the football manager is viewed as a main decision maker and the person responsible for the ultimate success or failure of a team (Arnulf et al., 2012). According to Carter (2013, p. 1) *a manager's performance, both on the touchline and in front of the media, is now analysed as much as their team's, with their actions and words 'deconstructed' in the search for some hidden meaning. Yet the job of a football manager is a paradox. Few occupations are volatile or as pressurized, and failure ultimately results in the sack.*

From a leadership perspective, Brady et al. (2008, p. 54), in a study of successful football managers, retell stories of politicians who turn to football managers for leadership lessons. By way of an example, after the 2002 World Cup, where the hosts South Korea achieved a remarkable 4<sup>th</sup> place in the tournament under the leadership of Dutch coach, Jus Hiddink, South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung is quoted as saying, *we'd better apply the Hiddink-style leadership to the operation of the government as well as corporations.* He goes on to say *we need to break out of the traditional mould and become a creative business organization. I believe we have learned this very crucial lesson from observing Hiddink's team operation style.* Four years on, following the success of an unheralded German team that reached the semi-finals of the World Cup, German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, dubbed the team manager, Jürgen Klinsmann, *the ideal leader.* Indeed, countless examples can be found from within the history of the game that suggest that there is much to be learned from leaders in professional football that might be applied elsewhere (Brady et al., 2008). In saying that, Carter (2013), who explores the history of the football manager, refutes the idea and argues football

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management is simply a reflection of wider society and changes in business management. However, what has been said before is done to make the point that academic study of these high profile, public figures might return some interesting or enlightening.

### 1.5: The Role of the Football Manager

To provide a bit of context, leaders in professional club football structures (**Figure 1**) are typically known as Owners or Chairmen who provide the resource and set the strategic direction for off-the-pitch activity. Whereas, manager is the designation given to individuals who are responsible for the core business or on-field performance that ultimately decides the fortunes of a football club (Flint, Plumley, & Wilson, 2016; Mills & Boardley, 2016). Without revisiting and igniting further debate on management versus leadership (Drucker, 2012) the role of a football manager, in many ways, is a leadership position. Prevailing discourse suggests that football managers are regarded as the most important employee of a club but with that comes intense scrutiny of both the individual and the performance of their team (Molan et al., 2016). In this sense and for the purposes of this study, whether football managers are or are not the most important person in the organisation, the manager is also considered a leader. Therefore, for clarity, manager is used throughout to mean leader.



**Figure 1: Typical Organisational Structure in Professional Football**

Source: Byars, Alex, Director of Strategic Projects, Everton Football Club (2015)



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It is also thought that sport in general is a distinctive industry with management challenges that are not found in other business areas and require distinctive management practices (Stewart & Smith, 1999). The argument also extends to professional sport with the view that the industry has a set of unique characteristics that require special consideration (Smith & Stewart, 2010; Stewart & Smith, 1999). By way of an example, Stewart and Smith (1999) cite the wage structure in professional football where, unlike traditional business structures, the highest paid employees (players) are found at the bottom of the pyramid as players are commonly paid more than managers and executives in some leagues. Moreover, football managers are assumed to be experts in their field and the majority having played professionally before starting a career in management or are developed from within the game via a coaching route (Mills & Boardley, 2016). Very few managers secure a position without prior or substantial involvement in the game (Dawson & Dobson, 2002). And, to manage at the top level of the game requires managers to undertake qualifications that sees them attain a level of expertise. This means that the progression pathway of managers grants them expert status within the football community which is the main idea of a TEL (Goodall, 2012). To illustrate, managers in England are required to achieve the highest national coaching qualification (Football Association level 5) to work at a top level club (FA, 2018). Therefore, as an aide mémoire to the reader, recognised qualifications together with this unique career path, means I assume managers in professional football to be expert leaders.

In saying all that, paradoxically, Carlo Ancelotti, a two time winner as a player and three times as a manager of Europe's most prestigious club competition, the Champions league, makes the point that most professional football players who turn to management receive little or no management and leadership training prior to taking their first job as a manager (Ancelotti, Brady, & Forde, 2016). This is particularly surprising when you consider business leaders typically receive some form of formal training and calls into question the ability of football managers to lead (Frydman, 2007). It perhaps explains, in part, why some former greats (as players) do not go on to become successful managers, as the demands of management and playing are not directly complimentary. From days gone by, legendary Manchester United manager, Sir Matt Busby said, *the best footballers do not necessarily make the best managers. It is even closer to the facts to say that great players seldom make successful managers. The*

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*technical gifts that make a footballer great have little in common with the gifts that make for managership and indeed they may constitute actual drawback for good managership* (Busby, 1974, p. 134).

Among other things, managers directly contribute to the formulation of tactics, team selection and player acquisition, things that are ultimately thought to affect sporting performance (González-Gómez, Picazo-Tadeo, & García-Rubio, 2011). And, although much of the focus on managers centres on the important relationship with players, managers also embody clubs or organisations and interact with many stakeholders, such as board members, media and supporters. Kelly and Harris (2010) examine the complex relationship between managers and those who sit above them in the structure, such as owners and directors. Their findings suggest a fractious relationship with feelings of hostility and distrust a common feature. The suggestion being, despite their roles at the top of a football club, directors and owners are perceived by managers and players as *outsiders* because of a lack of football knowledge but decisions they take effect on-field performance. Whilst these findings are thought-provoking it must be said that players and managers have a limited view and experience of the business of running a football club and, no doubt, only see the role of owners and directors in terms of how their decisions affect their ability to perform.

Findings from a study by Morrow and Howieson (2014) suggest aspiring football managers do recognise, as part of their career progression, that they must learn to trust others within a club structure and acknowledge that they do not have full autonomy and control over all aspects of the business. In saying that the far reaching nature of the role, together with complex relationships both inside and outside of an organisation and perception that good football managers make a significant difference, fuel the view that the manager is the most important person in a football organisation (Kelly, 2008; Molan et al., 2016). Yet there is no getting away from the fact that players are the ones who ultimately decide results with their performances on the pitch and at this point a manager's impact is limited to standing on the touchline watching the result unfold. Equally, the reality is owners of football clubs invest considerable finances to keep a club afloat (Ogbonna & Harris, 2014). What this infers is that

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understanding the impact of so-called expert managers means understanding relationships that exist within this context, which are far from straightforward (Kelly, 2008).

Finally, in collaboration with legendary football manager Sir Alex Ferguson, the Harvard Business School developed a case study of leadership lessons to capture crucial elements of his approach, experiences and success (Elberse, 2013). However, accepting limitations of case study research, means it is difficult to generalise about what is put forward from single or even multiple cases (Yin, 2014). As a result, the problem with this and many other viewpoints of this kind is that they assume organisational success can be attributed to one individual and neglect situational factors and environmental interactions that may equally affect performance. Further, the obsession with manager achievement often ignores countless examples of leadership failures which can have dramatic consequences for organisations. That said, this research is set in a unique context where, despite many high-profile managerial failings, expertise is presumed an important ingredient of success and as such I consider an exploration of the TEL in this context apposite.

### 1.6: Manager Impact

At the highest level of professional football the challenges facing managers are considerable due to the high profile nature of the role and extreme pressures to get results (Bridgewater, 2010; Carter, 2013). Bridgewater (2010) describes managing in football as working in a *fishbowl* insomuch as their work is open to intense public examination. Arguably, what sets football managers apart from their business counterparts, is that their performance is subject to public scrutiny, not only in terms of their overall contribution to success, but also their personal attributes and character (Brady et al., 2008). However, much like traditional business examples, methodological challenges exist to isolate manager input from organisational success which makes this a difficult area to study (Wang, Tsui, & Xin, 2011).

In saying that, on one hand, data from sports leagues and its labour force is readily available so detailed information about managers, players and performance makes study of this nature appealing (Brady et al., 2008; Bridgewater et al., 2011). On the other hand, it also means there is an obsession with statistical measures as predictors of manager impact on team performance which in reality only presents one side of the equation. For example,

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Bridgewater et al. (2011) state the ways in which managers contribute to organisational success is crucial to the study of human resource management. That is to say, the study of the impact of football managers on club performance is comparable in importance to attempts to understand CEO attributes and effect (Hambrick & Quigley, 2014; Wang et al., 2011). And, much like the so-called 'CEO effect', where leaders are thought to influence organisational outcomes, the debate that extends to professional football is equally problematic.

What this means is that there is a commonly held assumption that on-field performance is down to the football manager and choosing the right person essential to success (Taylor, Doherty, & McGraw, 2015). Furthermore, the continued rise in revenues of successful clubs in elite football leagues puts pressure on managers to deliver success or untimely pay the price (Flint et al., 2016). For example, the English Premier League (EPL), which is by far the highest revenue generating league in Europe (€4.4 billion in 2015/16), eclipses the next best German league by €2 billion per year (Deloitte, 2017). Hope (2003) suggests the role of the manager is to maximise points achieved in a league campaign as each league position in the EPL estimated to be worth £1.3 million with the champion receiving £24.7 million. In turn, Owners and Chairman are well aware of this and, in many ways, are chief sources of the pressure put on managers as the appointment of the wrong manager can be costly. In real terms, Chelsea, for example recently announced they paid out £26 million over the sacking of Antonio Conte, with the owner, Roman Abramovich, forking out a reported £90 million for managers that have been dismissed since his purchase of the club in 2003 (Steinberg, 2020).

Together with manager impact, another research stream looks at idea of managerial productivity. Dawson and Dobson (2002) use frontier production analysis to examine links between manager performance and human capital. This involves examination of important factors that determine sporting performance where they conclude a manager's initial playing experience matters most to club performance. Bridgewater et al. (2011), adopt the same methodology to examine the relationship between manager and player skill level on performance. Using data panels from British football from 1994-2007 to evaluate team success, the study assumes former playing ability and experience as a proxy for management

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skill and expenditure on player wages as a measure of their ability. Their findings indicate that managers who played at a high-level raise performance of lesser skilled players more than those of higher skilled players. Additionally, managers with greater managerial experience are more able to raise performance levels of the more skilled players greater than managers with less experience. The inference is that manager playing ability is more important in interactions with less skilled players, whereas their management experience serves to moderate and manage egos of the highly skilled players to raise aspirations of performance levels.

On one level these findings are plausible but must be interrogated further in view of the number of managers who have enjoyed exceptional careers as players but lose jobs for perceived failures (Bridgewater, 2010). According to Berri, Michael, Marikova, and Mondello (2009) organisations mistakenly attribute the efforts of leaders to success and the misconception that on-field performance is attributed to the manager, is just that. Further to this, Brady et al. (2008) analyse data from the EPL from 2000-2006 and show a correlation between performance (measured by league position) and available talent. This means, when compared, teams with the most expensive talent pool (in terms of player wages), on average, outperform those who spend less on player wages. And, although this seems a matter of common sense emphasising the importance players bring to success, likewise, there is no guarantee that spending brings about success as countless expensive player acquisitions have shown (Brady et al., 2008; Bridgewater et al., 2011). What it serves to do is bring balance to the debate and highlights the core problem of drawing conclusions in this way. Importantly, I look beyond these headlines and go on to argue that there is something else to understand about these figureheads and the influence they have on people that cannot be explained by statistical inference alone.

My review of the impact that managers in professional football ends with an early study that uses a regression analysis technique to assess a correlation between expenditure on players, manager contribution and final league position. Szymanski and Kupers (1999) report during 1978 and 1997 spending on players accounts for 92% of a team's final league position, with the managers contribution estimated to amount to a paltry 2%. This is also compared to data sets from the years 1950 to 1960 where the impact of player spending only accounts for 50%

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of final league position. Explanatory reasons for the discrepancy are rationalised by comparative wages levels and restrictions on player movement at the time (Carter, 2013). Methodological issues aside, the assumption here is that football managers operate under different conditions and understanding these conditions is of considerable importance to performance outcome. It also suggests to me is that understanding the impact of a football manager requires different ways of thinking to account for, not only performance measures, but also important historical, cultural and social conditions in which football managers lead.

With that said, invariably studies on the impact of football managers also leads to scholarship on the implications of changing a manager that also reinforce ideology that football managers matter. However, measurement on the worth of football managers is ambiguous and what is known about how they influence organisational performance speculative (Audas et al., 2002). Wagg (1984, p. 174) sums up the dilemma writing, *it is simply wrong to equate the performance of a football team with the performance of its manager. It makes no more sense, in principle, to...blame the head teacher of an inner city secondary modern school for regularly poor exam results.*

### 1.7: Managerial Change in Professional Football

In light of the discussion above, it should come as no surprise that managerial impact is also studied from the perspective of whether a change of manager improves on-field performance. However, as is the case with research on CEO impact, results are equivocal (Georgakakis & Ruigrok, 2016). Audas et al. (2002) provide one of the most comprehensive studies that examine results from every English professional league game between 1972 and 1993. And, despite some 700 mid-season manager changes findings indicate that replacing a manager does not improve team performance and also has a negative effect on team performance immediately after a dismissal (0-6 games). Hope (2003) comes in with an economic modelling technique that examines EPL data from the 1996/1997 to 2001/2002 seasons and puts forward what he deems is a *trap door* figure. He argues managers who accumulate only 0.76 points per game end up being dismissed. On one hand the figure is understandable, as over a 38-game season this is a dangerously low return considering 0.76 points per game means a team will only achieve 29 points over the season, but in isolation is problematic. Fast forward, if we consider the team that finished bottom in the EPL in the

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2017/18 season (West Bromwich Albion) achieved only 31 points, yet retained their manager at the end of the season, points alone tell you very little about what is going on at the club or indeed the manager at that time (EPL, 2018). Many factors contribute to the accumulation of points, not least the quality of the opposition, and attributing statistical measures to the dismissal of a manager can raise more questions than it provides answers.

Elsewhere, Flint, Plumley, and Wilson (2014) analyse secondary data on managerial changes in the highest division in English football over a decade to examine performance in relation to league position. On the face of it, the work is convincing as findings indicate a change of manager leads to a subsequent increase in points per match, despite the fact that this does not always lead to improvement in final league position. Moreover, they find teams in the top half of the table do not improve their league position following the dismissal, whereas teams in the bottom half of the table do. They conclude that owners and board members should consider respective league position as the important determinant before deciding whether to change the manager. Once more, it is no surprise that researchers adopt this stance, however, they make no attempt to account for the particular context of a club at the time that coexists with league position. Which means, whilst it may be an important metric, it would be less than judicious to sack a manager based on league position alone.

Finally, Hughes, Hughes, Mellahi, and Guermat (2010), who undertake similar research in the EPL, support these findings and suggest managerial change does see an upturn in short term results (10 games after the change) only for performance to decline in the long run (30 games). Carter (2013) calls this short-sighted thinking a self-fulfilling prophecy that assumes a new manager gives the team a lift. Whereas, others show results tend to pick up when owners stick with a manager through a difficult period (Audas et al., 2002). In this way, league position and financial reward that comes with results appear to define manager impact and success, irrespective of current socio-economic conditions. But simply put, obscure the very obvious fact that only one team can win the league and only one can finish on the bottom!

Extending the discussion to studies from other countries returns similar results and lead researchers to conclude that sacking a manager mid-season is not effective in terms of team performance (Bruinshoofd & ter Weel, 2003; De Paola & Scoppa, 2012; Koning, 2003). In

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opposition, Gonzalez-Gomez, Picazo-Tadeo, and Garcia-Rubio (2011) use data envelopment analysis, a mathematical efficiency measurement technique, and find mid-season managerial change in the Spanish first division improves on-field results, although this does not see those teams go on to outperform the ones who do not change managers during the season. Arguable these results are to be expected as changing a manager halfway through a season is a sign that the team is not performing well and might well be in the lower half of the league table. These studies operate on the assumption that the incoming manager is able to turn things around, against competition that is already outperforming them, which is conceptually difficult to accept as a general rule. It also highlights methodological challenges, as most of these studies present statistical analyses that fail to separate manager impact from performance outcomes, which suggests to me they are incomplete and are of limited value.

Overall, authors present hard edge statistical data that predict the impact of a changing a manager but do not look beyond results and league position. This raises serious questions about the leadership of the football manager and their influence that contributes to results as team performance undoubtedly involves the management of people and working relationships. Changing a manager and the impact this might have is one side, but how managers influence people to enable them to perform is the part that is not well understood. This quote from Paul Frantz, a French football manager, makes the point precisely when he says a team (T) *is not simply the addition of 1 plus 1 plus 1 all the way to 11. It's a multiplication.  $T = (1+2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9+10+11)$  to the power of N. N is the influence of the manager* (Brady et al., 2008).

### 1.8: Manager Influence

With all that said, despite the very public and often high-profile nature of a football manager very little is known about how they go about their work. This might be because professional football is largely a closed, idiosyncratic environment, that is shrouded in tradition, culture, people and myth (Potrac et al., 2007). Perry (2000, p. 62) points out *given the widespread interest in the soccer manager, it is strange that so little is really understood about him and his contemporary role*. In turn Beswick (2001) suggests this creates mystique around managers and the methods they employ to produce successful teams. He goes on further to suggest that much of what we know about football managers in Great Britain is limited to



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anecdotal and auto or biographical accounts of how they behave and operate. Carter (2013) also makes an important point that, in corporate terms, football clubs are relatively small organisations and suggests managers have a greater potential to influence throughout the organisation. In fact, Ogbonna and Harris (2014), undertake empirical case study research of an EPL club with a very successful past and point out there are artefacts that exist in the club museum that depict their most successful manager. This particular individual is held up as a heroic figure and is credited as the one who revived the fortunes and spirit of the club. The study shows another way that managers in professional football are explored and perceptions and interpretations that point to manager influence.

Potrac et al. (2007, p. 43) add to limited literature on football managers with empirical research that focuses on the coaching aspect of the role to understand power relations with players. Using systematic methods, they observe behaviours of participants during training sessions, at three points during a season, to evaluate practices. The manager's coaching behaviours are recorded and coded against an established behavioural scale with findings organised around occurrences on four dimensions (instruction, praise, scold and silence). Despite the fact that the use of praise is the most frequently observed coaching behaviour this is explained as a power dynamic between players and manager in that praise, not only enhances belief and confidence levels, but is also viewed as a power dimension as it reinforces desired behaviours. In terms of leadership influence, framed by French and Raven's (1959) typology of power, the authors conclude that *a power-ridden and complex social activity* exists between players and coaches.

Potrac, Jones, and Armour (2010) extend the discussion to a study in semi-professional football with an interesting finding that expert coaches try to create a bond with players that is not only based on respect for their football knowledge and experience, but one that is based on respect for them as individuals as well. Though coaching is only one aspect of a manager's multifaceted role what these findings do suggest, however, is that there is something else to the relationship, in terms of the person, that might be understood (Molan et al., 2016). In fact, Park, Seo, and Ko (2016), in a nuanced study of textual material of nine managers of the South Korean national team find successful leaders display virtues such as trust, sincerity and

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servitude toward players. And, unsuccessful managers are dogmatic, poor communicators and autocratic in their approach. After all, leadership is still a human act and if we look beyond some of the myth that is written about managers and the environment, I argue that exploring these virtues may reveal much more about the complexity than traditional approaches.

Kelly (2008), in an extensive study of leadership in professional football, looks more broadly at the manager's influence. Using evidence from semi-structured interviews with managers and players he explores issues of power, legitimacy and dominance. Drawing on Max Weber's (1964) ideas of authority to understand how and why the role of the football manager continues to be based on traditional forms of authority. He argues that despite rapid globalisation and the professionalisation of the game, in areas such as sponsorship and ticket sales, the role of football manager remains largely unchanged and resists modern forms of leadership. Further, Penn (2002) points out that very few managers have a standard job description (as we know it) that clearly outlines roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. The suggestion is managers at football clubs have a high degree of autonomy in how they operate and few constraints on how they lead. Nonetheless, this argument can be seen differently, as it assumes that modern-day players, for instance, are not powerless. At the highest level, players typically earn more than the manager, and there have been many instances where it is not a one way, and *player power* cited as reasons behind the sacking of a manager (Morrow & Howieson, 2014).

Furthermore, in an earlier study that focuses on the way in which managers discipline and maintain control, Kelly and Waddington (2006a) provide evidence of abuse and intimidation. Their findings reveal incidents of physical and verbal abuse and even acts of violence by professional football managers. This might suggest that managers have free reign in how they lead. However, if we return to the reality that in 2016-17 the average tenure for managers in the EPL was 1.16 years, then it is clear the power of the manager might be exaggerated (LMA, 2016). It is safe to say that the position of a football manager is never secure and ultimately their fate rests with owners and a board. Kelly (2008, p. 402) concludes by saying many aspects of modern-day football management still involve traditional forms of authority that is *based on respect for the sanctity of age-old rules and customs, which involves loyalty to a*

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*personal master*. This implies that despite modern influences on the game leaders in football play by different rules. More specifically, what we understand in terms of contemporary leadership and the influence of leaders today may not be found in a study of expert football managers themselves, and greater understanding of individual lived experiences from the 'inside' may uncover something else.

That being said, Molan et al. (2016) argue that research in relation to football managers tends to focus on on-pitch activity and there is very little knowledge of leadership away from the playing side. Arnulf et al. (2012) view the manager's off-field role and interactions with various stakeholders equally salient. Importantly, they suggest this is the reason why a number of theoretical perspectives are used to understand the role of the modern football manager. In line with contemporary thinking, it could be argued that there are distinctive ways of understanding the leadership of a football manager. Heroic writers view the manager as the single source of influence and study leadership and power (Kelly, 2008) and transformational leadership where managers seek to influence and inspire from social interaction (Mills & Boardley, 2016). Post-heroic researchers invoke ideas such as team leadership as a theoretical lens to explain the leadership (Potrac et al., 2010). Whereas, critical research addresses a dark side and bring to light issues of abuse, intimidation and mistrust in football management (Kelly & Harris, 2010; Kelly & Waddington, 2006b). Taken together, the literature suggests that the influence that football managers have on those who they interact with is wide ranging but is not always positive.

Molan et al. (2016) extend the literature to describe manager role and behaviours investigating four semi-professional clubs in Ireland. Using a phenomenological design, they capture experiences of managers, players and board members. In terms of working with players the study identifies key leadership dimensions, such as, implementing a strategy, setting performance expectations and effective communication. Whereas, managing relationships, motivating support staff and influencing through the media are considered important off-the-pitch leadership behaviours when working with other stakeholders. Although these are noteworthy findings the relatively small sample (n=11) and limitations of phenomenological design mean all we can take from the study is descriptive and a better

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understanding of what managers do off the field of play (Pernecky, 2016). However, much like Stogdill (1948) recognised some 70 years ago, trying to understand leadership in football this way, as a universal set of attributes and behaviours of expert managers, is problematic and brings us no closer to understanding the issue.

Considered all together, I argue that in general, the literature portrays romanticism (Collinson, Smolović Jones, & Grint, 2018) and football managers as important figures, who hold tremendous power and authority to provide ‘good’ leadership that inspire and empower followers (Alvesson, 2019). However, my review identifies gaps in what is currently understood around the idea of leadership influence that football managers have on people. As Yukl (2008) suggests, amongst the plethora of definitions, the notion of leadership influence is the most common idea and suggests someone influential doing the *right* things that bring about positive outcomes. In other words, leadership is associated with assumed forces that develop from meaningful relationships that stir action. Alvesson (2019) rejects this line of thinking and contends that we all exercise influence at times and to view acts of leadership this way largely means that it includes more than it rules out.

This naturally raises the question about, as Heidegger says, the *being* of leadership influence and how we can know ideal influence in the world (Heidegger, 1962). Viewed this way, existentialist philosophy recognises the potential to discover truths that exists in shared experiences and understanding of individual lifeworlds (Ashman & Lawler, 2008). In chapter three I offer a conceptual framework that unpicks this further and attempts to answer these questions. In addition to this, I go on to argue that there are conditions football managers must meet in order for leadership influence to be appropriate. Viewed differently, football managers are employees of a club or organisation that have their own traditions that are arguably in place before they arrives. As the reader will later come to see I show that, regardless of the role of a manager, attributes and how they interact with various stakeholders, to have a positive influence they must meet with appropriate conditions for leadership influence to be realised.

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### 1.9: Summary

The burgeoning body of knowledge that contributes to the discipline of leadership continues to thrive with research that seeks to provide explanations as to how leadership works (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). However, despite a wealth of literature what we know to be true remains contentious and contradictory (Grint et al., 2017). New theories claim to bring us closer to genuine knowledge yet continue to emanate from grand theory assumptions (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011). And, although leadership remains high on management agendas, common approaches suffer from epistemic problems that fail to advance what is already known (Alvesson, 2019). So, it follows that I argue ideas of contemporary leadership, such as the TEL, can be reimagined by challenging understanding from different perspectives and embrace more nuanced approaches that move debate beyond conventional ways of theory development.

Professional football offers a unique environment to study the leadership of expert managers because the challenges they face occur in a high profile and pressurised environment that, paradoxically, is insular in nature (Mills & Boardley, 2016; Molan et al., 2016). Despite a dearth of literature, leadership in professional football is written about in very different ways. And, football managers are said to obtain expert status from distinguished playing careers honed over many years within the game (Morrow & Howieson, 2014). Rightly or wrongly, there is also an obsession with on-field results as the measure of success and changing the manager is seen as the answer to poor performance (Audas et al., 2002; Flint et al., 2014; Hope, 2003).

Extant research also tends to focus exclusively on the role of the manager, attributes and how they interact with stakeholders (Penn, 2002; Perry, 2000; Potrac, Jones, & Armour, 2002). And, although there is overlap with on-the-pitch and off-field duties, what is also clear as Carter (2013, p. 162) puts it is, *the perception of the manager as a powerful figure has continued to grow, and his success, or failure, has become increasingly public. Whatever their impact, directors, players and fans alike have deemed that managers matter.* As such I assume that football managers are influential figures who can make a lasting impression in the way they manage and lead (Ogbonna & Harris, 2014).

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The importance of this perspective I understand but it strikes me that, as a society, we are obsessed with productivity and action. Therefore, I argue contrariwise for an alternative approach to understanding the problem. I suggest we put performance outcomes to one side, and from among the many definitions, I borrow from Yukl (2013, p. 19) who says leadership *is the exercise of interpersonal influence, is a complex, multi-faceted, form of performance - leadership does not exist unless something happens*. This means that I view leadership as performativity and the influence managers have on people a means of understanding expert leadership (Blackshaw, 2017). I further go on to argue that influential football managers must meet human conditions that exist within the tradition (Austin, 1962; Gadamer, 1989). And, this can be revealed by examining views of those who can give first-hand accounts of experiences of working with football managers to gain deeper insights.

Following the thinking of Szymanski and Kupers (1999), who suggest managers operate under ever-changing historical conditions, I create a juxtaposition and suggest that professional football clubs operate with their own felicity conditions and managing, in the requisite way, requires them to meet certain conditions in the eyes of those who they seek to influence (Austin, 1962). My suggestion is, football managers have to understand and operate within the conditions they find, which is handed down in long histories and traditions (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001). As Carter (2013, p. 162) surmises *managers have made an impact, and it has been all the more evident because football clubs, instead of resembling monolithic corporations, are really small organizations. And as such, the human factor becomes more important. The potential of an individual to influence outcomes is much greater but this potential is often constrained by football's management culture*.

To bring the chapter to a close, Avolio (2007) argues for more integrative approaches to leadership theory development that help us understand the best and worst of the construct. The suggestion being, for greater understanding, research should not only consider interactions of leaders and followers but also account for time, history and culture that combine to build understanding. I also argue the problem is as much (if not more so) epistemological rather than theoretical or empirical. On the basis of this review and associated issues, I put forward Gadamerian thinking that concerns a form of truth that is

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built on interpretation to understand expert manager influence (not outcomes) in a new light. This requires an understanding of tradition and what is handed down that is difficult to escape (Carter, 2013; Ogbonna & Harris, 2014). As Gardner (1990, p. 1) puts it *leaders cannot be thought of apart from the historic context in which they arise, the setting in which they function...and the system over which they preside. They are an integral part of the system, subject to the forces that affect the system.* Adopting this thinking, the foundation of my thesis goes on to argue that the TEL can be understood hermeneutically, as truth that emerges in context, and working out the hermeneutic situation assumes facts themselves do not matter where leadership is concerned. This means that truth cannot be grasped from the outside as there can only be interpretations that form new horizons (Eco, 1999; Gadamer, 1989).

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As has been highlighted in the preceding chapter there are ambiguities, contradictions and challenges with contemporary leadership research that mean developing any new idea is not a straightforward task. That is to say, what we know about any idea of leadership is contentious and a source of debate (Grint et al., 2017). It appears that the only thing we can rely on is the proliferation of research coupled with interest in the increasing complexity of organisational and management structures that provide fertile grounds for theoretical development (Dionne et al., 2014). However, the main criticism, when it comes to new ideas, is that theory tends to plug into frameworks or paradigms that ignore conceptual and methodological difficulties that have gone before until support for an idea or new forms of leadership takes place (Grint et al., 2017).

In saying that, this chapter builds on the last with a central aim to critically evaluate literature that sets out one such new idea, the theory of expert leadership (TEL). Mindful of the previous debate, this chapter locates the concept and rigorously discusses what is currently known. It also offers critique that will begin to set out my own thesis so the reader may anticipate the direction I have chosen to take. The chapter expressly argues that extant research in this area is limited, and as a result, leaves room for further exploration. I further argue that in order to develop the TEL, there is a need for a different approach so that we might begin to better understand the bigger question of, how and why it is thought that those who are considered experts in their field make better leaders (Goodall, 2012).

In many ways the TEL is an interesting talking point in that it evidences correlations that organisations perform better when they are led by individuals who are considered experts. This proposition is demonstrated in a number of studies in knowledge-based environments that include universities, hospitals and sporting settings. However, for these claims to be substantiated, it is judicious for me to delve deeper into the inner workings and unpack the presumed leadership process that brings about such findings. In other words, to discuss and evaluate how researchers justify the TEL and identify gaps and opportunities for theory development. This will then begin to show the reader how my thesis can build upon the current body of knowledge and provide alternative ways of looking at this social phenomenon.



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### **2.1: Support for a TEL**

The TEL is a nascent body of knowledge in business literature that posits experts in their field make better leaders. The central argument is that organisations perform better when they are led by individuals who have a deep understanding of the core business (Goodall, 2012). Put differently, leaders who are experts in their field are linked with better organisational outcomes over those run by general managers. The debate stems from concern that general managers, with skills that are transferable across companies and industries, are being recruited over so called experts in their field (Bertrand, 2009; Custodio et al., 2013; Frydman, 2007). The implication being that leaders with deep understanding of the core business have an inherent advantage of being successful over someone from the outside.

To date research is confined to a very small but growing number of studies that focus wholly on a positive correlation between the idea of expert leaders and their impact on performance outcomes (Goodall, 2009, 2009a, 2009b, 2015; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015; Goodall & Stoller, 2017). Empirical support for the TEL and effects on performance are found in a number of settings and begins with the first major study, set in the context of research-intensive universities. Goodall (2009a, 2009b) finds that a leader's scholarly ability correlates positively to an institution's position in sector league tables. In this context, what this means is that research competence (measured by lifetime citations) is found to be significant to this institutional measure of success.

The study looks, first, at the heads of the world's top 100 universities, before shifting focus to Deans in top business schools. A mixed methods approach that combines quantitative data of 400 leaders with semi-structured interviews finds that universities perform better when they are led by highly cited scholars. Using UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) results from 1992, 1996 and 2001 as the dependant variable and lifetime citations of 157 university leaders, a relationship between organisational outcomes and the research profile of the leader is found. Furthermore, qualitative data from semi-structured interviews provide explanations for this causal effect. With this, Goodall (2009a) concludes with the normative argument that leading academics, and not general managers, should lead research intensive universities. The suggestion being these leaders have a deep understanding and knowledge of the environment and are perceived as credible figureheads. They are also able to set high

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standards and are standard bearers as they can uphold the standards they promote. Simply put, minds are won over by an individual's prestige, accomplishments and reputation they have acquired in the industry.

On the face of it this is attention-grabbing, seems plausible and implies something important in terms of what we might look for when choosing future leaders. However, on closer inspection, it raises conceptual and methodological concerns that are difficult to overlook. Based on the mode of knowing what is suggested is dubious and perhaps exaggerated. Methodologically, this input-output mode of thinking raises questions of leader input (Alvesson, 2019). What this means is that for this or any other study that attribute leader contribution to organisational success, separating them is always problematic. In this case, it is difficult to assess how much of a leader's prior research output amounts to the overall performance measure. Further, this means that maybe we are confusing two different ideas; the ability to research and the ability to lead. Research citations are one thing but in terms of leadership it is unclear what this finding reveals about how results are achieved.

This also links to conceptual issues that undoubtedly affect the way findings are interpreted. Conflating expert leaders and performance outcomes using statistical methods only informs what is found in a dataset and is also dependant on the line of questioning. This means that the approach presents a descriptive feature that is advanced to make claims about impact which, in turn, is linked to leadership. In other words, the study has value in that it highlights particular attributes that suggest expert leadership and then draws conclusions on this basis (Flanigan, 2017). However, approaches like this do not conceptually specify what is required to achieve purported performance outcomes, insofar as they only identify what Brown and Treviño (2006) refer to as antecedents and consequences of leadership. Therefore, how those who are considered expert leaders improve organisational outcomes becomes an important question.

What is more, qualitative data from the study that, firstly, is not recorded and is then analysed from hand-written notes, raises small issues of trustworthiness (Bryman, 2016). Nonetheless, secondly, and a main criticism, is that whilst there are strong suggestions as to why leaders who are experts in their field appear to have positive impacts on organisational outcomes

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these do not go far enough and lack theoretical grounding. This means the process by which these outcomes are achieved and, importantly, how it translates to leadership needs some sort of conceptual justification. Suggestions that expert leaders instantly gain respect and credibility, set the standard and can walk the proverbial walk are based on a psychology of leaders, or in this case, how leaders perceive themselves (Goodall, 2009). Put another way, if expert leaders are all of these things, then what these scholars claim is not justified as it does not sufficiently explain how they achieve these impressive outcomes (Flanigan, 2017).

This issue of specialists versus generalists is once again examined in a study that tests a hypothesis that hospitals perform better when they are led by qualified doctors (Goodall et al., 2011). Statistical analysis of a cross-sectional data set from the top 100 US hospitals in three specialist areas, namely cancer, heart disorders and surgery and digestive disorders, paired with quality scores, measured by an Index of Hospital Quality (produced by US media outlets to inform consumers where to go for medical problems), find that hospitals that are led by doctors score 25% higher, on average, on this measure (Goodall et al., 2011). Further to this, Stoller et al. (2016) draw from a similar evidence base and add that according to the 2016 US News and World Report (USNWR) ranking, the best two hospitals in the US were led by highly skilled physicians. They also preserve the claim that these figureheads earn credibility based on expertise and considerable experience and also understand better how to lead in the environment.

Along with previous research, these arguments suffer epistemological problems meaning that there are reasons to be cautious. Establishing firm assertions without rigorous understanding of the context and conditions in which these leaders operate can only lead to broad assumptions about cause and effect (Flanigan, 2017). Further, choices of the dependent variables in both studies, university league tables and a quality index in hospitals, lead to questions as to whether these are suitable and reliable performance metrics. University rankings, for example, contain contested measures, such as star ratings of journal article quality, that are socially constructed measures and subjectively determined (Gobet, 2016). Also, a cross-sectional design mean results only identify patterns and associations at a particular point in time which can only then be taken forward as predictive conjecture.

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Alvesson (2019) criticises this type of approach for what he claims is reification of leadership that attempts to combine personal attributes into a coherent leadership phenomenon that then can be measured. The argument is that qualities are artificially chosen and lack sufficient explanation as to how they work together (Yukl, 2009). For Alvesson (2019, p. 34), *this assembling of different and diffuse issues into a well packaged object also masks the fundamental problem of leadership as a relation and in any relation there may be rather different views on the subject matter*. What this means for this study is that it presents an opportunity, if viewed differently, to address aforementioned gaps in understanding.

Statistical, leader-centric measures, reported from the perspective of what leaders think, do not provide evidence as to the social influencing process that might contribute to organisational outcomes. In other words, viewed another way can bring the phenomenon to life. I argue that stories of real experience allow the reader to feel expert leadership and understand how it is thought to work in a particular context. Therefore, to add weight to the argument, it seems to me that by taking the juxtaposition position that investigates leadership influence, and not performance outcomes, from the perspective of those who have lived experience, has the potential to unlock deeper insights.

The research stream continues with evidence found in two sporting contexts to address questions of how much specialist knowledge and experience of the core business leaders need to be effective. In US professional basketball, where performance data is readily available, the playing success of coaches is associated with coaching success in later years (Goodall et al., 2011). The authors analyse winning percentages of National Basketball Association (NBA) games over a seven-year period as the measure of team performance and coaching success together with data on former playing background. Longitudinal data shows a correlation that suggests leaders are able to draw on successful playing careers to go on to become successful coaches. Results also indicate that teams perform better when they are led by coaches who enjoyed successful playing careers with the largest effect mostly seen in the first year of appointment. Additionally, a sizeable difference of six places in the winning percentage table is found between coaches who played at the highest level and coaches who never played professionally. Goodall et al. (2011) argue that a coach's stellar background as a

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player gives them a deep understanding of the game and this brings great benefit to team performance. Knowledge and experience also provide credibility as a leader and allows expert leaders to devise winning strategies based on these unique insights (Goodall et al., 2011). To put it simply, the findings imply that expertise in a domain is a strong predictor of success.

This evidence adds to a paucity of research on leader characteristics and attributes that relate to organisational performance in sport overall (Fitza, 2016). Frick and Simmons (2008) use statistical analysis of data panels from the top division of the German professional league that show how relative coach salaries impact on team success. The findings suggest that appointing a better-quality coach (determined by salary differentials) increases league points gained. On one hand, these findings support expert leader claims, inasmuch as they show positive effects on organisational outcomes. On the other hand, they do not account for the fact that some great players are unsuccessful as coaches and equally highly paid, experienced coaches also meet with failure. Which returns me to the problem of how much of this winning and indeed losing is down to the coach, which remains opaque.

In another longitudinal study, Goodall and Pogrebna (2015) explore the leader-performance nexus in Formula One motor racing. From a database from 1950 to 2011 the performance of each team in the championship is observed and classified together with leader (team principal) information. Using regression analysis, the authors test a hypothesis that better organisational performance is achieved when expert leader knowledge aligns with the main business activity. Results show that the most successful teams are those run by team principals who were former drivers, as opposed to team managers, former mechanics or engineers (Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Additionally, team principals with longer driving careers have better results, and the number of years as a top driver matter more to overall performance in the championship, than the racing experience of the current driver.

Essentially, the claim is that, having spent many years as a top performer, expert leaders in Formula One have a unique perspective and understanding of the industry. Credibility is once again cited as an important factor that contributes to success as it meets with perceptions of expertise and trustworthiness. With that said, the most obvious criticism of these findings is

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that there is an absence of discussion about the essential role of the driver and car which are crucial to race wins. Primacy of team leader impact over car and driver input is a serious weakness. More seriously, Alvesson (2019) argues, studies of this nature are deeply disconnected from the realities of the organisational life as leadership is isolated from everything else that is significant in the particular context. In saying that, although Goodall and Pogrebna (2015) acknowledge there are limitations to the dataset and the study does not explain the underlying leadership process, they persist with calls for the development of a general TEL. And, whilst this study is set in a highly dynamic environment, the statistical approach does not allow for important features to be account for that may be important to the leadership effect.

This brings me to a study by Swanson and Kent (2014), who look for a different point of view in follower-centric research in professional sport. Survey data from a sample of professional sport employees and sport management students suggest industry knowledge and expertise play important roles in perceptions of sport leaders. Sport employees have schemas (mental representations) of credibility and prototypicality of ideal leaders based on experience in the industry and domain knowledge which have a bearing on perceptions of other leaders. Further, Todd and Kent (2009) put forward a framework of sport employee attitudes that suggest the existence of psychological structures that are unique to the sport industry are due to special contextual features that are generally not found elsewhere. What this means to the reader, in plain terms, is not that followers are always an authority, but expert leadership might look very different, when considered from those on the receiving end, and at the very least account for unique features found in the context in question (Smith & Stewart, 2010).

Mumford et al. (2002) discuss leadership in creative industries and report that evaluation of creative workers and their ideas is best achieved by leaders who share the same technical expertise and backgrounds. This is considered important as they are able to communicate the needs and direction of the organisation more effectively. In short, leader credibility is thought to enhance influence when leading creative individuals. They effectively argue that *it takes one to know one* and if you set the standard in an organisation you should at least be viewed as being able to meet that same standard (Goodall, 2012). It should be noted that empirical

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evidence thus far comes from highly skilled, knowledge-intensive organisations, where performance measures are relatively straight forward and, when these studies are considered together, they build the evidence base for a TEL, despite the lack of theoretical support for the main arguments.

Finally, this line of inquiry moves in a new direction and shows how the TEL is also associated with high levels of job satisfaction and well-being in organisations (Artz et al., 2017). The authors shift the focus to investigate the influence of expert leadership on emotional states of being. Statistical analysis of cross-sectional data draw on US and UK panels of over approximately 35,000 workers and suggest that expert leadership is linked to worker job satisfaction. From the analysis, a range of findings are returned that, in sum, maintain that leader expertise has positive influence on measures of job satisfaction. Moreover, research continues along these line and investigates leader competence and worker happiness (Artz et al., 2017); the impact of expert scholars on an academic department (Goodall, McDowell, & Singell, 2016); and physician leadership and performance (Kakemam & Goodall, 2019). Each study maintains and makes the case for expert leadership on the grounds that organisations benefit in terms of recruitment, selection and development of leaders. Still, in keeping with what has been reported beforehand, whilst these findings are eye-catching, they make no conceptual contribution that leads to deeper understanding of how these associations occur.

Collectively, the history of this small number of studies is important because it shows past thinking and current debates. Previous studies are limited by instrumental notions that leaders who are considered experts in their field engage with others and achieve organisational success (Ashman & Lawler, 2008). Nonetheless, researchers get bogged down in statistics and this way of thinking suggests a critical role for asking new questions and adopting different methodologies. I argue that this gap in knowledge is tied to perceptions about individuals that in some ways are influenced by cognitive bias and beliefs that attempt to confirm findings. It suggests to me that greater understanding of the social process that underlies relationships is required, in terms of how expert leaders are able to influence the actions of others, as they do not act alone (Goethals & Jones Sorenson, 2006). As such, my study takes a different approach, a philosophical one, that employs introspection and reason.

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In line with Heidegger (1962), who says the essence of social phenomenon is found in human experiences. I argue that greater understanding of expert leader influence, as opposed to instrumental effects, is critical to further theory development and this can be understood through stories of lived experiences that are representations of reality (Flanigan, 2017; Josselson, 2011b). Put very simply, conceptual understanding of the nature of the leadership relationship is the gap in knowledge that is important to the exposition of the TEL.

### 2.2: The TEL Unpacked

In introducing the TEL, Goodall (2012) suggests the pendulum has swung too far in the appointment of general over specialist leaders and makes the radical argument, in a study of university leaders, that academics make the best leaders (Goodall, 2009). Goodall (2014, p. 1) states *to be a good leader you have to understand the psychology behind your core workers, you have to know what motivates them, whereas business leaders moving to universities tended to introduce managerial systems to try to control academics whose work they did not understand*. As Goodall (2014) points out, the changing landscape of higher education makes universities more like businesses and argues current market forces bring into question whether academics have the business acumen and skills to understand the demands of running a university. Considered together, this view suggests a complex answer, not only because of the idea of universities as business units is contentious, but also the fact that academics are essentially employed for their scholarship.

However, putting that argument to one side, it is important to reiterate the focus of this study is not on organisational outcomes as a result of leadership, but an investigation of how those who are considered experts in their fields influence others. Unpacking the idea of a TEL means it is necessary to disturb the main assumptions of current claims about what is essentially a social process. According to Goodall (2012), expert leadership is a function of knowledge, technical ability and experience in a core business (**Figure 2**). This means that integrated variables, made up of individual attributes that are thought to be acquired or are innate, provide leadership that brings about positive outcomes. In other words, primacy is given to exceptional individuals over other contributing forces, such as organisational structures. Expert leaders are thought to be those with:



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(1) Inherent knowledge (**IK**), attained through education and training combined with high ability in the core business activity.

(2) Industry experience (**IE**), which stems from time spent and practice within the core business.

(3) Leadership capabilities (**LC**), which includes management and leadership experience and training acquired during a leader's career and innate characteristics.



**Figure 2: Model of Expert Leadership**  
Goodall (2012, p. 7)

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### Inherent Knowledge (IK)

**Figure 2** postulates that domain knowledge, track record and time spent in the industry leads to improved business performance (Goodall, 2012). Central to the argument is the interaction of technical knowledge and ability, with experience gained from time spent in the industry, and relevant training a desideratum. However, this logic raises several problems and challenges the notion as to how much of organisational performance can be attributed to expert leadership that may naturally depend on many factors. What is more, how expertise is defined is contestable, as most measures are based on sociocultural criteria that contain weakness as a measure of expertise (Gobet, 2016). For example, football managers must hold a recognised license developed by their respective football associations to take charge of a professional club but that in itself is not a predictor of ultimate success. Comparing inherent knowledge and experience is heuristic at best and not only raises the natural question of what we mean by expert but leads to more questions as to the level of core business knowledge and experience needed to improve organisational performance.

For Alvesson (2019, p. 13) this is *closed system* thinking that assumes leadership is a *self-contained unit* made up of leaders and followers where achievement is credited to the person in charge. What this means is that we are led to believe that other important contributing factors, such as organisational culture, are created by these individuals as an outcome of their leadership. Which is perhaps easier to accept if you subscribe to Meindl's (1985) view of leaders as heroic figures. Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, et al. (2014) argue that leader-centric approaches instil a false sense of certainty for understanding how leaders affect the performance of individuals and organisations. Conceptualising leadership as a stable, global process influences research and invites the use of quantitative methods for verification. This in itself leads to overestimations of the direct effects of leadership using past judgements or events to predict future outcomes (Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & Van de Ven, 2013). Therefore, to correlate variables in this way, on one level, makes it easier to look for and measure positive outcomes, however, on another level, it assumes attributions are constant and something we can take for granted. Which leads me to suggest that this investigation has

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to be mindful of such grandiose assumptions and be firmly grounded in experiences of organisational and social reality that tell the back story behind the numbers (Alvesson, 2019).

With that said, understanding expert leadership as a function of three variables, it is, however, worth considering how each one relates to overall leadership effect. Inherent knowledge (IK) assumes the combination of leaders who have a deep understanding of the core business and those who are considered among the best in their field can produce outputs that can be measured. IK is typically acquired through specific education and training and leads to an assumed development of deep knowledge of the core industry. This, according to Goodall (2012), is crucial as organisations perform better when they are led by experts who have high level ability. Extending the argument to this study brings to light a longstanding debate of whether the best football players make the best managers. As yet there is little evidence to support the claim (Bridgewater et al., 2011). In other words, high levels of knowledge and achievement in any environment is not a reliable predictor of leadership ability (Gobet, 2016). Essentially, it puts into question the notion of whether the leader of an organisation needs to have been a top performer in the industry as you could argue that this is industry specific.

In saying that, empirical data does show that the combination of IK and outstanding ability within an industry or sector results in performance gains (Goodall, 2009, 2009b; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015; Goodall & Stoller, 2017). This is supported by Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, and Smith-Jentsch (2012), who bring together expertise and intuition literature, to provide explanations. They argue the combination of knowledge and extensive domain experience leads to *expertise-based intuition* that enables experts to make quick and effective decisions that influence organisational performance. Alongside expertise, intuition is thought of as a thinking process that involves information processing. As such, the combination of expertise, that is developed through years of training and practice, is thought to influence cognitive processes that play a role in decision making and action. The suggestion again is that leaders with this profile are seen as credible and garner instant respect. However, in terms of the problematic of leadership, this points to subjective ratings of knowledge and ability that leads us to assume this produces positive results in some way. Along with contradictions and

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ambiguities of leadership study in general, it also means that as a leader, knowing what you want is one thing, articulating it to others can be something else.

### Industry Experience (IE)

The idea of industry experience (IE) proposes that both time spent in an industry and mastery are other important variables that contribute to organisational success (Goodall, 2012). Leaders who spend many years in an industry are thought to acquire tacit knowledge which facilitates the idea of expertise-based intuition and effective decision-making (Salas et al., 2012). Further to this, there are studies in business literature that to attempt to uncover a link between performance and whether a CEO who is promoted internally, or one recruited externally, have differing effects (Shen & Cannella, 2002; Zajac, 1990; Zhang Y & N., 2004). Unsurprisingly, findings are obscure and suggest each bring different qualities and influences to situations. Together, the IE function maintains that organisations whose leaders spend most of their career in one sector (not organisation) outperform those whose leaders do not.

However, research also indicates the correlation between level of expertise and time spent in a particular field is weak and experience in itself is often a poor predictor of expertise (Gobet, 2016). To see why, in sport, for example, the notion that 10,000 hours of skill practice results in an expert performer has received much empirical attention but equally meets with disagreement (Ericsson, Charness, Feltovich, & Hoffman, 2006). Put another way, it might be possible to spend a number of years in a particular domain and still fall short of what is considered expert. Alvesson (2019) calls the situation hyperreality, that is to say there is a disconnect between theory and what actually happens in organisations. The idea that credibility and respect is given to people of this ilk, who appear to be a good fit for their organisation, might be just that, and does not always stack up to everyday realities.

Dinh and Lord (2012) stress that it is important to consider any act of leadership in the context in which it takes place. And, in professional football there is popular belief that the manager is the most important person at a club and the position affords them special status. Carter (2013) states that football managers are still called the *gaffa* and are highly respected figureheads who lead. Kelly (2008) claims that the role of football manager remains largely

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unchanged and managers at football clubs have a high degree of autonomy in how they operate with few constraints. Although, this does not grant them immunity, as we know in 2016-17 the average tenure for managers in Britain's top division was 1.16 years (LMA, 2016). Together, this means in the context of this study, I suggest that you need a lot more than long experience and knowhow to survive the harsh realities of the environment, or even be successful.

The point to make then is, it invariably comes down to what researchers are really interested in. IE viewed this way suggests that researchers in this field believe in another problematic that intimates the number of years working in a particular sector gives a person superior advantages over someone from outside the sector. However, this lacks theoretical foundation as actions, feelings and relationships determine what we think about our leaders (Alvesson, 2019). Which means, in terms of a TEL, performance effects might be overstated. So it follows, in terms of theory development, it requires more than statistics for us to understand how those who receive this type of leadership relate their experiences to the ability to lead (Josselson, 2011b).

### **Leadership Capabilities (LC)**

Perhaps the most controversial assumption in the model (**Figure 2**) is the idea that leadership capability (LC) is commensurate with the level of position and this, in combination with the two other variables, functions to improve organisation performance. As such, management and leadership skill, together with attributes, are assumed as proxies of expert leadership (Goodall, 2012). While there is evidence to suggest that good leadership translates to positive organisational performance, there is little agreement as to the skills and attributes needed to achieve these impacts (Bloom, Genakos, Martin, & Sadun, 2010; Bloom & Van Reenen, 2007). Moreover, research shows the conceptual difficulty of not only identifying traits of good leaders, but measuring them with any form of reliability (Bass, 2008). That said, each year enormous resource is invested into business leadership development programmes, yet there is little evidence to suggest this then translates into positive organisational outcomes (Pfeffer & Dee, 2016). By contrast, Ancelotti et al. (2016) make the point that most professional football players who turn to management receive little or no management and leadership training prior to taking their first manager assignment. This perhaps explains, in part, why

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some former greats as players do not go on to become successful managers as the demands of management and playing are not the same.

Goodall's main argument concerning LC, is that organisations should be led by experts in the field as opposed to generalists. However, recent CEO appointments suggest something else. Just over half of Fortune 100 CEOs in the US have a degree in business, economics, or accounting, while 27% studied engineering or science and 14% law (Forbes, 2015). In the UK, more than half of the FTSE 100 senior leaders have a background in finance, compared with 25% who are qualified accountants, 21% from retail/hospitality backgrounds, 17% in engineering, 14% in marketing and 11% from a technical background (Crump, 2015). Therefore, it can be inferred that because of the varied backgrounds, senior leaders are currently selected primarily on ability to lead an organisation as opposed to domain expertise, and IK and IE are not taken to mean LC (Mumford, 2011). In fact, they are very different and whilst the assumption is that technical expertise, and management and leadership skill function together as expert leadership, this evidence suggests general, functional managers are commonly found at the top of companies, perhaps for good reason.

This highlights an inconsistent argument of the TEL in that IK and IE are variable yet arguably the most important to understanding leadership, LC, is assumed constant. This way of thinking affords expert leaders in professional football the same ability as general managers who are trained and appointed for their ability to lead. Many football managers spend years developing within the game but never received formal leadership training and learn on the job (Ancelotti et al., 2016). Consequently, their potential as leaders is often unproven when they make the step from playing or coaching to the management ranks. Throughout, Goodall (2012) concludes with a blunt argument that expert leaders, not general managers, should lead knowledge based organisations. Yet significantly, measures, not only have attributional shortcomings, but are solely focused on successful or ideal leadership and do not consider the impact of leadership failure can have on organisations.

If we consider Pfeffer's (2016) view that suggests demand for leadership studies stems from frequent leadership failures that result in a lack of trust in leaders and, Sonnenfeld and Ward

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(2007), who cite society's deep-seated fear of failure as the reason we turn to successful leadership in the first instance, then it is fair to say that Goodall's (2012) approach to expert leadership sits on shaky ground. For Alvesson (2019), this is a tautological problem where leadership is assumed from simple combinations of inputs and outputs that create an effect for a desired end. In this case, knowledge, experience and achievement in a particular domain are assumed to create forces that, in turn, improve organisational outcomes. On the face of it, the demand for this kind of leadership means we are drawn to people who we think can inspire, empower or transform. However, this way of thinking is in line with discourse that credits successful outcomes to people in leadership positions (Meindl et al., 1985). The danger here is that we get overtaken by dogma and lose sight of the fact that no matter what form of leadership we talk about, it does not always have positive outcomes.

That being said, in terms of LC in the context of this study, sporting figures routinely share experiences with the business world to examine whether leadership, that underpins sporting success, can deliver results when it comes to building and running an effective business (Elberse, 2013). The performance of the football manager is subject to intense scrutiny because of their perceived on-the field impact and equally, frequent manager changes as a result of failure to deliver results, strengthen the argument (Dawson & Dobson, 2002; Wilson, Plumley, & Ramchandani, 2013). And, despite many high-profile football managerial failings, leadership expertise is presumed important for success (Swanson & Kent, 2014).

In view of this and considering the TEL, what we do not know is how and why expert leaders are able to influence the actions of others to impact on organisational performance. This is a clear gap in understanding which makes it difficult to assess the impact of expert leader characteristics and ability on organisational outcomes as it currently stands. This points to a need to understand the influencing process that underlies relationships (Goethals & Jones Sorenson, 2006). Why this relationship between expert leadership and organisational performance exists needs to be better understood, and equally, how those with requisite domain expertise lead is also a matter that needs to be dealt with. Likewise, it is sensible to account for positive and negative influences to arrive at sound judgement.

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Unquestionably, there are many theoretical perspectives that inform conceptions of leadership (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Linden, et al., 2014). So, the idea of felicity conditions will be introduced in the next chapter as a conceptual framework to address these important questions (Austin, 1962). I borrow from a linguistic pragmatic theory, that views language as a performative act, to explain aforementioned associations with leadership. What this means is that before we make an existential leap and accept suggestions of a link between expert leaders and organisational effectiveness, we need to take a step back. I argue, before we get to this, there is something else to understand (Owen, 2012). This means that I put performance outcomes to one side and suggestions of credibility, respect, leaders who set standards and create the right environment are held up for conceptual explanation. Crucial to this thesis is the idea of felicity conditions that assumes performatives, such as leadership, have a mode of being that influence people to act and understanding essential conditions of performativity, is that something else to understand (Austin, 1962).

This means the importance of leadership influence cannot be underestimated as leaders touch people and create bonds that are real and meaningful and can stay with individuals for a long time. The argument I set out, assumes senior leaders rely on influence and this is tied to perceptions that shape behaviours and actions (Yukl, 2009). My thesis assumes expert leader influence can be understood through lived experiences and interactions of others with leaders in context and the stories they tell hold the key to understanding (Josselson, 2011b). To put it another way, to develop an in-depth understanding of the TEL, exploring lives lived and interpreting this knowledge is of central importance to my main aim.

### **2.3: Summary – Toward Theory Development**

As the reader saw in the previous chapter, demand for leadership studies remains unabated and the number of new ideas and their significance cannot be underestimated (Hunter et al., 2007; Pye, 2005). Theories have grown in the last decade (Gardner et al., 2014), however, the study of leadership remains problematic and often highlights conceptual ambiguity (Pye, 2005). There is overlap with this chapter which examines a new stream of research and hopefully the reader has come to see how this study responds to problematics and gaps in what is currently known. My review stresses the importance of uncovering how this particular



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theory works, as opposed to the forlorn task of determining causal effects on performance outcomes (Grint, 2005).

The theory of expert leadership (TEL) is a new but growing body of knowledge where studies show positive associations between leaders and organisational outcomes in a number of industry settings (Goodall, 2012). Although the evidence is thought provoking, prescriptive claims that follow make little conceptual contribution for deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Ashman & Lawler, 2008). Collectively, the paucity of studies suggests a critical role for asking new questions and adopting different approaches. Research also distorts reality as leadership is isolated from everything else that is significant in what is found in the contexts from which they emanate (Alvesson, 2019). More significantly, statistical approaches that are common to most studies, do not allow for important features of a context to be accounted for, which I argue, are central to what we might ultimately understand.

From the discussion, it is apparent that current propositions require theoretical elucidation. Unpacking the idea shows the need as there are gaps that fail to explain how expert leaders are able to make reported impacts. In light of this, my study takes a different stance and investigates the foundation of the theory, focusing on the influence expert leaders have on those they interact with. And, to avoid the dangers of being overtaken by ideology, attributional limitations and causality, I first, accept the reality is that expert leadership does not always have positive effects (Pfeffer & Dee, 2016). And, second, argue that those at the top of organisations rely on influence to achieve performance, which means examination of lived experience is required (Gadamer, 1989).

As far as I am aware, to date no other attempt has been made to understand the TEL from this standpoint and it appears to me that before we look at impact and performance outcomes, the idea of leadership influence needs to be interrogated further. To achieve this, I believe that it is necessary to look beyond patterns and associations that correlate expert leadership and performance and move the debate from statistical description to theoretical explanation. To do this, it is necessary to present a conceptual framework that can, not only make sense of data, but establish necessary boundaries for the study (Smyth, 2004). Therefore, my next step is to invoke a conceptual framework that I believe provides the

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content and structure to progress. I go on to discuss the idea of felicity conditions which evaluates the appropriateness of performative acts and where leadership influence can be understood as performativity in context (Austin, 1962).

### **Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework**

The previous chapter set out propositions for a TEL where I concluded the theory, as it stands, is incomplete. Conceptual and methodological concerns mean there is room to successfully build on what is currently known. Previous studies adopt traditional approaches that result in constructs that are operationalised for measurement to make sense of instrumental outcomes (Artz et al., 2017; Goodall, 2009, 2012; Goodall et al., 2015; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). However, as Ashman and Lawler (2008) argue, it is necessary to introduce relevant concepts that can describe and explain what is essentially a socially constructed process to understand the *essence* of the theory. In other words, to acquire greater insight it is crucial to develop theoretical narrative to understand how individuals construct, and make sense of, experiences of the phenomenon in question within a particular context.

With that said, this thesis cannot proceed effectively without a robust conceptual framework that allows the phenomenon in question to be further developed. To confront the points made above, I reach back and borrow from J. L. Austin's work (1962) *How to Do Things With Words*, and the idea of felicity conditions, to explain how words and sentences work as performatives, but crucially, how this can be useful as a conceptual framework. Austin (1962) argues that saying something can get people to do something and felicity conditions refer to a set of conditions that must be in place and criteria that must be satisfied for speech acts to achieve their purpose. The underlying premise suggests words and sentences are a gateway to understanding and are representations of the world (Hadiati, 2019). Although first used in linguistics to show how language functions, several essential conditions are empirically identified as powerful proxies of performativity (Blackshaw, 2017). What this means is, for something to be felicitous, there is an appropriate fit between what is represented in terms of a performative mode of being, which leads to understanding of reality (Ambrose, 1963).

For this study, this infers that what we understand by expert leadership must fit with thoughts and feelings of those who experience it for it to translate to leadership influence. The point to make is that language can be used to describe experience but also can be used to outline the appropriateness, or felicity, of an act of speech that enables performativity. Which means this approach stands in opposition to the current TEL that assumes an expert leadership effect based on leader qualities and competencies results in improved organisational outcomes

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(Goodall, 2012). Importantly, this chapter argues that how language works as an influencing process is a way of understanding human experiences of the TEL.

On first view, for an inquiry of a TEL, the use of Austin's (1962) term felicity conditions may seem remote, but I also link this with Gadamer's (1989) hermeneutic project, to recognise the part language plays in the process of knowing. In many ways, it can be assumed that how words and sentences work as a performative can be applied to other spheres (Blackshaw, 2017). In Gadamerian terms, this means working out the hermeneutic situation which is tantamount to working out the fit between leaders, followers and the context. The idea also takes it a step further by examining the appropriateness of this fit (Austin, 1963). What this means is that it can be applied to acts of leadership, in the abstract and in general, as above all, leadership is assumed an influencing process that enables people to perform (Yukl, 2009).

Fundamentally, Austin's (1962) thesis addresses a widely held philosophical concern of how speech acts (be they written or spoken), relate to how we act and experience the world. As the reader will find later, it is also concerned with truthfulness or falsity of a particular category of speech (Leech, 2016). In other words, what we have is a way of understanding how language works to enact performance that, in a sense, aligns to the interpretivist viewpoint of truth that is found in experience (Gadamer, 1989). Austin's argument rests on the idea of performativity which is then evaluated in terms of felicity. This means speech acts, if met by the right conditions, represent an influencing process. More specifically, uncovering the true nature of the TEL means it is important to understand conditions that need to be met for expert leadership influence to take place.

### **3.1: Felicity Conditions**

Austin's work is located in the study of linguistic pragmatics that more generally concerns itself with the use and meaning of language to situations (Levinson, 2005). However, much of what is debated centres on the use and classification of speech acts as one property or another (Leech, 2016; Martinich, 1997). What this means is, the idea of felicity conditions shifts the balance, and focuses beyond what can be verified by truth propositions that are used to fit the external world. The point is, there are some utterances that defy simple truth propositions and require other conditions to render them meaningful (Austin, 1962). Put

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differently, the logical positivist position that a statement has no meaning unless it can be verified as true or false lies at the heart of the debate, and stands in opposition to this thesis that adopts an interpretivist approach to understanding (Hadiati, 2019).

Researchers in this branch of study tackle the idea of felicity conditions to provide the means to assess truth based on the fulfilment of a set of conditions (Austin, 1962; Goffman, 1983; Searl, 1980). More broadly, the philosophical debate centres on where truth in language can be found. For Austin, the meaning of a word is found in the meanings of the many ways in which it is used (Ambrose, 1963). And in this sense this implies that truth is only explainable by analysis of multiple versions of truths (Blackshaw, 2017). The important point to make is, in this linguistic debate, the idea of felicity conditions proposed by Austin is a means of explaining how statements work that are not simple descriptions or sentences that can be verified by single truth propositions. The idea being that there are some words and sentences which are uttered to get people to actively do something. This is the key principle of Austin's thesis and the idea that I make use of (Levinson, 2005).

Austin (1962) sets up his arguments for a theory of speech and addresses a staunch distinction between beliefs about descriptive and non-descriptive acts of speech. Challenging taken for granted assumptions about the notion of what he calls, *performative* and *constative* speech acts, to dispel the idea that only statements that are descriptive or can be verified have meaning. In this way, his dialectic is done so on both epistemic and methodological grounds of what can be known from language. For Austin, performative speech acts contain a verb that has the job of doing something rather than just simply saying something, in that the interlocutor intends the hearer to act. To give an example, *warn*, is an explicit performative verb in the sentence *I warn you not to say that*. However, the statement, *don't say that*, comes without a verb but has an implicit intention (performative) behind it. In this case it could be interpreted as advice, a warning or a command, but importantly, signifies performativity. Indeed, the problematic is that most performatives are implicit and, as such, need to be identified and explored when interpreting speech acts (Hogan, 2001).

In what might be viewed as a technical discussion of the use of language, on the face of it the argument Austin sets out seems neither difficult nor contentious. Acts of speech can serve to

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describe, verify propositions (constatives) but can also contain meaning that can elicit performance (performatives), such as, to give an order, warning or instruction. However, some statements can do both and speech acts have different end goals in that some seek to describe reality whereas others have the goal of eliciting a performance act (Leech, 2016). Austin (1962, p. 2) says, *but now in recent years, many things which would once have been accepted without question as 'statements' by both philosophers and grammarians have been scrutinized with new care. For how do we decide which is which? What are the limits and definitions of each?*

The wider point to make, is that this difference represents the philosophical divide between what can be known objectively or understood interpretively as truth (Gadamer, 2006). Austin (1962) further argues that some constatives also act as performatives, if they meet felicity conditions, and have meaning when certain criteria are met. The key point to make, as the reader will come to see, as a conceptual framework and of paramount importance to this study, is the assumption that performative acts need to meet certain criteria to be successful.

Moreover, Austin (1962) outlines problematics of constative speech acts that represent descriptive speech or assertions. Primarily, these words and sentences are used to describe or require a truth condition, such as true or false, to fulfil their intended purpose. Additionally, unlike explicit performatives they also do not contain a verb that signifies action. The problem comes when constatives appear to serve a dual function of description and performativity. *The window is open*, for example, could be taken as a descriptive statement or interpreted as a call for action, for someone to close it! (Allan, 1986). This peculiarity leads to technical difficulty in terms of establishing general rules for the function of performatives and constatives as there are instances where constatives appear to work as performatives (Austin, 1963). That being said, the example above shows us that meaning can potentially be found in both the description and interpretation of acts of speech. This has important implications when inferred to mean acts of expert leadership and the reader will come to see how this is overcome when I present my findings.

Although there is doubt as to whether Austin's thesis is an actual philosophy, Blackshaw (2017), shows its relevance when taken outside of the linguistics setting and applied it to

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leisure studies. What he demonstrates is that certain conditions have to be met for a performative leisure pursuit to be enjoyed. To that end, it is interesting that Austin (1962) ends his thesis by doubling back and overhauling his initial theory of the constative/performative divide with a philosophical discussion that introduces abstract and general features that, he argues, can be applied to all categories of language use and the world (Levinson, 2005). Austin (1962, p. 138) makes an animated point saying, *once we realize that what we have to study is not the sentence but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation, there can hardly be any longer a possibility of not seeing that stating is performing an act.*

Austin (1962, p. 149) then proposes three general *families* of speech; the locutionary act; illocutionary force; and perlocutionary effect. Which means in saying something, the locutionary act, is the performance of utterance that give words and sentences ostensible meaning. The illocutionary force examines real and intended meanings and the perlocutionary effect is the actual outcome of the utterance, whether it was intended or not (Austin, 1962). For example, saying the phrase *Don't go into the water* is the locutionary act, which serves as a warning (illocutionary force), that if successful persuades the listener not to enter the water (perlocutionary effect).

The importance of this distinction is revealed when Austin (1962) examines illocutionary forces which make reference to a speaker's thoughts, intentions or motivations, and perlocutionary effects, that examine the performance act itself in terms of how it is carried out and the outcome. What this means is that there is an assumed difference between giving advice and a command as the forces involved influence subsequent action. The idea being, a speech act of any kind, not only has a performance function, but can be thought of as something that is experienced and can also be interpreted for meaning. Translated to this study of expert leadership, it is the notion of performativity, and the idea of forces or intentions that have effects on performance, which is of great importance to understanding leader influence. So, it follows that to understand expert leadership influence is to interpret these forces and their outcomes from lived experiences.

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Austin set about this task by exhaustively listing ways in which performatives are infelicitous, go wrong or are *unhappy* as he expresses it. For example, a promise is said to be felicitous if the act is done so in the future (*I promise I will come to your house*) as opposed to the past (*I promise I would have come to your house*). He then proposes a set of felicity conditions which performative speech acts have to meet to be successful. For Austin (1962) a statement is felicitous if it fulfils three essential conditions:

- A. 1. *There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect;*  
2. *the circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.*
  - B. *The procedure must be executed 1. correctly and 2. completely.*
  - C. 1. *The person must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intention, as specified in the procedure; and 2. if consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must so do.*
- Austin in Levinson (2005, p. 229)

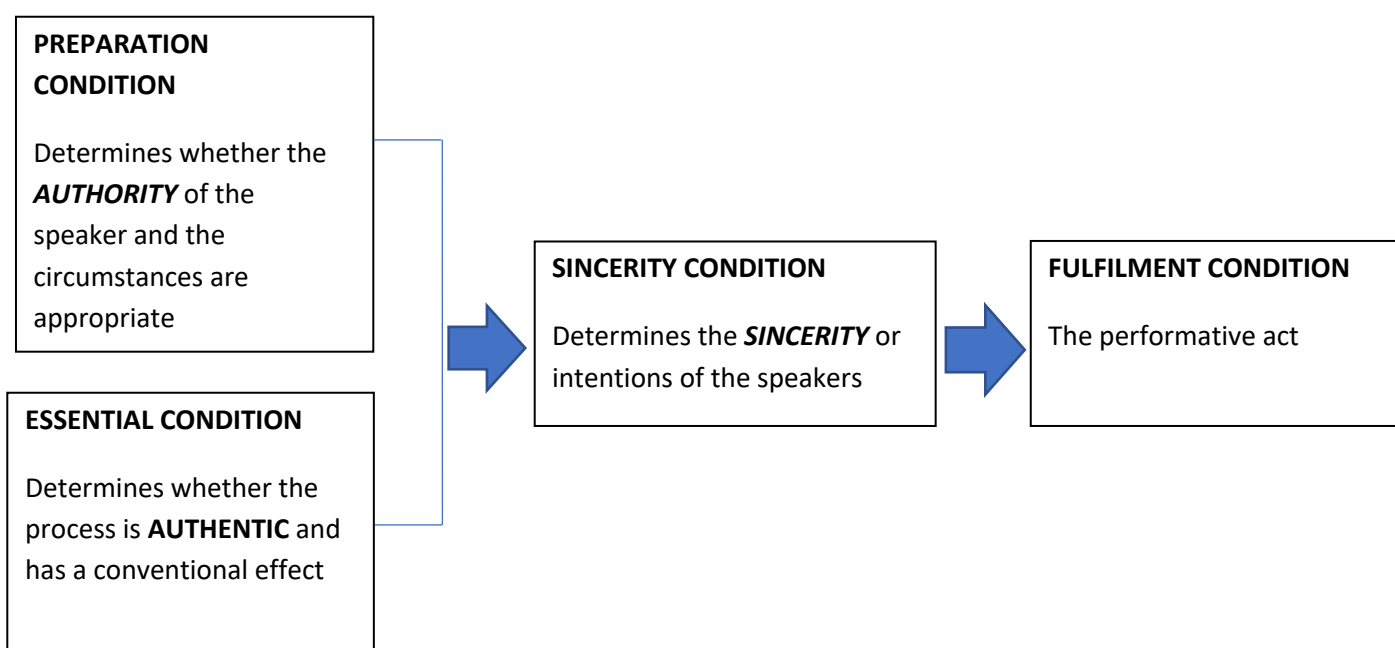
The real importance to this study is what can be inferred from each one. Condition A infers that convention must be adhered to and holds the idea that authority must be acknowledged in the process. The execution of the act must be authentic to be successful (correctly and completely) in condition B and for condition C to be felicitous, the intentions of the speaker must be taken as sincere to secure commitment. A few simple examples illustrate the point. Consider what would happen if I say to a friend, *you're fired*, and I do not even work at their place of work. This goes against condition A.1., and, as a result amounts to very little except perhaps, friendly *banter*. Pronouncing someone *man and wife* violates convention A.2. if the person doing so says it in the shower and is also not a priest. Saying, *I bet you a tanner it will rain tomorrow*, is trivial if it is not followed by a handshake or some form of confirmation that ensures the bet is meaningful (B.1. and B.2.). Finally, making a promise you have no intention of keeping is an outright violation of condition C (Austin, 1962).

Searl (1980), Austin's student, builds on the idea and introduces a fourth condition which he deems an *essential condition*. For Searl (1980), not only does the speaker have to show a sincere commitment to the performative, they also have to be able to perform what they say and clearly demonstrate their intentions. However, with both Austin and Searl, their argument rests on a major assumption that the listener understands the language that is



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being used. This implies that factors such as history, culture, tradition, among other things, come into play and places great emphasis on understanding the vagaries of a context. With that said, the idea of felicity conditions represents a set of rules or presuppositions that must be met for a speech act to be fulfilled. Several types of felicity conditions are identified with Searle's (1980) revision, referring to them as essential conditions or a *right* set of conditions that must be fulfilled for the performance to be successful. **Figure 3** shows how these key concepts are thought to work as performativity (Allan, 1986; Hogan, 2001):



**Figure 3: Felicity Conditions**  
Adapted from Hogan 2001 p.21

As Austin puts it, *the right person must make the utterance in the right manner with the right intentions* (p. 59). In other words, for speech to succeed in doing something, a set of connected and appropriate sentiments, that have a truth value, must exist. Furthermore, unlike constatives, where truth effectively lies in what is true or false, performatives are evaluated in binary truth-like terms (e.g., sincere/insincere, authentic/inauthentic) that are understood through performativity itself (Austin, 1963). If the sincerity condition exists, for example, the person issuing the speech is assumed to hold the right intentions behind the statement. Importantly, this is what I propose is concerned with leadership influence. What we have, however, is a way of, not only understanding language, but any situation where one

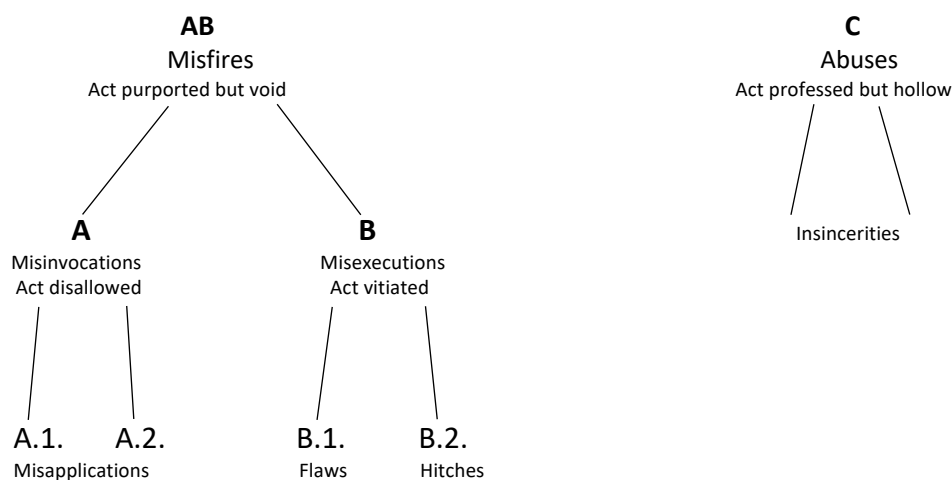
### Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

person tries to influence another. Gadamerian hermeneutics assumes that truth is found in experience, context and language, which is an important vehicle if I assume the performance act means something. On the other hand, Austin notes that an act is infelicitous if appropriate conditions are not met and thereby the act does not come about. The implication means, as said before, it is equally important to understand failures of leadership as well as instances of success, to arrive at correct understanding.

Austin (1962, p. 14) says, *a good many other things have as a general rule to be right and to go right if we are to be said to have happily brought off our action*. To discover this, he systematically discusses what he deems a *doctrine of infelicities* that explore cases where performatives go wrong, and the resultant effect. Conditions A and B, which are essentially conditions of authority and authenticity, are underlying reasons that *make* or *break* performatives. **Figure 4** shows distinctions between varieties of infelicities that occur in performative acts. The perlocutionary effects are *misfires*, which simply means that what is stated does not happen. More specifically, when the authority (condition A) is violated, this results in *misinvocation*, which means the person does not command the correct authority to execute what is stated in the requisite way and *misapplications* result. Condition B (authenticity) is said to result in *misexecutions*, that refers to ways of doing things that impact the performative act, in terms of quality and efficiency, for example. Austin suggests *flaws* or *hitches* have the potential to impair or even destroy performativity. However, violation of condition C is decisive and results in *abuses*, as the statement involves a form of deceit. Although the performative action can still be completed, the result is infelicitous or insincere. For Austin (1962), this is the most serious condition as, despite the intention behind the statement, the performative action can still be carried out but leave ill feeling.

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### Infelicities



**Figure 4: Doctrine of Infelicities**  
Adapted from Austin (1962)

According to Levinson (2005, p. 231), *performatives can only be assessed as felicitous or infelicitous, according to whether their felicity conditions are met or not*. Ipso facto, a performative act considered this way, suggests there is something else to be understood as to why this might be possible. Austin (1962, pp. 6-7) binds it all together and shows its relevance to this thesis when he says *the name [performative] is derived, of course, from perform...it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performance of an action - it is not usually thought of as just saying something*. Put differently, the idea of someone doing something by saying something, I assume, is tantamount to influence that can be interpreted for meaning. Continuing with this line of thinking, I also consider the idea of felicity conditions appropriate for a study of expert leadership, that is undoubtedly thought of as performativity, in the way that one person influences the actions of others (Avolio, Reichard, Hannah, Walumbwa, & Chan, 2009; Pye, 2005).

This brings me to the main criticisms of this speech theory. It might be argued from the outset, that the theory has a serious weakness in that performative acts can be brought about non-verbally. Added to this, the approach largely ignores psychological factors and assumes primacy of the circumstances in which the speech act is said. What goes on in the mind is, therefore, unaccounted for and ignored (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). This is at odds with an extensive body of leadership literature that shows how cognitive information processing

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offers ways of understanding what is considered a socially constructed process (Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, et al., 2014; Epitropaki, Sy, Martin, Tram-Quon, & Topakas, 2013; Lord & Maher, 1993). The fundamental argument suggests leader influence can be traced directly to social perception, emphasising a social-cognitive approach to understanding the phenomenon. Moreover, Lord and Maher (1993, p. 11) lead the way and define leadership as *the process of being perceived by others as a leader* and argue that it is important to understand how people process information in order to understand leadership perceptions.

The fundamental idea is, through repeated social interactions, the leader and follower relationship results in the development of categorisation and expectation processes which can have effects on performance. When there is a fit between observed behaviour and personal image of leadership, the individual exhibiting the behaviour is recognised as a good leader (Epitropaki et al., 2013; Stock & Özbek-Potthoff, 2013). Put differently, personal assumptions about traits and abilities that characterise an ideal leader are based on beliefs on how leaders generally behave and what is expected of them. The importance of what has been said also suggests how leadership influence works. In saying that, a serious limitation of this view is that most studies assume generalisability and stability over time and do not take into account the possibility that perceptions are susceptible to radical change.

Austinian thinking suggests a condition of intentionality, or aboutness, exists in the mind of the speaker, meaning there is something else associated with the speech act that can be understood (Heidegger, 1962). Although he goes to great lengths to classify a dichotomy of performative words that are either explicit or implicit, the latter may not exist at all (Leech, 2016). Thus, the idea of felicity conditions raises questions of knowing. For example, it may appear that someone is sincere but how can we really be sure? In response, Mayes (2003) argues that it is important not only to analyse the language process, but also account for the social situation in which it occurs. Together with Gadamer's (2006) idea of a fusion of horizons, that will be discussed in the next chapter, meaning emerges in context and fuses ideas of others with my own and this line of thinking goes some way to addressing this criticism. As the reader will know by now, this thesis emanates from the interpretivist

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paradigm, and takes on board that truth also is situated in the minds of individuals, as well as what is found in context.

Following Blackshaw's (2017) line of thinking that assumes appropriate fit exists between word and world or language and reality, he argues that when objective truth is replaced by felicity, truth can be found in both description and interpretation. In other words, to truly know we need to understand multiple versions of experiences. The importance of which means, painting a picture of expert leadership in professional football can be equally as potent before the process of interpretation in the hermeneutic tradition begins (Blackshaw, 2017). More specifically, the current TEL proposes that expert leaders are better able to improve organisational performance over general managers because they are respected and gain credibility (Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). These descriptions, therefore, become important starting points, and I will go on to show, theoretical understanding of the TEL can be understood in Austinian terms.

What I draw from Austin's (1962) framework (**Figure 3**) leads me to examine appropriate conditions that must exist for expert leadership influence to be possible. If the illocutionary force is viewed as leadership influence, then the felicity conditions of authority, authenticity and sincerity are assumed as the conditions that must be verified for the expert leadership influence to be successful (perlocutionary effect). Consequently, the focus of this study is firmly on Austin's set of conditions, that make this type of leadership possible, and is something that the study of linguistic pragmatics shows how to address.

Finally, I accept that the technicalities of how language works are far from straight forward as there are blurred distinctions in the way in which words and sentences function. However, putting linguistics to one side for the moment, what this means for this study is, understanding leadership influence can be found in both descriptive and performative accounts of experience, but, importantly, evaluated in terms of felicity. My thesis argues the conceptual moves of Austin can be applied to other performative acts. In the same way that speech is used to make someone do something in a requisite way, I consider expert leadership to be something that must meet certain conditions, in context, to achieve desired leadership influence. Therefore, to examine the TEL and to fulfil the overall aim of theory development,

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I put forward the idea of language, used in an unconventional way, and invoke felicity conditions as an appropriate conceptual framework to examine lived experiences of expert leadership. I further propose that for expert leadership to be felicitous expert leaders in professional football must be viewed as an authority, who are authentic and sincere which I explore further (Blackshaw, 2017).

### **3.2: Authority**

I start with Weber's (1968) conceptualisation of authority, as traces of his work are said to remain in contemporary leadership, in particular the idea of charismatic leadership (Conger, 1993; Houghton, 2010). Weber (1964) argues, for power to be maintained there has to be belief in its legitimacy. To distinguish the ideal, he juxtaposes forms of authority to put forward general features of the concept (Conger, 1993; Uphoff, 1989; Vanagunas, 1989; Weber, 1968). His ideal way of thinking is wrapped around ideas of power and legitimacy that show the conceptual difficulty of understanding authority. Weber (1968) sees authority as forces of influence and proposes abstractions of authority; traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic authority that are derived from how society is thought to be ordered and structured. Houghton (2010) argues Weber's ideas still hold as management and leadership scholars continue to draw on his ideas to shape their thinking. Whether this stands up in contemporary society is contestable, but the salience of Weber's work is that it provides a conceptual starting point to understand what is meant by authority.

Presented as contrasting positions, traditional authority is thought of as that which is handed down, based on respect for customs and traditions, and is sustained out of respect for age-old rituals that embody loyalty to a person. In addition, rational-legal authority is legitimised by way of position or office on the foundation of laws, rules and power. A hierarchical structure usually exists in these organisations with managerial roles that are clearly delineated. Finally, charismatic authority rests on the notion that people with exceptional qualities have the ability to inspire others (Conger, 1993; Houghton, 2010; Kelly, 2008). Plainly, Weber (1968) uses these distinctions to contrast the role of these types of authority figures to show how it is understood in society. Traditional authority and rational-legal authority are thought to bring about stability and order, whereas charismatic authority is

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more oriented toward forces of change. Whether these heuristic classifications have truth value is debateable, as Uphoff (1989) suggests, how authority is thought to work is complex, associated with other forces of change, power and legitimacy and is not value free. This means that it is important to absorb history, traditions and culture that govern how authority is understood in a given context.

Conger (1993) is critical of Weber's taxonomy and argues complex phenomena, such as leadership, cannot be reduced to these narrow categories, as other sources of change may well exist in organisations. Indeed Bryman (1992, p. 23) adds *Weber's conceptualisations are highly diffuse, sometimes contradictory, and often more suggestive of what is interesting than important*. With that said, what we do have is a way of thinking about authority that can help identify how people legitimate and rationalise leadership influence and where power thought to derive from. For example, the idea of charismatic authority assumes commitment is secured through a strong bond between leader and followers to initiate change, or in the extreme, revolution. In contrast, traditional and rational-legal forms of authority power are thought to be sustained by factors such as position, expertise, rules and tradition (Conger, 1993). The point to make is that it is useful to understand the source of authority as the suggestion is this has implications in terms of leadership influence. It follows, as a felicity condition, it is important for me to understand what is considered legitimate or appropriate authority in the context of professional football and recognise the plays in leadership influence.

Kelly (2008), who takes a Weberian approach to analyse the role of the football manager, argues that despite professionalisation and modernisation of the industry, the role of the manager has resisted change in terms of authority. Authority in this context is thought to be sustained on the ideal of tradition that affords football managers great autonomy and responsibility. Whereas, Penn (2002) maintains that football managers rely on charismatic management qualities such as personality and reputation to sustain authority. This perhaps illustrates the main weakness of Weber's model, as it could be argued that longstanding traditions of the game of football, along with a historical structure and individuals blessed

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with, so called, charismatic personalities, mean the source of authority in this context could be found anywhere in the taxonomy.

Returning to Gadamer (1989, p. 280) who refers to authority as *that which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority of what has been handed down to us - and not just what is clearly grounded - always has power over our attitudes and behaviours.* Like his theory of prejudice, authority is also seen as something legitimate, found in tradition and something that shapes understanding. So it follows, in the same way a speech act requires both the circumstances and the person to be appropriate, authority is acknowledgement of a person but is based on the fulfilment of other felicity conditions (Austin, 1962). Taking the romanticist view, Gadamer (1989) sees authority as a response to knowledge, judgement, experience and insight that are given primacy on the belief that these attributes are in some way superior to our own. He states that although status, hierarchy or office are one part of the equation and imply a sense of command and control, authority is not something that is ultimately bestowed by virtue as suggested by Weber.

Gadamer (1989) assumes hidden forces of power, domination and obedience are associated with the notion of authority but play no part as, ultimately, humans have free agency. This may be naive as it could be argued that in some backdrops respect for authority figures is expected, such as the military, although perhaps not universally. Moreover, Mathieu, Neumann, Hare, and Babiak (2014) refer to a dark side of leadership and remind us that leaders have been described as toxic, abusive, tyrannical and destructive, which is worth bearing in mind when considering authority. As such, this is something that needs to be, as Gadamer (1989) says, *worked out* and is a case where general rules cannot be applied. Consequently, what is considered authority can perhaps only be subjectively and intersubjectively understood within specific contexts.

If we consider authority figures such as teachers, leaders and experts, how we grant them authority is partly a result of their standing but also because of qualities and disposition that we assume bring great benefit. This understanding holds authority as something that is



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earned, and something freely given on our part. Gadamer (1989) makes the point in that authority can be a source of truth saying *authority is always connected with the idea that what the authority says is not irrational and arbitrary but can, in principle, be discovered to be true* (p. 280). The implication is that there is much to be learned from and about authority figures as the essence of the concept represents performativity that stems from a belief that these individuals are able to provide us with expert guidance and direction.

This all means, as a felicity condition, the job of authority and what sanctions and sustains it needs to be carefully considered. If authority is assumed as something that must be met by expert leaders to secure commitment, then how these individuals are officially *authorised* as Gadamer puts it, becomes the important question. In professional football, for example, it is understood that it is a result driven industry and managers are hired and fired as a consequence (Flint et al., 2016). Performance outcomes aside, this also raises questions of how football managers maintain authority. Simply put, how do they act in a way that upholds expert leadership? This leads me to consider the individual (football manager) and how, despite knowing the harsh reality of the industry, they stay true to themselves or authentic, and remain sincere.

### 3.3: Sincerity and Authenticity

To do this, I take authenticity and sincerity together as both are considered, in contrast to the abstraction of authority, ideals and perfect states of human existence (Bloom, 1991). I begin with the work of Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity*, who makes it clear that the two ideas have significant conceptual differences. For Berger (1973, p. 82), *the notion of authenticity emerges from the disintegration of sincerity*. Trilling (1971) describes the transformation as, *one may almost say authenticity emerges as the opposite of sincerity*. He also argues the concept of sincerity, when applied metaphorically to people, is culturally determined. What this means is that to talk about whether someone is sincere, it is important to consider the particular context in which it is spoken. Theoretically speaking, what we are looking at are intentions and hidden motives in situ rather than judgement on actions as to whether someone is sincere. For Trilling, these are found in evaluative thoughts and feelings about motivations and intentions of a person (Kennaway, 2015).

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### 3.3.1: Sincerity

In the enterprise of presenting what is considered self or putting our self on a social stage, sincerity itself plays a curiously compromised part. According to Trilling (1971, pp. 10-11), *society requires of us that we present ourselves as being sincere, and the most efficacious way of satisfying this demand is to see to it that we really are sincere, that we actually are what we want our community to know we are. We play the role of being ourselves, we sincerely act the part of the sincere person, with the result that a judgment may be passed upon our sincerity that it is not authentic.* In terms of expert leadership, this means that as far as the ideal of sincerity goes, there is a notion of intentionality at work in that judgement on morality and social acts determines whether leadership influence is positive or not (Heidegger, 1962).

Deconstructing sincerity means putting moral assumptions or criteria by which the ideal is evaluated into full view. For Trilling (1971), sincerity is an essential virtue that represents a feeling, a way of behaving and moral judgements about human nature. Its origins are thought to stem from Polonius's maxim *to thine own self be true*, not as an end in itself, but as a means to achieving this (Shakespeare, 1601). Working from the bottom up, sincerity in this way suggests the issue is a personal one. Paradoxically, according to Trilling (1971), it is not in fact a personal pursuit, but refers to a persona that is assigned to a person by others who pass judgement on moral standards. There is correspondence between, what Trilling (1971, p. 2) says are *avowal and actual feelings*. On one hand this does point to a person, but on the other, it is something that morphs into social and moral issues. Put another way, for Trilling, when considering sincerity, there is a degree of congruence between what a person is thinking and feeling and what is confirmed to others as the truth of what they believe. More specifically, this suggests in the act of expert leadership, football managers must, as far as possible, be perceived as a sincere representation of the idea of being true to them self and truly meet expectations of those concerned.

In saying that, Trilling (1971, p. 12) reminds us of the etymology that denotes its being, derives from the Latin word *sincerus*, which makes reference to objects as *clean, sound or pure*. However, when applied to people it suggests a moral quality that, not only is someone true to them *self*, but is honest, loyal and consistent in terms of the virtue and much later

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developed to mean an absence of pretence. Trilling (1971) also argues that sincerity is an essential condition of moral virtue that cannot be applied to people without regard for cultural circumstance. This means, the focus is on the idea of whether people really are what they appear to be or whether this is seen as, in some way, an act.

Further, he states that this has to be considered with regard to context. What Trilling (1971) has in mind is that sincerity plays a mediating role about a person that in turn influences actions. According to Arnovick (2006), sincerity is the most important felicity condition as there is a psychological meeting of minds going on, where intentions meet with beliefs and expectations. Continuing with this school of thought, we might perhaps say leaders are or are not, sincerely motivated, which then renders their leadership felicitous or infelicitous (Kennaway, 2015). This of course is difficult to know and appears to be more of a value judgement, as we know that felicity conditions of performative acts work together, which makes them difficult to isolate (Austin, 1962).

Berger (1973) states that sincerity is personified by the idea that is linked to performance in public roles that are truly (or sincerely) performed. In other words, a sincere football manager embodies the virtue as part of who they are. This for Trilling (1971) is the conceptual difficulty of understanding sincerity, in not only showing it, but ways in which we can know. Having said that, we know of course that it is possible to have insincere intentions, but for expert leadership to be felicitous, sincerity is something that is seen as an essential condition (Searle, 1969). Trilling (1971) also discusses the process of becoming sincere (how it ought to be) and its importance to a moral life. Essentially, what surrounds this ideal are conceptions of the quality of a person and the bearing it has on an individual's relationship with himself and others (Trilling, 1971). Importantly, this judgement not only belongs and exists in individual minds, but also corresponds with moral standards set by society itself. Yet paradoxically, this calls into question the sincerity of the person making the judgement and also moral positions that exist in society (Trilling, 1971).

Finally, in relation to the idea of felicity conditions, Searle (1969) points out that for an illocutionary act is to be complete and *happy*, a promise to the performative act must be

## Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

made, and this, as Blackshaw (2017) suggests, firstly, involves football managers being officially authorised by the collective. Secondly, followers must believe, sincerely, in expert leaders who are prepared to, when required, share knowledge and expertise as part of who they are. Trilling's literary examination of sincerity states key features of the virtue that, not only assume an absence of deceit, but are about honesty, loyalty and consistency of the virtue that never wavers (Trilling, 1971). What I take from this, in terms of examining expert leadership is, for leadership influence to be affirmative, sincerity is precisely what Searl (1980) classes as an essential condition, and the promise to the performative must be unadulterated. What Searl (1980) implies translates to mean, not only sincerely committing to the leadership but, crucially, that expert leaders embody intentions and that they clearly intend to fulfil the role with this in mind.

For Trilling (1971), sincerity as a social value is something that is achieved in relation to others, although it might be argued that the major flaw to this claim is that you have to experience it to know it. This then places added emphasis on Gadamer's hermeneutics as a way of knowing because, from my experience of professional football, I believe Trilling's idea of sincerity is something significant that cannot be overlooked. Still, how it relates to the authenticity is something else to consider.

### 3.3.2: Authenticity

Going back as far as Nietzsche (1844-1900), who without actually using the word made reference to authenticity when he wrote, *to become what we are is not to live according to our innate nature but to create our selves freely* (Golomb, 1990, p. 244). His philosophy is said to be instrumental to the project of authenticity as a way of fulfilling human potential. Whereas, Guignon (2004, p. 13) initially states authenticity, as Heidegger says, *is the process of understanding existence and is a project of becoming the person you are*. He goes on to define the ideal as *lying within each individual, there is a deep, 'true self' - the 'real Me' - in distinction from all that is not really me* (2004, p. 14). This suggests two essential aspects: first, the notion of becoming authentic implies there is a *real self* within, and getting in touch with it leads an authentic existence that is considered the primary purpose of life (Nietzsche, 1974). This is thought to be achieved through reflection, introspection or even meditation. Second,

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authenticity calls for us to express this real self in our interactions with the social world, to be what we are in everyday life situations, such as work and relationships with others. The suggestion being, only by displaying this authentic self can an individual achieve self-realisation and fulfilment (Guignon, 2004).

On closer inspection, if the purpose of being authentic is to achieve a fulfilling and satisfying life, how this is achieved raises more questions than it answers. This line of thinking also comes with assumptions that are problematic and to be authentic is less clear beyond common understandings. However, for Trilling (1971, p. 92) the idea is much more straight forward as his example from the world of art suggests when he says *persons expert in such matters test whether objects of art are what they appear to be or are claimed to be and therefore worth the price that is asked for them or, if this has already been paid, worth the admiration they are being given*. Viewed in terms of the idea of *being* and this *real self* that we are meant to be true to, suggests that the qualities we search for about our true self, are representations of social or historical interactions that we reveal to the external world. More simply, it suggests that when it comes to authenticity this gets put to the test.

Guignon (2004) believes the well-known lines spoken by Polonius in Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* is the catalyst for the conceptualisation of authenticity as we know it today.

Polonius says:

*This above all: to thine own self be true.  
And it doth follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man*  
Shakespeare (1601 Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 3)

The final line is thought to be momentous as it infers how authenticity is achieved. However, taken together, it suggests authenticity is a personal pursuit, as opposed to sincerity which is achieved in relation to others. Trilling discusses the quest for fulfilment in the first line, achieved by looking inward to discover something, is in fact the problem. Which means

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common conceptions of authenticity as a personal pursuit are not helpful. What Polonius implies as being authentic is not the end point but part of something greater and the purpose of being true to oneself is only undertaken to be true to others. So, authenticity, viewed this way is a social virtue as it concerns others (Guignon, 2004; Trilling, 1971).

For this reason Trilling (1971) sets out a clear distinction between what he considers the *inner* and *outer self*, as previous thinking see it as an end in itself. In this way he demonstrates how authenticity is a social, rather than personal virtue, as the issue at stake is not authenticity, but how it is achieved by virtue of sincerity (Guignon, 2004; Trilling, 1971). The important point to make then, is this relationship between sincerity and authenticity, allows us to see what makes authenticity possible. So, applying this to the idea of expert leadership has implications for what I interpret from stories of lived experience. Whether expert leaders in professional football are authentic might, in part, be down to whether they stay true to themselves on a personal level. Or, as a social value, be about whether others view it as *thou canst not then be false to any man*.

Thus, the dichotomy of the inner and outer means I take it that sincerity and authenticity need each other as felicity conditions. What is important to consider in understanding authenticity, is *the content of the commitment to others and an anxiety to know that individuals are credible* (Trilling, 1971, p. 12). In other words, sincerity and authenticity are inextricably linked and why people feel expert leaders are sincere is a key to understanding the notion of authenticity as this tells us why *to thine own self be true* is important. Put even more simply, it is not enough for expert leaders to think or say they are authentic, as this counts for very little in the eyes of followers, if they are not thought of as sincere.

Moreover, contrary to the notion of an authentic existence and being true to one's self, it is ironic that contained in the Greek etymology of the word are references to dark and destructive forces. As Trilling (1971, p. 131) points out: *Authenteo*: to have full power over; also, to commit a murder. *Authentes*: not only a master and a doer, but also a perpetrator, a murderer, even a self-murderer, a suicide. For Trilling, this form of authenticity signifies,

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*disorder, violence and unreason*, and remind us of a reality (Trilling, 1970, p. 11). He also speaks about authenticity in this way to suggest that violent resistance and ruthlessness are needed for, what he calls, the *creative spirit* to succeed. This means Trilling ascribes the idea that authenticity cannot be fulfilled without considering its opposite, inauthenticity, which then calls on a mode of interpretation that is dependent on individuals, society and political conditions for resolution (Trilling, 1971).

Finally, contemporary leadership theory also concerns itself with authenticity as scholars study why the 'real me' is important to good leadership (Gardner, Coglisser, Davis, & Dickens, 2011; Ladkin & Taylor, 2010; Weiss, Razinskas, Backmann, & Hoegl, 2018; Yammarino, Dionne, Schriesheim, & Dansereau, 2008). Luthans and Avolio (2003) discuss authentic leadership and point to a decline in trust and confidence in leaders that suggests individuals who are *open and true to themselves* are the types of leaders that restore faith in leadership. George (2003, p. 11) argues *being yourself; being the person you were created to be rather than developing the image or persona of a leader is the way to restore confidence in business organisations*. This implies acts or perceptions of higher order values is the kind of leadership that can have a profound impact. However, the argument is not entirely helpful as it returns us to the fundamental problem of what is this *true self* that is considered so important to leadership?

Indeed, much of the literature develops in the same way as conceptions of authenticity focus on self, awareness of self and elements of self that are considered authentic (Gardner et al., 2011; George, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Gardner et al. (2011) remark that the leader-centric focus results in a lack of clarity as to what authentic leadership is, as there is little understanding of its antecedents or performance outcomes. He also calls for a focus on authentic followership as a future direction for research agendas to garner perspective. What I take from this is authenticity of a leader might be understood from an alternative perspective that plays a crucial role in its formation. This then places greater emphasis on the view of authenticity as a social, rather than, personal virtue and a way of doing things that is verified by others (Avolio & Reichard, 2008).

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### 3.4: Summary

To bring this discussion to a close, I offer **Figure 5** as a way of organising what has previously been discussed and propose an initial conceptual framework to understand the idea of felicity conditions of expert leadership in professional football. I argue, in much the same way speech acts are thought to work (Austin, 1962), the hermeneutic tradition of professional football operates with its own felicity conditions and to manage in the requisite way requires these conditions to be met. Gadamer's (1989) idea of a fusion of horizons emphasises what is handed down in tradition comes with its own inherited prejudices and it is this meeting that brings forward new meaning. Said differently, this means, in terms of expert leadership influence, truth emerges in context and how leaders meet the felicity conditions can be interpreted from stories of lived experiences and what is considered important in the tradition of professional football (Josselson, 2011b). This is discussed in the chapter that follows that outlines the methodological approach I took in light of what has been discussed.



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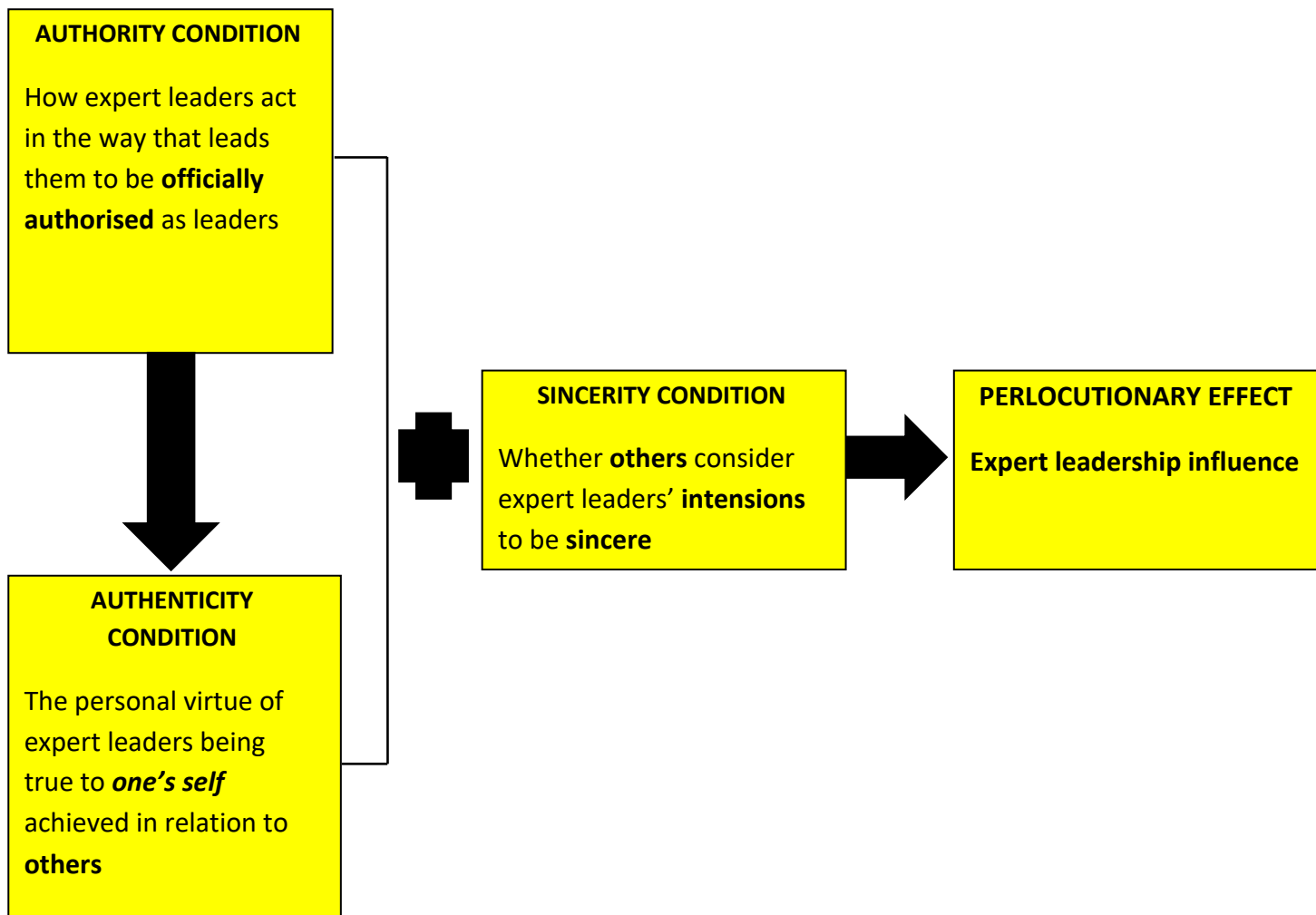


Figure 5: Initial Conceptual Framework - Felicity Conditions of Expert Leadership

## **Chapter 4: Methodology**

The following chapter is about providing explanation and justification for the approach I took to fulfil the aims of this research project. Previously, I set out a conceptual framework to analyse and evaluate the TEL. As I argued in chapter two, most understandings and interpretations of the theory are limited, not only because they lack conceptual underpinning, but also because of methodological shortcomings. This, however, leaves gaps and an opportunity to build on what is currently known, as the main ambition of this thesis is theory building (Wertz et al., 2011).

As the reader came to see from the critical discussion in chapter one, for over a century, leadership theorists have been grappling with conceptual understanding and as, Alvesson and Spicer (2012) claim, what we understand as truth about leadership is almost anything and everything. Additionally, despite a wealth of literature, what we know to be true is contentious and a constant source of serious academic debate (Hoye et al., 2006). This means the academic study of leadership in general is often controversial and highlights fallibility which comes with knowledge claims (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). For Alvesson and Spicer (2011), ideas that emanate from grand theory assumptions bring us no closer to genuine knowledge and as, Takala (1998) states, new theories invariably contain traces of old ideas that reappear in fragmented ways and serve to contribute to continued disagreement. These are all criticisms that can be levelled at the TEL as it stands. (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Western, 2013).

When it comes to this theory, the emerging idea holds leadership as an external reality and posits organisations perform better when they are led by individuals who have an outstanding track record and are considered experts in their field (Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Yet, to date, extant research is limited to quantitative approaches that find causality between expert leadership and organisational outcomes. Research also concentrates on successful performance outcomes without considering what could be learned from failure which can be equally informative. With that said, the reader will come to see that this study is different and was essentially about finding new ways of approaching an age-old problem. In this vein, I argued that current scholarship around the TEL has serious limitations and, on this basis, proposed the need to ask new questions and adopt a different methodology.

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The approach I adopted stemmed from an existentialist perspective and was guided by Gadamer's (1989) conceptualisation of hermeneutics and Josselson's (2011b) narrative approach in what is best described as hermeneutic storytelling. This starting point was used to account for experiences and perceptions of research participants to develop deeper understanding of the phenomenon in question (Gill et al., 2010). This chapter first considers the main philosophical assumptions that account for the nature of reality and knowledge claims and, therefore, how truth is understood (Bhaskar, 1989b; Walshaw, 2012). Importantly, it then goes on to introduce and explore key concepts and principles of Gadamer's hermeneutics, such as working out the hermeneutic situation, the hermeneutic circle and fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1989). Also, narrative analysis, on the assumption that the stories we tell about our lives and experiences are representations of reality (Josselson, 2011b). After that I detail the design and execution of the research process and what I did in the field. I then address an important part of research of this nature, the idea of reflexivity and the part it played in, not only stories told, but my own subjective understanding which is brought into the open (Gadamer, 1989). The chapter is then brought to a close by contemplating important ethical issues that were adhered to.

The foundation of my thesis is an acceptance of interpretivism which endeavours sensemaking from social situations (Gill et al., 2010; Johnson, Buehring, Cassell, & Symon, 2006). I felt this was appropriate to unearth meaning from stories of personal experiences which are embedded in historical and cultural conditions of a particular context (Bryman, 2016). What this means is that, in this study, I was not looking for truth in the univocal sense, but multiple versions that shaped what I understood to be true. Put simply, this meant that expert leadership influence was understood through interpretations of lived experiences of managers in professional football (Bryman, 2016; Johnson & Clark, 2006). Furthermore, a narrative research technique was chosen to account for meaning found in storied forms (Webster & Mertova, 2007). So it follows, in an empirical study, it is judicious to begin with a brief discussion of my philosophical commitment and key ontological and epistemological assumptions that led to the choices I made (Gill et al., 2010).

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1: Philosophical Foundation

According to Johnson and Clark (2006), conceptualising a research strategy invariably expresses a particular philosophical position which assumes a view of social reality, warranted knowledge and human behaviour. This means that accepting assumptions of a particular approach inevitably results in the rejection of some or all assumptions of an alternative. What became clear for this, and arguably any other research study, was a fear of self-contradiction as distinctions between various philosophical approaches are always contestable and some equally apply to competing positions (Johnson & Clark, 2006). To cope with the aforementioned burgeoning leadership literature, its contentions and ambiguities, it therefore became important to identify undergirding knowledge claim assumptions to help tackle the complexities of this body of knowledge (Pye, 2005).

In reviewing the TEL, the ontological problem became apparent. To show this I go back to the work of Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, that is committed to understanding the ontological question of Dasein (existence) and consciousness of it. For Heidegger, the nature of our existence is understood through the progressive unfolding of experiences that are considered real (Mulhall, 1996). He argues, *the essence in what it means to be human lies in Dasein*, and importantly, develops this further stating *to exist is always to exist in interpretation with other selves* (Heidegger, 1962, p. 10). In plain terms, this means truth is understood through socially constructed relationships. More specifically, according to Smircich and Morgan (1982), leadership ontology assumes the existence of leaders, followers and a notion of shared goals. However, Kelly (2013) stands in opposition, saying leadership cannot be understood through our senses and is a negative ontology that relies on beliefs. The important point to stress is that, as a general principle, the essence of leadership is social construction and to view it differently obscures what can really be understood (Alvesson, 2019).

As we know by now, the TEL is assumed to be an objective reality that is revealed through traits and behaviours of privileged individuals and evaluated using theory neutral approaches (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Hunter et al., 2007; Lowe & Gardner, 2000; Wilson, 2013). The

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ontological assumption is that this social reality exists independent to the researcher. Indeed, this is typical of leadership studies in general that are empirically motivated and adopt positivistic assumptions (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). Consequently, studies of the TEL are dominated by functionalist epistemologies with a focus on deductive and quantitative methodologies that assume the TEL exists externally and can be understood through testable methods (Goodall, 2009, 2012, 2015; Goodall et al., 2011; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Essentially, these studies present patterns and associations of an expert leader effect without uncovering the underlying leadership processes that explains leader contribution to performance.

For Alvesson (2019), this way of thinking falls into the trap of reification that attempts to convert an essentially mental or abstract concept into something real. Realist ontological approaches also tend to generate theories that are general and lack practical application (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). Despite knowing this, new theory development, such as the TEL, typically begin with quantification and attempt generalisation but perpetuate theory ambiguity and contradiction (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Hunter et al., 2007; Smircich & Morgan, 1982; Wilson, 2013). Similarly, claims oversimplify complexity without accounting for the socially constructed process or ideology (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012).

In view of these problems, this study recognised an interpretivist perspective that assumes leadership emerges from social interactions, to provide an alternate view (Raelin, 2011). Ontologically, my thesis assumes leadership exists in the idealist paradigm that presumes leaders and followers come to understand reality in a social exchange process (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). What this means is that knowledge is assumed to be found in experiences and human senses, as opposed to the realist perspective that assumes reality is independent to the observer (Pernecky, 2016). In saying that, accepting these claims naturally invites criticism from protagonists who argue, firstly, what we then come to understand is left to the involvement of the researcher and interpretation (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2002; Johnson & Duberley, 2000). And, secondly, researchers are consumed by their own ontological assumptions that can become more significant than the participants themselves. These are

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important points and necessitates a response that will become clear to the reader as the chapter unfolds.

Similarly, it was important to consider the nature of reality together with epistemological concerns of possible ways of knowing, as they involve ontological assumptions in that what we assume exists determines what can be known and therefore how truth might be understood (Bhaskar, 1989b; Walshaw, 2012). Epistemological assumptions are central to understanding the criteria by which we can know and what does and does not constitute acceptable knowledge (Venzin, von Krogh, & Roos, 1998). Also, by viewing the challenges faced by researchers in the field, often taken for granted assumptions and values which influence how reality is constructed are exposed (Johnson & Duberley, 2000). In view of this, in terms of the TEL, I argue on grounds of episteme for a fresh outlook with the emphasis on knowledge creation that explores language, experiences and senses.

Alvesson and Spicer (2012) suggest three broad paradigmatic assumptions influence approaches to knowledge claims about the study of leadership; positivistic; interpretive and critical. The inference is that different worldviews shape researcher interpretation, communicate objectives of a project and ultimately theories that are generated (Walshaw, 2012). Put another way, the suggestion is that it is extremely important to consider epistemological assumptions in evaluating reasoning and how we make claims to truth (Hunter et al., 2007; Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Pye, 2005). Moreover, epistemologies that take interpretive approaches assume interactions between actors create shared conceptions of reality (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012). In this paradigm the variety includes methods that explore language, experience, meaning and symbolic relationships. Nevertheless, they share the same set of assumptions with the goal of getting closer to truth by understanding how leadership is given meaning through rich accounts of meaning-laden experiences (Alvesson & Spicer, 2012; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Kelly, 2013; Wood, 2005). Which means that what we understand as truth is contingent on prior understandings, often taken for granted assumptions and values that underpin leadership claims and action (Johnson & Duberley, 2000).

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My thesis sought empirical understanding in this way and followed principles of German existentialist Hans-Georg Gadamer and his seminal work *Truth and Method*. His ideas invited me to establish an alternative to what is offered by Goodall (2012) and others and challenges the notion that the TEL can be understood as an objective reality. In other words, meaning was not created from value neutral insight, but understood hermeneutically through interpretation, where truth emerged as multiple truths in situ. According to Gadamer (1989) this is *worked out* by understanding the *hermeneutic situation* that is opened up by the right lines of inquiry and revealed through experiences that people share in stories they tell (Blackshaw, 2017).

### 4.2: Gadamerian Hermeneutics

According to Holloway (1969) the interpretive approach is traced to the philosophy of Max Weber and his ideas of *verstehen*, which translates to mean understanding something done in context, and *erklären*, to provide clarity and explain something in context. This means human action is thought of as a subjective enterprise that is created and understood based on expectations, feelings and beliefs in a particular environment. As legend has it, hermeneutics is rooted in Ancient Greece and in particular Plato's dialogs, where the Greek god Hermes acted as a messenger from the gods to humans (Pernecky, 2016). Apocryphal it might be, as Heidegger casts doubt saying, *the noun hermeneus is preferable to the name of the god Hermes by a playful thinking that is more compelling than the rigor of science* (Heidegger, 1971, p. 29). The key point to make, however, is the foundation of this study was Gadamer's (1989) interpretive idea that concerns itself with a form of interpretation and understanding.

The point also to make is conceptual hermeneutics has a long intellectual history. Hermes acted as the *hermeneus* (interpreter) of messages from the gods to everyday people. This is something that was said to require a special skill which means hermeneutics is often thought of as the art of understanding (Gadamer, 1989). In this sense a hermeneutic project can be summarised as *bringing something out of one world and into another, out of the world of the gods and into that of humans* (Gadamer, 2006, p. 29). It is also important to note that hermeneutics not only has a long history in philosophy, but also has roots in theology and law that were concerned with the interpretation of the bible, scriptures and judicial practices.

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Taken together, the focus is on what are referred to as texts (written or spoken), not only for interpretation, but also to provide convincing meaning as a consequence.

Following along with this thinking places the interpreter as a main focus of the practice and has implications in that the interpreter is thought, not only to be able to practice the art, but provide explanations for the meaning of text (Austgard, 2012). Situated in the era of scientific methods, hermeneutics is linked to interpretive acts, such as writing and speaking, as an ability to do something as opposed to an exact science (Gadamer, 1989). This means that the conceptual claims of hermeneutics argue extensively for a credible, rigorous and trustworthy methodology that is able to bring new understandings to what Kant (2010) refers to as *things for us* (phenomenon) that can be difficult to understand but, most certainly, stand in opposition to the scientific view (Austgard, 2012; Stenner, Mitchell, & Palmer, 2017).

Contemporary hermeneutics typically cites Dilthey (1833-1911), Heidegger (1889-1976), Gadamer (1900-2002) and Ricoeur (1930-2005), as influential scholars who argue, philosophically, for a general theory of interpretation. Yet, there would be little to be gained from considering this number of intellectuals, and the approaches that make up the doctrine, as it is difficult to reduce them to a common set of epistemic principles (Pernecky, 2016). However, what I intend to do is briefly outline the philosophical project and some of the key principles of existential thinker Gadamer who discusses issues of ontology, epistemology and method that were relevant to the ambitions of this project. Crucially, the discussion outlines how his ideas were influential on my thinking throughout the research process.

Gadamer (1989, p. 341) writes *understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated*. His idea rests on what he refers to as *historically effected consciousness* that accounts for the interpreter's past and future. This introduces the idea of understanding social and cultural traditions when interpreting text, as he argues the hermeneutic principle, if brought into the open, is a reflexive position that functions as an element in the act of understanding and says *to stand within a tradition does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible* (p. 324). This line of thinking suggests that my prior knowledge and experiences in professional football, together with accounts of lived experience, were vital to



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advancing what is already known (Stenner et al., 2017). Moreover, for this study, understanding what he calls the *hermeneutic situation* meant that I opened up new lines of inquiry to reveal meaning through stories that were told (Blackshaw, 2017).

### 4.2.1: The Hermeneutic Situation

For Gadamer (2006), working out the hermeneutic situation is a question of interpreting lived experience and requires, what he calls, prejudices to be brought into the open as the researcher is part of what can be understood. Further, this must also include all that is contained in the historicity of a tradition. Put another way, interpretive understanding of text very much included my preunderstandings, which then determined interpretation and theoretical explanations. Looking back, it made the task of interpretation far from straight forward as, until the final analysis, which is discussed later, I was unaware of how some of my own prejudices affected the final interpretation. For example, as I discuss in chapter six, I was aware of an incident concerning one participant and a high-profile football manager which made me consider how this affected what I brought into the open.

Experience, as opposed to abstract philosophical speculation, holds the key to deeper understandings of human life and social phenomenon (Simms, 2003). This for me was an important consideration as it immediately raised concerns about what counts as genuine experience. As Simms (2003) points out, in terms of interpretation, experience is thought to reveal the true meaning, and although subjective, also reveals the meaning of life and social entities. Therefore, if TEL does have an ontology, it may in fact be better understood in what Gadamer (1989) sets out in tradition and not a reality that is 'out there' that we detach. So, working out the hermeneutic situation meant that I rubbed Gadamer's principles up against stories of people who have first-hand experience of football managers, together with my own presuppositions, to develop new meanings of the theory in question.

### 4.2.2: Tradition

What is meant by tradition sets up many of Gadamer's (1989) arguments for his hermeneutic theory and focuses on a consciousness of history and culture that lies within a particular context. This suggests that what can be interpreted and understood about a phenomenon might have very little to do with the thing itself (Kant, 2010). More specifically, the expert leadership effect on organisational performance may in fact have very little to do with the

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leaders themselves and might rest somewhere else. Tradition is an abstract concept that describes powerful forces and customs that are said to be handed down and difficult to escape. However, as a principle, this was something I felt was important to acknowledge as the world of professional football is an old establishment, with long histories and traditions. This suggests ambiguous and complex properties often lie beyond what can be seen but have important implications for what might be found (Gadamer, 1989).

This also means that, despite agency, there are forces that we become conditioned by, such as power and domination, that are historically given within a tradition, often without us questioning them. Gadamer (1989, p. 280) speaks of tradition as a form of authority saying, *that which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority that is nameless, and our finite historical being is marked by the fact that the authority of what has been handed down to us - and not just what is clearly grounded - always has power over our attitudes and behaviours*. This can also be extended to organisations whose values, culture and people are equally affected by tradition and are important to what we come to understand. Gadamer (1989) argues tradition is something we are never free of and something that must be embraced as it combines the old with the new to reveal new insight.

This suggests is that traces of the past are contained within the present, and I had to recognise features of this particular tradition and enquire as to its hermeneutical meaning. This leads to, what Gadamer (1989) calls, a historically effected consciousness that is required in the act of understanding to open up new possibilities and what we want to bring into the open. Thus, in a study that sought to understand leadership influence, the importance of an acute appreciation of the context was invaluable. As the reader will see in chapter six, my understanding of the tradition of professional football is brought firmly into the open, which I argued was important as it led to a new interpretation of the TEL.

### 4.2.3: Interpretation

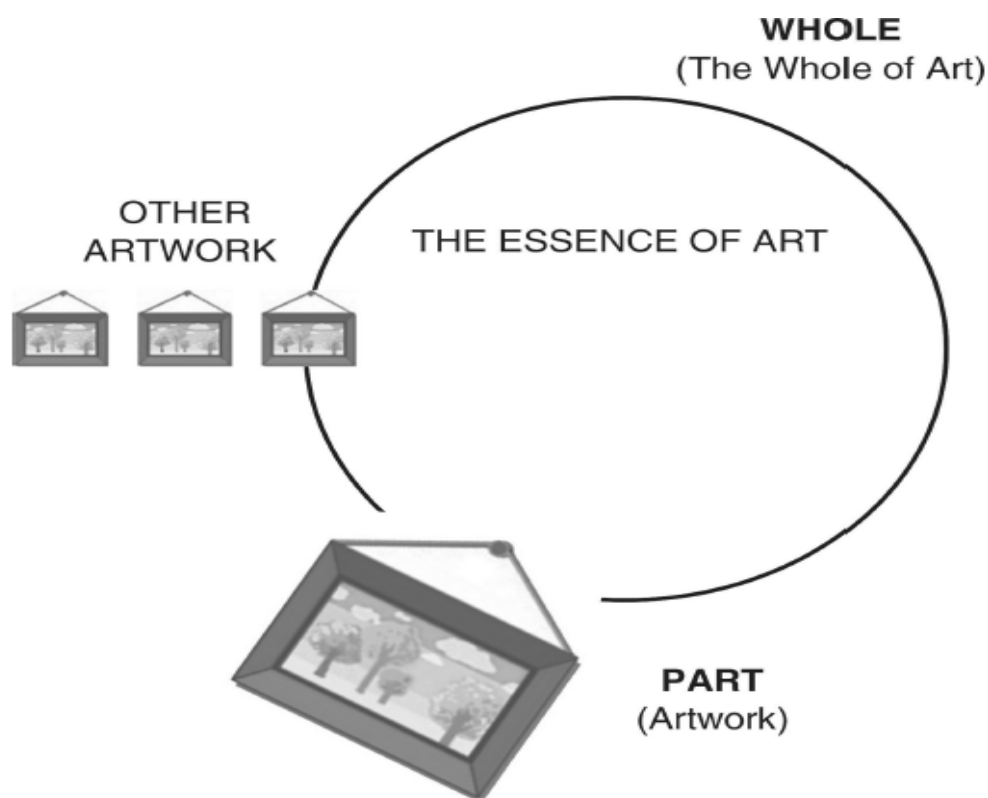
Arguably the most important idea for the study was the notion of interpretation and the implications for my approach. Gadamer (1989) returns to Heidegger, who introduced the idea of the hermeneutic circle, as a way in which interpretation and understanding is achieved. Heidegger describes a circular mode of thinking in order to demonstrate the ontological

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significance of existence, in that Dasein itself is understanding, and examining our own being in the world is how this is achieved. For Heidegger, understanding develops from *circling back and forth between presumption and surprise* (Moran, 2002, p. 18). The suggestion being, understanding requires interpretation of experience as well as an understanding of existence itself. In other words, this mode of thinking accounts for what we understand about a particular context and also what it presents to us. By extension, this suggested that to reveal the essence of expert leader influence, subjective interpretations of participants were mediated by my own understandings and what I also found in tradition.

It should also be said the idea of the hermeneutic circle is not a method in itself but a philosophical tool for understanding social behaviour (Pernecky, 2016). It also highlights the problem Heidegger confronted in that, if our very existence constitutes understanding, then it is very difficult to imagine how preunderstandings do not come into play when we interpret what is spoken or read. The pivotal point is that it establishes a principle that both Heidegger and later Gadamer take on, as an interpretive dialectic that moves from the whole to its parts and includes personal understandings. For Gadamer (1989, p. 291) *our task is to expand the unity of the understood meaning centrifugally. This harmony of all the details with the whole is the criterion of correct understanding*. What this means is that the hermeneutic circle represents a relationship between text of experience and tradition. Gadamer (1989, p. 70) exemplifies this using the aesthetics of art (**Figure 6**) and writes *in the experience of art is present a fullness of meaning that belongs not only to this particular content or object but rather stands for the meaningful whole of life*. Put very simply, I assumed no one text spoke for itself and understanding was achieved from these conceptual moves (Ferguson, 2006).

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**Figure 6: The Hermeneutic Circle**

In saying that, Gadamer (1989) claims *it is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition* (Gadamer, 1989, p. 281). It must be said that prejudice is not used in the negative sense that we are familiar with today, but in the sense of a judgment that is made before all elements that determine a situation have been examined. Prejudice also assumes that past experience shapes our understanding of the world and must be confronted, as this can equally be legitimate in a historical hermeneutic consciousness. Without question this thinking influenced my decision to follow along with Gadamerian hermeneutics as it meant my own experiences were made explicit and included as part of the research. According to Gadamer (1989) historical consciousness means the researcher is aware of prejudices that may prevent understanding and makes a special effort to acquire a historical horizon to avoid limiting the possibility of the field of vision.

Horizon is used metaphorically to mean human interpretations of reality as Gadamer (1989, p. 305) says *we are always affected, in hope and fear, by what is nearest to us*. So, working out the hermeneutic situation was to encounter tradition, and through the right line of

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inquiry, open up possibilities of what could be understood. So rather than look for an expert leadership effect on organisational performance, this study was concerned with working out the essence of lived experience, to understand what makes the TEL possible. Gadamer (1989, p. 302) reminds us that the task of interpretation is never complete but opens up the possibility of new insight as horizons change. He writes *to have a horizon means not being limited to what is nearby but being able to see beyond it*. On one level, this raises doubt as to whether one can ever really find philosophical truth through the experiences of others and, in turn, becomes a question of whether what we interpret is merely description of experience or genuine episteme. Equally this invites criticism of relativism where almost any account of reality is considered truth (Bloor, 2011). Yet, on another level, this gave me comfort in the knowledge that what I found could only be viewed as an interpretation, but importantly, opened up the possibility for further interpretation.

### 4.2.4: Fusion of Horizons

With that said, hermeneutics provides a means to overcome problems that come with this theory of interpretation. Gadamer (1989) counters by invoking the idea of a fusion of horizons where a third meaning emerges as truth. This places the researcher squarely in the interaction with participants and provides a structure by which understanding can be achieved. As the researcher, I was not only immersed in the process, but was part of the overall narrative. Therefore, the idea of a fusion suggests that when dealing with issues that are considered *in the eye of the beholder*, such as leadership, my personal experiences were central to the inquiry (Bass, 2008; Stogdill, 1974).

Conversely, concerning this mode of understanding, Blackshaw (2017, p. 153) argues there are some concepts that defy rational explanation and do not lead to a fusion of horizons, but instead result in *a mis-meeting* of meaning. Based on ethnographic research in leisure studies, he claims hermeneutics only provides *imaginary horizons*, as the value of what is understood resides in rich description that leads to us to see and feel what is within a tradition. Hermeneutics holds that truth lies in interpretation but, paradoxically, is criticised for its reliance on its own truth claim, its own prejudices (Blackshaw, 2017). That being said, the point to make is that this thesis is grounded in tenants of an interpretivist approach and what we come to understand is just that, an interpretation that is open to interpretation.

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Gadamerian theory of interpretation assumes truth is found in historically affected tradition and individual accounts of experience can be problematic as it can never be completely value free. Gadamer (1989) argues structures of power and dominance are not easy to recognise but are legitimised within tradition. This naturally led me to question how seriously we can take any account of experience when interpreting social activity (Schacht, 1998). In many ways Blackshaw (2017) argues for a rethink of the idea of the hermeneutic circle in order to arrive at the correct interpretation of a situation and suggests both representation and interpretation should form one. Accepting this argument meant, as the reader will come to see from the analysis of the data, my starting point was to report the findings and provide rich description of football managers which laid the platform for new understanding.

Overall, Gadamer's (1989) hermeneutic elucidation emphasises the role of tradition, culture and history but also includes the part that language plays in processes of understanding which aligns to my conceptual framework. It ends teleologically with an important epistemological contribution that states the purpose of hermeneutics is to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place. For Gadamer, the gap between being part of a tradition and what we do not know about a phenomenon can be understood through everyday human experiences that are shaped in social and cultural neighbourhoods (Pernecky, 2016). He notes *the polarity between familiarity and strangeness is what hermeneutic work is based on to distinguish between psychology, in particular perceptions, and interpretation that is based on accounting for experiences grounded in cultural and historical traditions* (p. 295).

This focus, however, can be challenged as it assumes primacy of experience over psychological foundations that can also be analysed. It also presupposes truth is found interpretively within tradition and understanding results from a fusion that produces new fields of vision (Gadamer, 1989). Like this, I assumed leadership does exist and is concerned with a world that cannot be fully understood through naturalistic observation. I argue that in order to get closer to truth about the TEL it is best understood through an interpretative view of experience. Therefore, within what is largely considered a scientific paradigm, philosophical differences emerged with the inclusion of human inter-subjectivity (Johnson et al., 2006).

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Furthermore, as this study was concerned with theory building and not hypothesis testing, and in recognition of the importance of human stories in context, narrative analysis was also chosen as a methodological guide. The idea privileges stories that are elicited through methods that assume human experience is inextricably linked to lives lived (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). For Webster and Mertova (2007), storytelling is natural and common human communication that is used to illuminate experiences that have profound impacts on people. That is not to say other mediums, such as visual images or poetry cannot be interpreted for meaning, but simply to highlight the ubiquity of storytelling in our everyday existence (Josselson, 2011a). Which meant the narrativity thesis provided an appropriate means to address the complexity of expert leadership influence (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

### 4.3: Narrative Story Telling

Traced as far back as Aristotle, narrative research is a well understood methodology (Baynham, 2015). For Ricœur, narratives not only imitate life but are something we can learn from. He refers to narratives as mimetics of human action (Simms, 2003). This means the stories we tell are representations (memes) of our understandings. Spence (1982) develops the point further adding narrative truth involves, not a factual record of what really happened, but a constructed account of personal experience. What is common to all is that meaning is constructed through social accounts that, methodologically speaking, privilege the particulars of subjective ways of knowing. Connelly and Clandinin (1990, p. 10) reinforce the point claiming, *narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as a method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways*. As such, I drew on this mode of thinking as it aligned to the approach I had in mind.

Moreover, research in this genre is characterised by a focus on written or oral texts that are narrations of human experience. What underpins the research is the idea that people are able to understand their lives through stories that have imagined beginnings, middles and ends (Josselson, 2011c). To clarify the point, Chase (2018, p. 547) defines narrative research as *retrospective meaning-making, the shaping or ordering of past experience...a way of understanding one's own and others actions, of organizing events and objects into a*

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*meaningful whole of connecting and seeing the consequences of actions and events over time.*

As one of many definitions, it does, however, provide a way to understand what is considered narrative research and also to acknowledge the obvious limitation, in that stories are not the only way to interpret social experiences. In short, the main claim of narrative research is that our propensity for storytelling is an important way of how we make sense of our lives (Bruner, 1990; Josselson & Lieblich, 1999; Wertz et al., 2011).

Theoretically, narrative research is thought of as a hermeneutic enterprise, a science of meaning, that aims to secure significance from an analytical process of construction and reconstruction of stories (Josselson, 2011c). Josselson (2004) claims research takes place within ideals of what Ricoeur calls the hermeneutics of faith, that aims to restore meanings to texts, and hermeneutics of suspicion, that looks for hidden meaning. The approach suggests a means to understand how people make sense of their lives and, as a narrative researcher, I very much sit on the shoulder of the story (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015). In a philosophical sense this refers to meaning in life which is crucial to understanding through interpretation of text (Simms, 2003). The result is said to be a creative process that sheds light on the enigmas of a particular social phenomenon. In saying that, both hermeneutics and a narrative approach come with the inherent danger of nihilism and the possibility of relativistic truth in which any claim to truth is as good as the next (Johnson & Duberley, 2000; Josselson, 2004). This criticism is difficult to overcome but will be acknowledged in the limitations of what was found.

Finally, in contrast to what Clandinin (2007) calls the grand narrative of traditional approaches, two further features of narrative research are seen as important. The first aligns to Gadamer's idea of tradition, in that context is assumed omnipresent and includes notions of temporality and spatiality, along with the context of other people (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). In other words, this meant context not only provided the backdrop, but also moved with the story as it unfolded. Second, the notion of temporality was an important tenant as stories are inherently time-based on the rudimentary assumption that plots start with a beginning, middle and end. Essentially, my study was about the interaction of temporality in how the influence of football managers might change with individuals, time and context.



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These were two features I considered important and reported on in the findings alongside conceptual ideas.

Therefore, accepting narrativity as a methodology, I hoped to move the debate beyond current suggestions about expert leadership influence. This nuanced approach weaved together hermeneutic principles and stories in context and were the foundation of this study. In a subtle way that science cannot capture, this interpretive approach, as opposed numerical analysis, offered the possibility to reveal important themes to discover new meanings (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015).

### 4.3.1: Narrative analysis

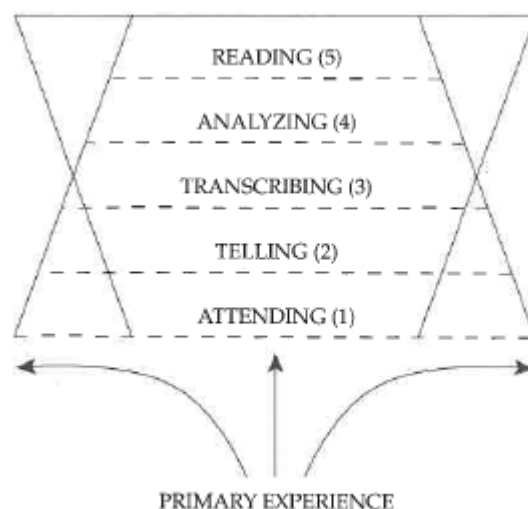
At this juncture it is important to make a clear distinction between narrative inquiry, typically employed in studies that are autobiographic in nature such as a life story, and narrative analysis that refers to a broad range of approaches to storied texts of experiences (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2015; Riessman, 2005). Both narrative and non-narrative text is included in both, which means, words that are spoken and those that are not, are equally part of a story and subject to interpretation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). However, simply said, narrative analysis is an investigation of texts of human experience, not life story (Josselson, 2011c). For Barthes (1989), there is plurality in what is recounted and what is interpreted signifies meaning. This means that narrative analysis involves individual representations of experiences (events and actions), which are then subjected to interpretation to uncover hidden meaning. As such, I considered the approach a good fit with the ambitions of this thesis.

Andrews, Squire, and Tamboukou (2008, p. 2) make it clear upfront that *unlike many qualitative frameworks, narrative research offers no automatic starting or finishing points*. So, in contrast to some neighbour methodologies, such as grounded theory and phenomenology, that offer clear modes of investigation, narrative analysis is challenging in that the process lacks orthodoxy and clear rules or structure (Josselson & Lieblich, 1999). I found the main difficulties involved how to elicit stories; the extent of researcher and participant involvement; whether interpretation should be at a general or specific level; and questions around the epistemological significance that could be attributed to stories (Andrews et al.,

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2008). Despite this, I chose the approach as it offered the means to describe, understand and explain the TEL, and these challenges were overcome through reflexive consideration of the analytical process (Reissman, 2002). The reader will see this is outlined in an open discussion of the research process and, in particular, my approach to interviews and analysis of conversations that formed an overall narrative of expert leadership influence.

Josselson (2011a) suggests the method is a process of capturing texts that represent real life experiences that are then decoded and reorganised for meaning. In turn, Reissman (2002) offers a framework that simulates the analytic process (**Figure 7**) but stresses this is a loose structure as narrative analysis lacks clear methodological rules (Josselson & Lieblich, 1999). The broad idea is that participants retell stories in relation to a sequence of events and provide connections that are then interpreted (Patterson, 2011). How this worked in practice is discussed in further detail later in the chapter, however, I was largely guided by the process Reissman (2002) outlines. To state my approach very simply, I aimed to examine participant interviews and make sense of their stories of football managers. Thus, at the heart of the ambition, I undertook a narrative approach, in the hermeneutic tradition, as a methodology to study and interpret lived experiences in a distinct historical context.



**Figure 7: Levels of Representation in the Research Process**  
Reissman (2002, p. 221)

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### 4.4: The Researcher, Researched and the Subject

Before detailing the practicalities of the research process it is important to outline the role of the researcher, the researched and the subject of the research, football managers, and how this shaped the narrative and theory development. Gadamer argues that our own prejudgements frame the ability to understand the world and as such cannot be eliminated (cited in Gardiner, 1992). On one hand, this calls into question any form of research in this paradigm, in terms of what can legitimately be claimed as truth. On the other, Josselson (1995) makes it clear that within narrative research there are no objective positions on which truth claims can be made. Arguably, social and cultural experiences are embedded in anything that we all read, write and make sense of. This essentially meant my own a priori understandings were what I brought to the study and these had value-laden implications. Further to this, the hermeneutic circle accepts that preunderstandings help build knowledge (Josselson, 2004). Therefore, it is important to emphasise this methodology was built on interpretations from myself, as the researcher, as well as participants as the researched, both providing an interpretation on the subject.

The challenge, therefore, was to enter into conversations, not only to gather stories, but to acknowledge the part I and the research participants played in the construction and interpretation. On my part I paid great attention to both the social and relational context in which the narrative was elicited and this was evaluated in regard to my own viewpoint (Josselson, 2011c). Said another way, I attempted to be reflexive and aware of my own opinions in what was co-constructed. As the reader will come to see, at times this was difficult, as some dark and troubling issues were discussed that required, not only careful presentation, but also cautious interpretation as I reflected on, and worried about, how to report what was told, which at times was familiar and quite personal.

The reality, however, was my personal experiences of the environment, which are detailed in chapter six, meant that I was able to interpret what was told in terms of the vagaries of the context beyond what was obvious to arrive at Gadamer's idea of a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1989). Equally, participants provided their interpretation of the subject that also shaped the narrative for theory development. The important point to make, however, although the level of analysis was on the many stories that were told as a philosophical thesis

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ultimately I was not looking at particulars or qualities of football managers but looking at properties, in the abstract and general, of expert leader influence. For instance, four participants had, at various points, been managers themselves which could have meant that their accounts were told from a perspective that privileged or protected the subject in question. However, as the reader will come to see, in Gadamerian thinking this does not limit what can be known as all accounts were mediated by my reflexive interpretations to arrive at a third meaning and a new field of vision (Gadamer, 1989). In chapter six the reader will see that this was foremost in my thinking and my use of analytic memos of events helped maintain a reflexive mindset (Saldaña, 2016).

Finally, in regard to the truth value of my findings, data quality criteria were firmly considered from within the interpretivist paradigm. Ideas of internal validity was replaced by credibility (authentic representations); transferability superseded external validity (generalisation); dependability (in terms of minimisation of researcher bias) replaced reliability, and confirmability supplanted objectivity in the form of researcher self-criticism (Johnson et al., 2006). Although the goal was to approach the research as systematically as possible, reflexivity was important for me to scrutinise the findings and attempt to reduce sources of bias (Hammersley, 1989; Seale, 1999).

### 4.5: The Research Process

The remainder of this chapter moves away from theoretical contemplations and details the practical decisions I faced to make the research process more explicit. The reader will come to see that, consistent with a general lack of systematic protocols for hermeneutics and narrative research, the process was organic and adapted as the research progressed.

#### 4.5.1: Sample Strategy

The sample was my first consideration and participants were chosen on the basis of their experience and knowledge of working in and around professional football. Principally, I sought to garner stories from people who had worked closely with football managers. The result was a diverse sample that included current and former players, coaches, senior officials and the media (**see Table 1**). The hope was that their collective stories would voice a narrative of expert leader influence. Moreover, as the aim of this project was theory building, this

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meant the study should not to be confused with conventional sample designs, that are selected for their suitability to generalise to wider populations (Yin, 2014). Therefore, probability sampling, designed to produce samples that are representative of a population, was rejected in favour of theoretical sampling, where participants were considered the vehicle to explore concepts (Jones, 2015). In other words, participants were selected on the basis of their relevance, as opposed to statistical motivations.

**Table 1: Summary of Key Participants Characteristics**

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Number of clubs</b>	<b>Number of managers</b>
1. Kyle	Coach	5	9
2. Rob	Chief Executive	1	6
3. Danny **	Ex-player	14	22
4. Alex	Ex-player	3	4
5. Jordan	Coach	2	8
6. Ben *	Current player	9	16
7. Harry *	Current player	9	20
8. Ian **	Coach	6	11
9. Jim **	Coach	12	26
10. Kevin	Broadcaster	NA	NA
11. Lewis *	Current player	4	8
12. Mick	Ex-player	18	28
13. Neil	Sporting Director	7	12

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14. Paul *	Ex-player	6	13
15. Ryan	Ex-player	14	27
16. Steve **	Coach	7	16
Total		137	226

\* Played international football

\*\* Experience as a manager

Riessman (2005) argues that narrative analysis is not suitable for large numbers of generic participants and is best suited to smaller numbers where connections can be made from events and actions that are meaningful to the storyteller. As Jones (2015, p. 132) advises, *you need to consider the nature of the study, with narrative and phenomenological studies requiring smaller sample sizes than generic qualitative approaches*. Therefore, the number of participants deemed necessary was not a simple answer and ultimately the quality and depth of the data was considered more important than how many participants I felt were needed. As Kelly and Harris (2010) point out, the relatively few academic studies in professional football show the difficulty researchers face in gaining access to this very closed environment. And, although I took great pride from the fact that I was once ‘one of them’ (albeit nearly 40 years ago), throughout the process I very much felt like an ‘outsider’ and access was not as straightforward as I first envisaged. This meant, on reflection, once you are not truly part of it, this presents additional challenges.

To overcome the problem my starting point was to draw on personal contacts, as a convenience sample, which I hoped would later snowball (in a sense) as I asked interviewees for possible referrals (Bryman, 2016). I also took advantage of a couple of opportunist moments where being in the right place at the right time led to interviews. That said, my original plan was to gain access to between 2-4 clubs and secure interviews with 4-6 employees at each venue. But, as Bryman (2016) points out, the research processes does not always go as predicted and might lead to changes in design or research questions. This proved accurate as I was unable to get past the ‘gatekeepers’ to secure permission to collect data

## Chapter 4: Methodology

from my initial list of football clubs. As Van Maanen and Kolb (1985, p. 11) observe, *gaining access to most organisations is not a matter to be taken lightly but one that involves some combination of strategic planning, hard work and dumb luck*. This meant that I went to 'Plan B', which in hindsight, was 'Plan A'. In all, I secured a sample that comprised of sixteen participants, and although might be viewed as a methodological weakness when compared to random sampling, for example, it was the most pragmatic way for me to gain access to people from this closed social world (Kelly & Harris, 2010).

With that said, the sample was diverse in terms of roles and responsibilities but, importantly, contained vast experience from individuals who had spent many years in the domain. In the end, it comprised current and former players, all of whom had played in professional leagues in Britain, including four individuals who also played at full international level for their countries. All coaches were ex-players and two had undertaken short stints as managers before returning to coaching roles. I was also fortunate to be able to interview two senior club officials, one CEO and a Sporting Director, through a chance encounter. Finally, through another opportunist moment, I was able to interview a leading media figure, who I considered might bring a different perspective to the mainstay of the sample.

Following the interviews, I decided to begin the analysis with the intention of returning to the field to increase the sample size. However, on the issue of data quality, this brought into focus the matter of saturation, that is, when I began to learn nothing new (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2019). The data corpus brought together the collective wisdom of individuals who had considerable experience in various capacities in professional football. This was not to say that any one person had all the answers, or the collective knew everything there was to know. What it meant was the level of analysis was the important consideration as the focus was not on each interview or even cross-case analysis, but the combined stories of a staggering 226 football managers. Through their voices a narrative of expert leadership emerged and, as such, this addressed concerns about the sample size, as the level of analysis was firmly on stories of football managers that emerged from conversations.

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### 4.5.2: Interviews

My next move centered on collecting data and this was achieved through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted over a seventeen-month period. As Jones (2015) observes the researcher's participation in a narrative interview should be minimal to encourage rich, detailed storytelling. As such, they were approached as conversations to allow the participant to be centre stage and take the floor. **Appendix 1** shows my initial interview guide and open ended questions that were designed to generate extended accounts of experiences (Reissman, 2002). The thinking behind this was that this would probably be more suited to people who are from, what still remains a closed environment, particularly players who are well versed and guarded in interview situations (Kelly & Harris, 2010). This meant that I developed a guide with a few broad, starter questions to facilitate storytelling, such as *can you tell me about a manager who had a big influence on you?*

It is also worth saying that both my lines of inquiry and interview technique evolved over the period. Firstly, as most researchers would probably attest, the more interviews I did the more comfortable and adept I became. As a former television broadcaster, I had extensive experience of interviewing sports personalities, however, I found in-depth academic interviews to be challenging as participants, in general, were somewhat suspicious and at times took the interview in unexpected directions. As a matter of fact, a few contacts that I thought would grant me an interview declined, with one saying *I don't like to get involved with that sort of thing*. Secondly, it is also worth noting that my line of inquiry also developed and was refined once my conceptual framework took shape which allowed me to interrogate the phenomenon in question in a different light. In practice, it meant that my initial interview guide was fluid and questions focused on what emerged in conversation. My conceptual framework also gave me a critical lens through which to probe areas of discussion but was perhaps more important to the analysis to come.

Interviews took place in a variety of locations, from cafés to classrooms, but were organised at the convenience of the individual. The nature of the study was explained and participants were then asked for consent (**Appendix 2**). The point to make here is that, in each case, I made it clear that my main responsibility was to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity. I also stressed that any names of individuals or clubs would be presented as pseudonyms in



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the final report. The hope was this would encourage participants to be as open as possible, which worked better in some cases more than others. Finally, the interviews were digitally recorded using smartphone technology, downloaded and stored on a secure platform. **With that said, the reader should be forewarned that where participants really did open up, the stories presented contain some graphic accounts and offensive language that some may find unpleasant.**

As far as transcription was concerned, as Bryman (2016) points out, the main decision is whether to do it yourself or use a professional service. Advocates of doing it yourself cite the main advantage is that it allows you to get really close to the data. However, when theory met with practical reality, my decision was heavily influenced by the fact that I am not a quick or accurate touch typist and after one attempt it was clear to me that this would be extremely time consuming. Given that I was also a part-time student I had to be realistic as I did not have sufficient time to develop the necessary skills. So, all recordings were sent out and returned with pages of verbatim text.

Spender (1989) reminds us that it is the researcher's experience of the interview and the context that is all important, which proved to be an accurate observation. Whilst the quality of the transcripts was extremely good, there were errors that needed to be corrected, particularly when it came to important facts that involved technical football discussion, names or jargon. This meant that I had to carefully listen to each interview and amend transcripts before detailed analysis could take place. With that said, I found this part extremely beneficial in terms developing a much better feel for the data and, importantly, a sense of emerging themes for coding.

### 4.5.3: Coding Technique

Analysis in this genre is a creative process that seeks to understand themes, not only in relation to one another, but as a dynamic whole (Josselson, 2011a). This is what distinguishes narrative analysis in that the ultimate focus is on the whole story as opposed to atomised parts (Chase, 2018). Furthermore, what is also unique, is the parts take on real importance in how they are used to recreate the whole (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Riessman, 2005; Wertz et al., 2011). This meant I initially read texts for holistic, over categorical meaning, and gave

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content privilege, over structure (Josselson, 2004). The main challenge was then to differentiate between narrative and non-narrative text. For example, in question and answer exchanges it was sometimes difficult to establish where a narrative began and ended as they did not always have clear boundaries (Reissman, 2002). Importantly, as the level of analysis was within stories, the job was to piece data together to make the invisible visible and the insignificant significant. This meant I linked different parts of stories to form a coherent whole. I also paid attention to the content of the narration (the told) and the structure (the telling) looking for voices within and what was not said or unsayable by looking closely for omissions (Josselson, 2011c). In short, what I was looking for were sections of text that best represented a narrative of expert leadership influence.

Josselson (2011c) outlines how this might be done. I first collected stories around the theme of the TEL that were converted to text (construction) and then read closely to get a sense of structure, which then gave rise to general themes (**Figure 8**). Second, I returned at subsequent points to specific parts to help me develop meaning which was considered in terms of my research questions (deconstruction). This iterative process involved multiple readings to identify different voices, common dialogue and contradictions to understand how themes came together to form a coherent whole (reconstruction). This was then interpreted in the spirit of the hermeneutic circle and in accord with the literature to discover how any meaning expressed could be explained (Simms, 2003). Making use of Gadamerian ideas was, therefore, important to help me understand particular sensitivities that, in turn, created new ideas (Andrews et al., 2008; Wertz et al., 2011).

Typically, narrative research relies on thematic analysis to identify first level understanding before each story is revisited (Josselson, 2011c). To do this the data was coded using Saldaña's (2016) affective coding method to provide a structure. Drawing on this understanding the analysis was conducted on four dimensions; attitudes; beliefs; values; and emotions. Attitudes referred to what were, essentially, opinions about football managers in the way participants thought or felt about them. Whereas beliefs differed in that they detailed accounts of direct experience (as far as possible) as opposed to opinions. This meant beliefs, included values and attitudes based on personal knowledge, experiences and naturally

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perceptions of football managers. Values simply meant what participants felt was important or valued about managers. Finally, the theme emotions was about emotional responses to managers and how they made them feel (Saldaña, 2016). These affective codes were a helpful starting point to organise the data although there was naturally some overlap.

A first coding cycle was conducted to attribute meaningful qualities to the data. Sub-categories were then generated that were either verbatim, a word or short phrase assigned to describe experiences (see Figure 9). Analytic memos were also written at this stage, as I reflected on each interview, to set up hermeneutic interpretation to come. As Saldaña (2016, p. 11) points out, *rarely will anyone get coding right the first time*, which was a truism in my case. My first coding cycle resulted in 91 sub-codes, which was probably a result of me trying to be thorough, and also my uncertainty as to what should get coded. However, the second cycle brought greater focus and clustered key words and phrases from text within sub-codes. From this, higher order themes were developed that described general features of football managers on the dimensions outlined (Saldaña, 2016). This recursive process, where I looked to interpret and build on codes and categories, was extremely valuable as it sharpened my sense of the narrative that emerged. And, importantly, it also provided the basis for making a theoretical contribution based on my research questions and literature (Bryman, 2016).

### Attitudes

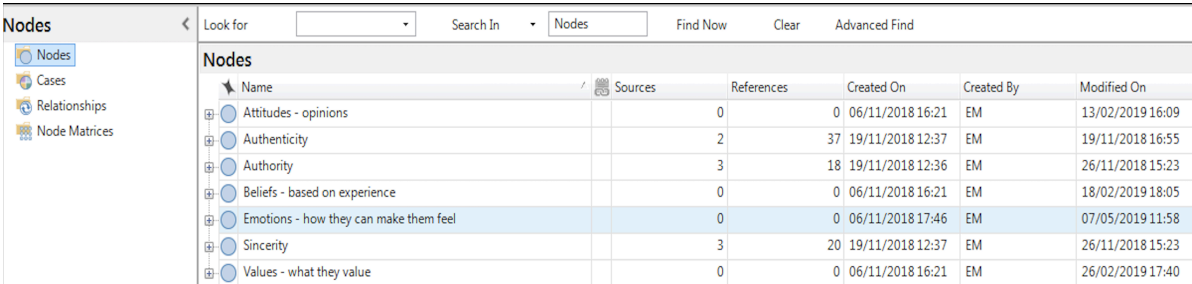
First cycle coding	Second cycle coding	General themes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adaptable</li> <li>2. Charisma</li> <li>3. Consistent approach</li> <li>4. Creates the vision</li> <li>5. Driven</li> <li>6. Engaging</li> <li>7. Good and bad</li> <li>8. Aura</li> <li>9. Didn't like him</li> <li>10. Makes difficult decisions</li> <li>11. Old school/New school</li> <li>12. Passionate</li> <li>13. Perceived to be successful</li> <li>14. Respect</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Change, old school, headmaster, disciplinarian, fear, aggressive, black and white, basic, simplistic, personality, bully</li> <li>2. Aura, respect, fair, gravitas, mystique, looked up to, god, legend, status, successful, makes difficult decisions, knowledge</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong characters</li> <li>2. Have an aura</li> <li>3. Charismatic</li> <li>4. Passionate</li> <li>5. Visionary</li> </ol>

## Chapter 4: Methodology

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Set the standard</li> <li>16. Right fit</li> <li>17. Personalities</li> <li>18. Untrusting</li> <li>19. Who you know</li> <li>20. Legend</li> <li>21. Fair</li> <li>22. Successful</li> <li>23. Encouraging</li> <li>24. Likeable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Engaging, charisma, encouraging, caring personalities, likeable, relate to players, character</li> <li>4. Driven, passionate, motivated, work ethic, enthusiastic, commitment, standards, sacrifice, hardworking</li> <li>5. Adaptable, creates the vision, revolutionary, manage the club, work in the broader, environment, philosophy</li> </ul>	
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**Figure 8: Example of Coding Process**

From the onset I committed to using NVivo software to efficiently organise and store sections of text. **Figure 9** displays two screenshots that illustrate how the data was electronically managed into nodes (codes) and sub-nodes. Concerning the decision to use data software, Friese (2014, p. 211), makes an imperative point saying, *to the software, a code is just an object that can be attached to various other objects and whose content can be searched and retrieved. Everything else is up to you.* This meant that, although there are many great features to NVivo, the challenge was still to create a narrative from what was coded. Organised this way, the data housed findings which told a story of football managers which was then reported in the three chapters that follow.



Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On
Attitudes - opinions		0	06/11/2018 16:21	EM	13/02/2019 16:09
Authenticity		2	19/11/2018 12:37	EM	19/11/2018 16:55
Authority		3	19/11/2018 12:36	EM	26/11/2018 15:23
Beliefs - based on experience		0	06/11/2018 16:21	EM	18/02/2019 18:05
Emotions - how they can make them feel		0	06/11/2018 17:46	EM	07/05/2019 11:58
Sincerity		3	19/11/2018 12:37	EM	26/11/2018 15:23
Values - what they value		0	06/11/2018 16:21	EM	26/02/2019 17:40

## Chapter 4: Methodology

Emotions - how they can make them feel	0	0	06/11/2018 17:46	EM	07/05/2019 11:58	EM
An arm around me	1	2	16/11/2018 18:23	EM	16/11/2018 18:24	EM
Close bond	2	2	06/11/2018 17:47	EM	29/11/2018 14:15	EM
Dark side	1	3	16/11/2018 18:44	EM	17/11/2018 22:03	EM
Didn't think he liked me	2	4	07/05/2019 12:14	EM	09/05/2019 12:17	EM
Enormous respect	2	14	03/01/2019 10:41	EM	12/02/2019 17:20	EM
Honoured	1	5	29/11/2018 15:28	EM	29/11/2018 15:46	EM
Real affection	2	10	06/11/2018 16:23	EM	18/02/2019 15:50	EM
Supportive in public	1	12	18/02/2019 15:55	EM	18/02/2019 15:57	EM
The uncontrollables	1	10	16/11/2018 18:46	EM	16/11/2018 18:50	EM

**Figure 9: Example of NVivo Coding**

### 4.6: Ethical Considerations

The project was conducted in accordance with Sheffield Hallam University Research and Ethics Policy and Procedures. Details of procedures for ensuring ethical issues were adhered to can be found at the [University Research Ethics Approval Procedures](#). The research did not involve vulnerable participants nor was the topic considered particularly sensitive in nature. In saying that, some disturbing discoveries emerged from conversations, but it should be noted that these were freely given. Additionally, informed consent (**Appendix 2**) was obtained prior to the start of each interview and participants were also informed they were free to withdraw at any point. Perhaps, the main ethical consideration throughout was to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participants from this high-profile environment. This was guaranteed using pseudonyms and participants were offered the opportunity to review the accuracy of factual information from the texts.

Another important consideration is expressed in Josselson's (2011a) debate on authority of experience (a participant's understanding of their experience) and authority of expertise (the researcher's interpretation). Essentially, the concern centres on ownership of collected data, in terms of accuracy and subsequent interpretation. The crucial point is that participants were informed that the interpretation of their stories was not about them (as a person), but them as a participant of the research. Therefore, the final interpretation may not feel like an accurate representation of their experiences. Finally, health and safety risk factors were also considered as part of this process, although I did not encounter any issues where participants or the researcher were harmed. Additionally, all data was stored on the University's data management system ([SHU Research Store Service](#)).

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### 4.7: Summary

This research aimed to contribute new knowledge by seeking to understand the influence that those who are considered experts in their field, have on people they interact with. To that end, the research was approached from within the interpretivist paradigm in order to build on the current TEL (Bryman, 2016). Principles of narrative analysis (Josselson, 2011b) were attended to that allowed for holistic consideration of stories of expert leadership. Data was collected in the form of in-depth, semi-structured interviews to develop a holistic picture in the hermeneutic tradition (Gadamer, 1989). Finally, thematic analysis, using an affective coding method (Saldaña, 2016) was undertaken to provide the basis for understanding and explanation (Reissman, 2011).

The findings are presented in three chapters that, first, describe managers in professional football; followed by hermeneutic interpretation of participant experiences; and finally re-conceptualisation of the TEL using Austin's (1962) theoretical lens. Given that the TEL is still an inchoate idea, like any story, one understands better when you know the main actors. Accordingly, I argue that it is sensible to neatly present the phenomenon in question in order to begin the process of conceptual understanding (Van Maanen, 2011). For Blackshaw (2017), painting a detailed picture is equally as powerful as conceptual explanation. Put simply, this means that it is difficult to enter into theoretical discussion unless the reader has a clear idea of matters associated with the phenomenon in question.

## Chapter 5: Findings

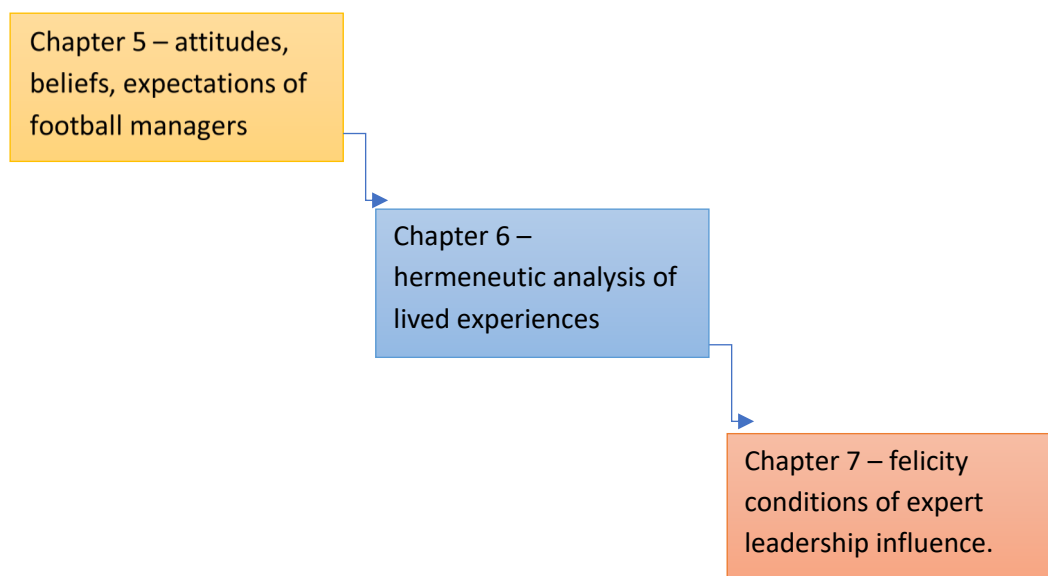
This is the first of three findings chapters that are guided by the method outlined beforehand. What has been said in chapter four was important, as it detailed my approach to the analysis, to ultimately provide conceptual explanation and satisfy the broad aim of this thesis. Nevertheless, as Grint et al. (2017) advocate, analysis and interpretation of subjective experiences of leadership require accurate description of the ideas in question, which gives the reader an appreciation of the phenomenon under investigation. This meant it was important to present precise depiction that tells a story of the British football manager before theoretical elucidation takes place (Josselson, 2011a). Therefore, perspectives about who they are, what they do, and what was considered important about their leadership are discussed in what follows. As was also said in the previous chapter, to do this, the data corpus was coded using an affective coding method and analysis conducted on four dimensions to organise and examine the data in a systematic way (Saldaña, 2016).

The reader should bear in mind that what is described in this chapter is a version of a story, told to ultimately help understand leadership influence. Consequently, I believe it is important to get a sense of what participants were prepared to disclose and how it was interpreted. It is also accurate to say that participants brought a wealth of experience (**see Table 1**) and the strength of the data corpus is that it incorporated viewpoints from a broad range of stakeholders who have interacted with football managers. When knitted together, I think provides sufficient insight to achieve the aim of describing key features of expert leaders. Put differently, the level of analysis was not a comparison between participants, but a narrative that stemmed from first-hand accounts that are parts of a whole picture (Gadamer, 2006; Josselson, 2011b).

It is also worth saying again that this study is fundamentally about theory development and, more specifically, trying to understand how and why it is thought that experts in their fields make better leaders (Goodall, 2012; Goodall et al., 2015; Goodall et al., 2011; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015; Goodall & Stoller, 2017). To achieve this, each chapter contributes important findings that linked together as outlined in **figure 10** below. Chapter five begins by examining cognitive thoughts, beliefs and expectations of expert football managers and is followed by chapter six which provides hermeneutic analysis of participant experiences to uncover what

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was found in the social, culture, historical tradition. Finally, chapter seven builds on the findings of the previous two and examines the idea of felicity conditions to provide theoretical explanation of expert leadership influence.



**Figure 10 – The Theory Building Process**

Lastly, the study is situated in the context of professional football with the focus on British football managers, who are still referred to as the *gaffa*, as the following exchange told:

*Interviewer: Did you call him [NAME]?*

*Ben: No, gaffa.*

*Interviewer: Always gaffa?*

*Ben: All the managers, all my managers I've known I still call them gaffa, yeah. The structure high up is still there. So, you've still got, erm, chairman you got directors as well. But, then the manager.*

It has been nearly forty years since I played in this environment and from what I remember, despite modernisations, it appears discourse remains ensconced in an era where respect for authority figures was expected (Carter, 2013). Like many organisations, professional football comes with its own tradition, full of rich history, culture and stories, but is not a reality that



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you easily detach from (Gadamer, 1989). In many ways football managers are assumed to be experts in their field, many of them having spent the majority of their career in the game as footballers and coaches, before making what is seen as the natural progression to manager (Carter, 2013). Further, the debate for a TEL shows a trend that suggests general managers, with skills that are transferable across industries, are being appointed over so called specialists in their field (Bertrand, 2009; Custodio et al., 2013; Frydman, 2007). Not only does the theory posit that the very best in the business make better leaders, but also makes the claim that organisations perform better as these individuals have deep knowledge and experience of the core business (Goodall, 2012). Chapter two reviewed the emerging body of knowledge, and I argued claims as to the explanatory importance and robustness of the construct go too far as many theoretical and methodological matters remain unresolved for the concept to be accepted at face value.

More specifically, what also became clear was describing football managers is not a one size fits all, as the role of the football manager has evolved over the past 30 years and club structures can be different. Therefore, how the role is described can vary from club to club (Carter, 2013). Importantly, despite popular belief that football managers are the most important person in the organisation (Molan et al., 2016). Contrasting stories told by participants who were responsible for the hiring and firing of managers not only highlighted different approaches, but also served as a reminder that although football managers are pivotal figures, ultimately they are employees that are selected to lead the central function, as the following stories show us:

*Neil (13<sup>1</sup>): When I got here, [NAME] was the manager and, erm, the idea was to keep continuity till the end of the season. I was really worried that we were going to get relegated. We spoke with the board...and the new owners who are involved at that stage as well. But...I was thinking, if we could just keep it going, keep it going...knick a few points and we shouldn't go down. But there was one game...even before the game...I was thinking, I hope we get a result today. And, even if we don't there's enough games to keep us up. But I'd looked at the game and...I spoke to the owner after the game and said, "if we don't make a change...then I think we've got a real possibility of getting relegated". It was like alarm bells were going. A MANAGER was out of A CLUB and my intention was always to bring him. But I didn't want to bring him to a dog fight. I wanted us to get over the dog fight and bring him in...start a fresh. He was always gonna be my number one*

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<sup>1</sup> Numbers denote key participant characteristics Table 1 page 100.

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*choice. Erm...football it's very incestuous...and it's normally who you know and what you think.*

*Rob (2): For THIS MANAGER, we were gonna go through a far more rigorous selection process and we interviewed quite a lot of managers. Quite a few did do PowerPoints...presentations. Erm, it was quite interesting because the Chairman prepared a spreadsheet of probably about ten things that he was looking for...and then it would all be marked and then we'd see...There was things like, you know, his coaching ability and, how you would do it. And he said, right, and "that's gonna be...the guy that comes out of this...we're gonna note it, we're gonna mark it" ... Anyway, we did it all and stuff. I mean, THE MANAGER (they chose) finished about ninth! Anyway, he (the Chairman) was like, right...we're not doin' that anymore! Well, the reason that THE MANAGER got the job was because there was a poll of the fans and they were unanimous and wanting him to get the job. Yeah, the fans wanted him. So, I think that's where science went out of the window a bit.*

Sixteen interviews (ranging from 35 to 80 minutes in duration) produced a data corpus of over 150,000 words. Participants varied from current players (3), former players (5), coaches (5), senior management (2) and the media (1) (**Table 1**). It is also worth noting that the intention was not to interview football managers themselves, however, four participants had taken up brief spells as managers before returning to coaching roles, so were able to speak first-hand about the mind of the manager. This supported the point that the majority of managers played professionally and are developed from within the game before taking the hot seat (Mills & Boardley, 2016). With that said, the idea was to capture a broad range of viewpoints to develop a general narrative. It is also worth saying that access to individuals who were willing to speak about their experiences was difficult enough. Getting them to fully open up was another matter, as evidenced by what one participant told me as the recorder was turned off at the end of an interview:

*Mick (12): I didn't want to dob (implicate) anyone in with anything I said. Some of people in the game would rather take it to their grave, whereas others will only write about experiences in a book!*

Indeed, there are a number of biographic, autobiographic and documentary accounts that do just that (Ancelotti et al., 2016; Calvin, 2015; Hughes, 2015; Moritz, 2015). However, the admission was something I kept front of mind as it suggested there might be things that were not said that could equally be illuminating. In total, participants had worked with some 226 managers, spanning over 140 clubs and national teams. Ten had played in the highest league

## Chapter 5: Findings

and four represented their country. Five ex-players remained in the game as coaches. I was also fortunate and grateful to gain access to a Chief Executive, Sporting Director and leading football television figure, who were equally generous with their time. Taken together, this highlights the quality and experience within the sample, all of whom were well qualified to speak about a world they know so well.

The first coding cycle was conducted on the four dimensions stated to attribute meaningful qualities to the data. Codes were either in vivo (verbatim), a word or short phrase, that were assigned to describe experiences. Analytic memos were also written to reflect on each interview and set up a hermeneutic interpretation, which I attend to in the next chapter. This produced 91 codes to describe the data which raised an important point and highlighted the difficulty with any leadership study, as illustrated by Stogdill's (1974) well known quote, *leadership can be anything and everything*. The proliferation of codes, in part, reflects Stogdill's point and was supported by a breadth of descriptors. A second coding cycle, however, brought greater focus which developed categories and then main themes (**Figure 8**). These four affective codes, attitudes, beliefs, values and emotions are now discussed alongside views of participants and are presented in a narrative style to describe the British football manager (Saldaña, 2016).

### 5.1: Attitudes

This section begins with, what are essentially, opinions about managers and this quote from Alex made for an interesting opening:

*Alex (4): it's interesting that, you know, we're talking about managers because, erm, more than the guys I played with, it's the different managers that you played under that stick out in terms of...they make players.*

Attitudes was used to refer to the way participants think or feel about managers. This meant that although participants undoubtedly drew on actual experiences, they sometimes made reference to managers they had not worked with to make a point. Indeed, the code could equally have been labelled *opinions* as, although these might have well been formed by experiences from within the game, they were not always as a result of direct experiences. It is also worth saying that the codes are closely related so there was some natural overlap. For

## Chapter 5: Findings

attitudes, a first coding cycle produced 24 initial codes which were refined to generate five main themes about their character. Managers in professional football were thought to be:

1. **Strong characters**
2. **Have an aura**
3. **Charismatic**
4. **Passionate**
5. **Visionary**

At this point the image and make-up of football managers started to take shape. Participants spoke about their methods from days of old through to the modern manager. Football managers were still referred to as the *gaffa*, are highly respected figureheads and steer the ship. On one hand, they are strong, all powerful characters, who are authoritarian, disciplinarians and sometimes feared. On the other hand, modern managers have evolved and adapted to the current age of information technology, and foster relationship-based leadership. Greats of the game were often spoken about and managers as well as players featured in these conversations. The names were well known and stories about them documented, which elevated these figures as people we should learn from (Elberse, 2013). So, it probably came as no surprise when participants spoke about some managers with great reverence, and a significant theme that showed itself was the idea of a presence or aura as it was usually framed. Some spoke about managers they held in high esteem as if they were larger than life and the narrative suggested this way of thinking stemmed from pedigree in the game. It was also unsurprising that managers were spoken about in terms of charisma as a key ingredient that enabled them to make strong, moving connections with people. (Weber, 1968). Ian, for example, suggested one manager radiated this invisible, transcendental quality:

*Ian (8): THE MANAGER was like a, erm, I don't like using that word, but a God. You know, you'd walk past him, and he just had this aura about him and, you know. You'd walk past him a million times and if he said good morning to you once, that was it! You walk in the room, you have that much respect for him. Even though he wasn't an outwardly loud guy, he just commanded respect as soon as you saw him.*

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Football fans certainly recognise the conventional image of the demonstrative football manager, pacing the touchline, punching the air and barking instruction (Carter, 2013). What is more, they were said to be passionate about the work they do and how this was openly exhibited. Participants suggested that there was an expectation for outward displays of passion and, in the main, credited football managers with this quality. Finally, the theme of visionary referred to managers who had a clear idea of what they wanted and how they thought to manage within the structure. In short, they knew how to transform vision into reality.

Overall, the theme attitudes examined opinions to offer a picture of British football managers. The findings suggested a number of desirable qualities that participants thought or felt about managers. In saying all that, you could argue many people have opinions on football managers, and some even think they can do a better job! And, while this section gives us greater insight to views of football managers, perhaps that is all it can do. Professional football remains a relatively closed, insular and secretive world and very few actually know who football managers really are but also what they do away from the public glare (Potrac et al., 2007). So, I now turn my attention to describe beliefs about important work they undertake which differs from what has been said before, as these are, as far as possible, based upon actual experiences.

### 5.2: Beliefs

Effectively, football managers are assumed to be experts as many of them spend significant amounts of time in the game as players and coaches before turning their hand to management (Dawson & Dobson, 2002; Fitzgerald & Dopson, 2009; Mills & Boardley, 2016). Paradoxically, most of them receive little or no management and leadership training prior to taking up the job (Ancelotti et al., 2016). In saying that, there is no doubt the environment in which they operate is unique, and Harry explained why this is important in terms of being a manager:

*Harry (7): In any other business you always have someone who's the top person in the business. Now football's slightly different because the owners of the business aren't necessarily 'au fait' with their business...football. So, you have a business expert there, whereas maybe other companies, in different industries, generally the owner has been someone who's built the business up, so knows the business inside out and is the 'head*

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*honcho'. The problem that you've got in football is that you've got people who like football, and this is another thing...the majority of the population like football. Yeah. The majority of the population think they're good at football...and the majority of the population think they know everything about football. So, that's where it becomes slightly different to other industries, and this is what I say to people, I don't even think there's another industry like it really. So, the thing is you employ experts and then these owners...their understanding isn't as competent as it should be to understand what THE MANAGER is bringing to the table. Then, when things aren't goin' well, it's the easiest person to replace...cos there's only one. Now, if the manager is managing the first team to get results then by rights, he is the most important person.*

Harry's view echoed dominant discourse concerning the importance of football managers. However, what I present here differs from the previous theme attitudes, as it describes accounts of direct participant experience, as opposed to opinions. Stories of first-hand accounts help the reader understand important aspects of the role. In saying that, it was not about the day to day specifics but discussed at a general end of the scale. Therefore, beliefs included values and attitudes based on personal knowledge, experiences and naturally perceptions of football managers (Saldaña, 2016). Main themes suggested football managers:

- 1. Create the right environment**
- 2. Inspire**
- 3. Get the best out of people**

Neil made it clear when thinking about football managers it was judicious to consider both sides of the coin:

*Neil (13): I've worked for probably around, pffft, eleven or twelve...a few...I take good and bad out of everything if I can. And, I've taken something from every one of them. Some of them I thought weren't the best, and some of them I thought were unbelievable.*

So, why were some unbelievable and others fell short? Neil provided good insight:

### 5.2.1: Create the right environment

*Neil (13): Whether THE MANAGER is a great coach or not, I don't really know because I'd never worked with him at first, you know. But, the atmosphere around the place was massive. Absolutely. And we started winning games. Erm. People were talking, you know, and it was a friendly place to be. A good atmosphere at the training grounds. This might sound a bit selfish, but I like coming to work and being in an environment where people respect each other. And people are good with each other and, like...there's a friendly atmosphere. That's what matters most.*

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This implied that the manager was instrumental in creating a working environment where people could perform to their best. And, in some way, supports the idea that football managers enjoy a high degree of autonomy with few constraints on how they lead (Kelly, 2008; Penn, 2002). Despite this, Jordan described a toxic miasma as an example of how quickly things can change:

*Jordan (5): A MANAGER is a great example. I recall him getting all the staff, and I mean all the staff, into a meeting, including the cleaning staff...all the staff. All into a meeting and did this speech to everyone and it was very uplifting. It was very motivational. He was very much the leader of the room...really commanded. We're talking like an audience of two-hundred and fifty people and he really commanded a room. He had very much a...clench your fist, punch the wall, we're gonna do this. This is gonna be effort, determination, graft, hard work. And people buy into that...he sold this. Ten games in, you've had an initial, positive response then reality sets in. You lose a couple of games. You've done all that running, grafting, hard work. It's then the next bit. We actually need a plan B. We need a plan C. And, he didn't have that. All he had was the...come on lads. Yeah, initially results picked up because everyone was upbeat. So, he created an environment of positivity. We are gonna do this, we're in this together... everyone plays a part...it's achieved through hard work...through determination...through everyone giving that extra bit. And, everyone did! And then, probably fifteen games in, all of a sudden, they lose two or three. Players start to underperform. Fans start to question it. There is no plan B. You get in on the Monday morning and it's all f'ing and blinding. And, you're this, you're that. And the players are looking for fault. He didn't know that bit. And it starts. And then players start thinking, you know what, I've had enough of being sworn at and being told that I'm this and I'm that. A manager gets brought in because things are bad and the reason they've been brought in is because someone's been sacked because it's been bad. So, the first job is recovery and getting it back on an even keel. The elite managers, for me, are, then the ones that can do the next bit.*

We probably have all experienced working environments that we might describe as healthy or unhealthy, and the suggestion was the conditions that a manager creates are temporal but something that can be managed. Whether the manager can or cannot create the right environment is up for debate, but it is something that can change and needed to be adapted. For Steve, some comedic relief was a way of balancing things out:

*Steve (16): Gotta have humour. There's gotta be somethin' in yer camp makes you laugh. You can't be serious, serious, serious, serious. People don't enjoy working. THE MANAGER, master at it. He'd have you in stiches some days. Wasn't everybody's cup of tea, you know, but the majority...everyone loves playin' for im. And, they were doin' some funny things really...that element of humour all the time. Gotta av it...you gotta enjoy it. People wanted to play for him. Creating a fun environment, yeah, I think THE MANAGER was excellent at that.*

Intuitively, this suggested that if you have a manager who you like, who is good fun and you enjoy being around, then that can make for a good working environment. Likewise, you might

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also assume working in an industry that you are passionate about (in this case football), would strengthen job satisfaction. Still, this may not be the case and a place of work might just only be that, a place of work. So, we probably should bear in mind that no matter how people make their living, it can become more difficult if they do not enjoy the working environment. The data suggested this was very important and also inferred the football manager was pivotal in creating the right environment.

### 5.2.2: Inspire

Delivering inspiration would seem a very obvious and essential quality for anyone who holds a leadership position, so, it was hardly unsurprising that leaders of young men and figureheads of an organisation were able to move people in a way that inspired. Ian put it this way:

*Ian (8): I think, errrr, erm, THE MANAGER is really important because, you know, whether it's football or any walk of life, you know, if you've got a group of people you have to have direction. You have to have inspiration.*

Kyle explained how inspiration resulted from motivation which was another area where you would also expect a football manager to shine:

*Kyle (1): Whether it was truth or not he had an ability to make you believe it was true. I think half of the time when you reflected back, you'd go, I don't know if he was just doin' it for effect...but it influences you straight away. The biggest thing that I saw with THE MANAGER was, errr, a phrase could mean so much. He didn't say an awful lot to you but, when he said, it hit home. Whether negative or positive...that ability to motivate.*

Kevin spoke about unconventional ways in which managers motivate players. An understanding of the mind or reverse psychology came to mind, in that a little can go a long way:

*Kevin (10): A PLAYER talks about it a lot. He says... "you know, THE MANAGER would slag me off all the time but on occasion he would just say that was quite a good ball today". Just a tiny bit of praise. And, that would keep THE PLAYER going for the rest of the week. Where, there would be other players that would need, "oh, you were fantastic today". "The way you did this, the way you do that". He never, he hardly had any praise from THE MANAGER at all. Cos it all went to ANOTHER PLAYER and, THE OTHER PLAYER would be the one that was getting a bollocking. But, every now and again...he'd tell him, "hold on number seven"! And, he said...that made him feel ten foot tall!*



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Alex, made another point to illustrate methods used to inspire excellence:

*Alex (4): THE MANAGER had that same rever...everybody respected him. But what THE MANAGER did was say to the kit manager, "I want my kit to be the best kit that takes to a pitch. Do it". He would say, to the dietitians, "I want my players to be the fittest players out there, you go and find out what that diet means and get it in to em". He would then turn around to his fitness guys and say, "my guys are blowing on eighty-seven minutes, you go out and find out how we get them through to a hundred and three". And they'd go and do it. And then, basically, with each of his players he would say, "you're the best goalkeeper in the world, you're the best right back in the world, you're the best at this in the world, you're the best at that. Right, I need for you to do the best of what you're good at". Right. Never mentioned the opposition! When they got in at half time, if they were losin' or struggling, he would turn round and say, "I thought you were the best. You've got the best diet, you've got the best kit, you've got the best food. I thought you collectively were the best team". That was his talk and his motivate, so they went up a gear.*

However, Lewis was sceptical about the inspirational influence of the manager and suggested they are only part of the whole. The ability to motivate was not simply black and white and what has been said before might be overstated:

*Lewis (11): When we're playing that's one of the main reasons. Training's really good. That keeps you motivated. Some people, like, money is the motivation innit', and all of that, but just playing is the best bit. You can sit there picking up bonuses, but it don't mean anythin'. For me, I take playing over anything really. Yeah, definitely. That's the main thing.*

In a way, Neil's story of an uninspiring new manager highlighted the importance of developing relationships and the simple act of getting to know someone as the key:

*Neil (13): A MANAGER comes in and there was a massive downturn then. So, it was one where the manager never really inspired the staff number one. As in, the normal staff, like me or the players. When I met THE MANAGER, it was like...it just, just didn't do anything for me. I was really surprised. When I introduced him to a member of staff, when we were walking up the stairs and I said, boss, this is A MEMBER OF STAFF. He's Head of the physio department, the medical department. And he shook his hand and sort of went like that...And walked past. He just said nice to meet you and walked past. And I thought. You know, first impressions of when you meet someone, errr. You know the member of staff said to me, "pffft, what about that". And basically, he'd lost two people by doing one action. It can be bullshit you know you might not have time, or you might be busy. But, if you just spend a little bit of time, certainly the first time you meet someone. I wasn't having him!*

Alvesson (2019) argues strongly that a *Hollywood* view of leadership creates myth and portrays leaders as heroic figures who have powerful influence. Football managers appeared to occupy this space as some of them were described in ways that fit the bill. The theme suggested that participants looked to the manager as a source of inspiration and, although it came in different ways, participants believed it was an essential part of what managers do.

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### 5.2.3: Get the best out of people

Finally, when it comes to beliefs about the role, a catch-all theme of getting the best out of people emerged even though it might sound a tad clichéd and something that belongs to pop psychology and the culture of positive self-help. It rested on the assumption that through the tireless efforts of a football manager, they help us find that performance inside of us, that elevates us to the best version of our self (Guignon, 2004). A number of approaches to this were recalled which were synthesised to describe the most important parts of the job. For the Chief Executive, managers who achieved this not only understood the football side of things, but were also able to contribute to the wider organisation and bring it all together:

*Rob (2): The manager thing is mad for me. I think the large part of the football side is done by the players. The players in football manage themselves to a large point. You know, they play football, this is what these guys do, they've been doing it since they were six years old...they know how to play football. Yes, you know, there's some tinkering here and there but it's the management is the key thing. And that is your ability to manage the group of players but the football club as a whole and to enable the players to give of their best. If you can get everyone on the ship, everyone on the same boat, row in the same direction and don't have outliers whispering in the corridor. If you can get everyone together then, then you've cracked it. I actually think the football bit is the easiest bit. I think it's the easiest bit. Because, I think stats and history tells us that most of the time most people get the same out of the players. Now, look, if you're not very good you're not going to get as much out. And, if you are very, very good, you're gonna get more out. But, on the whole ninety-five percent are not incredible nor terrible. It's about managing the club and then because you've managed the club well you can get the best out of the players.*

Mick described the whole idea as a process of negotiation and, through a bit of give and take, the desired outcome was achieved:

*Mick (12): So, you were negotiating a lot of the time to get the best out of him. You're working with them. As a manager you can tell a player this is what I want. Right, and when I started that was a big part of the managers that you met. When I worked with THE MANAGER at A CLUB it was more of a negotiation process.*

Kevin the broadcaster, believed this optimum state was achieved by winning people over to get them on side:

*Kevin (10): He's great (THE MANAGER), cos he's basically said we need the media on side. It's like because everybody's on side, because the players have embraced the media. It's a lot harder to criticise the players when you've actually met them and they're all decent lads. And, they've said hi to you. I'm gonna smile to you, or they've sat down and done an interview like this. You think, well actually, he's helping me out so I'm not going to dig him out now. So, I'll support him a bit.*

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Jim developed the idea further and told a story that highlighted some key guiding principles. He suggested the football manager, not only needed to get people on side, but also had to take them with him:

*Jim (9): There are key people in the changing room, whether they be senior players, whether they be better players, whether they be players with the loudest voice with, errr. I think in any environment THE MANAGER will know the key players in his changing room. You're not sucking up to those players but you're making sure that you've got those players on side because they're really important to you. And it's important that you keep your key players on side. You know your core pool is massively important and THE MANAGER got them onside and HE'S talking to them, they understand what HE'S trying to achieve. There will always be people within the changing room, when it isn't going well, there will be people that will get a little bit harder. Maybe they're not getting a game. Maybe they think they're not being treated as well as they could be. When results don't go well, those people will have a little bit more to say to themselves. I'm sorry, you're core players, your sergeants, whatever you call them, they've got to be with you because then they're nipping it in the bud and help THE MANAGER. You can only nip so much in the bud as THE MANAGER. Most players haven't really got the balls to stand up to a manager. They'll nod, and when he's gone away then they got a lot to say for themselves when THE MANAGER's not around. So, it's important that he has that environment that is disciplined and fair. THE MANAGER works them hard, but he has them players within, you know...key people within...have go to be on the same page...and they've got to be working with HIM.*

The clichés are familiar: on the same page; buy-in; take people with you. Taken one way, they describe something very positive that participants looked and craved for from their managers. Looked at differently, they suggested an absence, a self-interest or solipsism (on philosophical grounds) that assumed football managers did not always put the needs of others first (Mumford, 2012).

### 5.3: Values

*Mick (12): It's hard really to pick out one that had the biggest influence...because, in the roller coaster of playing professional football, you know, different managers bring different things, and different opportunities to the table at different times in your life.*

As an affective code, Saldaña (2016) suggests values represents the importance participants attribute to themselves or others. In this way, I took it to mean what they valued about football managers. Yet, as I describe what participants considered important, I am under no illusion about a sovereign reality that is nine-tenths of the law in the game. Football is driven by results and, above all else (club, community, fans), what happens on the pitch is what ultimately matters (Flint et al., 2016). Consequently, it would be naive to overlook this at any point, as participants made very clear:

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*Lewis (11): Obviously the be all and end all is winning games. So, if you stop winning games, the players almost...stop...aren't really believing what the manager's saying. And that's how you kind of lose players.*

*Neil (13): To be fair to him, is he the best manager in the world? What he's won it would be hard to say he isn't for me. Wherever he goes he wins the title.*

*Rob (2): Because it's really difficult when all that really matters is your three points...and, however anyone says it to you...they tell you about long-term planning...the only thing that really matters is them three points on a Saturday.*

Beyond accepted discourse that came with winning, managers were said to perform a number of duties. Some were considered important and some much more mundane. So, what did they value most about their managers?

Significant themes that pointed to skills and qualities participants valued about football managers were:

- 1. Knowledgeable**
- 2. Standard-bearer**
- 3. Man management**

### 5.3.1: Knowledgeable

*Kyle (1): To inspire I think you've got to have a tremendous knowledge and understanding of the game.*

With this in mind, Danny explained the thinking behind the well-trodden path of going from a player to coach and in his case, manager for a short time:

*Danny (3): Knowledge is massive cos I think there's a lot of MANAGERS think that they've got knowledge, but they've not. They get jobs and they've not got any knowledge. But, if you've been in it for a long time, you've been a coach or whatever, you might gather that knowledge. I looked at it and I went, pffft, you've been fifteen years a football player, so you've got knowledge. And, that's what kicked me into the coaching side. I've played over four-hundred games...went and did my badges. Every course I've done all through the years I take the good things out that I thinks good. They've helped me you know. I've done A license, pro license, applied management, now doin' my FA advanced youth award. So, I've kept up doin' all this stuff. I had my A license, but I didn't have a clue really. And, I went and I seen the big picture. A MANAGER at A CLUB. And, I learned my trade there. He's knowledgeable. Yeah, we'll win some games cos he's knowledgeable, this is good stuff.*

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He also expressed appreciation for their ability to pass on what they know to willing pupils:

*Danny (3): THE MANAGER. Great times. THE MANAGER was brilliant. THE MANAGER, like, head of his time. Head of his time as a manager and tactically...errr, football knowledge. How he wanted to play the game. Oh, aye, THE MANAGER he taught me the game. Errr, he taught me how to play the game.*

Yet, this did not give them a rite of passage, as Mick explained. Football managers had to put expertise-based intuition on the line as players, in this case, delivered their own verdict:

*Mick (12): THE MANAGER, erm, brought the influence of knowing what he was doing, and he was developing me as a player. So, that was a massive influence because you need to know your stuff. I think you've always got that question mark. I think you've got to prove to everyone. Players will initially go with what they see, and what they know. But over time if you're not making football sense to them, then, it's going to look, and appear to them straight away, that...I'm not sure if this guy can. Football sense is making decisions on and off the pitch that, you know, a man in the street, erm, can't make those decisions. He can talk about those decisions, but there's no consequences to those decisions. However, when you're in the dug-out, there's consequences to make in a sub-in, the first fifteen minutes, twenty minutes...you can't make that emotional decision.*

For Paul it was very important that the manager had *walked a mile in their shoes*, as he explained, in difficult times credentials get put to the test:

*Paul (14): When somebody's trying to tell you to do something that hasn't done it...you're just a fake. And, that's the reason why I think that MANAGERS rise and fall is so drastic. It's like me as a parent telling you about your job. Telling you why you're not very good at your job. They will see through you and that happens with footballers. But it only happens when things aren't goin' well.*

We all probably hope the person in charge knows what they are doing. And, the football manager typically fits the bill as many of them have enjoyed stellar careers as players before cutting their teeth as coaches and managers. However, the findings suggested that was not enough. There is no future in the past. Managers still needed to prove themselves to effectively pass on their knowledge and, as suggested by the current TEL, have a really good understanding of the environment (Goodall, 2012).

### 5.3.2: Standard-bearer

Academic writers devote a lot of time debating the concept of organisational culture and its relationship to leadership (Schein, 2010). The main source of contention being whether leaders can in fact change a culture. As tempting as it was to label this theme setting the

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culture on the assumption that managers are the architect, for me this was problematic. I was sceptical, not only because changing a culture takes time, but as we know, football managers work in a highly pressurised environment, where the average tenure is as little as 13 months (EPL, 2018), which means they have little time to make their mark and are rarely afforded this commodity (Audas et al., 2002; Flint et al., 2014; Wilders, 1976). What emerged was less contentious in that there was an expectation that football managers were standard-bearers of the organisation. Interestingly, participants spoke not only about the importance of managers setting the standard, as a theme, but also managers being able to meet that standard as well:

*Mick (12): Massive. This guy played football at the highest level as well. So, a lot of his influences, I took into my coaching, and I know that there's a lot with me, and the old players and... he comes up quite a lot. I've had managers that have not played at a high level and I've respected them in terms of, erm, their man management. In terms of what they brought to the table in life skills...But the fact that he played at that highest level made me realise that you can walk the walk.*

It is fair to say there were strong opinions as to whether it was important that managers had *walked a mile in their shoes*. There was no absolute consensus but the dominant view was best summed up by Jordan, a coach, who had played the game to a decent standard, but not as a standout performer:

*Jordan (5): I think it does to some, yeah. I've certainly seen examples of players respond better to coaches that they're aware have played the game at elite level. I think that it's that respect thing. I think that's one of the challenges I've always had. I played football to a good level but not to an absolute elite level. I think a prime example of that could be THIS PLAYER at A CLUB now. I know from speaking to people that the respect that he's got, from staff, from players, because of who he is, what he achieved. What he's now got to do, I think, and this is the same for them all, he's got to have that ability to transfer that knowledge to players cos that for me is coaching. So, there's managing, which is one skill. Coaching is that, being able to transfer impart the knowledge you have into another individual, and that's a different skill. But, in answer to your question, I do think that that respect, that credibility, erm, with players, but also with the staff around the place. When you're managing the first team I think if you've got the stature of someone like THAT PLAYER, they're able to manage their situation, their group, because of their background. And they gain that respect because of who they are.*

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Sometimes setting the standard was achieved, as Paul suggested, through establishing a good framework and providing clear guidelines and parameters that left no doubt:

*Paul (14): I preferred a manager that I knew that when I never played well, I knew I never played well, so I didn't really need a bollocking. I always liked boundaries. And, in them boundaries you know where you can and can't push it. And, that's why I've always liked NAME OF MANAGER. When I went to THE CLUB, I still hadn't lost the weight I needed and then the manager that came in...he just told me from day one...you're not playing till you lose weight. And, I just lost weight.*

A well-known line from Ken Blanchard's popular book from the 1980s, *The One Minute Manager*, comes to mind when he said *good managers not only catch people doing things wrong, they also catch them doing things right!* This was certainly illustrated first by Ben who said:

*Ben (6): The gaffa comes in and you know what's coming, especially if you know you're not having the best game. And, I feel like that's why I had my most productive time under him, because he did that. He'd come in...he'd be like, "shite, shite, shite. Do this. Gotta be better, gotta do this". And you're like, right, I have to do something to change that, straight away...you are constantly just trying to reach that threshold all the time. And, over time, and it's the reason why you are the way you are.*

And then Mick, who appreciated a more supportive approach suggesting setting the standard was achieved through positive reinforcement:

*Mick (12): He gave me a good understanding of what I needed to deliver at what time. THE MANAGER would highlight instances where, that was intelligent play which then directed me as...that's what I need to do. THE MANAGER would go, "Sonny, that was marvellous, Sonny. Marvellous". And you knew...keep producing that everyday... If THE MANAGER says it everybody's going to know it. So, THE MANAGER had a massive influence because he gave me that understanding at an early age of what was needed.*

So, what we have is an image of individuals who have spent most of their professional lives in one industry and enjoy special status as a result. This allows them to understand what it takes, not only as they have *walked the walk*, but importantly, and by various means, because they can help others formatively.

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### 5.3.3: Man Management

*Harry (7): So, when I look at THE MANAGER now, he openly admits that he's not a great coach, but I think he's an unbelievable man manager.*

It goes without saying that football managers are leaders of men who take to the field of play (Molan et al., 2016). Participants routinely used the phrase *man management*, as a common theme, when the leadership of the managers was discussed. Essentially, man management appeared to do what it says on the tin. Though, how it was experienced was quite different.

Alex offered one understanding:

*Alex (4): The biggest influence and the best manager I ever played for was a guy called [NAME]. His man-management was second to nobody I've ever met, cos he at every point, with almost every player...had an arm round them. It was nothin' before kick-off, he'd go around everybody and have a little word in their ear.*

So, what exactly did man management mean?

Paul told a story that makes the point that, while the idea of man management can involve unconventional methods, it essentially concerns a relationship built on mutual trust and respect:

*Paul (14): THE MANAGER was a great man manager because when we did well, we got rewarded. We were allowed to have a pizza or beer or something like that. There was no money involved in this. It was very, very simple... you do well, I'll look after ya. And, you know we went on this fantastic run. Thirteen games unbeaten. So, we were always allowed a beer on the back of the coach. We played away at A CLUB, eight hours in the bus on the way down there. Not great preparation for a game. Got beat 2-1. Three games to go, we needed to win two out of the three to get promoted. He got us back...it's two-three in the morning, he says, "every single person here I want you in eight o'clock in the morning". So, we were all thinking, Jesus!*

*So, we turned up for training, eight o'clock, no one's in the car park and we're thinking, "aww, he's stitched us up here". So, anyway, he turns up at quarter past eight, "follow me in your cars". So, he took us to a place in A TOWN... about an hour's drive. So, we all thought, right, get our running shoes on, he's just gonna run us. So, he said, "right, get yourselves ready". Warmed up in the car park...there was sixteen lads warming up and doing the stretches. He says, "right, in this pub I want a meeting". We walked in the pub, there was pizzas, beers, everything. He just said to us...he says, "you've been fantastic". He said, "you let me down yesterday", he says, "but fuck it...team bonding today". And we went and won the last three games and we got promoted. And, it was them little things he did that we had so much respect for 'im. But there was that line that we didn't cross. Awww, he was great. He got the best out of everyone. I just liked that man management style where some players couldn't hack it.*



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Lewis elaborated further about the value of having a close relationship as a key ingredient to managing players:

*Lewis (11): I think player management is massive, especially the more modern you go. I'm not on about me, but some players you have to keep happy. Do you know what I mean? Let's say a manager has his team, so obviously there are a few players that aren't playing. It's how do you keep them players happy because they're gonna have to play a part as...injuries happen. So, talk to them. Because, obviously, if you're not playing, as a professional footballer you want to be playing football. So, you're not gonna be as happy. But if they completely oust you that's the difference. I've had a manager before that just completely destroyed my confidence because he just bombed me out. Yeah, that was (A NAME) ...he was a very negative manager. So, when I broke through and was in the team... I came out and training wasn't great. But I was still young... I was still doing well, and I trained really well but, then, he said that I got too comfortable in the first team, which may have been true or not. But, then he completely just, like, bombed me out for like two months! He didn't say a word to me. He would avoid me on the training ground. So, as an eighteen-year-old you're thinking, what the hell's going off here? I've done well when you've asked me to do well. So, why am I now nowhere near the first team, do you know what I mean? It was very...it was just very weird.*

Finally, Paul recounted a time where the manager got it all wrong:

*Paul (14): Over six, seven-hundred appearances. I had great managers and coaches and he was that first wakeup call to me. His man management skills were poor! So, you train all the week, the squad goes up, and, there's a squad of eighteen. Then, an hour and a half before the game he would then pick the starting eleven. Never did it the day before. And, I used to watch him, he never used to have the balls to say, "listen, you're not playing today... because I'm changing this". I'm not saying that's man managements skills. If you're not playing, you're not playing. There's always a reason.*

*I was playing with a lot of young players and I hit the floor running. Couldn't do nothin' wrong. I scored I think nine goals in five games. So, I was flying. We had some senior players who were good players and one lad who was a goal scorer. I was in the team and he wasn't, and he would complain. The manager would keep coming to me and sayin', "you look a bit tired, are you all right"? Because he wanted to give this other player a go. He dropped me for a game away at A CLUB and, his excuse, errm, it was just embarrassing. I lost a lot of respect for him because, he never gave me an actual reason. I would rather him said, "you're not playing today...I'm gonna go a different way" ...not a problem. So, this lad came in, he played, scored, and then the week after he never played so well so I got back in. At this time, I'd already scored twenty goals. I was top goal scorer and, I'd been called up to MY COUNTRY.*

*He (THE MANAGER) was very soft...players used to push the boundaries way too much because he didn't like confrontation. He didn't wanna argue with anyone. I'm not saying he wouldn't lose his temper, but, that player power thing started to push in and, I just lost a lot of respect for him. He just wasn't honest. How do you manage people? Nothin' to do with football. What you did on that training session it doesn't actually matter. That's why coaches are there. They do the coaching, you manage! And, the more managers you speak*

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*to, the top ones, they'll always say, I have to manage my board and then the player second. Man management...how they are with the players.*

What was interesting was that participants rarely used the word leadership when discussing football managers. This might be because football management still echoes Victorian style approaches to the supervision of young men that has morphed over time (Carter, 2013). Or more simply, it might just be the fact that, although some are now referred to as head coaches, in the main, the position still is referred to as manager and not leader (Arnulf et al., 2012). However, the ability to understand and work with the individual was the aspect of the job that participants equated to man management. The skill of managing people. The findings most certainly suggested this is not a science. Conversely, it may well be considered an art that some acquired and some did not.

### 5.4: Emotions

I thought long and hard about including this theme as some of what I found was disturbing and, in all honesty, I did not want to play the role of junior psychiatrist trying to provide explanation (Saldaña, 2016). I certainly did not anticipate encountering some of what was told (on and off tape), which elevated the theme to another level in some respects. Nonetheless, as the aim of this section was to provide brief description, in-depth analysis was not necessary. The theme concerned emotions recalled and/or experienced and emotional reactions to how participants were made to feel. To begin with Ben reiterated the blunt reality of the environment:

*Ben (6): Erm. Pffffttt. It's weird with me personally because I got this thing where, he's the manager and I'm just gonna go with what he says. Yeah, I've learned it's cos being under so many managers, it's like, you don't wanna challenge them. You don't wanna fight them because you're never gonna win. He's the manager. He can say...you're not playing.*

For the player, the consequences can be great, and managers' thoughts and actions are ultimately driven and justified by results. Concerning football managers, participants felt:

1. **Respect**
2. **Fear**
3. **Valued**
4. **Mistreated**

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### 5.4.1: Respect

In the main, there was an overwhelming sense of respect for football managers that affected thoughts and actions. Mick gave one example:

*Mick (12): The very first manager...the reason why I joined my club at that time...the manager there... I'll name him by name because I loved him!*

However, Ben recalled the arrival of a new manager which raised thoughts of whether it was respect given or respect earned.

*Ben (6): The first day he came in the assistant tried to call him by his first name. Like "[NAME] do you want to say anything"? And, said "It's gaffa. My name's Gaffa!". Straight away, mate, as a player, you're just like, oh fuck, I've got to respect this guy. Whether he's got the credentials or not, like, pfffttt, wow.*

Paul discussed the non-public side of a manager and an approach that led to a deep respect for the individual:

*Paul (14): THE MANAGER was very approachable and very, very good. Unfortunately, I got sent into his office. Errr...not for being very good. I'd moved from a small town to a big city and bright lights etcetera. So, I got called into his office quite a few times for going out, you know, not looking after meself properly. Eating the wrong food, being overweight. So, that wasn't very nice because, you know he would give me a bollocking! But then he would tell me that I'd be wasting my career if you don't knuckle down. He says, "you'll be one of these that'll be in the pub in ten years saying I could have been a footballer". He kept on telling me, "you've got a great opportunity here you know". It never sunk in really, when I was there! So, he was great in that way and, you know...the lads talk about him, or anyone who's ever played underneath him they only talk about him in high regard.*

Whereas Jim explained it almost as a parent-pleasing child seeking to win approval as they grow:

*Jim (9): He had the ability to, erm, make you desperately wanted a world done of him. I wanted him to appreciate me as a footballer. He had a way about it. Once you got his trust, it felt like the world. And once you have that trust from somebody that you have an enormous amount of respect for, that's a very powerful thing to take onto a football pitch. And you don't abuse that trust either!*

This strong emotion was certainly at work when participants spoke about how they felt about football managers. Whether it was elicited by the position, their achievements or personal qualities was unclear (Grint et al., 2017). However, the emotion acted powerfully and often led to participants thinking or behaving in emotional ways.

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### 5.4.2: Fear

In saying that, we should not forget Albert Camus renowned line, *nothing is more despicable than respect based on fear* (Camus, 2019). So, I wonder how he would have felt about Neil's deference to the position:

*Neil (13): There was real respect for the manager. I think respect because it was what was expected of you. With THE MANAGER, it was fear as well where you'd be shitting yourself. You'd be thinking, oh my god, THE MANAGER's there and you're in awe of HIM as well...you know it's a strange one, really strange. But THE CLUB always had traditions. They won things.*

Steve suggested a Machiavellian style, in that the ends justified the means and within the world that is professional football, like it or not, it comes with the territory:

*Steve (16): The team under THIS MANAGER, yeah. The way he set his standards. I was blown away by that. I thought, fucking hell! I mean brutal...brutal. Just, fuckin' so aggressive with it. And, I was like, whoa, fuckin hell, what's this, you know. And I said to im after, fucking hell...this is mad, you know. THE MANAGER says, "If they can't handle this, they can't handle playing at [A FOOTBALL GROUND]". It really stuck with me that cos I played at THAT GROUND and...tough place to play when it's not goin' well. Over time I saw these lads build resilience and resilience is fucking key to sport because there's gonna be downs...there's gonna be injuries, there's, there's gonna be bad performances. Social media, there's gonna be fans tellin' yer there're shit...you missed a big chance on Saturday, you're gettin' it. I saw it work, you know, cos the reality is you're gonna misplace a pass at THAT GROUND, the fans are gonna go "fucking, get im off!". You can't build resilience without bein' tough on people. Listen, confidence is another thing. You can't build confidence by tellin' someone they're shit all the time. But these players would fucking do anything for a well done off THE MANAGER. And he would give it once a blue moon. But they'd want it and he was a brilliant coach. A fantastic coach.*

However, for Ian there was a human cost to this confusing binary of fear and respect:

*Ian (8): I believe that, if you, you want the best out of people you gotta treat people very hard, very fair. But then, to explain why you're having a go. Erm, if THE MANAGER had a go at me and just left it at that, I'd take that personal. But HE had a go at me and explained it. "Why I'm having a go at you? Because I know you can do these things. I'm not asking you to do something you can't do. You are brilliant at doing this. But I need that standard. I need that commitment from you". So, all of a sudden, you're giving me the biggest rollicking of my life. But you only doing it because you know, I know how much you think of me. So, that doesn't damage me as a person. We won league with THE MANAGER. He gave me everything that I ever wanted. I won a championship, nineteen years, that was the only championship I won! I can remember him having a go at half time saying like, "you know, he's getting the better of you and all this kind of stuff and you haven't done this, and you haven't done that". And, after the game I've gone home, and I've thought about. I've thought, well, I've hit the post, I've hit the bar twice, I've had a diving header, erm, and I've nearly scored three or four times. So, I rang him up. I says, "you know gaffa I've been thinking about what you said, and I didn't say anything back at that time because*

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*I've got a lot of respect". And he says, "you know what. I know you had this, I know you had that, but I wanted your standards to stay the same second half, and I wanted you to play with a high intensity cos we need that intensity this week. So, I'm just getting in underneath you a little bit to make sure that you're with me". And, it was, it's something that I took on board. But, I would always, if I had to do the same thing, I would always back it up with a positive. Always leave with a positive. Never leave it down wind because you can lose people.*

Wherever your moral compass lies, the findings suggested there was an element of fear associated with experiences and interaction with some football managers. And, although they were described earlier as strong characters, who have aura, charisma and inspire, the paradox of fear and respect worked in opposition when feelings were described.

### 5.4.3: Valued

To understand what participants meant by the theme, I open with a comment from Neil who recalled times where he felt less than valued by the manager in charge:

*Neil (13): We felt as if we weren't part of it when THIS MANAGER was there. I wanna feel as though, erm. I want to feel part of it.*

In contrast, Harry went on and explained why feeling valued was important to him and how this influenced his perception of a manager:

*Harry: I'll tell you what it was. THE MANAGER made me feel important. He made me feel that I could come to him and offer my opinion and he would listen. That's what it was. If I could really pinpoint it, it was the fact that when I was at A CLUB, I was well-respected by everybody. And, THE MANAGER, his ASSISTANT, they appeared to value my opinion. And, err, it gave me a sense of purpose really because I felt like my opinion mattered. So, I suppose that's why they had such a big influence. So, I would class them as bein' up there.*

Alex recalled in detail how having the full trust and confidence of the manager was important to his self-efficacy:

*Alex (4): All that THE MANAGER had to say to me was... "this is down to you today. This is made for you today". I never forget we were playing in the Cup semi-final and, erm, we'd gone 1-0 and he stood on the lines and was givin' his instructions and, you know, and they'd got answers for everythin' we did. We got in at half time and there was quiet, and a lot of the lads were trying to gee each other up. And, he said, "right then lads, you guys know you boys together are the best eleven in this league. But, there's a question bein' asked of ya today". He said, "they think they've worked you all out". He said, "they think they know how to stop you cos you're like robots, cos although you played along the deck, they know where your strengths are. What else we got?" He says, "Alex ain't even had a sniff yet, who's creating chances?" He said, "you know if you give im a chance, he's gonna score, ain't you Alex?" I says, "yeah, yeah, just give me the chance. Just give me the chance". So, we got out there and we made a better fist of it and it was like chances galore.*

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*But I never forget. We had a fullback and, he was a cultured player and, the ball was knocked wide to im and as it came to im he went, "on yer bike, on yer bike, Alex!" And he smashed this ball straight inside the fullback. I was on it, nod down. Bang! 1-1. After that we were outta sight, I think we beat them about 4-1. All THE MANAGER ever did was tell me I'm the best. If somebody tells you that, and keep tellin' you, you're king size when you pulled on that shirt.*

The idea of having the support of someone who provides positive encouragement is something we probably all feel is desirable and that was something Harry noted as important:

*Harry (7): THE MANAGER he was brilliant. Just his mannerisms, just the way he would talk to yer. Err, the information he would give. The encouragement. The drive, you know, he was passionate and, you know, he had high standards. Just the encouragement that he gave me. You know, I can't really pinpoint anything. I honestly can't pinpoint anything that I really learned from him. You know, it wasn't like I say, oh he taught me that...just remember him being a real influential person. I knew I was gonna be looked after.*

Whereas Jordan used an example we can all probably relate to, that gave a clear view of what it meant to feel valued:

*Jordan (5): So, without it being a dictatorship...it was a positive dictatorship. He was a very, very influential person. Having said that, the positive was that THE MANAGER was very supportive and upbeat and positive. Things started off really quite well. Quite positive. He had like an open-door sort of policy, so he'd work in an office that the door was always open, and you could literally just walk in, sit down. "Got this issue...what do you think?" And, and I really admired that particularly in football because football as you know is a harsh environment.*

For Danny, the feeling transcended the game itself and was likened to a duty of care that exists between the manager and those under his charge:

*Danny (3): THE MANAGER used to sit em down and talk to em. Talk to em about the game. How you feelin...you got any problems off the pitch? If you want, let me know, and I'll help ya. That you're caring about them. The human side...makin' sure the players are alright. For me, it's all about the players. There's a dividing line, right, where you have to know what mark you can step over, right. I know the gaffa'll help us, he's caring, but, hey, we have to do this...if not he will come down on you! THE MANAGER was brilliant at it. He is a very caring person. People don't know or see that side of him.*

All told, the emotion of feeling valued is something we probably all can relate to and appreciate in our leaders. The suggestion was that it was about understanding the person and managing different personalities. In reality, it meant different things to different people, but nevertheless, was something that was found to be a very important part of the relationship.

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### 5.4.4: Mistreated

Some of what I found definitely took me by surprise. So, I close the description of the football manager on a sombre note. The theme mistreated goes far beyond the scope of this project as it probably warrants conceptual understanding that this space does not allow. Still, I felt that it should probably be presented if only to inject a sobering dose of reality. I would argue that no one intentionally goes to their place of work to be mistreated and you would expect that an organisation would have systems and processes in place that protect people. To that end, I start with Steve who mentioned a type of manager that we might have encountered before:

*Steve (16): I signed under A MANAGER who was fierce. Aaaah, on my case every day. I didn't think he liked me. Erm, wasn't mad on him.*

Ryan took this further and explained how a situation escalated and how accepted behaviours in professional football might be interpreted differently elsewhere:

*Ryan (15): I think I let certain managers affect me, and not dealing with it. So, what I mean is that I'm quite humble as a person, and I'm a team player. And, I probablies let MANAGERS maybe pick on me or bully me a little bit and accepted it. I wish I was a little bit more... "no I'm a good player, don't speak to me like that. Show me some respect. If you wanna fight, let's fight, type of thing then we'll sort it out that way. Even if you beat the crap out of me"! If I'd done that when I was younger maybe I would have been better suited going forward. You either take it. You sink or you swim. Players couldn't take it. And, that's what ultimately got him the sack cos they couldn't cope with it. They couldn't deal with it. Football's a tough world and it's a tough environment. And, I can understand, in any other walk of life it's bullying.*

Harry described power relations between player and manager and his feelings that resulted in destructive behaviours:

*Harry (7): You know, personal experiences of A MANAGER. Probably one of the most horrible person that I've ever come across. He was able to articulate himself well. He was able to manage up well and, I mean, you know, not goin' into too much detail but he probably ruined THE CLUB. It took us about three, four seasons to come back. He was one of these where he would be able to manipulate...and then just leavin' when the time was right for him. But he left a horrible trail of destruction. Yeah, not sort of physically or tangibly, but psychologically with people, you know. Mentally. Yeah, he was a horrible man. Bullying, things like that, to both staff and players.*

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### 5.5: Summary

So, there it is. A story of the British football manager that told us many things about the person; important functions they perform; what participants value about their leadership; and how it made them feel. The narrative that unfolded brought to light characteristics, attributes and qualities of individuals who are among the best in the field. Expert leaders (Goodall, 2012). An image emerged that suggested, amongst other things, they are strong, passionate, charismatic standard-bearers, who have deep football knowledge, inspire and find ways to get the best out of those they lead. The chapter also provided individual stories that accentuate the work of football managers and the emotional impact they have on those they interact with. The narrative was expressed as a binary that also showed negative aspects of expert leadership where managers were disliked, feared, and did not always treat people well.

With all that said, the state of academic study of leadership might suggest, in terms of theory development, there is no further use that we can put to this understanding. For (Alvesson, 2019, p. 34), these approaches artificially integrate selected qualities and behaviours into ideas to suggest a particular type of leadership. He states, *this all sounds fine, but what do these qualities have to do with each other?* This then raises serious concerns as to what the chapter really amounts to. One answer is, the findings provided a rich description of football managers, that helps to develop better understanding of individuals who are considered experts leaders (Goodall, 2012). However, answers to my research questions are not necessarily found here, as the nature of the subject that I am trying to understand cannot be settled by description alone (Mumford, 2012). For Heidegger (1962), the chapter expresses a mode of being in the world, that requires the phenomenon in question to be laid bare, before anything further can take place. Put simply, to conceptually understand something, it is helpful to see and feel it before theorisation begins, to avoid the risk of getting stuck in old approaches to knowing (Alvesson, 2019).

Perhaps more importantly, what the chapter does is to present the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and expectations of those who had close relationships with football managers. Stories suggested that leadership influence was tied to the person they are, how they go about their work and emotional states of being. However, these key features and qualities were described



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at a level of generality that invite further complicated questions. Theoretically, and in relation to this study, these key questions centre on uncovering how and why the people described are able to influence. What the reader also came to see was that there is a reality in professional football that cannot be escaped. It is results driven. However, resisting debates about the impact of football managers on performance outcomes, the ensuing chapters go on to provide hermeneutic interpretation of these lived experiences that builds on what has been said, and is then followed by theoretical discussion that explains the performative influence of the gaffa.

## Chapter 6: Hermeneutic Interpretation

The purpose of this chapter is, not only to build on what has been said in chapter five, where rich description of what we came to know about managers in British professional football was provided. But, also to interpret what I came to understand from individual stories in this context. For the reader, the importance is that it brings us a step closer to what is important to the final analysis to come. This is also where Gadamer's (1989) ideas really come into play and had important implications for the epistemological approach to understanding experiences of this social phenomenon. He writes, *understanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than participating in an event of tradition, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated* (Gadamer, 1989, p. 290). This meant that it was vital to reflect, not only on the research process as a whole, but to interpret important events that ultimately shaped the analysis, which are presented in this chapter.

Throughout, I certainly felt that I had been taken back to an early part of my life and listening to participants placed me firmly in the reflexive process that Gadamer speaks about. The point is, what I ultimately came to understand might have been far more difficult had I not been (at one point in my life) part of this idea of tradition. Gadamer (1989) discusses the idea of a historical-hermeneutic consciousness, which means a person trying to understand something must not only be open to the other person but must be conscious of what is significant in a particular context. Importantly, Gadamer's (1989) idea of hermeneutic interpretation comes from his point of departure from Husserl and Heidegger, whereby Gadamerian hermeneutics rests on the central idea of bringing the interpreter's past into focus. He says *to stand within a tradition does not limit the freedom of knowledge but makes it possible* (p. 324). The assumption is that we are products of our experience, powerfully shaped by them, but this equally adds to what we come to understand. This hermeneutic principle meant that, in the process of interpretation, my prior knowledge and experiences had to be brought to the fore (Stenner et al., 2017).

For Gadamer (2006), trying to understand something is essentially working out the hermeneutic situation. This requires, what he calls prejudices, to be reflected upon, as the interpreter is also part of the situation being investigated. He says *it is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition* (Gadamer, 1989, p. 281).

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Prejudice in this sense refer to judgments that are brought to examine a situation, which are not always obvious. So, rather than test for an expert leadership effect on organisational performance (Goodall, 2012; Goodall et al., 2011; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015), this study was concerned with working out the essence of lived experience to understand what makes it possible. In this way, and following Austin's thinking, my approach raised questions about essential conditions that had to be met for expert leadership influence to be possible (Austin, 1962).

Crucially, the idea of prejudice assumes that past experience influences what and how we understand something. This had to be confronted because, it can not only hinder interpretation, but conversely, can equally be useful to what is ultimately discovered (Gadamer, 1989). In reality, this meant the act of interpretation was far from straightforward because sometimes I was unsure of how my presuppositions may have led to misinterpretation, as there are no evaluative criteria. For me, this only really became apparent when I reflected on the analytic memos I wrote and how these influenced the overall narrative.

According to Gadamer (1989), historical consciousness means the researcher is aware of prejudices and makes a special effort to acquire a historical horizon to avoid limiting what might be possible. Put very simply, interpretive hermeneutic understanding included my preunderstandings, which then determined a new understanding. Therefore, to work out the hermeneutic situation of expert leadership influence of managers in professional football the chapter, first, brings my story into full view. Second, is then followed by interpretation of each interview experience to bring out salient contextual features. Third, invokes the idea of a fusion of horizons to arrive at a third meaning to aide theory development.

### **6.1: My Short Story**

Memories of my very first manager in the professional game are still very vivid. He was a manager of some standing in the British game who is still talked about and for whom many a book and film have been curated. His legacy lives on and is still there to see as his name is honoured on the very stadium that witnessed some of his greatest triumphs. That was 1981. Still, traces of his influence stay with me today. In the same way people talk about the influence of a father, for example, when someone influential touches your life, what exactly

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is that influence and why can it be so powerful but difficult to explain? The point I make is, this study comes from belief that there is something else to be known from leaders from an elite sport environment that might be useful elsewhere (Brady et al., 2008).

I went on to play for other managers and, once the game decided it did not need me anymore, I experienced leaders in other walks of life. However, my first manager stands apart and as he famously self-declared, *I wouldn't say I was the best manager in the business. But I was in the top one!* (Clough, 2002). Maybe, it was because I was young and impressionable, living out a boyhood dream, or maybe it was because the manager was able to influence me in a way I did not understand at that time. Which brings me back to the research at hand. This philosophical study sought to understand this very conundrum and explain why we are so powerfully moved by some leaders and indifferent to others.

At that time, I was definitely not equipped to make sense of my experiences and interactions with the manager, who fits many of the descriptions outlined in the previous chapter. The *gaffa* was indefatigable, in every way. Most certainly, he was a very strong character, who I feared and respected in equal measure. Without doubt, he had that aura that participants described. He was unquestionably the most passionate and charismatic individual I have ever come across (in a Pied Piper sort of way), and a visionary who was way ahead of his time. If I could use a phrase that describes what set him apart, I would say, he was *the right man, at the right time, for the right context*. So, my position in relation to the study goes back to this time (aged 16), which was possibly the beginning of my interest in football managers and leaders in general.

For Western (2013), it is important to reflect on one's own experiences to locate our views on leadership and my years of working exclusively in the sport industry, in a number of roles, are what drove my interest for this study. In saying that, my career as a professional footballer was short-lived (to say the least) and was over before anyone really knew it! Yet, the game itself never left me and while I did not realise it at the time, a fascination with the management side of the game was born.

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I revived my hopes in life by attending University and then turned my hand, as many ex-players do, to the coaching side of the game and helping others. This led to me securing my first 'proper' job, although I had to go some 3000 miles away from home to do so. I took a job as an Assistant Coach at a University in the United States where I found my coaching feet and four years later, went on to assume my first leadership role, in charge of my own programme. I pinpoint this as the time where my interest in leadership peaked, as I was now the appointed leader of young adolescents. For fourteen years I sought every opportunity to better myself through a gamut of leadership development methods; qualifications, books, training courses, conferences, films, mentors, you name it. I was looking for the elixir to my own development and was probably determined to be that *Hollywood* leader that Alvesson (2019) eschews. And, I suppose that is where my problems with leadership began.

At that time, I was the leader and have flitted between being a leader and being part of leadership teams, in the years that followed, which has exposed me to many different faces of the phenomenon. The more I read, heard and was taught, the more I thought I understood leadership, but the reality was I actually knew less and less, and became more confused! On reflection, my understanding of leadership threw up many contradictions that could, in part, be explained by existing theory, but equally left unanswered questions.

My plan to go on to graduate from the coaching ranks to the top job (football manager) never materialised. However, I did what was, for me, the next best thing and remained immersed in the professional game as a television broadcaster, spending ten years talking about it in this capacity. This saw me interview countless football managers which once again stoked my interest and curiosity in these individuals. Taken together, an appetite for leadership and familiarity with a context, led me to follow the line of thinking that there was something that could be learned from the sport that maybe could be applied elsewhere. Bolchover and Brady (2002) find countless examples from the history of the game in support of the point and show how people outside of football feel the same. In saying that, what they actually learn is uncertain. So, it is this is very the idea which I explore theoretically in the following chapter.

All told, what has been said before showed me the difficulty of a study of this nature but also started this philosophical ambition. Now, in the world of academia, a new journey started, as an early career researcher (although not so young). This positioned me to once again confront

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some of these unanswered questions. My destination had modest ambitions as it was born out of a desire to simply know more. But, when provoked by Gallie's well set out argument of essentially contested concepts, the temptation was to give up the ghost (Gallie, 1955). Still, I maintained belief that there was something to be known about leadership in this special context and decided it was worth giving it a go.

As I searched for a suitable way of approaching an investigation of this nature, Gadamerian hermeneutics had strong appeal. The idea of a *fusion of horizons* immediately resonated, as a means of making sense of, not only what only people told me, but as a way to recognise everything else that I know comes with professional football. So, in this study, I was not only the researcher but the researched, and I take a seat in the chapter as a reflexive sensemaker. Over the course of listening to hours of audio and analysing transcriptions, a holistic picture of the football manager emerged. Participants carefully constructed a complex picture described in binary ways. Stories about who football managers are, what they do, and what they considered important were a paradoxical mix of good and bad, that pointed to success and failure. The task then was to apply a mode of thinking that allowed for interpretation and understanding of what had been said.

This I found in hermeneutics which meant my abridged story is considered an important starting point for interpretation and also to make me aware of potential bias that might stultify the ambition (Gadamer, 1989). Notably, this was aided by observations I made and memos (see example in Appendix 3) I wrote along the way as I thought more about the conversations and what they might mean to the problem at hand, leadership influence. This was done to trigger the reflexive process of the hermeneutic circle and to apply critical thinking to stories that were told (Saldaña, 2016). Consequently, this reflection is presented next to further the process of knowing.

### 6.2: Hermeneutic Interpretation

#### *Mick*

What struck me was the tremendous wealth of experience Mick had accumulated, through the many clubs and the number of managers he had rubbed shoulders with. Despite this and much like myself, it was his first manager who he said had the most profound influence on

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him, which stayed with him today. Maybe it was because he was at an impressionable age or maybe he was looking for someone to guide him. The important point to make is, the influence of a football manager can be long lasting. Mick was introspective and had no trouble recalling experiences and events that occurred over two decades ago. He looked back on many instances of manager influence in terms of the impact it had on his performance but also on himself as a person.

Here, I found the idea of manager influence to be powerful in different ways. What was clear was the most influential were those who commanded authority but also, ones whereby he granted authority. This was because there was something about their character and what they were able to show, in terms of what it took to be successful, that made him want to follow. Importantly, he described how they also took the time to get to know him as a person and developed a relationship that was based on *negotiation*, more so than power. Mick saw upstanding characters, who had strong convictions in what they said and how they acted, as very important. This also pointed strongly to ideas of authenticity, in the way he accepted their ways of going about things. The fact that he expressed the sentiment, *I loved him*, when he spoke about one manager, suggested something else to me and pointed to profound leadership influence. He described instances of requisite knowledge, experience and behaviours, but these were also mixed in with ideals from my theoretical framework, authenticity and sincerity. Still, authority came through as the most prominent, in terms of performative influence, that managers had on his time in the game and arguably his life.

I recall finishing the interview when Mick opened up a little more. He said *I didn't want to do anything in with anything I said*. The point he was making was that, there is a lot of talk about football managers from the outside, but also a lot of suspicion from those within about what gets written and who they are prepared to entrust. This was my interpretation and he pointed out that some people in the game would rather *take it to their grave*, whereas others only write about their experiences in commissioned books. Despite the fact that Mick was someone I knew and I made sure he understood that the interview was completely confidential, the reality is people inside of football can be very guarded. So, much of what is written about football managers is difficult to come by, and some of it probably only conjecture, unless you are well connected to the inner sanctum. It also made me wonder

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throughout; how close I could I really get; or how completely honest were they if I was not one of them?

### **Danny**

Danny gave a colourful, no holds barred account of a lifetime spent in the game, as a player, coach and two brief spells as a manager. I did playfully suggest that he should have written a book on this basis and listening to his stories he certainly spoke about some intense experiences in professional football. Even though the game had not always been kind to him, what was evident throughout, was an undoubted love and passion that took him away from his family at an early age. Yet, these experiences had left scars and in many ways, shaped his trenchant views on the state of the industry overall.

What was also surprising was, despite fifteen years as a player and many years preparing for life as a coach and manager, how little he talked about technical aspects of the game. Instead he emphasised, what he termed, *the human side*. This was summed up when he said *the pro license stuff and all that, doesn't teach you all that stuff. It's all about humility. Carin' about people. And, being honest. Honest and knowledge on the coaching pitch and gaining that respect of yer players*. For me, this said an awful lot about what the game had thrown his way and implied something conspicuous by its absence. What is more, although managers are required to be qualified to a certain level, which in a sense makes them experts (on paper at least), the suggestion was, nothing really prepared them for the challenges they face. Knowledge and experiences are vital assets in the eyes of players and those who employ them, but there is no doubt what happens on the football pitch is the reality that ultimately governs. Yet, when you go beyond this what jumped out was the focus on human virtue that pointed to the idea of leadership influence.

Interestingly, Danny began the interview by making a serious point about football managers when he said, *some are unscrupulous people* and I have no doubt that they will have a place in a book, if he chooses to write one! I could interpret this as there being a lack of morality and upstanding people within the game, which gets overshadowed by the intense focus on winning. But, I could also view this as something that separates those who were considered influential. Throughout the interview I always felt Danny carried a sense of disillusionment



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with events that made him question whether the hard work and sacrifice was really worth it. Speaking of the sacrifice he said, *to the detriment of bringing up my oldest boy*. It made me think his experiences, as wonderful as some of them had been, also left him with sadness and regret. He spoke about instances of politics, nepotism, violence (some of his doing!) and corruption, that were not the focus of this research, but would make for an interesting study. Despite this, the main theme came back to good human values, as important qualities, which made it all the more interesting because he once was 'one of them'.

Danny was the ultimate storyteller and his tales were mixed with much humour which made them compelling. Yet, they also left me feeling the game, at times, had been cruel and left him restless about football overall. Finally, when I thought about my theoretical lens and how I might apply it here, his contribution to the sincerity node, when he used words such as *humility, transparency* and *honesty*, implied something important. This suggested these virtues might have been all too often absent as he attached great value to this way of being and his idea of leadership.

### **Harry**

In many ways I found it apt to reflect on Harry's story through his own words which captured what this investigation is about. The interview itself was wide ranging (as he sometimes went off piste), but his experiences confirmed a lot of what I draw from the research. Firstly, I found Harry, (who was still actively playing, albeit semi-professionally), thoughtful in the way he spoke about his highs and lows. *I look back on it now and say, what a lucky boy I was. You know, that just shows how I changed as I've got older, and I'm able to reflect...I see the bigger picture now. Erm, I know hindsight is a wonderful thing*. Like many players who turn to coaching, the responsibility for others, rather than a sole focus on their own performances, may have had something to do with it. However, when he said of his days as a player, *I'd played a lot of games throughout my time. I've been through a lot*; I did not take the reference lightly. I thought some of his experiences affected him more than he disclosed, or might have possibly imagined, and not always in a good way.

More than anything, he very much spoke of manager influence in opposition, such as, *he's a real good manager, real nice man*. And then, *we had A MANAGER come in and I'll not mention*

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*im... but, he was horrible. Really horrible, like a bully. He also suggested the problem that we've got now is that there's still managers that are that way inclined. This continued when he recalled the contrasting influence of two managers he has worked under. I got shafted a little bit under, THE MANAGER. I played...did really well...was tryin' to push for a contract and was told everythin's great, don't worry about it, we'll sort it out at the end of the season. And then, just dropped me, right at the end. Yeah. Which I didn't take lightly to be fair, you know. I'm always one of these people that although I might not agree with everythin', if you're up front and honest about it. Contrasted to; I got call up from my international debut...under A MANAGER who was... a great...great man. You know, he understood the young men's mentality really...he had a good dressing room and good team spirit you know, and he really liked me.*

For someone who played for many years at the highest level, I felt his experiences had left him somewhat cynical, which was best summed up by this story. *I'd spend about three hours on the motorway travelling down to London to play at A CLUB and I thought...really...is this really what I wanna be doin'. I'd kinda fallen outta love with the game. It's hard to describe really...I see the players are quite they're dispensable, really dispensable. And they are seen by many as just assets and pawns really in a game of chess.*

Finally, when I asked him to sum up the qualities of the managers he felt had the biggest influence, he said; *they were respectful. Err, they had a drive, they wanted the best, they had high standards. They weren't afraid to tell you when you weren't doin' it...so, in a way you get that honesty...but it was quickly backed up by respectfulness. I would say they were empathetic with you as a person...they cared.* In terms of this study, it struck me when he finished the thought with; *so, nothin' to do with tactics or technique or anythin' like that.* This was an important point as his stories confirmed the strong sense I was getting about the influence of managers. Yes, there might be a TEL that suggests expert leader knowledge, experience and achievements lead to better performance outcomes, however, as Harry alluded to, their real influence had much less than we think with expert status, and more to do with humanity.

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### *Ryan*

Ryan is what would be described as a journey man in football parlance, in that he enjoyed a long career, playing for a number of clubs, that was filled with peaks and valleys. Importantly, the list of managers he played for was impressive and he had plied his trade up and down the league structure. Overall, what struck me was the lasting impact managers continued to have on his life. He remarked, *I think football's like a drug, it's a release. When you're winning it's brilliant, when you're losing it's not good.* The reference reminded me that the results driven environment can be a difficult place to cope, but also said to me that winning, was at times, used to mask another side of a story that rarely gets spoken about. This led me to think about what conditions are like when results are not good and the face of leadership in such times. Ryan's interview not only intrigued me but disturbed me as well. In sum, it was a story of a man who had high hopes and dreams that were severely affected by some managers and clubs he worked for.

Early on in the interview he made reference to a mental condition of one of his children and how, in later life, he found he suffered from the same condition that went undiagnosed during his playing career. The association made me think about the cathartic, addictive and depressive moments he mentioned and how results and performances were used to cover up some deep lying mental issues. For me there was a contradiction with certain references he made. On one hand he said; *you have to be strong-minded.* But on the other; *you could be fearful if you're weak minded. You could be fearful of him (the manager). And, what I mean by that is if you're not a confident person, or you think that you see the manager because of who he is, you have a bit of a panic...you stay out of the way...you hide.*

It was almost as if he was saying, I had this problem and I recognised it, but the only way to cope was by showing no weakness. That resonated with me having felt these traditional notions of masculinity that were very much part of the culture in my time. More broadly, it troubled me because of knowledge that has now come to light of players who are reported to have suffered in silence and the lasting damage it causes, that was (and probably still is) an accepted part of the game (BBC, 2019; Bower, 2018). Ryan confirmed my suspicion when he said: *I think I let certain managers affect me, and not dealing with it. So, what I mean by that*

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*is that I'm quite humble as a person, and I'm a team player. And, I probably let MANAGERS maybe pick on me or bully me a little bit and accepted it.*

Not for the first time, the issue of bullying was raised which was perturbing, as it appears to be institutionalised. In view of what has been said before, I was surprised he was so open and revealed such powerful emotions. I found it strange on one level but interesting on the other. Maybe this was because he felt I understood, as we connected. Or maybe, because of my background (which we spoke about pre-interview), he unconsciously thought I would be non-judgemental. Whichever way, it was clear experiences in football (and no doubt in other industries) can be really deep and impactful in destructive ways. What was also clear is his story is a good example of the idea that manager influence, if told truthfully, has to recognise a negative side.

### **Neil**

Neil provided interesting insight to the thinking behind the selection of a manager, from a senior management point of view, and how clubs approach it very differently. I looked forward to the interview because it was the first time I had spoken with someone other than a player or a coach and was interested to hear a different perspective. What was fascinating, when talking about the appointment of a football manager, was how little stock Neil placed on formal qualifications, but emphasised relational qualities instead. He said, *I'll only bring someone in I can work with*, which suggested, in part, choosing a manager was more about the commonly held notion of 'who you know', a practice most organisations avoid in a society that professes equality and transparency.

He told of a story about a manager he had waiting in the wings (to be appointed), as an example of how some clubs went about the process. From this there was little doubt that self-perpetuating practices of choosing individuals who look like you, or are like you, were at work throughout the industry. It also suggested forms of bias were alive and well in a world where traditions are handed down and preserved. Neil went as far as saying, *it's very incestuous. And, it's normally who you know and what you think. It's very brave, person, who will go and take an unknown.* He also discussed another method that pointed to identity, values and a club philosophy. Without doubt, these are probably rooted to the history and traditions of a

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club, but also reflected current reality, ambitions and financial resources. On the question of the criteria for selection of a football manager he said, *what does the club want?* This meant some managers were chosen on repute and achievements that match with the current direction of a club. But, in reality, wider calls in British society for equal opportunity were perhaps less of a consideration, as personal contacts and networks were important that pointed to the 'old boy network'.

In saying that, it was also a reminder that all other reasons are usurped, and the selection of a football manager is still based on pragmatic reasons and a clear bottom line, results! My interpretation was that on some aspects, football clubs are left to their own devices, and some continue to promote systemic inequality, patronage and nepotism, as they search for the best man available. This came down to what Neil referred to as, *people, I know are not gonna let us down*. It confirmed something I was acutely aware of, when it suits, football does not conform to some rules in modern society, which has meant some groups have been repeatedly disadvantaged (Wallace, 2019). However, that is for another study.

Inferences to the influence of football managers came from comments such as *the aura of him...was unbelievable*. There is no doubt that some football managers received that kind of accolade, based on success as players or managers, that grows and adds to how they were perceived. Conversely, it was interesting to note from someone who was instrumental in the appointment of managers, that the idea of character was something that came through very strongly. He mentioned, what he considered to be essential qualities, which were *powerful, inspirational characters, who were innovators and progressive*. And, it was no surprise, based on his role, that when asked, Neil did not see the football manager as the most important person at a club, but certainly did see them as a vital part of the overall structure.

Finally, I found it interesting when he said *I like being in an environment where people respect each other, and people are good with each other. You'll notice that it's a friendly atmosphere here. That's what matters most [to the manager]*. What this suggested was, you can talk about managers, good and bad, their personalities, qualities or achievements, but what equally mattered was genuine concern for people. I took this to mean that football managers must not only mean what they say, but they must also act in a way that is of true benefit to others (Gadamer, 1989). In this turbulent, macho world where winning is said to be everything, it was refreshing to hear that basic human values were still appreciated.

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### *Kyle*

Kyle painted a detailed picture of what he termed the *tool kit of managers*. In comparison to discourse from many of the ex-professionals, he spoke about how managers today have evolved from the old school character, that I experienced, to the modern manager who operates in different social conditions (Carter, 2013). For Kyle, a lot of what people from the 'outside' understand about football managers amounted to little more than opinion. There probably is some truth to that as, what we can know starts with perception of how they are portrayed, and also what they choose to reveal. Put another way, what we can know is subjective at best and depends on our vantage point as to truthfulness. And, having undertaken this research, as Gadamer (1989, p. 302) reminds us, *the task of interpretation is never complete but opens up the possibility a new insight as horizons change*. This was an important point to remember as I reflected on these personal accounts and what I came to interpret.

More specifically, Kyle spoke about how the modern manager modelled what he called, *relationship-based leadership*, underpinned by an ability to relate to people of all kinds. His story of one manager's approach; *THE MANAGER gave you an identity. And, mine are drive, serve, inspire, unite*. This for me was insightful in that the reference to identity pointed to powerful forces and influence (in this case good) this manager had. He also made connections between the qualities of these individuals and how they translated to leadership, which perhaps, reflected his current role, as coaches constantly look back and forward when reviewing performances. Nonetheless, he viewed the managers who had the most influence had a caring side, where the welfare and potential the individual were utmost considerations.

Kyle also suggested the idea of what he considered were authentic managers: *For managers we talk about not changing what you're selling*. I associated this, on one hand, with the ideal of *being true to thyne self*, but also what managers display to others. It suggested clarity and potency of principles were crucial to achieving the influence they sought. Perhaps, football managers are performers (the selling reference) and in order to take people with them they have to be seen to be true to themselves to ensure buy-in. Which is something I respond to in the final chapter where I discuss the idea of authenticity as a social rather than personal virtue.

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Finally, Kyle made interesting reference to the history and traditions of a football club as mediators of manager influence. The feeling was the work of a football manager was inextricably linked to club history, traditions and the community they serve, and this had to be understood on arrival. He spoke about one club where he immediately felt the weight of tradition in terms of standards and expectations. And, another, where he felt there was little or no tradition, which presented an opportunity. He said, *there was no history there, so you had a blank canvas...and it was, like wow, what can we make it? There was no limits, no limitations, no expectations, just this is a blank canvas and I think, that was really nice.* This perhaps supported the point I made earlier and suggested that the beyond cognitive thoughts and feelings, described in chapter five, football managers had to understand expectations that are found in history and traditions.

### *Jim*

This was an unusual interview because Jim's experience were not the typical rite of passage from player, to coach to manager. Jim had worked in the game for a very long time, as a player and coach, but what made him different, was that he had been asked, on three occasions, to act up as interim manager in naturally difficult circumstances, only to return to his previous role. So, he not only spoke about his experiences of managers, but also how he experienced the role himself.

What struck me was the value he placed on an intellectual approach that went beyond physical and technical facets of the game. This was evident when he made reference to his stints as a manager which added to the developing picture of manager influence. In a thoughtful interview, Jim reflected on aspects of influential, successful and failures of football managers. Describing the work, he constantly returned to the need for clarity, in terms of setting expectations (whether they liked it or not), to enable individuals to understand and perform. Together, with a notion that was mentioned in a few interviews, of having a *clear philosophy*, was also high in his thinking of football management. This was something he clearly valued and he gave a powerful example of how he used this as a guiding principle during one of his terms as interim manager. Perhaps, all of this pointed to the idea of the authenticity, in the way that we want leaders to show us the way. But equally, when we lose

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the way, we want them to simplify and clarify things, to get us back on track. And, what Jim described suggested authenticity meant, a way of doing things that then displays to others the person you are.

In what has been said to be a harsh reality, throughout this research I continued to be surprised by the importance participants placed on aspects of personal relationships. On one hand, in high-performance settings where people rely on each other greatly to succeed, this probably stands to reason. But on the other side, it also suggested it was the only way to survive what can, at times, be a cruel world. When speaking about one influential figure in his playing days, Jim remarked, *he never really ever talked to me about my game but was always very interested in me personally. So, it was a personal relationship.* This said a lot about my impression of Jim the person but also what he valued about managers in general. This got me thinking theoretically and implied something about the sincerity condition. Of all the many descriptions of football managers I listened to, what seemed to make the relationship work, came back to basic human values, that were the cornerstone of suggestions of manager influence in this context.

What was also interesting, was how he did not hesitate when thinking about the manager who had the greatest influence and referred to him as a *father figure*. In this environment we can sometimes forget that what we are dealing with, by in large, are young men who put their faith and talents in the hands of individuals who have tremendous power over them. Some, like Jim, leave their homes at a very young age and in a sense the football manager becomes a surrogate father. Paradoxically, parallels he made to managers as *sergeants* of an army and players, biblically, as *disciples*, symbolised a deeply ingrained culture and a hierarchical structure (that existed when I played). And as I am well aware, fundamentally, players are controlled by these all-powerful figures, who ultimately demand obedience.

### **Steve**

Steve was keen to make me aware of the harsh realities of elite sport and the player-manager relationship, using words like *brutal, aggressive and bully* to, paradoxically, describe a manager he considered had the biggest influence on his career. You might wonder then, how anyone could consider such behaviour acceptable in any working environment? He



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rationalised it as *setting a standard* and preventing people from *taking short cuts*. I saw it as perhaps a product of the environment, something handed down, for good, bad or indeed evil! Still, when considering leadership influence, it did make me wonder, how any positive relationships could be formed by such means. His stories resonated with me quite deeply, as this very same leadership approach left scars on me as a young player. It also suggested how we can be profoundly influenced by those who lead us and how behaviours might then be reproduced in our own practices.

Having been a player, coach and manager (for a brief time), Steve used the following story to sum up the difference between being a player and the manager. *Well, as a manager it's more difficult, yeah. Cos the stress is...fuck me...the stresses when you're losin' a game. I would come home...if it was bad day at the office...I'd ring my wife and say, "look, put the kids upstairs, don't wanna see em". Well, I didn't want them to see me. Oh, it was awful, I cannot handle losing. Never have. But as a player I'd go into the bar and by the first or second pint...we'll have a laugh. I fucking did my bit, you know. Whereas with managers you can do your best, but your team don't do the best and now you haven't done your best. It's your fault...it's very different.*

I sensed an inner conflict going on, when he said of being a manager, *you got more control, but you feel outta control*. Conversely, the suggestion for me was that football managers have some sort of addiction to power and crave control. The paradox, however, is their fate ultimately rests in the hands of others in the structure, and that must be an uncomfortable feeling to grapple with. I also sensed a conflict, between what he had experienced from previous managers and who he wanted to be, as he wrestled with his own identity; *you see a lot more relationship-based coaching and managers. I think they've got to know you care or they don't care what you know. So, if I think someone's efforts are not there, I'll tear a strip off them. But they know I care. If I'm just goin' after them all the time they just think I'm a bit of a wanker.*

To me this was the paradox of authenticity, in that, on one side, it is understood as being true to yourself, but in actuality, it is how this is displayed to others (Trilling, 1971). Steve articulated this as trying to be consistent. *One thing's all important and then a month later something else has come in. You can't get away from those things, so, it's making sure that*

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*there are traits that we must exhibit. This is what we stand for, this is what we are. It's a very dangerous world when you start moving away from the principles that have got you somewhere.*

In terms of leader influence, Steve had strong views on the key ingredients he considered made for success. *It's these things; passion, leadership, perfectionist, desire, winner, leader. After that it's character. It's fucking character.* The point to make when considering the idea of expert leadership, is that I accumulated a list as long as my arm, of traits, behaviours, attributes and qualities. However, as I go on to argue in the final findings chapter, these alone were not enough to fully understand the real influence of a leader. This idea of character that Steve mentioned suggested something mental, moral or ethical, might have something to do with what sets managers apart.

### **Alex**

Even though Alex did not enjoy a particularly long career, the itself game and the managers he played under had left a lasting impression. Like many others, he also seemed to have been greatly influenced by an early manager, in his case an individual who provided support, encouragement and showed belief in him. Coming from a tough upbringing, football undoubtedly gave him a strong sense of identity, which for me, came through when he talked about the manager who had the biggest influence on him, and the fact that this was not linked to on field success. *He knew how to get the best out of an individual, and that individual didn't necessarily have to be the best. All he ever did was tell him who's the best. If somebody tells you that, by gone, for him you are the best. So powerful have his words have been over the years and if you get it right that's what you'll motivate individuals to do.*

Alex was adept at recalling experiences from several decades ago in great detail, and certainly drew on this to formulate opinions of modern-day football management. What continued to surprise me was how little emphasis he and others placed on football, and how much they valued the person. For Alex, a manager who provided encouragement and support were the things he valued most. That said, he talked about the actions of another manager that he

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remarked, *led to the first disappointment I ever had in my life. Erm, it was an introduction to how cruel the game can be.*

He also spoke at length about darker issues with some emotion, which was something I understood as I know all too well, disappointment can be hard to take. He also paralleled similar disappointment suffered by his son in the professional game in conversation as well. For Alex, expectations and disappointment went hand in hand, and he suggested that there was a lack of a duty of care throughout the game in how they deal with young people. He might have a point. I know from my own experience that football can 'chew you up and spit you out'. But I do wonder if this is any different to any other high-performance environment. In saying that, it also suggested that when expectations are somehow not met, maybe we naturally look for something or someone to blame.

I sum up Alex's story as an example of how big a part belief played in his life. For Alex, the power of having something to believe in (the game of football) and someone believing in him (a manager) was an important matter. *The biggest influence, erm, and the best manager I ever played for was a guy called A NAME. THE MANAGER always used to say to me if you're good at somethin' keep doin' it. Believe.* Leadership influence for him came in this way. As he said *as a footballer, every wonderful result I've ever had has come out of belief and being shown belief. So, a manager puttin' an arm round me and sayin', you know, you were magnificent.* This suggested to me that this was important to analyse further in terms of the sincerity condition as set out by Lionel Trilling (1971).

### **Paul**

Paul gave an informative interview that helped me get a real sense of how the football manager's role has evolved as his time in the game spanned three decades. It also supported the point Neil Carter makes in his book, *The Football Manager*, that management in football reflects how management in general is shaped by changes to societal thinking. Paul contextualised this evolution, as he had experience of both the Victorian style leader, and the modern-day manager. He claimed football managers today were much less of a coach and were *more rounded*, and he used the words of one of his managers who said *he had to manage my board and then the player second. Because the coaches do that.* He also described

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how managers today are reliant on new technologies to emphasise how the modern-day role had changed. Despite this, I did wonder whether the influence of football managers had changed at all?

The fact that Paul played for one of the most successful managers in British history added to the interest, as I suppose we all want to hear about the celebrated. And, I certainly think his views have been indelibly shaped by the influence of certain managers that entered his life. It was also interesting how he saw one manager, in much the same way as another participant, as having a father's influence on a son. In fact, he referred directly to one as *a father figure* going on to say *anyone who's ever played underneath him, they only talk about him in high regard*. His stories about managers, their influence, those who got the best out of him and those who did not, were again presented as binaries between what he considered the good and bad ones he worked with. For example, he talked about how a manager *influenced by fear, but was approachable*. And spoke about one as someone *he liked but did not respect*. A paradoxical mix!

Man-management was the term Paul and many others used to describe a skill they considered essential. For him, managers who set clear expectations and tight boundaries were the ones who stood out. This got me thinking that maybe we might be overcomplicating the issue, for Paul, it was about keeping it as simple as *black and white*. Of course, we know people are complex and unpredictable, and one can never be certain that what works for one works for another. Still, he also spoke about the need for managers *to interact on a personal level, yet avoid coming across as a soft touch*, which I took to mean this not only says something about the true self but the organisation as well.

Paul spoke about reaching the lowest point in his career due to the negative influence of a manager and how he considered retirement if he remained in charge. The story was a tale of toxic behaviours that he described as *punishment* and ended with him claiming *he was a bully*. Undoubtedly, there are public perceptions and ideal notions of football managers and this is one way they are viewed. However, I also found, on the other side of the coin, there is another story that needs to be told.

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### *Kevin*

I was hoping the opportunity to interview a highly respected and experienced broadcaster would give a slightly different take to the question at hand. In particular, a vantage point that differs from that of players and coaches who arguably have closer interaction with football managers. Although Kevin recognised the important role the media plays, his indifference to their importance did surprise me. He remarked *we're a minor part of it, but without it I think we'd be badly missed. Because, I'm sure football would cope without football commentators. But I think now that TV is so important in terms of revenue and stuff, I think it'd be missed if it wasn't there.*

The comment was a gateway as to how some of the media, who interact closely with managers, feel about the relationship. He said, *I've never felt properly inside football because there's always been that suspicion from those playing the game towards us as the media. Like, you're the enemy. You're the ones that I've been told were slagging us off at the weekend.* This framed my interpretation as I reflected on this sentiment. I certainly got a sense of disappointment at times that, according to Kevin, the working relationship between managers and the media was superficial and he suggested, *we're all going through this pantomime really.* This might have had something to do with a high-profile incident he had with a recognised manager that I was aware of, or a genuine feeling that there was, as he said, *a conflict of interest really.*

In saying that, his insights confirmed that those who work in the media (as I did) were part of the tradition and were very much on the inside and they are very aware of what goes on with players and managers. Yes, the job is to report on what goes on within the game and they provide a valuable source of information, however, the tales they hear undoubtedly contribute to opinions they form. In fact, Kevin told stories about managers with whom he had developed close relationships which were rich and insightful. He talked about qualities such as *being approachable, helpful* and the virtue of sincerity, when he spoke about a manager as someone *I'd like to work for.* On the other side of the argument, he told a story that travelled the football circles, of how the off - field conduct of a manager, led to his players 'downing tools' and his ultimate dismissal. The point is that, working in the media gave them

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ready access to the environment, and as such, they formed impressions of football managers from what was open to them.

Despite undoubted progress of football and the media, Kevin expressed concern for the future of the relationship with managers when he said, *you know, we are people as well, we've got backgrounds and histories and interests and if they get to know us a bit more we get to know them a bit more. But I don't think that'll ever happen.* I generally thought, just like any relationship, the one between the media and football managers comes down to individuals. Simply put, some forge positive relationships and some just do not hit it off. Yet, as Kevin suggested, it is still very much a power relationship where managers, to a large extent, call the shots. Once more, the suggestion of the human element, what the manager was like as a person, was the foundation of relationships and once again assumed primacy over any talk about technical and tactical genius.

### ***Ian***

My reflections on this interview were clouded by a shocking disclosure from the participant that he was a victim an egregious child sex-abuse scandal that has blighted English football (Taylor, 2018). Appalling stuff that I am afraid has done a lifetime of damage! I needed to reset as this sidelined my thinking. As I listened with a sympathetic ear, I considered not conducting the interview, and later asked if this was something he was still willing to do. Ian is someone I had known for a number of years, not a friend as such, and I would not have expected him to entrust me with such information. I did wonder why he chose to and naturally was shocked, appalled, disgusted and felt overwhelmingly sorry for him as he calmly recounted the mental and physical destruction caused by individuals who held influential positions and preyed on the vulnerable. It got me thinking, in any study involving people who have great authority and hold powerful positions, there is reality that needs to be told, that cannot be done so truthfully without acknowledging a dark side undeniably exists.

I was also surprised by the interview itself, which was almost the opposite, as Ian recounted many highs. Though, he also suffered greatly from another unfortunate side of the game, injuries. Blighted by a string of lengthy injuries that threatened his playing career on a number

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of occasions, he commented *I'd had thirteen operations before I was twenty-five. I was told to retire four times. Every game I played in I was grateful for.* This summed up his remarkable resilience and made me think that, despite some very dark times, life in football had also been special for him. Late on in the interview he remarked *it was a new journey* and for me that reflected his outlook and probably how he used the game itself to overcome some of its demons. Nevertheless, from the start of his career to this very day, football has left him with some very good and some very painful memories.

In terms of manager influence, ideas around sincerity were prominent in my thinking, when he recalled virtues such as *honesty, fairness* and *loyalty* in various stories. Loyalty was dominant and many of his football decisions were made through a sense of loyalty to and from individuals. An example of this was found in the irony that his very first manager, who had a really profound influence on his formative years, was the person he chose to play for as his last in the professional game. This suggested strong bonds were formed and how important the relationship was.

In keeping with the time, he accepted the command-control style of management, but only when it was balanced with what he considered acts of fairness. As an example, he referred to an incident where he was singled out for criticism by a manager, and said, *it's something that, you know, I took on board. But, if I had to do the same thing, I would always back it up with a positive. Always leave with a positive. Never leave it down wind because you can lose people.* This was perhaps an example of when authority is legitimised when met with sincerity. Accepting criticism is part and parcel of sport, but for leader influence to be positive, it suggested it has to be met with sincerity or viewed as fair criticism in this case. In saying that, throughout the interview I never lost sight of what Ian revealed earlier, which I also witnessed in my time in the game.

### **Jordan**

Jordan's interview was another that voiced the fact that the context itself provides the other side of the argument. When he looked back, he told stories that highlighted how what comes with the tradition affected managers influence. He typically framed his reflections by stressing, like most, that football in general is a tough environment, hierarchical and operates

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largely on opinion. This emphasised to me that it was always important to keep this in mind, because the way football looks from the outside, can in fact mean something else to someone within the game. That said, the clubs and managers he worked for impacted on him greatly in both directions, but he saw the experiences as points of learning. For example, when commenting on a difficult situation which resulted in him being dismissed from his role, he said, *I think I learned a lot from that*. I found the story refreshing but not surprising as throughout the interview Jordan was balanced in his appraisal. Perhaps this was because he was no longer in the game at the time of the interview, which gave him the space and security to look back. Or maybe it was simply the way he is.

What was really interesting and relevant to this study, was his account and feelings on the issue of whether a stellar playing background mattered to football management. The fact that he had not played at an elite level probably meant this was something he confronted, at times, throughout his coaching career. Like most, he certainly had a strong opinion on the issue and said, *ex-players in British clubs are getting jobs because of who they know and their contacts and their experience. Because of their background...they gain that respect because of who they are*.

He then told a powerful story of a legendary player who returned to a club as the manager and made an immediate impact in terms of results on the pitch. Moral lifted and he created a positive environment, only for it to go sour soon after. In Jordan's view *being able to create a longer-term vision* was his shortcoming that ultimately saw him lose his job. Maybe his assessment was slightly naive, given the culture in football, but perhaps the point he was trying to make was, influence does not always mean in perpetuity. In other words, having a great CV only takes you so far as people look for much more in their leaders.

Jordan suggested the need for adaptability (if we were to go down the qualities and behaviours route), however, when I thought about Austin's idea of felicity conditions, his story suggested something else. The argument Austin makes is that to be influential (not win games) managers must meet appropriate (felicity) conditions that are set out for them, not only by what surrounds the club, but also by those who they interact with. So, using the example, it might be less about reputation and great qualities but how the person is understood by others.



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### **Rob**

I was fortunate to secure this interview, not only in the way it came about (through a chance meeting), but because Rob was a CEO and member of the board at a top football club and gaining access these individuals can be extremely difficult. His interview became a story of his time overseeing the hiring and firing of seven managers and reflection on events that unfolded. As a CEO, the interview added a different dimension and richness of description of expert managers, their role, and what he considered strengths and shortcomings. I listened intently as he chronicled a string of appointments and dismissals that not only outlined the challenging conditions in which football managers have to operate, but also the thought process behind decisions taken. Arguably, he provided a broader perspective to that of both players and coaches, which came across from his repeated use of a phrase, *managing the club*. To me this transcended *man-management*, that was frequently used by players and coaches, to describe what senior officials valued in football managers.

It was also interesting how much he downplayed the football side of the manager role as *a given*, in favour of other aspects of the running of a club as more important which was perhaps understandable given his position. As one of the people responsible for the appointment of managers, he placed relationships with the board, staff, fans and the community, over man-management of players. In that way, the concept of relationship-based leadership, used by another participant, came to mind, which might be a reason why so many participants cited human values over football aspects. Rob told an interesting story of a manager who was largely successful in a first spell with the club and who then returned for a second stint. He said, *I think both THE MANAGER had changed a little bit and the club had changed a lot. So, that connectivity it didn't work perfectly, the gel, the chemistry didn't work perfectly*. Like it or not, in many ways football marches to its own beat and what I interpreted and ultimately understood had to account for these oddities.

It was also fascinating to learn about the reality and inevitability of football managers being dismissed from someone who was ultimately tasked with the undertaking. Like others, he spoke about managers in binary expressions, but with this gave examples of the influence they had throughout the club. According to Rob, managers are generally brought in with a

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clear remit that is set out by owners and or the board, *he's got to deliver on the pitch, he's got to manage the club*. Yet, for Rob, it was the quality of their interactions throughout the club that made the difference, which suggested this as a source of their influence.

This got me thinking how my research could benefit someone like Rob as the hiring and firing culture in football looks set to stay. First, I would say that my advice will probably not keep a manager in a job! Nonetheless, when choosing a manager, look beyond attributes, repute, and achievement which concern the things I described in chapter five, which at times, amounted to what football is essentially about, opinion. Second, understand the really important features of the context. And, third, as part of the appointment process, find a leader who displays human values that are a good fit to the context. For me this is about the importance of a leader developing and maintaining quality relationships throughout an organisation that are viewed by others as authentic. Rob told a story about one manager who did not survive long when he said, *he didn't command the authority or the belief*. He went on to say, *this was something that did for the manager not only with players but throughout the club*. This demonstrated the point precisely, as manager influence was understood through the quality of relationships. Said simply, a values-based approach.

### **Ben**

There is old saying within football that goes, *winning is like a good deodorant - it covers all bad smells!* Ben's interview, like many before, ultimately came back to the pressures of performance and results that can unfortunately cover many ills. As a current professional, had played for 9 clubs and as many as 16 managers and counting. He provided a very level-headed assessment of the manager influence which was quite powerful and long-lasting overall. I framed his thoughts within this cultural mindset, as he appeared to accept things that we might not consider just. Nonetheless, it was also interesting that he had empathy for the job of the football manager when he said *it's so hard being a manager cos any wrong decision the players aren't gonna work for you...the fans...and you're under pressure. Look, mate, you have to see him as the guy who's trying to do his job and it's down to you*.

He spoke about lessons he felt he had learned from managers, seeing them as *life lessons* that gave him the skills grow as a player and person. *When I was eighteen, nineteen I experienced*

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*five, which was really good early on, to kind of get a feel of how different managers work and that whole change, transition. How to deal with it. Players coming and going. It was very good.* And, in describing qualities of those he considered to have had a positive influence on his career, the one that stood out concerned *setting the standard*. He felt this worked best for him, as it not only challenged him to reach his best, but also simplified and clarified situations. While I understood this, I could not help but think this probably depended on how the message was delivered, as setting the standard could also be viewed as an ultimatum.

He did, however, leave me thinking about the paradox of authority. First, he gave this example of how authority was initially granted by virtue of the position, saying, *as a player...I've got to respect this guy...whether he's got the credentials or not*. Second, he later went on to say, *I've always gone okay, let me take him in first, listen to what he's doing, play by the rules. Over time I think then you get into well, you know, do I like this kind of person?* This suggested a bit of both, the respect given, respect earned argument discussed in the previous chapter. For Ben, authority was granted in deference to the position, but over time needed to be maintained. This suggested that authority was not a standalone concept and is linked to other ideas that sustain it. Ironically, Ben spoke about *credibility* and *honesty* later in the interview, which suggest the link that ultimately governs whether authority given, lasts.

Finally, Ben was quick to bring me back to his way of thinking, when he said, *I've learned...you don't wanna challenge them (managers)...you don't wanna fight them because you're never gonna win!* Know your place was the perceived reality of a player earning his living from the game, and the playing and winning, the centre of that universe. An institutionalised mentality, it appears, that cannot be escaped.

### **Lewis**

Lewis was a young professional at the beginning of a promising career and, compared to some of the former professional players, it felt like he carried much less baggage. This came through in responses that were quite matter of fact. I also sensed an element of vulnerability and the 'innocence of youth' came to mind. His interview was emotional in places, but equally refreshing, as he spoke about what really mattered to him. He said, *for me, I take playing over anything really*. That I could really relate to because, as a young player, all you dream of is the

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opportunity to take to the field in front of adoring fans. It also made me wonder whether a touch of cynicism would creep in over time, and how much his outlook might change over coming years. Nevertheless, my overall reflection on the experience was that it came from a place of passion and a love of the game, first and foremost.

It is also worth noting that this was my very first interview and almost 18 months had elapsed before I came back to undertake the analysis. I think this was a real benefit to what I interpreted, as what Ricoeur calls, *distanciation*, was certainly at work (Simms, 2003). Ricoeur's argument is that our perspective changes when we distance ourselves from the phenomenon in question and I think this was accurate in this case and listening back all those months later. In that time, the study and my thinking had moved on and I had developed a more attuned perspective. What this meant was the interpretation took on greater significance, because Lewis's stories fitted neatly with ideas that I was not aware of at the time of interviewing.

In terms of manager influence, it was interesting how he commented that reputations often follow managers and are formed, not only through their experiences and success, but by players and the media. Often, by the time a manager arrives, presumptions are firmly in place as Lewis said, *people in football, they know!* Probably, what surprised me most was when I asked what he needed most from a manager to get the best out of him. He placed *honesty* over and above anything else, which really resonated and, along with a manager *who understands the game*, these were his two essential qualities. However, honesty was something he came back to repeatedly in stories he told. Thinking about it, it seemed to me for someone with this passion and love for playing football, who was also starting out in the game, to view honesty above football related matters meant he might have experienced a serious lack of it, at some point, in the player-manager relationship.

He also made a powerful statement when he said, *I talk to the players. I talk to the senior pros about different kinds of stuff and...who's your favourite manager and are there any good ones? Because, obviously, there aren't many good ones.* This implied that football managers get it wrong more than they get it right and good leadership might be in short supply. For all their knowledge, experience, status, reputation and success, I now had this strong sense that

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there was something else that needed to be understood. And to explain their overall influence meant moving beyond common conceptions. So, my final move, paying attention to my own preunderstandings, is to bring together this horizon of participants and researcher, as a fusion of horizons (Gadamer, 1989).

### **6.3: Summary - Fusion of Horizons**

Gadamer (1989) invokes the idea of a fusion of horizons where a third meaning is said to emerge as truth found in context. What this means is, my ideas and participants experiences are joined to interpret the nature of the world in question. The point to make, however, is this way of thinking places me squarely within the research and offers a conceptual structure whereby understanding can be achieved. Gadamer (1989) argues, rather than bracket away preunderstandings, as suggested by Husserl and Heidegger, these are included as part of the story and lead to higher order understanding (Heidegger, 1962; Husserl, 1997). In this way, hermeneutics assumes the more you understand about a particular world and its social, cultural and historical ways, the better you are able to find truth that is good enough for a particular point in time. This also assumes truth is found interpretively and produces, what Gadamer calls, a new field of vision (Gadamer, 1989).

The main idea is that perspectives of both the researcher and texts are analysed through a circular mode of thinking to arrive at understanding. It also means the interpretative task looks for something new and uncovers hidden meaning to develop insights. Yet, the reality is the hermeneutic circle is not a method in itself and all it offers is a philosophical approach to understanding and not an explanation. Therefore, this aspiration had to be confronted as every interpretation then becomes open to a new interpretation (Gadamer, 2006). This all means that my prior experiences in professional football add to the study, in that they allowed me to understand (as far as possible) what was told. Arguably, football has a culture all of its own and you have to be well versed in its ways to intimately understand. This meant that I framed what was said in terms of the vagaries of the context which, I argue, added authenticity and originality to the research. I believe that very few people could have conducted a study of this nature without this deep understanding of the context. So, in this reflexive way, the principle of fusion of horizons, allowed me to consider these lived experiences along with and my own reflections to develop higher order understanding.

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To facilitate this, I generated analytic memos (**see example in Appendix 3**) and kept in mind some basic questions during this process of the interpretation. After each reading of a transcript I asked myself; what struck me?; what surprised me?; what intrigued me?; and what disturbed me? (Saldaña, 2016). This resulted in what has been said before, but importantly, drew out important features that contributed to an overall narrative. I found whether football managers are the most important person at an organisation was equivocal, however, they can make a considerable impact and, more importantly, were influential as leaders. Football managers make for an interesting study because of the position they hold, the characters they are, the methods they employ and the impact they can have on organisations as a whole (Grint et al., 2017). In saying that, despite technological advances in the game of football, what struck me was how little the actual management side of the job had changed. Club structures may have altered, and some managers now hold the title of head coach, still, the management narrative appeared to remain fundamentally the same from my time in the game. Participants still used the nomenclature *gaffa*, a sign of a social rank that has been in place for many a decade.

With this came issues of power that showed themselves in relationships with those who operate under the manager and, at times, struggles with those above (Kelly & Harris, 2010). The football manager was said to be power oriented and a paradox in terms of legitimacy perpetuated by virtue of position and the use of power and domination in relationships (Weber, 1964). This was found in many stories where fear and respect were regularly discussed in terms of the impact on individuals. While football managers are essentially appointed to bring on field success and are given autonomy over that aspect of the operation. They assume power relations, as they are the ultimate decision maker, and I found that there was a fear associated with experiences and interaction with some managers.

On the other hand, their knowledge, experiences and achievements afforded them a status that acted powerfully in positive ways. The paradox of fear and respect worked in opposition, but importantly, had to be understood in the context of this results driven culture. That is not to say football managers had it all their own way and power was absolute. As we know owners and boards get impatient and managers are regularly dismissed. And players fight back, as many participants spoke about *player power* and managers *losing the dressing room*. Overall,

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respect given, respect earned and mutual respect resulted in a dynamic that combined with contextual factors to mean leadership influence.

Furthermore, I was surprised by a lack of emphasis given to football matters as participants routinely spoke about the person before anything football related. I had expected to hear tales of tactical genius or innovative ways managers improved performance through technical expertise. But more often than not, talk went beyond football matters in the first instance, before any professional or coaching aspect was discussed. More specifically, when considering the idea of a TEL, expert knowledge, experience and achievements in the game took a back seat (Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Participants spoke openly about the human experience, in binary terms, and described virtues they valued or that were in short supply. Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that managers are all qualified to a certain level and football ability was taken as a given. Or maybe it pointed to the quality of the personal relationships which were integral to interactions. Taken together, I came to realise that what I was dealing with were the natural sensitivities of human beings. This is not to suggest that football matters were not important, but despite intense interest in the study of leadership and an abundance of theories, what was considered important was a strength of character and humanity, qualities that are neutralised in leadership studies in general (Rumsey, 2013; Sadler, 2003).

Although, I might also be accused of returning to age old leadership debates of traits and behaviours in my description of the football manager in chapter five, as the qualities mentioned were many (Bass, 2008), I believe this was important to give the reader a sense of mental conceptions of football managers. However, I interpreted the fact that talk first turned to the character of managers as something significant and suggested that there was something else to be understood. It also implied that it was not enough to have all these various qualities and attributes and achievements, and that reputation, knowledge and experience, only went so far. The suggestion was football managers had to have something more, with values such as honesty, fairness, empathy and loyalty consistently discussed that show an appreciation of others (Ashman & Lawler, 2008). This suggested, importantly, that looking closely at the character of the individual was essential to the idea of leadership influence.

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With that being said, a bit of perspective is necessary, as it cannot be denied that the organisational context was significant and forces beyond the control of the football manager were said to be at work. So, history, tradition and the identity of the club itself might have very little to do with them. In particular, I found the narrative on what is handed down intriguing, important and highlighted how susceptible we are to following traditions that come before us. What was clear is that the industry has deeply embedded values that advance through the ages and influence all it surrounds (Ogbonna & Harris, 2014). I got the sense that participants were very quickly made aware of this and readily adopted a 'that is the way it is' mentality. Rarely, did I get the feeling that this was challenged for fear of repercussion by those in power. And, in many ways, I sensed this was responsible for what is brought into the open and what is kept secret (Potrac et al., 2007).

It was also interesting to see how the dynamic of history and tradition worked and how it operated as almost an identity that formed the cornerstone of a club. For all the intense focus on football managers, I found managers embraced tradition and culture and became part of it in performing the role. There were, however, occasions where participants talked about a key figure in a club's history, who was responsible for creating this very tradition, that subsequent managers had to live up to (Ogbonna & Harris, 2014). This invariably concerned remarkable achievements at a period of time and centred on outstanding results. I was also aware that participants had this strong sense of what went in the past which was difficult to ignore but had to be understood (Gadamer, 2006).

Furthermore, there was a dark side to leadership that had to be faced which was, without doubt, the most difficult part of the research (Mathieu et al., 2014; Milosevic, Maric, & Loncar, 2019). Participants described a range of emotions that exposed mistreatment that caused psychological hurt. What was particularly disturbing was that some of this went unbridled, and at times, there was a feeling that issues were 'swept under the carpet'. To put it bluntly, some individuals were linked to feelings of fear and hatred, bullying, physical and mental abuse and enduring inequality. The dialectic between what was told and my own experiences led to me feel a sense of despondency as, whilst the issues are complex and have deep historical roots, they appeared to be almost impossible to eradicate. It also brought to the fore some of my own prejudices and I may have underplayed some of what was told and not



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confronted these issues in the requisite way. In truth, some of the abuse reminded me of my time in the game and provoked feelings of despair as they endure. In saying all of that, as a disclaimer, I should make it clear that what I found cannot be solely attribute to football managers, as participant accounts were only one side of the narrative.

Arguably, football operates in an alternate reality and it is very difficult to understand some of its ways in societal terms. This means it can, at times, work in its own fashion and in a way that can confound those on the outside. In this environment, at times, I found less of what would be considered good leadership and behaviours that were less than virtuous (Owen, 2012). What is more, my sense of disappointment stemmed from the fact that a lot of what I found was not new and to which the authorities have turned a blind eye (if I had to play the blame game). So, it is reasonable to say the influence of those who manage in professional football, whilst it brought success, was far from always positive and had the potential to ruin lives.

Whether this stemmed from the cutthroat environment, unhealthy power differentials, clubs or the game, I cannot be certain. My experiences in football and in other sectors tell me that these issues are not unique and are found elsewhere. This led me to argue that in any study involving people who have great authority and hold powerful positions, there is reality that needs to be told but cannot be truthfully told, without acknowledging a dark side undeniably exists. This I believe to be a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge as I not only highlighted what was found in a unique, historical social context, but introduced another side of complex relations of the TEL to the conversation.

Therefore, when the sum of the parts met the whole, in this study of expert leadership influence, my feeling is still that there is much to learn from these often celebrated, high profile figureheads (Elberse, 2013). Importantly, the chapter showed what can be understood is deeply embedded in history and traditions that can perpetuate social and systemic problems (Potrac et al., 2007). In the end, I had the feeling that there is a natural order in professional football that looks unlikely to change. What I also understand is that the football manager can make a tremendous impact on the pitch but is also extremely influential on those around it. In terms of impact, I leave that to scholars who are already on this pilgrimage (Flint et al., 2016; Hope, 2003; Szymanski & Kupers, 1999).

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In terms of leadership influence, I argue that in order to get results you have to be able to influence people in the right way. Yukl (2013) argues the only consensus that can be reached when looking for a definition of leadership is that it involves an underlying influencing process. Consequently, what I am trying to do is understand that assumed influence. The next chapter does just that and provides theoretical discussion to explain why and how leaders, who are considered experts in their field, are able to influence those they interact with. To do so, I return to Austin's (1962) idea of felicity conditions, to elucidate the human side of the job, as a way to transcend the opposites that made up this paradoxical mix.

## **Chapter 7: Felicity Conditions of Expert Leadership**

### **7.1: The Football Manager - A Paradoxical Mix**

To this point the reader has been taken through two findings chapters. The first provided a detailed description of managers in professional football, outlining the character, primary capabilities and aspects of the job that are valued. This was done to give an appreciation and intimate feel of cognitive thoughts, feelings, beliefs and expectations about these individuals. However, this general depiction raised conceptual questions vis-à-vis leadership influence that could not be settled by description alone. This was then followed by hermeneutic interpretation that served to, not only position the researcher in terms of the study but brought into the open preunderstandings for the narrative that ensued.

In line with Gadamerian thinking, this reflexive task allowed me to, not only be aware of my presuppositions, but to also take me to a place whereby I understood how this might influence what could be known (Gadamer, 1989). The dialectic between text of lived experiences and my own preunderstandings led me to argue that what can be understood about the influence of managers in professional football is deeply embedded in long histories and traditions of a culture. I also described football managers as a paradoxical mix which meant significance was found within contradictions (Trilling, 1971).

This chapter focuses on bringing it all together and provides theoretical elucidation in order to satisfy the broad ambition of my thesis. The chapter attends to the aim and provides explanation for the straightforward question of how and why expert leaders are able to influence in a requisite way. The job was not to produce a step by step guide but rather to explain, as Heidegger put it, a mode of *being in the world*. As the reader came to see in the previous two chapters, this mode of being had the power to inspire, encourage and influence others as well as demotivate, denigrate and destroy through true and elusive qualities.

Alvesson (2019) criticises what he considers common mistakes in leadership studies that follow time-honoured problems but fail to advance what is already known. Drawing on this same understanding, I argue there is much more to understand about the TEL than simple integration of heuristic attributes and behaviours that are thought to affect performance outcomes. With this in mind, my thesis sought to first separate leadership from performance

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outcomes, thereby removing the problematic of apportioning performance to an individual or particular type of leadership. And second, through stories of lived experiences, show that an examination of leadership influence is a valuable means of understanding performativity.

Critically, the chapter makes a unique contribution to knowledge as it is the first time the idea of expert leadership has been investigated this way. What this means is that, as a performative act, the TEL in professional football is explained using principles of J. L. Austin's thesis. The key point to make, and what I take from the philosophy, is that the analysis follows a line of thinking that examines particular conditions that must be met for performativity to be realised (Austin, 1962). This means that the appropriateness of leadership influence of British professional football managers is examined at a forensic level and findings presented in a critical discussion of the felicity conditions authority (Weber, 1964), authenticity and sincerity (Trilling, 1971).

I begin with, what I thought was, a particularly striking comment from Lewis, a current player, who played for four clubs and eight managers, as a preamble to the theoretical discussion to come:

*Lewis: I talk to the players. Like, I like to talk to the senior pros about different kinds of stuff and...who's your favourite manager and are there any good ones because, obviously...there aren't many good ones.*

It is reasonable to assume that no football manager sets out to do a bad job, yet, as Pfeffer (2015) points out, frequent leadership failures in organisations lead to a lack of trust in leaders. Although we might be surprised by this as we regularly see football managers held up as iconic, positive figures (Elberse, 2013). The subtext, however, tells a very different story and suggested, what we consider good leadership, might be rare indeed. As Lewis implied, and if there is some truth to this perception, this is perturbing in terms of the state of leadership overall. On balance, it is accurate to say all conversations discussed some aspect of poor leadership, which moved me to describe football managers as a paradoxical mix. The suggestion being lines were drawn between what were considered good and bad properties and perceived success and failure, and that were invisible at times (Austin, 1962). British football is a small community and for managers, reputations can be enhanced or besmirched

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overnight (Calvin, 2015). What Lewis stated put me on alert as, overall, the findings were not what might have been expected, and the narrative was certainly not always positive.

It is also important to stress that the data corpus was derived from sixteen in-depth interviews and the collective wisdom of individuals who have worked in the professional football environment (**Table 1**). This is not to say that any one person had all the answers, or the collective could solve all the issues. The important point is that the level of analysis was the key concern. It was not about each interview in isolation, but made use of Josselson's (2011b) idea of narrative analysis to combine stories of an astonishing 226 football managers that give credibility (authentic representations) to the data (Bryman, 2016). Through these voices a narrative of expert leadership emerged. Conversations very much spoke about the influence of football managers as a dichotomy or in opposition, with participants often referring to their experiences of some managers as positive, on the one hand, and others quite the opposite (Guignon, 2004).

Harry, who played for nine clubs, his country and an incredible twenty managers, gave two examples that underscore the point:

*Harry: I worked with A MANAGER, you know, people were fearful because he had manipulated things to get rid of people...good people. Because they maybe disagreed with him, or they had another opinion, or, you know, they didn't conform to what he wanted.*

*Harry: THE MANAGER is an unbelievable guy, and he's not a personal friend of mine. He's on about this human element and being a human being. He would rather pick someone who was a good human being, who's not got the best skill, over someone who's got loads of skill but's a dickhead. And, quite often I think when things aren't goin' well he gets ridiculed for that, you know. If THE CLUB lose a game or if it's not goin' well they say he's too loyal to people, he's too much of a nice guy. I just say, that's a load of rubbish to facilitate an excuse for why things aren't goin' so well.*

For Guignon (2004), this modern way of thinking is sensemaking that is valorised in the way we rank experiences in opposites, such as positive or negative, good and bad. This means the paradoxical nature of the leadership terrain often implied the presence of something, or something amiss (Peacock, 1975). What I found was most certainly conflated, confounding, contradictory, divisive and fragmented. Furthermore, Austin's idea of felicity conditions is also a binary that considers performative acts as felicitous (happy) or infelicitous (unhappy) (Levinson, 2005). In view of this, the data was examined and analysed for stories of positive

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and negative influence and evaluated for what was inferred conceptually to make theoretical contributions.

### 7.2: Felicity Conditions of Expert Leadership

As a reminder, Austin's (1962) philosophical project confronts the long held belief that acts of speech had little value beyond description and verification. At the heart of his study is the search to understand the nature of truth and reality through the relationship of word to world (Leech, 2016; Martinich, 1997). Put another way, this means words and sentences are thought to do more than simply describe and have a performative function that causes people to act. Thus, the very idea of speech and performativity that can be interpreted for meaning formed the cornerstone of this thesis.

Alex, who played for two clubs and four managers, demonstrated the point precisely with this story:

*Alex: I'll go back to A MANAGER who was my favourite all time manager. Toward the end of my career I played against him and never failed to score. And, the last time I played against im we actually got beat. Anyway, when we were runnin' onto the pitch, I saw THE MANAGER and I says, "Ay up, GAFFA!" He said, "Another one for you today?". He said to me, "Yeah, you dare!". So powerful have his words have been over the years.*

Examination of felicity conditions is important to the study of linguistic pragmatics and allows researchers to gain deeper insight from language data (Leech, 2016). Austin's thesis essentially considers the act, the intent and the effects in terms felicity. To put the point another way, and relate it to this study, it means that in the same way that saying something can mean doing something, I assumed acts of leadership work in a similar way, inasmuch as, the same principles apply to any performative act (Blackshaw, 2017). Consequently, when looking to explain expert leadership influence, I looked beyond traditional conceptions and followed along with this line of thinking. For example, Steve, a coach who played for seven clubs and sixteen managers, implied where this might be found:

*Steve: What was his qualities? I've got a list of em...and after that it's character. It's these things, passion, leadership, perfectionist, desire, winner. The one with the best character will be the best.*

The qualities mentioned are beliefs and expectations of football managers that were essentially outlined in chapter five. However, lurking somewhere within the mention of

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character are signifiers of intentions and values that point to virtuous leadership action (Kennaway, 2015). This implied that there was more to understand about the influence of football managers that might be uncovered through Austin's theoretical lens. His set of speech conditions, that have truth value, proved useful to take me beyond traditional and exhaustive descriptions of qualities, attributes and behaviours that are typical of leadership study in general (Alvesson, 2019).

However, before the reader can fully translate Austin's ideas, I return to the main aim of this thesis and the idea of a TEL. It is also important to reiterate that football managers are assumed to be expert leaders based on distinguished playing careers that are honed over many years within the game (Morrow & Howieson, 2014). And, without question, there was overwhelming support for this, and various reasons offered as to why. First, Danny, a retired player who worked for an astounding fourteen clubs and twenty managers, explained why, on the face of it, football managers are able to influence positively and the difficulty, managers who are not considered experts faced:

*Danny: What they'll never have, the ones that've not played the game, bein' in situations and addressing them. One-nil down, one-nil up, three-nil down, errr, the manager's havin' a go at ya at half time. You know you're playin' to stay in that team. Yer know, the fans are havin' a go at yer...how do you handle it? They've never been in that position you know. Fuck, the centre-half's not givin' me a kick today how am I gonna' solve this problem? Because they're tryin' to give information to these players and never been in situations on the pitch and off the pitch.*

This common theme intimated an imperative that a football manager had to have played the game to a high standard. Ian, who played for six clubs, under eleven managers, offered his take:

*Ian: Now, these are guys have played at the top level and straight away you listen to every single word. But with managers who haven't had that, you know, rightly or wrongly. You question certain things. Then you've got a manager who in the first place hasn't got your one-hundred percent respect, because of not having played at that level. Then, you've got someone like [NAME] coming in who's been a top, top player, who's won everything and manages well at A TOP CLUB and he's walking in and watching you in your first training session. You're naturally just gonna give everything.*

In a way, this supports Goodall's (2012) argument that organisations should be led by individuals who are vanguards and who have ability that, at least, compares to those within

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the organisation. For Ian, Goodall's idea of inherent knowledge and experience was considered something important in this setting. He suggested that being an expert changed the dynamic and those who enter without the 'right' background face additional leadership challenges. However, in Austinian thinking, what makes expert leadership felicitous, based on Ian's understanding, straddles principles of felicity conditions A and B.

As a reminder, Austin (1962) states for speech acts to be felicitous they must meet the following conditions (Hadiati, 2019):

- A. *1. There must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect;*  
*2. the circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.*
  - B. *The procedure must be executed 1. correctly and 2. completely.*
  - C. *1. The person must have the requisite thoughts, feelings and intention, as specified in the procedure; and 2. if consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must so do.*
- Austin in Levinson (2005, p. 229)

In short, what can be inferred from these essential features is what was important to this study. Condition A infers that convention must be adhered to and holds the idea that authority must be acknowledged in the process. The execution of the act must be authentic to be successful (correctly and completely) in condition B, and for condition C to be felicitous, the intentions of the speaker must be understood as sincere to secure commitment. With this in mind, Ian's story means football managers most certainly do benefit from the time they have spent within the game, success they accumulate and repute. However, in Austinian thinking, what makes this situation felicitous is mostly found in condition A.2. The idea of the appropriateness of the person makes it imperative (in Ian's minds) that a football manager has played the game at a high level. As an aside, it should be pointed out that I found the issue appeared to matter more to players, who arguably are the most directly influenced on a daily basis by managers.

Further to this there was also a suggestion around the idea of authenticity in Danny's assessment, viewed as how managers went about their work, when he said, *tryin' to give information to these players and never been in situations*. This suggested football managers who had not played the game might possibly be able to meet condition B.1. (the procedure



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must be executed correctly) through perhaps what they had learned as a coach, but unable to meet B.2. (the procedure must be executed completely), having not been in the situation themselves as a player. Although this was not absolute.

Levinson (2005, p. 231) reminds us, *performatives can only be assessed as felicitous or infelicitous, according to whether their felicity conditions are met or not*. The point being, the performative function that makes people do things, as Austin (1962) put it, has a perlocutionary effect that determines its overall success. Parking technical use of words and sentences for the moment, when examining performativity in general it was important to closely analyse individual experiences, the context, along with the perlocutionary effect to assess leadership influence (Levinson, 2005). This was demonstrated when Harry discussed the personal qualities he expected from football managers:

*Harry: Well, that they were respectful. Err, they had a drive. They wanted the best. They had high standards. They weren't afraid to tell you when you weren't doin' it. So, in a way you did get that honesty...but it was quickly backed up by respectfulness. Errr, I would say they were empathetic with, with you as a person. They showed they cared. So, nothin' to do with tactics.*

On first look, it is probably fair to say there is nothing out of the ordinary here when we think about good leaders. Yet, what we can also gather is that Levinson's (2005) insight is accurate if we apply the principles of the conditions outlined above and make subtle conceptual moves to examine Harry's thoughts. What we are talking about is the idea of leadership influence and where this may be found. Which means, for expert leadership influence to be felicitous we have to examine the implied importance Harry gave to each condition in order for them to be met.

First, we can assume football managers meet the fulfilment of condition A.1 (must be a conventional procedure having a conventional effect), by virtue of the leadership position they hold. But, they also need to command authority, and as Harry put it, *they weren't afraid to tell you when you weren't doin' it*, which probably would not have worked without the backing of condition A.2 (the circumstances and persons must be appropriate). The attributes he made reference to, *drive, wanted the best, had high standards*, suggest a way of going about things for the authenticity condition to be met (conditions B.1. and B.2.). However, and most importantly, Harry's main emphasis was on condition C.1. (the person must have the

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requisite thoughts, feelings and intentions), signified by his use of the words, *were respectful, were empathetic, showed they cared, honesty*. This was supported by his final point *so, nothin' to do with tactics*. In isolation, this is where main leadership influence can be inferred. Taken together the suggestion is for the performative act of expert leadership to be successful, for Harry, the sincerity condition in particular had to be met in the form of those virtues mentioned. As the reader saw in the previous chapter, conversations about football managers, surprisingly focused on personal qualities over technical talk, which intimated this was a source of leadership influence.

Taking this a step further, Austin (1962) says conditions A (authority) and B (authenticity) are *make or break* and violations of either means performativity does not happen. However, violation of condition C (sincerity), he deems *abuse*, as the statement involves a form of deceit, and although performativity can be completed, the result is infelicitous or insincere (Leech, 2016; Levinson, 2005). So, what Harry described makes this strong suggestion, as it seemed that he was less concerned with the manager's requisite knowledge and experiences and was far more concerned with how the person comes across. And, depending on the context, the performative act might still have been realised, but the leadership influence viewed as infelicitous according to Austin's doctrine of infelicities (**Figure 4**). So, when examining the fit the between leaders and followers in context, what I gleaned from this was, for football managers to influence positively, perceptions of personal virtue played a vital role. Moreover, this stemmed from beliefs and expectations that carry the potential to stir a range of emotional responses as the performative act is executed.

On one level, as set out by Austin, this analysis seems reasonable, but on closer inspection what Harry suggested cannot only be viewed as a straightforward, formulaic consideration. Austin states felicity conditions cannot be considered in isolation, and like any performative act, what occurs is concerted. Although I examined Harry's story in terms of component parts, it is the sum of the performative that is important in terms of leadership influence. For Austin (1962, p. 52) *we must consider the total situation in which the utterance is used – the total speech act*. What this means is that, at another level, there is added complexity associated because of what can be entailed, implied or assumed. Austin also suggests performative acts involve scalar forces and intentions that influence how we do things and it is this very idea

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that can also be taken forward to further examine expert leadership influence. As Heidegger (1962) makes clear, how we reach understanding, is an interpretive dialectic from the whole to the parts, that includes personal understandings and vice versa. This means that it was important to ultimately consider stories of manager influence and Austin's felicity conditions for what they meant to the idea of expert leadership overall.

These latter points notwithstanding, if we consider Searl's (1980) idea of an essential condition, not only does the speaker have to show a sincere commitment to the performative, in that they have to clearly demonstrate intensions, but also be able to perform what they say. This line of thinking points to the idea that the best players make the best managers, that has been widely accepted in professional football despite meeting with evidence that is inconclusive (Bridgewater et al., 2011). This explains, at first glance, why it is easy to understand, as the TEL claims, why manager pedigree is thought to equate to condition B, authenticity (Goodall, 2012; Goodall et al., 2011; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Still, despite strong feeling amongst participants, what I found was equivocal and suggested this was only part of the answer. By way of an example, Paul, a former player who played for six clubs and thirteen managers, made reference to a well-known manager, who is commonly held up as an outlier. Despite not having what is considered a star-studded background, this particular manager achieved tremendous success in the British game:

*Paul: Well, it depends what you call play the game. So, when THIS MANAGER came everyone was laughing at him, came from the [NAME] League and it was a bit of a laugh and joke. Him and A TOP MANAGER hit it off and he gained respect from that. So, he was the first one who's never really played. And then the qualifications came in so you got a lot more people from different companies started comin' into football and, it didn't matter if you played, but to gain the respect of players you have to have played, because players will see through you later on. Players lose respect for somebody who has never played the game. Doesn't matter what they've won. When somebody's trying to tell you to do something that hasn't done it, they will see through you and that happens with footballers. But it only happens when things aren't goin' well.*

This points to the leadership challenge managers with unconventional backgrounds face when entering the profession. Paul inferred that perceptions could be overcome, and for him, this was achieved by securing *respect*. As a felicity condition, the manager's status was only part of the reckoning. Returning to Austin, who works out his thesis in reverse as he initially examines ways in which performative words and sentences are infelicitous. The *doctrine of*

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*infelicities* is what he considers when performatives go wrong (Austin, 1962, p. 14). Paul gave a good instance of infelicitous expert leadership that not only serve as reminder of the unique context in question, but highlighted a way of doing things that would be unimaginable in another arena:

*Paul: THE MANAGER, when he came in and he'd signed twelve players. That was the team he wanted and, he was left with myself, from the old manager. We played at home and he did a team meeting with just the twelve players he'd signed and, left the other six sat in the dressing room. The lads came out and they were just shaking their head and said he's mental. He was saying, "you're my players" to them, "I don't give a fuck about the others in there". And, we're sat thinking, well, I'm playing today but I'm not part of his team.*

*So, anyway, I came on and scored the goal and we won the game, and he was goin' round praising all the players but not me. And then, that week in training there was an argument and stuff and he got them same players in and give them the biggest bollocking ever saying, "I've brought you in, I'm paying for that car" etcetera, etcetera and his language was, every other word was effing this and that. And, the lads never started performing. When somebody calls you a cunt ten times a day, constantly shouting at you. I was watching players.*

*The morale in the dressing room was low confidence was ridiculously low and I was seeing a lad who had depression through all this, and it just didn't affect him anymore. The lads wouldn't argue, they would just accept it and get on with it. They had to get rid of him because literally the players just weren't working for him. Usually, a manager won't like a player or somebody's not doing for him, but it was, like, him against the whole team. He was never gonna win. He just lost it and even his coaches he took on, weren't happy with how he was managing things. And that was probably the lowest of low in my football career when I actually thought to myself, if he's still here I'd leave or retire. He was that bad...he was a bully.*

If we also consider that for speech acts to be felicitous, actions have to be completed in the requisite way (conditions B), and the speaker has the right intentions (condition C), this means it is important to recognise the assumption that words and sentences convey feelings and emotions that reference the external world. What this means for performative acts is that, for the receiver to know whether this is worth contemplating, managers must meet with all conditions outlined (Leech, 2016). With Austin's principles in view, we can examine Paul's story more closely, as the feeling of being marginalised from the onset by the incoming

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manager signalled an intent that, for Paul, violated the sincerity condition and acted as harbinger of the leadership come.

Austin sees this as an *abuse* of a speech condition, that according to his doctrine, is an *infraction* of expert leadership influence, which ultimately triggered Paul to consider retirement from the game. Continuing with this thesis, the manager's approach resulted in *misexecutions* that contained serious *flaws* and *hitches*, which is putting it mildly in linguistic terminology. The important point to make, however, concerns condition B. How football managers go about their work (in the eyes of followers), demonstrates a lot about who they are, which then calls into question conditions A (authority) and C (sincerity). And, put very simply, means there will be serious bumps along the way.

To bring some perspective, Rob, a senior club official, recalled happier times where expert leadership was felicitous and showed, in this instance, how performativity was positively realised (Austin, 1962):

*Rob: A MANAGER came in with loads of charisma. Met him a couple of times and said let's go for it. So, I said to them (the board), look, this is the guy who comes in smiling, who puts a sort of smile on people's faces, errr, and at this level I think he can make an impact. THE OLD MANAGER created a dower feel, so when a guy came in with some freshness, what it did was it added. He was very clever because he didn't remove all the good things, he just sprinkled a bit of charisma and a bit of energy on top of all the good stuff that was already there. Were able to go and they got on a run and the fans started comin' back.*

*THE MANAGER engaged with the community, he got out there. We talked about what THE CLUB stands for, what we're striving to do. And, two wins became four wins, became six wins. THE MANAGER handled it all very well and suddenly...the whole place just got alive, because, you know, THE CLUB'S a football place, and if you get it going then it can be exciting. Fans came back, within two months we had twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty-thousand people packing the stadium...we finished third. Yeah, it was different.*

For Rob, a Chief Executive responsible for the appointment of football managers, expert leadership influence was demonstrated by how personal qualities were applied in the requisite way. He highlighted the importance of the authenticity condition, which, as the reader will see later, is more concerned with a way of doing things in relation to others, as opposed to credentials or achievements (Trilling, 1971). Austin (1962, p. 14) says, *a good many other things have as a general rule to be right and to go right if we are to be said to have happily brought off our action.* In view of this, Rob's story showed the appropriateness

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or authority of the manager, who was able to put a *smile* on faces (A.2.), was done in way that displayed his true self to others (B.1. correctly). From the story, this was achieved by adding to what was already working well (B.2. completely), that in turn engaged and influenced people in a sincere way to positive effect (C.1). Viewed this way, what we have is a way of transcending acts of leadership, from a narrow focus on attributes, behaviours and actions, to a focus on the influencing process. This means for expert leadership to be realised concerns this idea of appropriateness of performative conditions that must be met in the right way to achieve desired influence.

In saying that, an important point emerged that not only emphasised manager credentials but brought to the fore the significance of the context in terms of what is handed down. Chapter six provided examples of traditions in professional football that reign supreme, such as the intense focus on winning, which are embedded within the culture (Gadamer, 1989). Further, Austin (1962) argues that an utterance must account for, not only the roles of participants, but the context as well. Factors such as history, culture, tradition, among other things, come into play, which places great emphasis on understanding the vagaries. This was explained by Mick, also a former player who worked incredibly for eighteen clubs and twenty-six managers:

*Mick: When I worked at A CLUB under THE MANAGER, there's a history that precedes a lot of clubs. So, there's an expectation of, they've been great, they should still be great. There's an expectation, definitely. There was an expectation for us to win games and it was only when promotion came, you know, that expectation then was realised. Even now, certain teams have a good history. I think that's interesting because success and how it's, how it's seen to the fans, sometimes can give managers baggage.*

*So, THE MANAGER going into THE CLUB got the best results for a long time, however, it was always going to be a matter of time because of his perceived style of football. So, there's a balance to well, how do you like your eggs in the end. You know, if I told you I'm going to serve you this, right, you can't tell me you're sick of that style. The style of play can be a big burden to football clubs and football managers. I think the fans at the end of the day will show their disapproval if they're not winning. They will accept it if they're winning, but they'll show their disapproval the minute the results...the fans won't accept it.*

This prompted me to revisit Gadamer (1989) who claims tradition is an abstraction that describes powerful forces and customs that are handed down and are difficult to escape. More specifically, in terms of expert leadership influence, there were beliefs and

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expectations, that have very little to do with leaders themselves, but were found to be significant. Neil, a Sporting Director who worked for seven clubs and with twelve managers, thought this was something to be understood and respected, as its origins had profound consequences:

*Neil: [NAME OF CLUB] always had strong traditions. There was always 'the CLUB way' they called it. And, it was a real, it was like win, lose or draw, they were the same. It treated everyone the same. You know, you weren't happy about losing, but you would still have a drink with the people after the game, you'd still talk about football. You'd still be respectful. I think AN OLD MANAGER brought it in. Yeah, one person did it. THE CLUB always had traditions. They won things, they won so many things and I think they won their dignity. THE CLUB always expect to win, we're [NAME OF CLUB]. That's what we do, you know. I think there's some places where there'll be a person that does it. I think it's not an organisation, it's down to the top and it might be a CEO, it might be the manager. I think the expectation is because of what they've done in the past.*

On the other hand, Lewis described these forces as something that you feel, and as Gadamer says, are historically given within a tradition, often without us questioning them:

*Lewis: The other night, when we walked into A CLUB you could feel how big a club it was. So, we, we were standing on the pitch and obviously we're in awe. There's a lot history and heritage to THE CLUB. [NAME] are a huge club.*

As discussed in chapter six, as a hermeneutic inquiry, the significance of context was something that I had to consider throughout. What can also be drawn from this, and as other stories showed, was that it was important that history and traditions are fully understood as part of the idea of expert leadership influence. The examples before brought this into the open and led to a new understanding that had to be examined closer in terms of what was sanctioned (Gadamer, 1989). On one hand Austin's argument suggest, for expert leadership to be felicitous, leaders had to understand that certain conditions must be met for their influence to be realised. On the other hand, these stories were examined further in terms of what is considered legitimate in the context of professional football. Bridgewater (2010) refers to football management as managing *in a fishbowl*, which means that there are plenty of interested parties who feed into to the tradition, such as owner, players, fans and the media, who in turn, exert pressures on the job of the manager. Neil above (and others) reminded us that the pressures for results and performances on the field, not only affect the

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job of the football manager but interested parties alike, and this appeared to be unconditional.

The above points notwithstanding, what should be noticeable by now is, as a linguistic pragmatic concept, the idea of felicity conditions shines new light on acts of leadership. First, it emphasises the importance, when constructing an image of expert leadership, of considering underlying reasons for success and failure and, as the examples above show, just how potent this can be. Second, how a cocktail of thoughts, feelings and expectations are associated with leadership influence and were important signifiers of perlocutionary effects (Austin, 1962). Finally, the importance of understanding important features of a particular context is equally powerful.

I bring this section to an end with a story from Danny, an extremely experienced ex-player, and an example of an incident that is not unfamiliar in professional football. It highlights, through unfiltered language, a raw, macho environment, but importantly, another infelicity of expert leadership that Austin regards an *ill of disrespect* (Austin, 1962, p. 18):

*Danny: THE MANAGER. I had im in an armlock when we were on tour. He was out of order, like, he never sort of took to me. When he came in, he always wanted to play someone else, which was fair enough. So, we went on tour to the Canaries. Other clubs were there. What happened was he was mixing with all them and blanking all us, but we weren't a bothered. And all the players we're all talking, and one comes to us and says, "what about your gaffa". He just says, "I'm no manager, they've offered me X-grand a year to manage muppets". "No chance" [Danny says]. So, we laugh, alreet.*

*THE MANAGER comes down, he says, "right, we're goin' for a drink and it's compulsory". So, we says, "fuck off we're a bunch of muppets". And, to be fair, we were! So, we all went for the drink. So, as the day goes on, we were wanting to go to the beach and he was clicking my heels saying, "Mackam, do you fancy yourself as a hardman"? He's like, "oh, you look like a good middleweight, me and you could have a good scrap n' that". So, I gets sat down and, the Chief Exec's there and the Chairman's there, right. So, we're sat there, he kept coming up and slapping me. He's goin' like that, "oh come on then". And, I say, "if he does that again I'm gonna smash im". So, he does it again. I jumps up, he says, "ya cunt". I says, "you're out of order".*

*So, we went out later that night and I was fucking steamin' and THE MANAGER comes in. He goes, "alright Mackam". I'm fuckin' sat like this, yeah, I'm alright. He says, do you want a drink? I says, "aye, yer alright". I says, "I'll have a Drambuie n' ice". So, I'm like that, Drambuie and ice, fucking grabbed him in an armlock and I goes, "you ya cunt". I says, "don't you ever do that to me in public". I've got him in a fucking armlock like that. We didn't fight for long. Then he tried to get out, I say, "aye, fuck im". I pushed im away. So, the next thing in morning, we were leavin' to go back. So, I walks down for breakfast, n'*



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*all the lads are sittin' and thinkin' like, no, you couldn't have. And, I'm saying, "no, no, no". There's all the lads all laughin' and I went, "I did!"*

Applying the final argument of Austin's thesis, what is going on here had to do with performative forces that, not only apply to speech acts, but can be witnessed in their equivalents. Generally, to get people to do things with words and sentences the performative has to be executed correctly, by a person who is in a position to do so, and with the right intentions (Austin, 1962). Importantly, there are forces and judgements associated that result in a perlocutionary effect that demonstrate felicity. Austin argues that it is these associated forces that influence actions. More specifically, the idea of the locutionary act is the uttering of a sentence in a way that gives it reference and relevance. Whereas the illocutionary act (e.g., a suggestion, advice or command) assume forces that influence actions and the perlocutionary effect is what comes about or is achieved (Austin, 1962). Simply put, there is an act (locutionary act), in this case expert leadership, that comes with intentions and motivations that results in forces (illocutionary force) that can be interpreted in terms of felicity (perlocutionary effect). And, it is these forces that ultimately determine the success of the performative. Furthermore, Austin is quick to remind us that any performative act is liable to a variety of infelicities (**Figure 4**) that are based on feelings, thoughts and intentions which were apparent in Danny's story.

It is also true to say that both Austin and Searl are essentially interested in the classification of speech acts to clear up some of the vagaries of the use of language. However, my interest was in the relevance and understanding of both the forces and intentions involved in performativity and the effect in terms of what this meant to expert leadership influence. Austin (1962) goes along with this and states that a performative is something that is experienced and can be interpreted for meaning. In this case, the manager's public disrespect for Danny and his teammates, calling them *muppets*, and subsequent taunts and bullying provoked a powerful reaction that rendered leadership infelicitous and ultimately led to confrontation.

As Leech (2016) reminds us, performatives are evaluated by the strength of illocutionary forces and acts such as warnings, advice, or orders come with forces that vary in strength. What is felicitous occurs only if the performative act is executed correctly and with

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appropriate intentions, for the desired outcome to be achieved. In this case it could be taken that Danny felt disrespected and undervalued when he said, *he never sort of took to me. When he came in, he always wanted to play someone else, which was fair enough.* And this perhaps influenced his understanding of the manager's intentions which resulted in feelings that built up with considerable force and ultimately resulted in the flashpoint.

Leech (2016) refutes this idea and argues that we have no right to assume these pragmatic distinctions exist in reality. He also suggests that we are quick to take worse case examples to advance an argument. I respond by saying, as Weber (1968) points out, judgement is ultimately determined prevailing societal standards with means that the idea is grounded in social experiences. Moreover, the hermeneutic interpretation was based on personal experience of the environment and suggest otherwise. Along with reasons already given, and also on common sense grounds, I further argue that it is not uncommon when individuals in any place of work feel ridiculed, undervalued, or even worse disrespected, for powerful emotions to build. And, if authority is challenge on such grounds, can also lead to catastrophic *misfires* (Austin, 1962). I interpreted this to mean precisely what Trilling (1971) speaks about, in the world of professional football, sincerity plays a compromising role in leadership influence, which can be powerful and emotive.

Heidegger proposes the idea of intentionality (Heidegger, 1971), which suggests, in this case, there was an absence of something (perceived respect) that signified the intentions of the manager which escalated to violence. More specially, for expert leadership to be felicitous, Danny's story is not only one of a failure of leadership, but highlighted the need for behaviours and actions to be in accord with intentions, which are sometimes explicit but more often not (Austin, 1962). Said simply, in terms of expert leader influence, behaviours and actions are only part of the performative act, and what is vital are underlying intentions, thoughts and motivations that cause a strength of feeling or associated forces which have consequences.

This then brings me to an important question that needs to be answered; what this means for a TEL and the broad idea of leaders and followers? One answer might be, if we view these stories collectively, expert leadership influence represents a commitment to the performative. This could be what Blackshaw (2017, p. 38) refers to as a *heavy commitment* because, as these stories showed, in the leader-follower relationship, followers come with cognitive schemas

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(Lord & Maher, 1993). This means that, although expert leaders are afforded an initial period where knowledge, experience and achievements in the game of football adopt authority, it takes conscious effort and time to develop that deep sense of trust to realise positive leadership influence.

Conversely, as stories of failed leadership show, it only takes a moment for the situation to change. In other words, what has been shown before demonstrates that the TEL has felicity conditions that must be met. And, the degree to which these are met, based on follower perceptions, produce powerful forces which render expert leadership felicitous or infelicitous. This is what maintains positive influence, as there is an acceptance of the expert on one level, but a strong commitment, on both sides, on another level, that makes the social process of expert leadership authentic and sincere (Trilling, 1971).

In sum, I argue that principles of the idea first proposed by J. L. Austin in the study of linguistic pragmatics were appropriate to examine expert leadership in this study. Felicity conditions refer to criteria that must be satisfied for performatives to achieve their purpose (Austin, 1962). Which means, in Gadamerian terms, working out the hermeneutic situation was tantamount to working out the fit between leaders and followers in context. However, this idea took it a step further and examined the appropriateness of this fit, as the stories above showed (Austin, 1963). Austin's argument is demonstrated in that condition A, not only emphasises the importance of understanding a context, but also implies a form of authority is acknowledged; condition B, suggests the performative act must also be authentically executed; and for condition C to be felicitous, associated thoughts, intentions and motivations must be perceived as sincere for the perlocutionary effect to be positive (Austin, 1963).

Therefore, what the reader came to see from stories of interactions with football managers can be understood in these terms. Felicity of leadership influence concerned the appropriateness of actions and behaviours but, importantly, was concomitant with thoughts, feelings and intentions of conscious minds. These produced powerful responses that denote leadership influence and establish whether the act was positively realised. Set in the context of professional football, I found the importance of condition A.1. (conventions within the context), cannot be overstated. This meant football managers had to understand important contextual features, such as values, identity and philosophies, that are handed down in long

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histories and traditions. And, in this high-performance environment, football managers had to respect tradition and what it embodied. Before bringing the chapter to an end, and with of the idea of the hermeneutic circle in mind, I now go on to discuss how each condition relates to the phenomenon as a whole (Gadamer, 1989).

### 7.3: Authority – A *Thin Line*

In Gadamerian thinking, now that the reader has gained insight into how expert leadership is thought to work in professional football, it is important to examine the key parts and analyse how they related to the phenomenon as a whole. As the narrative of the expert leadership influence unfolded, as a felicity condition, the data indicated authority was important. To that end, I drew on the work of Max Weber as the conceptual starting point for the analysis that follows. Weber sees authority as *forces of influence from how society is ordered and structured* (Weber, 1968, p. 75). His taxonomy of *traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic* authority represents ideal abstractions of how authority is thought to work. With Weber in mind, the authority of professional football managers was examined and began the following exchange with Ben, a current player who has worked for nine clubs, under sixteen managers to date:

*Interviewer: Did you call him [NAME]?*

*Ben: No, gaffa.*

*Interviewer: Always gaffa?*

*Ben: All the managers, all my managers I've known I still call them gaffa, yeah. The structure high up is still there. So, you've still got, erm, chairman you got directors as well. But, then the manager.*

What we see here can partly be explained by Weber's idea of traditional authority, as football managers are still typically referred to as the gaffa. Traditional authority assumes primacy of customs and traditions sustained out of respect for age old rituals that embody loyalty to a person. According to Kelly (2008), who adopts this view to analyse the role of the football manager, he argues, despite professionalisation and modernisation of the industry the role of the manager has resisted change in terms of authority. What this means is that authority, in this context, is thought to be sustained on tradition that allows football managers great independence and responsibility. As the reader can see, the dialogue, in part, supported this

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but what comes into question becomes much more about the degree of authority that was thought to exist in the relationship.

In addition, what Ben stated outlined a typical leadership structure of a football club, which is understood through the idea of rational-legal authority. For Weber, rational-legal authority is typically found in organisations with hierarchical structures and with managerial roles that are clearly defined, legitimised and, importantly, sustained by position, rules and or power. Traditional authority and rational-legal are also thought to bring about stability and order (Weber, 1968). Unpacking this further, what we have is something that is unwritten, and is what Ben suggested and something I also experienced. Football managers are rarely addressed by their given name, particularly in the case of players and the coaching staff. As Ben explained further, unwritten rules of power and dominations come into play:

*Ben: The first day he came in the assistant (coach) tried to call him by his first name. Like "[NAME] do you want to say anything"? And, he said "it's gaffa. My name's Gaffa!". Straight away, mate, as a player, you're just like, "oh fuck, I've got to respect this guy". Whether he's got the credentials or not, like, pfffttt, wow.*

As far as Weber's (1968) idea of charismatic authority goes, this revolves around the idea that people with exceptional qualities have the ability to inspire others. Charismatic authority also assumes commitment is secured through a strong bond between leader and followers in dynamic, change environments (Conger, 1993; Houghton, 2010; Kelly, 2008). As suggested by the current TEL (Goodall, 2012), Ryan highlighted how this presence was a powerful source of authority:

*Ryan (15): There was an aura about him. You come in and you don't see the manager. You see him every one-twice a week down the training ground. But the influence would be as soon as you're putting the goals out...and the manager's dog walks through the gates first and he follows in and everyone goes, the Gaffa's here. He had an aura about him where you knew he was there. That aura about respectfulness. Regardless of that, he's the manager of the football club and he picks the side. He knew every player; everyone had a nickname. Erm. He never forgot. So, you could do something four weeks prior, where you'd not played well in a game and, trust me, four weeks later you're getting the biggest bollocking ever in front of the first team. Dressing down...told you "play like that again I'll fuck you off back home quicker than you came". And then, within half an hour of that happening and walking off with your tail between your legs. He's making you walk his dog,*

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*coming back and giving you twenty-quid and it's forgotten about. Stuff like that. That's, that's aura.*

However, for Neil, the idea of aura, which was discussed in chapter five, secured charismatic authority. This concerned not only achievements and status within the game, but, more importantly, qualities of the person:

*Neil: I worked with A MANAGER for a little bit...what he brings to it is the gravitas of the person. I think as a human being really and what he's done in the game. What he's won, as a player, and what he's won as a manager. He's got an aura about him, where he would come in and, pffft. That's more than any other person. He is hard to get to know but once you get to know him, he doesn't forget you. I would say as a person, and the gravitas. HE is probably, after me dad, me most favourite person you could know. The actual, the aura of him was unbelievable. He was the best one, yeah. There was real respect, and respect for the position. Respect for the manager.*

For Conger (1993) power is a source of authority and is sustained by factors such expertise, position, reward, coercion and rules. What Weber considers traditional or rational-legal forms of authority I most certainly found in this context. In line with this, Harry accepted the position as part of well-established structures:

*Harry: If the MANAGER finds out you're talkin' about him like that you'll be out the door and that's the way it is. Do you know what I mean? And, do I think that's right? I suppose, yeah, because whether I agree with the managers, ultimately, he has to be the one that makes the call because he's the one gettin' paid to make decisions.*

Interestingly, the role of the football managers was often expressed metaphorically, and reflected by other, well-established hierarchical structures. The suggestion being, firstly, authority derives from long standing traditions, which command respect, but secondly, is also where status is earned:

*Rob: THE MANAGER he was brilliant like a general, like a sort of military general.*

*Jim: Your main guy has got to be a leader. He's gonna show the way and then the disciples follow. As players, we're disciples. You're the sergeant. You know your key people within that army have got to be on the same page as you and they've got to be working with you.*

In saying that, Paul reminded us of the reality and why it was unwise to challenge expert leadership in this arena:

*Paul: THIS MANAGER is very good. I just found the new era of coaches, as I was getting older, you just knew they weren't gonna be in the job very long because...they weren't strong enough. They weren't strong enough characters. Where when you took on THIS*

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*MANAGER there was only one winner. Loads of players tried it... out the door! I never pushed in that way. We had so much respect for 'im. But there was that line that we didn't cross.*

However, Kevin, a respected figure in the media, brought a sense of balance and let us know that the authority of the football manager was far from a dictatorship. The suggestion was some of the views expressed previously may be a thing of the past as players understand that they have agency (Gadamer, 1989) and exercise what is commonly known in the game, as 'player power' (Morrow & Howieson, 2014):

*Kevin: What I was gonna say is that in those days the manager ruled the roost because if he dropped you, you went from earning two-hundred and fifty pound a week to fifty quid a week, with no chance of earning fifty quid bonus for this, that and the other. So, if he didn't think you were good enough to play, you suffered. You had to stay on his good side. Whereas now you've got a guy on a standard wage of twenty, thirty grand a week. If the manager doesn't fancy you anymore, you just think, ah, fuck it. I'm not changing.*

Conger (1993) is critical of Weber's taxonomy and argues complex phenomena, such as expert leadership, cannot be reduced to narrow categories as other sources of change may well exist in organisations. Furthermore, Bryman (1992, p. 23) comments, *Weber's conceptualisations are highly diffuse, sometimes contradictory, and often more suggestive of what is interesting and important.* These thoughts probably explained why the idea of authority was expressed as a metaphoric 'thin line' between fear and respect. Neil highlighted the issue very well, as a tension between expectation and a perceived reality:

*Neil: There was real respect for the manager. I think respect because it was what was expected of you. With THE MANAGER, it was fear as well where you'd be shitting yourself. You'd be thinking, oh my god, THE MANAGER's there and you're in awe of HIM as well...you know it's a strange one, really strange.*

For Ben, authority of football managers was a contradiction of several factors at work:

*Ben: You're looking up to the manager like...they've done it. They're these people, that's where I wanna be. You're just kind of in awe of him. Erm, and how I saw the players responding to him. Like, they respected him. Erm, he kinda, you know, set discipline in the dressing room. It was just that respect thing. He was manager at THE CLUB, yeah...he was well known, great career. I just remember being scared of him, straight away...cos of how he looked, and he was. He had an aura about him. I think as a young kid coming into your first professional club, it's like, that's the manager...pew. And, you'd walk around, and he'd say good morning to you, and you'd say good morning to him, but you just didn't*

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*want to. A bit scared. So, at first, you're looking up to the manager. They've done it. They're these people, that's where I wanna be. You're just kind of in awe of him.*

With these thoughts in mind, what we had was a way of thinking about authority that helped identify how individuals rationalise and legitimise expert leadership influence. Power was seen to be a source of influence and the authority of football managers an important felicity condition. However, it was also important to understand what was considered legitimate authority in this particular context and to analyse the part it played. I found that authority in this environment was viewed as a form of consciousness that rested on important forces from within the tradition and initially legitimised by virtue of the position. In terms of expert leaders in this context, this was sustained by status, structural power and notions of fear and respect. That being said, it is important to point out that over the past thirty years professional football in Great Britain has undergone tremendous professionalisation and modernisations but still remains a male dominated environment (Smith & Stewart, 2010).

Kyle, a coach who worked for five clubs and nine managers, highlighted what we are dealing with here and the dominant discourse:

*Kyle: I think it was more alpha-male. I look at the managers that I worked under and they were that big characters, that bit brash. That big domineering type. Quick witted, strong banter, authoritarian. Slight ounce of bully in them. This is who I am, I'm very clear on who I am. Very typical male like figure. Errr, alpha-male.*

Whether Weber's (1968) heuristic classifications have truth value is contestable, but the point is, from these stories, the authority of football managers can be mostly explained by the ideas of traditional, rational-legal and charismatic authority. Participants spoke of manager authority in value-laden terms and a complex mix of forces that point to ideas of power and dominance (Uphoff, 1989). What this means is, in the same way acts of speech require both the circumstances and the person to be appropriate, in this study authority was understood as belonging to the person, which meant it came with its own prejudices (Gadamer, 1989). In other words, as a felicity condition of expert leadership, authority was, at times, viewed differently by participants. Yet, it can be argued that authority was essential to the influence that football managers have, no matter where it was thought to come from. More widely, the findings suggested it was understood as something that existed within, and was sustained by, histories and traditions of football management in Great Britain (Weber, 1968).



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I draw on Gadamer (1989, p. 280) next, who says, *that which has been sanctioned by tradition and custom has an authority of what has been handed down to us and not just what is clearly grounded always has power over our attitudes and behaviours*. Authority understood this way is viewed as something legitimate, found in tradition but, importantly, is something that shapes understanding of experiences. In Gadamerian terms, the authority of a football manager rides on a power relationship and an acceptance of this power. However, for Ben, this was far from the case and authority was something not to be questioned:

*Ben: It's weird with me personally because I got this thing where, he's the manager and I'm just gonna go with what he says. Yeah, I've learned it's cos being under so many managers, it's like, you don't wanna challenge them. You don't wanna fight them because you're never gonna win. He's the manager. He can say you're not playing.*

According to Gadamer (1989), hidden forces of power, domination and obedience ultimately play no part as in authority as humans have free agency. However, in view of what has been said before about the harsh realities of life in professional football, this may be jejune. Gadamer goes on to say this is something that needs to be worked out, as general rules do not apply. So, in line with this thinking, what was told as authority was interpreted with the context in mind (Gadamer, 1989). It might also be argued that Gadamer (1989) has a romanticist view, that essentially views authority as an acknowledgement of leader knowledge, judgement, experiences and insight, giving primacy to the belief that these attributes are, in some way, superior to our own. He states that although position, status or hierarchy are part of the thinking, it comes down to command and control. However, for Gadamer (1989), authority is not something that is ultimately bestowed by virtue of position, as suggested by Weber's conception. His understanding holds authority as something that is earned in the way it is legitimised and freely given on our part. Put very simply, position alone does not guarantee leader authority is accepted by others. Ben explained this way of thinking and how authority changes with time:

*Ben: You're watching how he goes about his meetings, how he does things, and over time you'll develop your own, like. Does he know what he's doing? Is this really working? Is he doing what he's saying he's doing? You look at how they operate. And then you get respect off that.*

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Mathieu et al. (2014) bring us back to my idea of a paradoxical mix and reminds us of a dark side to leadership. A reality where leaders are described as toxic, abusive, tyrannical and destructive. Crucially, I found authority, be it given or earned, was also misused as Ryan, who played for fourteen clubs and a total of twenty-seven managers, highlighted:

*Ryan: I think I let certain managers affect me, and not dealing with it. So, what I mean, what I mean by that is that I'm quite humble as a person, and I'm a team player. And, I probably let MANAGERS maybe pick on me or bully me a little bit and accepted it. I wish I was a little bit more... "no I'm a good player, don't speak to me like that. Show me some respect. If you wanna fight, let's fight", type of thing, then we'll sort it out that way. Even if you beat the crap out of me! If I'd done that when I was younger maybe I would have been better suited going forward. You either take it. You sink or you swim. Players couldn't take it. And, that's what ultimately got him the sack cos they couldn't cope with it. They couldn't deal with it. Football's a tough world and it's a tough environment. And, I can understand, in any other walk of life it's bullying.*

Harry also described destructive behaviours that involved an imbalance of power between players and managers and how this affected his feelings:

*Harry: You know, personal experiences of A MANAGER. Probably one of the most horrible person that I've ever come across. He was able to articulate himself well. He was able to manage up well and not goin' into too much detail, but he probably ruined THE CLUB. It took us about three, four seasons to come back. He was one of these where he would be able to manipulate...and then just leavin' when the time was right for him. But he left a horrible trail of destruction. Yeah, not sort of physically or tangibly, but psychologically with people, and you know. Mentally. Yeah, he was a horrible man. Bullying, things like that, to both staff and players.*

Weberian thinking maintains authority is what sanctions and sustains expert leadership and this needed to be carefully considered. From this, I argue, if the authority of a football manager is assumed to be something that must be met in order to influence commitment, then how these individuals are officially *authorised*, as Gadamer says, became an important question. My findings suggested authority was a combination of the individual, time and space, with divergent reasons as to its role in performativity.

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Unequivocally, it is accepted that professional football is a results driven industry and managers are hired and fired readily as a consequence (Flint et al., 2016). Putting that argument to one side, I found the role of the football manager was a privileged position where managers held tremendous power which afforded them a high degree of autonomy and control. This was something that was also found to exist within tradition, as football is an old establishment where structures and roles are firmly rooted (Weber, 1968). Against this backdrop, for expert leadership to be felicitous, football managers were authorised either by virtue of the position they hold or granted by those they lead. Rob discussed the importance and highlighted an instance where a manager ultimately failed to secure authority:

*Rob: It was a terribly short period and it saw him off. I think it's funny, isn't it, if there's a little chink or a little crack, or whatever it may be, then it enables people to start questioning. And, I think there are certain things that people will tolerate. I think what happened with THE MANAGER, rightly or wrongly, when the little cracks started appearing people didn't put it down to him making the wrong substitution, or the fact he was a bit unlucky with a with a player. It was down to bigger issues such as his ability to command authority. I'm not sure if I agree with that, but that was the conclusion that was reached.*

As Kelly and Waddington (2006b) conclude, the role the football manager has generally resisted change and football managers enjoy a high degree of authority, autonomy and control. Importantly, findings also suggested, as a felicity condition, managers ultimately needed to be *authorised* (Gadamer, 1989) for expert leadership to be sustained and be felicitous. This meant that, while there was an acceptance of the position, over time, a conscious decision was made whether to continue to follow. Viewed this way, authority is closer to Gadamer's idea, in that, accepting the undoubted the privilege and power of the position, for expert leadership to be truly felicitous I found football managers needed to be granted authority in conscious minds. As the stories above also showed, this was achieved in relation to other conditions as participants demonstrated that managers were authorised, a sign of trust that was based on how they approached their work and the sincerity of their judgements (Austin, 1962).

### **7.4: Authenticity and Sincerity – Two Sides of the Same Coin**

In this section I consider how football managers approached expert leadership in terms of the ideals of sincerity and authenticity. And, although they are said to be opposites (Trilling,

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1971), I argue, in terms of the TEL, they are ‘two sides of the same coin’ and for leadership influence are interdependent. Said another way, authenticity and sincerity need each other to fulfil the performative act of expert leadership. To interpret these two social virtues, I refer back to the work of Lionel Trilling, to show how this conceptual distinction worked as a felicity condition. From Austin’s thesis we know that there are several types of felicity (or appropriate) conditions that must be fulfilled for a performative to be successful. Here I consider the part that both sincerity and authenticity played.

### 7.4.1: Sincerity – *Thoughts, Feelings, Intentions*

To begin with, Trilling makes it clear that the two, sincerity and authenticity, have significant conceptual differences. Berger (1973) adds, the idea of authenticity emerges from the disintegration of sincerity which means these days, acts such as leadership are seldom considered in terms of sincerity. Trilling describes this change and says authenticity emerges as the opposite of sincerity. So, the idea of a dichotomy was particularly useful as I examined data to interpret, first, what participants meant by sincerity:

*Harry: When I was at A CLUB, I spent one year, got into the team, got dropped because the manager brought his pal in. I remember it well. We were playing A TEAM away on a Tuesday night and my uncle, who’s sadly passed away now, he came to watch me, and I got Man of the Match and he said, he said, “best player by a country mile”. He says, “you’ll definitely playin’ next week, on that performance” and I had a little joke about it. The Friday THE MANAGER brought in A NEW PLAYER who he had worked with at ANOTHER CLUB, I think. And, did team shape and I wasn’t playin’ and he said, “I haven’t made my decision on who’s playing or not yet”. I went, “come on I’m not daft!”.*

Establishing what is going on here, Harry interpreted the manager’s intentions through the situation as it presented itself. Team shape refers to tactical plans that are rehearsed with players who take the field on the next match day. In this case, Harry felt he had not been treated fairly (having played well in the previous game) only to be replaced by a new player without any prior explanation. Critically, what was in question were intentions that Harry believed were revealed, first, by the arrival of a new player, and second, through this specific work on the training ground.

Trilling argues that the concept of sincerity, applied metaphorically to people, is culturally determined. What this means is that talk about whether someone is sincere must be

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understood from within the particular context. In this case it could be argued that Harry's assessment of his performance and the situation were misguided, and he had no right to feel aggrieved given the harsh practicalities of the game. But theoretically, we are looking at intentions and hidden motives in situ rather than actions and judgement, as to whether someone is sincere. These were found in Harry's evaluative thoughts and feelings about the manager's motivations and intentions, "come on I'm not daft!" (Kennaway, 2015). On one level, given the peculiarities of this context, Harry maybe should have just come to terms with the situation. On another level, I interpreted Harry's perception as a violation of the sincerity condition in that, despite his efforts for the team, he surmised the manager had already intended to replace him. In saying that, Rob was quick to remind us of the pressures that managers and others work under:

*Rob: In the same way that the managers, you know, don't always stick to their principles after a game or two. The board as well, you know are impacted are hugely by results.*

I have little doubt that Harry understood this view but for him the manager acted in a way he cogitated to be insincere. Simply put, Harry's construction of expert leadership meant leaders have to be reliable in what they say, what they mean, and do what they mean. Trilling says, *in the enterprise of presenting the self or putting our self on the social stage, sincerity itself plays a curiously compromised part. Society requires of us that we present ourselves as being sincere, and the most efficacious way of satisfying this demand is to see to it that we really are sincere, that we actually are what we want our community to know we are. We play the role of being ourselves, we sincerely act the part of the sincere person, with the result that a judgment may be passed upon our sincerity that it is not authentic* (Trilling, 1970, p. 10-11). What this means, in terms of expert leadership, is as far as the ideal of sincerity goes, there is a notion of intentionality at work, in that social acts and judgement on morality determine whether leadership influence is positive or not (Heidegger, 1962). What Trilling has in mind is that sincerity plays a mediating role in this influence, which for Harry, roused feelings of favouritism, deceit and injustice.

Continuing with this school of thought, we might put it that the manager was not sincerely motivated, which rendered this act of expert leadership infelicitous (Kennaway, 2015). But,

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the point Trilling makes, when applied to people, the concept of sincerity is culturally determined and judgement is, therefore, mediated by contextual reasons (Trilling, 1971). Berger (1973) brings us back to the original meaning of the word sincere, it refers to objects as clean, sound or pure. By extension, when applied to people it means consistency of virtue, which much later developed to mean an absence of pretence. Importantly, Trilling argues sincerity is an essential condition of moral virtue. With this thinking in mind, Rob clarified the point when he discussed the qualities of one manager he appointed:

*Rob: Well, let's talk about his qualities first of all. A straight man. An honest man. I think they come through in any discussion. You can see how much he cares about the club, the people around im. Had been a manager for a dozen or more years. Prior to that, had seen the good and the bad of THE CLUB and felt almost some family responsibility to make it successful.*

The focus here was on the idea of whether people really are what they appear to be or whether this is seen, in some way, as an act or performance (Trilling, 1971). What Rob was talking about is the embodiment of sincerity as a moral ideal applied to leadership in this example (Berger, 1973). In this case, there was consistency in the manager's character that was displayed to others and which had widespread influence. Furthermore, both Paul and Lewis elaborated on the idea of absence of pretence:

*Paul: I just lost a lot of respect for him. He just wasn't honest. You can be honest and the best way to do that is, you don't have to say why you are not playing, as a manager. You can just say, I'm changing things round today, I'm goin' another way. What more do you need to know? And, that's what I call being honest. You sort of accept it. I'm happy when a manager tells me, "right, we're goin' to swap things round today. We're playin' these. I wanna go this way". And, that's where I just found THE MANAGER wasn't honest. He couldn't handle the players as time moved on. Eventually, he got the sack. I just found his man management skills poor and you knew long-term he would struggle with that.*

*Lewis: He wasn't a very honest manager. For me I can handle not playing if you think someone's doing better. Is better. If you say to me, "listen, this guy's more me. I've brought him in. I want to try him out". Fair enough, there's nothing I can do. But then, if that doesn't work then there should be an opportunity for me, do you know what I mean? To at least show that I can do better. If I don't, fair enough. So, the main thing as a manager is just to be honest, it helps you out so much knowing where you stand. Talking to you. Do you know what I mean? To get the best out of me he'd have to be honest. No matter what, just be honest with me. We're all big men.*

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A powerful theme to show itself was where participants regularly spoke about the idea of honesty (or lack of it) in football managers. What we see here is both Paul and Lewis understand the realities of the environment and clearly voice, for expert leadership to be felicitous, managers had to hold this important quality. Both spoke about how a straightforward, honest approach was required for leadership influence to be positive. Here honesty constituted sincerity which, for Arnovick (2006), is the most important condition as there is a psychological meeting of minds going on where intentions are met with beliefs and expectations. This, of course, is difficult to know and seems more of a value judgement as we know that felicity conditions of performative acts work together, which invariably makes it difficult to isolate any one condition at a given point.

However, the focus here is on whether there was correspondence between, what Austin (1962, p. 2) says are, *avowal and actual feelings*. For me this suggested in the act of expert leadership, the intentions of football managers must be perceived as genuine to truly meet expectations. Berger (1973) states that sincerity is personified by the idea of an *honest soul* that is linked to performance in public roles that are truly (or sincerely) performed. In short, the sincere football manager reveals this virtue as part of who they are.

Jordan, a coach who worked for two clubs and eight managers, reflected on a situation where he was forced out of a club, but also what he learned:

*Jordan: One thing I will say about the MANAGER and what I learned from it was he did tell me to my face these things. So, it wasn't done in an underhand way. And I think I learned a lot from that. And although I don't like the individuals that I'm referring to, I do respect them in terms of we're in a room, they told me to my face. They explained their beliefs and philosophies. They just didn't fit with mine. I admired that in the management team really and right through to the end it was always very honest and open.*

This story represents, for Trilling, the conceptual difficulty of understanding sincerity in not only showing it, but finding ways of knowing it, as is evident from a story Harry told:

*Harry: I signed two-years with them. Didn't quite work out you know because, A, I didn't really work hard enough and, B, I kinda' felt I got shafted a little bit by the second manager that came in. I was playin' and doin' well. I got a bad injury the start of the first season. Err, I got call up from a international debut for the senior team and then I came back buzzin', ready for the next challenge. And then got dropped at the start of the season and*

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*I was, pfft, you know, what's goin' on here? The manager brought some other players in, of course, and then I started in a game and I ruptured two ligaments in my ankle. I was oowt for three months. And because I was outta the picture, I felt that kinda put me to the back of the pile really. And, I suppose, you know, I was out for most of that first half of the season and then I got back into the team.*

*The assistant manager became the manager and I played, got back, did really well. Was tryin' to push for a contract and was told everythin's great, don't worry about it, we'll sort it out at the end of the season. And then, just dropped me, right at the end, which I didn't take lightly to be fair, you know. I'm always one of these people that like to think that, although I might not agree with everythin', if you're up front and honest about it I can always look back on it and say, well, I can deal with that. I just felt I got shafted a little bit cos honesty is one of our values. I suppose it's not about saying everything that's honest, but about havin' an honest attitude. I think there's a lotta people out there that for whatever reason or find it's easier to be dishonest than it is to be honest or get more out of bein' dishonest. You know, a massive statement here, but I think a lot of people are forced into bein' that way, insincere, because they're unsure.*

Of course, it is possible to have insincere intentions, but what Harry suggested, despite what is professional football, for expert leadership to be felicitous, sincerity was something fundamental (Searle, 1969). Thinking of Austin's typology, the manager adhered to most of the relevant rules, except the one concerning this essential psychological state.

Trilling also discusses the process of becoming sincere, meaning how it ought to be and the importance to a moral life. Essentially, what surrounds this ideal are conceptions of personal virtue and the bearing it has on an individual's relationship with himself and others. Importantly, judgement not only belongs and exists in individual minds, but is also set by moral standards in society (Trilling, 1971). As a felicity condition of expert leadership, I found the importance of sincerity irrefutable, but how it is understood was best explained through opposing experiences of leadership.

Ian told of a story that neatly summed up the strength of this particular condition:

*Ian: THE MANAGER was a honest guy. My experience with THE MANAGER was he was honest and up front with me. If I had a bad game, he would tell me I've had a bad game. He wouldn't just say, you've had a bad game, end of. He'd say you've had a bad game, this is where, in his opinion, I could've improved, but he was always open to he was always open to my side of it, what I thought as well. THE MANAGER was having a really bad time cos obviously the results were going the other way. After ten games I was told the bone I*



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*had fused had broken. So, my career is over, more or less. I'm looking for specialist who will try and do something with it. Nobody would touch me, so in the end I had to go back to London. THE MANAGER was under pressure with his job. I was told by the Doctor, "that's it, you're finished". "You can't play ever again". I'm coming into THE MANAGERS office, he knows what's been said already, he's under pressure with his job. His only concern was about me as a player and as a person. It's not about just being loyal to you as a player, it's being good to you as a person. He was a man who looked out for his players.*

As Searle (1969) points out, if an illocutionary act is to be complete and happy, a promise to the performative must be made. And this, as Blackshaw (2017) suggests, first involves football managers being officially authorised by the collective. Second, as Ian implied, followers must believe in the sincerity of expert leaders who are prepared to, when required, share knowledge and expertise as part of who they are. What Ian's story also demonstrated follows Trilling's literary examination of sincerity and assumed, not only an absence of deceit, but honesty, loyalty and never wavering in constancy as key features (Trilling, 1971). At an unimaginable point in his career, and also a difficult time for his manager, Ian believed the manager's commitment would remain unaltered. Therefore, in terms of expert leadership, what I take from this is that, for leadership influence to be affirmative, is precisely what Searl (1980) classes as an essential condition. The promise to the performative must be pure.

I found, as a felicity condition of expert leadership, followers needed to sincerely believe that personal motivations and intentions of football managers were genuine for the leadership influence to be received positively. Searl (1980) classifies this as an essential condition, which translates to mean, not only sincerely committing to leadership action, but crucially, that expert leaders embody intentions and they clearly intend to act with sincerity. For Trilling, sincerity as a social value is something that is achieved in relation to others, and stories of expert leadership showed its importance and ways in which it was realised. I found a strength of feeling that I interpreted to mean that, expert leadership as Goodall (2012) describes aside, for leadership influence to be felicitous football managers needed to act above board with the right intentions. In saying that, it could be argued that you never can truly know what something is like until you experience it. However, as someone with experience within this

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setting, I believe Trilling's (1971) idea of sincerity is something significant to leadership influence that cannot be overlooked.

### 7.4.2: Authenticity – *To Thy Own Self Be True*

Turning the attention to the second of these ideals, while Trilling makes it clear that sincerity and authenticity are conceptually opposing poles of self, authenticity has usurped sincerity in modern thinking. For Guignon (2004), the well-known line by Polonius in Shakespeare's play Hamlet is the impetus for conceptualisation of authenticity as we know it today. As a reminder Polonius says:

*This above all: to thine own self be true.  
And it doth follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man*  
Shakespeare (1601 Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 3)

The final line is thought to be meaningful as it implies how authenticity is achieved. For Trilling, being true to oneself is only undertaken in order to be true to others. What this means is that being authentic is not the personal pursuit that most associate it with but part of something else. In this sense, authenticity is understood as a social virtue as the issue at stake is not authenticity in itself, but how it is achieved through others (Guignon, 2004; Trilling, 1971). For this study, this meant it was important to examine authenticity as social interaction and then to consider the felicity of how expert leadership was acted out. As Guignon (2004) states, an authentic way of doing things is the content of a commitment to others when intentions are acted out. Continuing along with this, Kyle discussed his view of an authentic way of doing things in professional football and how it had changed over time:

*Kyle: I think you've got to be able to relate to the player. Cause if you can't then that player's goin' to be dismissing yer at times. I think today's generation players don't start with respect. I think this generation of whether you call it the two-thousands or the millennials. I think they've been taught right the way though to go and question, to go and challenge. And, I don't see that as a negative. I think whereas me and you in our generation would have been...whatever you're telling me I'm gonna take for granted, I'm gonna take for gospel. And then, then later down the line, probably, not for two years or three years, you're actually gonna go find out for yourself whether it's good or it's bad. I think this millennium generation comes from the point of, I'm gonna challenge em. I'm gonna see*

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*what you really know and then what they do. I think is how they gauge it. This is my level of understanding, I'm gonna challenge you to my level of understanding and then, if you're up to that, then I'll let you in. I sincerely think that that's the case.*

Luthans and Avolio (2003) suggest that individuals who are open and true to themselves are the types of leaders that can restore faith in leadership. In terms of a TEL and management in professional football, this implies that perceptions of personal virtue are thought to be important to leadership influence, although the argument is not entirely useful as it returns us to the problematic of what is this true self. What Kyle suggested was that managers had to prove, through how they go about their work, that they were authentic, and this had to be put in full view. This follows Guignon's (2004) idea of authenticity and the content of a commitment to others in how they operate. It also emphasised the point that authenticity is a social, rather than personal virtue that is verified by others (Avolio & Reichard, 2008).

Typically, the starting point to understanding authenticity is through its opposite, inauthenticity (Guignon, 2004). Kevin's story does that and showed how a football manager's conduct quickly changed perceptions:

*Kevin: THE MANAGER came in and then we've heard, subsequently, that none of the players were having him. That story about them in [A COUNTRY] ...four of the players they'd gone out. They'd gone on for a training camp and it was THE MANAGER'S idea that were gonna use a free weekend, cos the snows, we're gonna work hard at bonding and get them fit. And then, it all backfired because these four players (committed a crime). The story goes that night, when it all kicked off and they were trying to get hold of the manager he was already out on the town on the pull! Cos that's what he was like. So, if you're one of those players you're thinking, "yeah, we were in the wrong and they've been cained for it afterwards". And, you think, "well, the manager was doing this that and the other. That's no better than what we were doing and, he's not defended us for what we did". "He's kind of hung us out to dry". They weren't having it.*

If, as Guignon (2004) suggests, authenticity calls for us to express this *real self* and be what we are in everyday life situations, then we can understand the breakdown in this instance. The idea of the manager engaging in debauched behaviour while his players were fined for their conduct was taken to be hypocritical by the group. Viewed this way, the infelicity violated leadership influence according to Austin's doctrine of infelicities (**Figure 4**). The assumption being that only by displaying this authentic self can we achieve commitment from

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others was the issue at hand (Guignon, 2004). Kevin's story showed, first, where authority was lost, and second, *misfire* and *hitches* as outlined in Austin's doctrine. Perceptions of their own manager brought into question his authority and was a violation of the authenticity condition (B.1).

As said before, contained in the etymology of the word authentic are suggestions of some dark and destructive forces which, for Trilling, means authenticity signifies, *disorder, violence and unreason*, which is necessary to remind us of its being in the social world (Trilling, 1971, p. 11). He speaks about authenticity in this way to remind us that violence, confrontation and ruthlessness are needed for, what he calls, the *creative spirit* to succeed. Yet, it also might explain why the backstory of expert leadership influence brought to light some dark issues. The reader has been reminded of the realities of the football environment throughout and what we have here is a story of how an issue was acted out.

Returning to Austin's felicity conditions, Ben's story highlighted that the problems associated with taking each condition in isolation:

*Ben: He came to the manager job and I was one of his first signings. So, straight away that natural respect, he's the manager, he's brought me to a club. I'm just gonna work as hard as I can for him. But then it didn't help. It didn't help me because I played for managers before who have seen it, done it, experienced, and I kinda know what it takes. How an environment has to be. But, with THE MANAGER it was like, I could see what he was trying to do, and I bought into what he was trying to do. But there were signs that he was still new to it and they would come out in certain ways. I wouldn't play on those things, cos, I know certain players that will just like, any sign of weakness...they're in. They're going for the kill. I think it's just my mindset of "look...he's just normal, he's a guy trying to do his job". And, I had this respect for him in a different way cos it can't be easy. But then, on the football aspect, some things, I was like, "that's not it" and, I tried to say it in the best way I could without, you know, trying to overstep the mark with him as the manager. I personally feel that certain things should be done a certain way. Erm. I tried to offer my opinion in the best way I could. I think with him it was very theory-based. Whereas, I look, practically. This is what we're doing, this is how you do it out on the training pitch, we're doing it. But, with THE MANAGER it was more like we're doing certain drills, trying to replicate what it would be. But, in a game of football you can't replicate it.*

In this instance we see that authority was granted, as there was a respect for the fact that Ben was the manager's first signing and he was prepared to work hard for him. The sincerity

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condition also appeared to be fulfilled, as he acknowledged the manager's efforts and the challenging circumstances that come with football management. The leadership problem appeared to be, what Austin deems *misexecution*, in how the manager's plans were carried out. As much as Ben wanted this manager to succeed, in terms of the authenticity condition, the players had other ideas on how things needed to be done and his methods fell short of expectations. More generally, what it showed is the importance of looking at both felicitous and infelicitous examples and their effects, to fully understand each condition at work as there are degrees of *unhappiness* in performativity (Austin, 1962).

Finally, this story from Ian demonstrated how Austin's theoretical framework worked in this context:

*Ian: THE MANAGER was quite interesting really, because when I came back from my injury, I played fifteen games after injury and he dropped me. That was okay, I understood that. Wasn't happy, but I understood it because A PLAYER had played all the season. In my opinion, he wanted it a certain way. He's got his way of playing, he's got his belief, he knows his players, he does his own work on personalities and characters. He would come into training with an intensity, wanting to improve. A togetherness. We could rely on each other, we trusted each other completely because of the closeness of the team and this is what THE MANAGER really tried to encourage.*

Austin's idea of the happiness or unhappiness of felicity conditions is complex as, although things can go wrong, what is important is if conditions are met in the requisite way. Although Ian was far from happy about being left out of the team, what we see here is authority granted in respect for the manager's decision, met by acknowledgement of his way of doing things, on the basis of Ian putting the team first. The issue becomes much more complex as what we can also see is there was a commitment to the performative that is culturally determined but this where leadership influence resides (Trilling, 1971). This means, as Gadamer says, it is something that is worked out as truth within tradition and, therefore, the appearance of a TEL, we can say, rests in the reality of these experiences.

Ian's story showed on one hand, personal authenticity but also an authentic way of doing things. On the other hand, and very importantly, authenticity as a social virtue, that was achieved with others through sincerity (Guignon, 2004; Trilling, 1971). Although Arnovick

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(2006) states that sincerity is the most important condition, I would argue that, authenticity for football managers is a way of going about things and is of equally importance. I found this was crucial to expert leadership influence when met with sincerity. Ian's suggestion of *togetherness and trust* goes along with Austin's idea of the perlocutionary effect, and what we observed in the story is this social commitment of the collective, as Trilling puts it. It also highlighted that as felicity conditions, authenticity and sincerity are not only conceptually related, but were shown, to some degree, to be interdependent (Guignon, 2004; Trilling, 1971).

### 7.5: Summary

Arguably football is a sport that is unlike any other and the narrative of managers in professional football suggested just that. From what was found, I argue that what participants wanted from football managers in terms of leadership, involved much more than a set of knowledge, skills and long experience, as suggested by the TEL as it stands (Goodall, 2012; Goodall et al., 2011; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015). Applying Austin's theoretical lens, what this chapter established is that football managers, who are essentially expert leaders, were evaluated by a set of conditions they needed to meet for their leadership influence to be perceived as felicitous. Austin's thesis is not a new idea but there is something profound to be embraced as what it showed is the focus of what we deem to be leadership, in this case, may need to be placed elsewhere. Put simply, expert leaders are human beings after all, and I found central to leadership influence, is what makes us human.

From what has been discussed beforehand, there is little doubt that the role of a football manager is a powerful one that affords them great autonomy (Kelly & Waddington, 2006b). And, in line with the ideas of Weber and Gadamer, managers most certainly command authority by virtue of the position they hold (Weber, 1964). However, I also found that these leaders were symbolic representations of conditioned minds (Lord & Maher, 1993) and needed to be authorised by those they interacted with for expert leadership influence to be achieved (Gadamer, 1989). What is more, and significantly, the moral values of authenticity and sincerity were found to be important to performativity and the ideas closely related, codependent and worked together as leadership influence.

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Therefore, to illustrate this significant contribution to knowledge, I return to the current TEL as it stands (**Figure 11**). The model proposes an expert leadership effect is a function of; inherent knowledge (IK) and a product of technical knowledge and achievements in the core business; industry experience (IE), acquired from significant time spent in the industry; and leadership capabilities (LC), that are a combination of innate ability and leadership skills (Goodall, 2012). Taken together, this function is thought to improve organisational outcomes. I argue that what I found in chapter five aligns to the idea of leadership capabilities (LC) and provided empirical evidence that described general features of the leadership of football managers.

However, to fulfil the main aim of theory development my thesis took this a step further. **Figure 12** represents conceptual ideas that show, when the problematic of performance outcomes is removed, how and why expert leaders are able to influence in the requisite way. As a general principle, I demonstrated for football managers to have positive influence leaders had to; first, meet with what is found in locally mediated attitudes, beliefs and expectations of those they interact with (chapter five); second, understand important features that are rooted in social, cultural, history and traditions (chapter six); third, for expert leadership influence to be felicitous, football managers needed to meet, in the requisite way, conditions of authority, and be authorised beyond the position they hold; which is granted by virtue of authenticity, in the way they operated in relation to others; and sincerity, with thoughts, intentions and motivations that embody the virtue.

Finally, returning to Alvesson (2019), who argues this line of thinking represents, what he calls *Disneyland ideology*, that celebrate moral elements and the idea that good people are crucial to successful or effective leadership. I counter, as throughout I have demonstrated that the virtues shown in **Figure 12** are grounded in lived reality and are locally mitigated by follower perceptions and important features of the context. From the analysis in this chapter, it becomes clear that viewing expert leadership in this way brings to the fore the need to examine the nexus of attitudes, beliefs and expectations of followers, context and higher order values displayed by leaders. It also highlighted the need to examine the idea of essential conditions of leadership influence, when leadership is considered appropriate, and reasons for misfires (Austin, 1962).

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The TEL is a nascent body of knowledge in business literature that posits experts in their field make better leaders. The central argument is that organisations perform better when they are led by individuals who have a deep understanding of the core business (Goodall, 2012). However, this chapter conceptualised the idea differently and explained why the TEL in professional football is tantamount to expert leadership influence and, further, uncovered the underlying leadership process. To do this, stories about British football managers were evaluated using J. L Austin's theoretical ideas. The result is what expert leadership influence in professional football is all about; a social relationship that takes place in an uncompromising environment that is laden with long histories and traditions. Nonetheless, when leadership was considered in terms of virtuous acts and worked out in Gadamer's hermeneutic tradition as a form of truth, the result is a way of understanding the influence that football managers have on people. Now that this has been undertaken, the reader is in a position to reimagine expert leadership, and maybe leadership in general, through this way of theorising and will also be able to reflect on conclusions that will now be drawn.



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Figure 11: Current Theory of Expert Leadership

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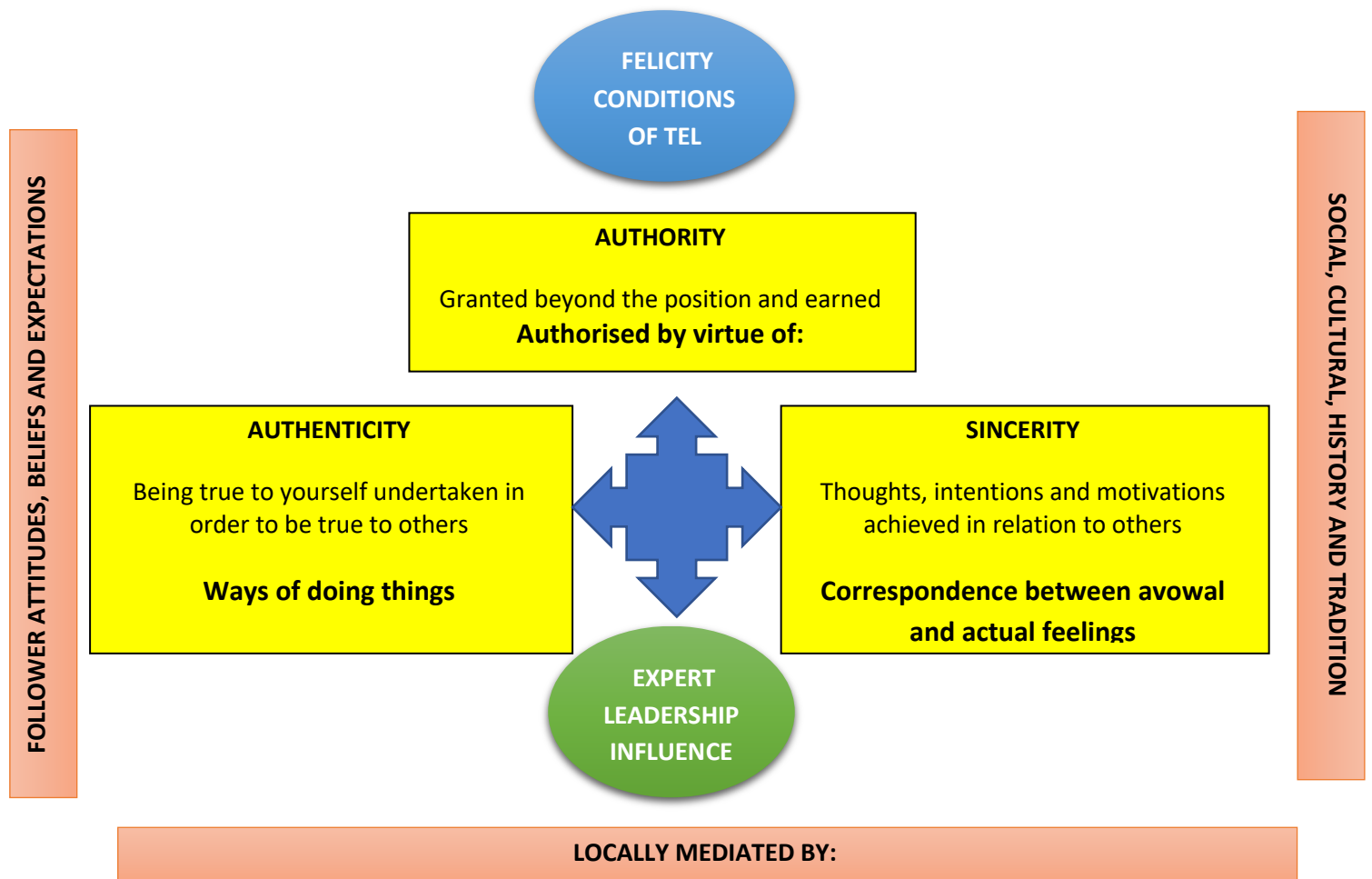


Figure 12: Representations of a TEL Influence in Professional Football

## Chapter 8: Conclusion

This chapter draws the thesis to a close, bringing together what has been achieved throughout to show how the study makes its contribution to knowledge. The aim was theory development and more specifically to advance what is currently known about the theory of expert leadership (TEL). In support of this a number of objectives were set out and each one contributed to realising this main aspiration. These key objectives were to; provide empirical description of British football managers; interpret lived experiences with a hermeneutic framework; explore the TEL by way of a linguistic pragmatic framework; and re-conceptualise the theory.

By now the reader will be well aware of the growing body of knowledge of a TEL that posits experts in their field make better leaders. The idea rests on the main argument that organisations perform better when they are led by individuals who have expert knowledge and a deep understanding of the core business (Goodall, 2012). In other words, leaders who are considered experts are associated with better organisational outcomes over generalists. Research is confined to a small but emergent number of studies in a range of settings that, in the main, focus wholly on positive correlations between the idea of expert leaders and impact on performance outcomes (Artz et al., 2017; Goodall, 2009, 2009a, 2009b, 2012, 2015; Goodall et al., 2015; Goodall et al., 2011; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015; Goodall & Stoller, 2017).

Furthermore, studies suggest that expert leaders impact on organisational outcomes because they are credible figureheads who act as standard bearers, as they are perceived as being able to uphold standards they promote. Put simply, expert leaders gain credibility and respect because they have *walked the talk* and this, among other suggestions, are associated with improved performance outcomes. Whilst these findings certainly make for an interesting debate, suggestions for a TEL focus on descriptive features of leadership and normative claims that lack conceptual support. Research also raises methodological concerns that are difficult to overlook and pose more questions than they answer. In response, my thesis took a different approach. The argument I developed throughout was, those at the top of organisations rely on influence, and this is tied to lived experiences that shape actions and behaviours that produce meaning. Notably, this is one of the main achievements of the

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research and links to my contribution to knowledge, as the conceptual approach I took is the first of its kind in this stream of research.

Moreover, I turned to linguistic pragmatics and in particular J. L. Austin's (1962) idea of felicity conditions for a conceptual framework to facilitate theory building. The idea assumes some words and sentences act as performatives and how they work were a way of understanding expert leadership influence. The notion was adopted as a philosophical way of knowing to investigate truths concerned with the theory in question. Essential conditions of the TEL were then examined with Gadamer's (1989) interpretivist approach in mind and this revealed, more generally, for leadership influence to be felicitous football managers were considered authority figures (Weber, 1968) who are authentic and sincere (Trilling, 1971).

The remainder of the chapter summaries the two main concerns found in literature, how they were addressed and what I concluded. My study approached theory development in a nuanced way so this final chapter also discusses methodological implications in terms of advantages, limitations and, importantly, possibilities for future research. However, before this is done, I begin with a summary of the main findings and conclusions drawn for their original contribution to knowledge and implications to the broader field. Finally, I bring things to a close with personal reflection on the knowledge producing process, discuss assumptions that changed and my overall journey.

### **8.1: Towards an understanding of the TEL**

The three previous chapters each responded to the goals outlined above that framed the inquiry from the outset. Each chapter contributed to narrative that told a story of the British football manager and led to theoretical understanding of their leadership influence (Josselson, 2011c). Chapter five fulfilled the first of the objectives that were repeated at the beginning of chapter and began to confront conceptual problems mentioned. It also brought the role of the football manager to life to give the reader an appreciation of the lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. The description told us many things in terms of; who they are; primary skills; what people value about them; and emotions provoked that expressed the outward face of leadership. Themes developed described characteristics and attributes of leaders who are thought to be among the best in the business. And, as the

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story unfolded, an image of the British football manager emerged that showed, amongst other things, they are strong, passionate and charismatic public figures, who have exceptional football knowledge, inspire and find effective ways to get the best out of people.

First, chapter five expressed a way of being in the world that I argued was necessary before further analysis could take place (Heidegger, 1962). To put it simply, to understand something conceptually it is useful to see and feel it, to avoid the risk of getting stuck in old modes of knowing (Flanigan, 2017). Second, key features and qualities of football managers were described, at a level of generality, which was the first of my objectives, but this still led to questions of how they were able to influence people in the right way. And to take Alvesson's (2019) point seriously, when he argues this approach artificially integrates selected qualities and behaviours to suggest a particular leadership style. This then raised the question as to what further use I could put to the understanding. Although, Flanigan (2017) suggests that a focus on descriptive features of social phenomenon has value as they provide insight that answers questions such as, how football managers act in certain situations and how they go about leading. It was difficult to draw firm conclusions insofar as the chapter only paints a picture of a world as it is but lacks conceptual underpinning. So, as this thesis is about theory building, what I was trying to ultimately understand could not be settled by this alone (Mumford, 2012).

Further analysis in chapter six was also guided by key philosophical concepts of Gadamer's hermeneutics to offer a reflexive account as I looked to get under the skin of lived experiences. The task was approached with description of the football manager front of mind and was supported by the idea of a fusion of horizons, where a third meaning is said to emerge as truth found in context. This meant my experiences were included with individual stories, to provide interpretation of the phenomenon in question, which placed me squarely in the study. The importance of this line of thinking was that it offered a conceptual structure for higher order understanding, and my experiences in professional football were thought to bring great benefit, in that it allowed me to understand (as far as possible) inside stories. This meant I framed what was told in terms of the vagaries of the context and I argue, a second main achievement, was this gave credibility, authenticity and originality to the study, in a way

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most could not. I believe that it would be very difficult to conduct a study of this nature without deep understanding of the environment. So, in this reflexive way, I analysed experiences together with my pre-understandings and I found, at times, professional football operates in its own hyperreality that is sometimes difficult to understand in societal terms. On one hand, the dominant discourse was that football managers were very salient people, mainly because of the position they hold, the characters they are, the methods they employ and the impact they are perceived to have on organisations overall (Grint et al., 2017). On the other hand, the narrative suggested that they are equally very influential leaders.

Gadamerian thinking allowed me to fulfil my second objective and when the sum of the parts met the whole, I was convinced there was much to learn from these often celebrated, high profile, figureheads (Elberse, 2013). Yet, what can be understood is deeply embedded in history and traditions of a game that can perpetuate social and systemic problems (Potrac et al., 2007). I concluded that football managers can have tremendous impacts on an organisation but equally are extremely influential on people around them, which can be moving and long-lasting.

### **8.2: Contributions to Knowledge**

It is accurate to say the influence of those who manage in professional football, whilst it can bring celebrated success, was far from always positive and stories uncovered some very toxic behaviours that had the potential to ruin lives. I understand that football works pragmatically on performance outcomes and can be a harsh, unforgiving reality and any theoretical explanation had to bear this in mind. Still, there was a dark side to expert leadership, which was raised on a number of occasions and that I had to face and was, without doubt, troubling (Mathieu et al., 2014; Milosevic et al., 2019). The dialectic between what was told and my own experiences highlighted complex issues that have deep historical roots and led to a range of emotions that point to mistreatment. This led to my first contribution to knowledge in that chapter six, not only highlighted what was found in a unique, historical social context but also introduced another side of complex relations to the conversation (Ashman & Lawler, 2008). This led me to argue that there is an unpleasant truth that needs to be accepted. In any study involving people who have great authority and hold powerful positions, there is reality that

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needs to be told, that cannot be truthfully told, without acknowledging a dark side undeniably exists.

Throughout I continued to be surprised by the importance placed on human qualities of personal relationships in what can be a harsh world. More generally, there was a distinct lack of emphasis given to technical football matters, with participants typically referring to the person, before anything football specific. On one hand, this stands to reason as it is evident that people rely on each other to succeed in high-performance environments. On the other hand, I concluded that the cornerstone of leadership influence is founded on humanity. I also found that participants spoke in binary ways and described virtues they valued or were possibly in short supply, in what I deemed a paradoxical mix of properties (Guignon, 2004).

Perhaps this had something to do with the fact that football managers are all qualified to a certain level and football ability was taken as a given. Or maybe it pointed to the quality of personal relationships which were integral to interactions. Taken together, I came to realise that what I was dealing with were the natural sensitivities of human beings. This is not to suggest that football matters were not considered important or valued, but despite intense interest in the study of leadership and an abundance of theories, what was considered important was a strength of character and humanity that are neutralised in leadership studies in general (Rumsey, 2013; Sadler, 2003). Therefore, I concluded that descriptive integration of expert knowledge, experience and achievement, that are a feature of current theory (Goodall & Pogrebna, 2015), should take their place (for the moment), with the idea of leadership influence at the forefront.

Participants overwhelmingly expressed this idea and demanded much more from football managers than a set of skills, knowledge and long experience. Applying Austin's (1962) theoretical lens, my thesis was able to make its noteworthy contribution that showed that football managers, who are assumed to be expert leaders, were evaluated by a set of conditions for their leadership influence to be considered appropriate. This suggested that the focus of what we deem leadership may need to be placed elsewhere as higher order virtues were found to be central to expert leadership influence and what makes it possible.

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Therefore, from the above points, my major contribution to original knowledge is the thesis that I have maintained throughout. Chapter seven, not only explained why the TEL in professional football was tantamount to expert leadership influence, but also showed how it was realised. The analysis showed expert leadership influence in professional football takes place in an uncompromising environment that is laden with long histories and traditions, but is nonetheless, what makes the social relationship possible. The chapter brought it all together and showed how this satisfied my third objective as I explained how the TEL, as a performative act, can be evaluated at an abstract level, by essential conditions that must be met for leadership influence to be felicitous. At this point I hoped the reader appreciated how this study contributes to the existing body of knowledge. And, that I showed how expert leadership can be understood, when framed by Austin's theoretical prism, as a set of conditions that were identified as the underlying influencing process.

Unpacking each of these conditions, I concluded that there is little doubt that the role of a football manager is a powerful one that has changed very little over the ages and affords managers great independence (Kelly & Waddington, 2006b). This was explained by means of Weber's (1968) and Gadamer's (1989) ideas of power, dominance and legitimacy. What we had was a way of thinking about authority that helped identify how individuals rationalise and legitimise expert leadership influence. I also found that football managers are symbolic representations of conditioned minds (Lord & Maher, 1993) and needed to be trusted as leaders in terms of how they approach their work and their judgements. What this meant was, despite considerable power that comes with the role, there was a thin line between the juxtaposition of authority granted and earned. Expert leaders ultimately had to be authorised by people who, over time, made a conscious decision whether or not they continued to follow (Gadamer, 1989). Said very simply, the position of football manager alone or any notions of expertise did not guarantee authority was recognised in order to influence.

Conceptual development continued by way of examination of the moral virtues of authenticity and sincerity. From Austin's thesis we know that there are several felicity conditions that must be fulfilled for a performative act to be successful and I found the two ideas were closely related, co-dependent and worked together as leadership influence.



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Although they are said to be opposites (Trilling, 1971), and to realise my final objective (to re-conceptualise the TEL), I concluded, in terms of the leadership of football managers, they were dependent. What this meant was, when applied metaphorically to people, authenticity and sincerity needed each other in terms of a performative mode of being (Blackshaw, 2017). I also found they were culturally determined which meant when we talk about whether someone is sincere this has to be understood contextually and societally.

Intentions and hidden motives in context, rather than actions and behaviours, were found to be situated in evaluative thoughts and feelings about motivations and intentions of football managers (Kennaway, 2015). Very importantly, what I concluded is that in the social construction of football managers, this meant an absence of pretence in what they said, did, and meant (Trilling, 1971). As a felicity condition, I found the importance of the sincerity indisputable but, how it was understood was explained in dual experiences of leadership influence, as there were always two sides to the narrative. This showed that in the act of expert leadership, intentions and motivations of football managers had to, as far as possible, be perceived as genuine and honest to have requisite influence. Put another way, for expert leadership to be felicitous, football managers had to embody the ideal as participants looked for consistency of character in the way it was displayed to others (Berger, 1973).

Turning attention to the second of these ideals, Trilling (1971) makes it clear that being authentic is not the personal pursuit that most people associate it with, but part of something else. In this study, I found being true to oneself was only important when undertaken in order to be true to others. Consequently, authenticity was assumed to be a social rather than personal virtue. What was at stake was not authenticity itself, but how it was achieved by virtue of sincerity. This meant that authenticity followed in line with Guignon's (2004) idea of an authentic way of doing things, and meant that it was the content of a commitment to others that was important. Taking this forward, the narrative suggested that football managers had to prove they were authentic and this had to be put in full view.

Paradoxically, authenticity was typically understood through its opposite, inauthenticity, which called for expert leaders to express their real self in everyday life situations (Guignon, 2004). Only by displaying this authentic self could commitment and leadership influence be

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realised. Importantly, I found the leadership of football managers was once again understood as opposing ideas, as either the heroic leader that was the source of influence and inspiration (Kelly & Waddington, 2006b), or the villain who was the centre of some dark issues that came to light. This led me to I conclude that authenticity of the football manager was a way of doing things and this was crucial to influence as it was perceived as a social commitment to the collective (Trilling, 1971).

To satisfy my main aim I proposed a new framework that conceptually represents what has been said beforehand and shows how a TEL was thought to work in professional football (**Figure 12**). Overall, it specifies concepts that can be applied to lived experiences to explain how football managers influenced people with whom they interact. Therefore, my major contribution to new knowledge is the thesis I developed. For expert leadership influence to be felicitous football managers needed to meet, in the requisite way, conditions of; authority and be authorised beyond the position they hold; which is granted by virtue of authenticity, in the way they operate in relation to others; and sincerity, with thoughts, intentions and motivations that embodied the virtue.

Crucially, I found this was mediated by interplay of thoughts, beliefs and expectations of people who interact with football managers and also what is rooted in historically affected cultures and traditions. In this way I believe my thesis has set out the underlying leadership process of expert leaders. Which means, when truth was replaced by felicity, what we have is a philosophical way of examining the TEL that takes us beyond traditional approaches to new understanding. Taking the argument forward, Austin's (1962) thesis explores the appropriateness of the fit between language and experience, which I found to be a powerful way of viewing expert leadership. It brought to the fore the need to examine the nexus of beliefs and expectations, personal qualities and virtues along with what was found to be important in this context. It also highlighted the need to examine reasons behind felicity and infelicity as the gateway to understanding (Austin, 1962). With all that said, this does not exempt the argument from criticism, in that felicitous leadership influence does not guarantee performance outcomes - although, that debate was not on the table.

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Finally, when German-American psychologist Kurt Lewin (1974) first proposed the idea of action research and coined the maxim, *there is nothing so practical as a good theory*, he emphasised the importance of combining theory with practice to not only explain things but to change them as well (Snyder, 2009, p. 226). Yet, when you spend significant time in theoretical thought it can be easy to overlook particulars in favour of properties and elucidate in the abstract and general, rather than the concrete and specific (Mumford, 2012). However, unlike Lewin I argue that the importance of my thesis is not necessarily how thought and practice combine but how it is relevant to challenges that leaders face today. As I write the world is in the middle of a crisis that has seen our existence distorted in a way few could have imagined. Consequently, there is intense focus on world leaders for salvation and leadership and humanity are facing the ultimate examination. If we consider what Zaccaro and Horn (2003) call leadership in action, I argue, the world is on a tidal wave of emotion and trust and confidence in leaders has never been more fundamental to how they are evaluated. My thesis encourages scholars to bring to life the inner workings of theory through stories of lives lived (Josselson, 2011a), and carefully examine performativity which has the potential to address problems of our time (Alvesson & Spicer, 2011).

For, if leadership is about what we find in contemporary literature, which is a sprawling, crowded space, that is fragmented and confusing (Rumsey, 2013; Sadler, 2003), then a major contribution of this thesis is to propose that the focus may need to change and, theoretically, leaders understood as less charismatic, transformational or visionary (Jones, 2019; Yammarino, 2013), but primarily as human beings who perform a professional role. Besides, most leaders at the top of organisations have requisite knowledge, experience and achievement. Which means Searl's (1980) idea of the promise to the performative suggests that there is an obligation football managers have to meet, and this comes in the form of felicity conditions that have to be verified for leadership influence to be realised. For instance, times like this is probably a reminder of what is important and what makes leadership work. The human relationship and how you act in relation to others are the things that leaders will be remembered for and what I suggest is a way for leaders to cope with these new challenges.

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Moreover, each year enormous resource is invested in business leadership development training yet there is little evidence to say that this then translates into positive organisational outcomes. So, I see the most direct relevance of the thesis to the leadership development area in terms of suggesting a different focus. Owen (2012) discusses leadership development as something occurring *in between people* but argues there is still this intense focus on traits, attributes and competencies and the emphasis should be on relational aspects. So, from a practical perspective the findings of this thesis might help football managers and practitioners who work with them to identify, reflect and self-assess on these key qualities as part of education and leadership development programmes of football associations.

Moreover, HR professionals might be interested in the idea of value-based recruitment and selection. The practical utility means that instead of appointing a leader on behaviours and competencies, which is current convention, the focus might shift to a manager who fits the values of the organisation. In practice it means working out and holding up the important values of the organisation then finding the person who is a good fit. For example, in the context of this study, if a football club is community-based it means you look for evidence of a manager's work in this area. This could be done at interview or perhaps by talking to other managers, coaches, or looking at social media and news stories about what the manager has done in the community. Therefore, as a practical contribution, my thesis proposes the HR profession, and recruitment in general, move away from traditional competency and behavioural practice, to selecting leaders on a values-based process that assesses the fit of human values and the cultural of an organisation as the desideratum.

### 8.3: Methodological Thoughts

Throughout I maintained that in order to develop on what is currently understood, alternative approaches were needed that allow for the essence of this social phenomenon to be understood (Heidegger, 1962). As the reader came to see in chapter four, I chose a methodology that shined light on an interpretivist approach to attend to central problems that view the TEL an external reality, accessed through theory neutral methods, to arrive at a single truth (Goodall, 2012). For this reason, I argued contrariwise that expert leadership is first and foremost a socially constructed phenomenon and scientific theorising employ the

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wrong devices for study of a human phenomenon within organisations (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). With this in mind I devised a philosophical approach to achieve my overall aim.

The approach I adopted stems from an existentialist perspective and was guided by Gadamer's conceptualisation of hermeneutics and Josselson's (2011b) narrative approach in what I described as hermeneutic storytelling. The ambition was to interpret lived experiences to develop deeper understanding and to account for the nature of reality, knowledge claims and, therefore, how truth is understood (Gill et al., 2010). This qualitative approach combined key concepts of hermeneutics with storytelling principles on the assumption that the stories we tell about our lives and experiences are representations of reality (Josselson, 2011b). This meant that I was not looking for truth in the univocal sense but multiple versions that shaped what I understood to be true.

Consequently, the focus was on understanding expert leadership influence through insider stories (Bryman, 2016). Hermeneutic storytelling allowed me to, first, open up the right line of inquiry by working out the hermeneutic situation. This meant that truth was worked out from multiple truths that emerged in situ (Gadamer, 1989). In other words, evidence gathered from interviews was interpreted with Gadamerian principles in mind and included my own preconceptions. This also accounted for what was contained in the historicity of the context. Second, subjective understandings were revealed in storied form which, in turn, enabled me to knit together individual accounts to provide a narrative (Josselson, 2011b).

Therefore, accepting this approach as the chosen methodology, I hoped to move the debate beyond current suggestions, which means it is judicious to briefly discuss methodological implications and provide suggestions for future research. In chapter four I provided justification for the sample as throughout the data collection cycle my main concern was whether I had enough data, and if so, how did I know (Bryman, 2016). In the chapter I reasoned why findings were not limited by the size of the sample but by how the method was applied. As stated above, my aim was to produce an overall narrative so comparative analysis across the data corpus was not attempted (Josselson, 2011b). With that being said, it would have been interesting to compare, for example, views of current players and ex-footballers,

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and this could have also been extended to examine relevant demographic dimensions, such as age, experience and role. Still, what we have is an interpretation that looks at a phenomenon in a particular way, and if we accept Gadamer's view, this leaves the door open for future interpretation. However a note of caution, as Grint et al. (2017) point out, what I found leaves no room for claims of universal coverage. Perhaps the most the findings can do rests on the idea of transferability and find similarities with other situations, contexts or ideas of leadership (Bryman, 2016).

Likewise, this does have implications for future researchers as the methods I used could also be employed to examine two areas that warrant further exploration. First, in terms of a demographic, the study, set in the world of British professional football which is traditionally male dominated, is one sided. And, although there are established women's professional football leagues, this voice was not represented. As Crust and Lawrence (2006) point out, in a review of leadership and football management, there are a lack of studies in general and most make no reference gender. I suspect little has changed in this regard, and along with the undoubted progress of the women's game, it would be interesting to see if the theory I developed is, first, genderised in anyway. And, second, from a management perspective, whether there is added significance to the idea of a values-based approach that I proposed.

Finally, my findings uncovered a dark reality where football was linked to feelings of fear and hatred, bullying, mental and sexual abuse and enduring inequality (Mathieu et al., 2014). These issues are complex, have deep historical roots, and some I recognise from my time in the game many years ago. Although what I found cannot be attributed solely to football managers, there was a feeling that authorities turn a blind eye. However, I believe there is not only an opportunity for future exploration, but also a responsibility that, unfortunately, could not be attended to as it was beyond the scope of this study.

### **8.4: A Final Look Back**

From the beginning I found the idea of a TEL interesting, insofar as I am fascinated by leadership and have been influenced by some extraordinary people who I considered to be experts in their field. Looking back, this fascination was the beginning that many years later has turned into this PhD. What is more, the problems I found with existing literature led me

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to think there was so much more to understand. My research most certainly challenged some of my own taken for granted assumptions about individuals I held in high regard and the result is a story about something I believe is real and potentially important. I hope the narrative might also cause debate in the broader field of leadership and lead to a shift in focus. What I mean by this is that, my study suggests that it might be time to move away from age old debates that focus on traits, behaviours, attributes or combinations of conceptual formulations that report organisational impacts and refocus on what I consider is the simplicity of leadership.

There is little doubt that leadership necessarily involves people, relationships and important factors that are found in particular contexts. Yet, by examining it in conventional ways means the human being gets lost. Amongst the plethora of theories, concepts and constructs, where researchers strive to link attributes to headline performance outcomes, there is a genuine risk that virtuous qualities of people involved gets overlooked. And, although Alvesson (2019, p. 31) calls this *Disneyland ideology* that celebrates moral elements and the idea that good people are crucial to effective leadership. I, in turn, argue that he assumes too much, insofar as when we link leadership of any conceptual description to performance outcomes the approach conceals what is really important.

So, my final remark on the subject of the TEL, and maybe leadership in general, is to say: Yes, knowledge, experiences and some sort of leadership capability are important and cannot be ignored. However, this thesis offered a way to understand the profound influence that leaders have in a particular context. And, also highlighted that this cannot be underestimated as it was found to move and touch people in powerfully enduring ways. For good and bad. Moreover, in terms of expert leadership influence, I conclude by saying, current suggestions are not enough and for any theory of leadership to survive and ultimately be enacted the principal underlying concern comes back to values placed on humanity.

Therefore, my thesis argues first, for the theory of expert leadership to be felicitous in professional football, it requires leaders to be legitimately authorised by those they interact with. Second, it is crucial that they are perceived as authentic in what they display to others. This means authority is a form of trust and confidence that needs to be repaid by authenticity

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in how managers approach their work, which is an essential part of the individual that must be congruent with the person who appears. Third, a promise must be made whereby followers believe thoughts, intentions and motivations are sincere. Which simply means, the TEL is a paradoxical mix of perceptions of leadership qualities, human conditions and performativity in context.

For the reader my final remarks refer to all that has said beforehand, but specifically, how it came about as I travelled from one end to the other. You often read that undertaking a PhD is a transformational experience. Now I know why and in keeping with the nature of the study, it is perhaps best for me to express this with a sporting analogy: For me, the experience has been like running a marathon, but not knowing where you are headed, how far you have to go, how long it will take or even if you can complete it. Most of the time you run in the dark. And then...you turn a corner and see the stadium lights. Yet, when you finally arrived at the finish line, there is no fanfare, it is inexplicable, serene and humbling. But it is at this point that you realised how grateful you are for what you get in return. Because what you discover in the light is the reward for any pain and stress endured along the way. Yes, you develop a set of new skills that serve you well, confront ideas that were not familiar and develop confidence from achieving something you never thought possible. But the real payoff is that transformation...of the mind. That is immeasurable, but importantly, leaves you with new consciousness of Dasein.



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## Appendices

### Appendix One: Initial Interview Guide

1. How many clubs have you worked for?
2. How many managers have you worked under?

*I'm interested in understanding the influence (good and bad) that managers have on performance.*

3. Tell me about the influence of your first manager?
4. Tell me about the one(s) that made the biggest impact on you?
5. So what *qualities* have the good ones you have worked with got?
6. So, if I come as a new manager how do I get the best out of you?

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*I'm also interested in hearing your stories from football to help me understand the effect a new manager has on a football club. As an outsider we see examples in football of 'managers bounce' come. Let's take a recent example of A MANAGER getting sacked at A CLUB after a poor run of results then going to A CLUB and lifting them off the bottom in such a short time. And on the other side of it you call also look at A MANAGER who as yet hasn't had the same effect in terms of results.*

7. Can you remember a time when a new manager arrived at a club and it just worked from the start?
8. Can you remember a time where it didn't go well from the start?
9. Would it be fair to say new managers have to prove themselves to the players in some way?
10. So what needs to be in place when they first take over?
11. *In my day I would say that managers generally ruled by fear. I can imagine things have moved on since then.*
12. How do you feel managers go about commanding authority these days?

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13. Can you tell me about a time when you experienced a change in manager?
  14. I know the key to football management is winning but results aside take me back to a previous manager and the point you sense there might be a change and what do you think wasn't working?  
*We also hear in the media about a manager losing the dressing room.*
  15. Have you ever witnessed this?
  16. What does a manager have to do to gain your trust?

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17. Do you think the club you work for has its own significance?  
*We hear a lot about the way of a club (the A CLUB way for example) and how this determines how a manager goes about his work at a club.*
  18. In some ways do you think any manager who comes here has to live up to what has gone before at the club or is this just a myth?  
*Finally, we are seeing examples of it now with fans of A CLUB and A CLUB showing their dissatisfaction with the situation at their clubs.*
  19. Can you tell me about a time when the fans had an influence on the managers or players performance?

## Appendix Two: Participant Consent Form

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY: Felicity Conditions of a theory of expert leadership in professional football.** *Please answer the following questions by ticking the response that applies*

- |  | YES                      | NO                       |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the Information Sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction and I understand that I may ask further questions at any point.  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study within 14 days, without giving a reason for my withdrawal or to decline to answer any particular questions in the study without any consequences to my future treatment by the researcher. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the Information Sheet.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I consent to the information collected for the purposes of this research study, once anonymised (so that I cannot be identified), to be used for any other research purposes.   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Participant's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant's Name (Printed):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher's Name (Printed):** Eddie Mighten

**Researcher's Signature:** *Eddie Mighten*

**Researcher's contact details:**

Eddie Mighten

Sheffield Hallam University

Collegiate Crescent

Sheffield, S10 2 BP

**Please keep your copy of the consent form and the information sheet together.**

## Appendix Three: Example Analytic Memo

Paul's interview was illuminating in as it give me a real sense of how the manager's role has evolved over time based on his experiences in the game. It also highlights how management in football has reflected how management in general has been undoubtedly shaped by changes in societal thinking. Having played and worked in the game over several decades Paul contextualises the evolution of the football manager and how football management has changed with changes in society, from the Victorian style leader to the modern-day manager who is less of a coach of players to someone who is more rounded and has to manage my board and then the player second. Because the coaches do that. He also discusses the how managers today are reliant on information technologies to punctuate the changing role of football managers. I found this insight fascinating in how football has been changed by macro changes in the world and how this has trickled down to the way that football managers go about their work. The examples he gave on how information technology drives the role of the modern manager was powerful in terms of understanding not just their changing role but their changing influence.

The fact that he played the most successful manager in the history of British football presented an interesting perspective in that I think this indelibly shaped his view of football and managers in much the same way that a father's influence can leave a lasting impression on a son. In fact, he refers to one manager as a father figure going on to say anyone who's ever played underneath him they only talk about him in high regard.

His stories about managers, their influence, those who got the best out of him and those who didn't, present themselves in many binary terms. His account of experiences is done so with binary thinking as his stories provide contrast between what he considers good and bad managers that he worked for. For example, he talks about how an iconic manager influenced by fear but yet was approachable but also spoke about one as someone he liked but didn't respect.

Man-management was an expression he used on a number of occasions to express the quality he considered necessary by those who had the greatest influence on his career. For him the managers who had the greatest influence on him had clear expectations and set very tight boundaries. This got me thinking that maybe we might be overcomplicating the issue because for Paul this was about keeping it simple and setting clear expectations that are black and white. Of course, we know that people are complicated and unpredictable beings and you can never be certain that what works for one can be applied to another. However, once again this was expressed in binary opposition in that he talked about the need for managers to interact on a very have personal level but also avoid coming across as a soft touch.

For me the most telling moment in the interview came when he talked about reaching the lowest point in his career because of the negative influence of a manager to the point he considered retiring from the game if the manager remained in charge. His story about this particular manager is a tale of toxic behaviour that he describes as punishment and ending with him saying he was a bully. In binary thinking Paul certainly dispels the romantic notion we often hold about leaders and in this context football managers whose portrayal, in some arenas, as something entirely different.

