



Leader-follower-ship as embodied and enacted practice: reflections from the dancefloor

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**LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP AS EMBODIED AND
ENACTED PRACTICE:
REFLECTIONS FROM THE DANCEFLOOR**

Fides Matzdorf

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

July 2024

I hereby declare that:

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2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
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Signed

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LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP AS EMBODIED AND ENACTED PRACTICE: REFLECTIONS FROM THE DANCEFLOOR

ABSTRACT

This research is about understanding leader-follower relationships in work contexts, with the aim to deepen and conceptualise the understanding of how managers can improve their understanding of leader-follower-ship through embodied practice, and how the 'lens' of dancesport can help to achieve this. The empirical part of the project is based on a study of participants' interactions (both bodily and verbal), perceptions and reflections in a workshop setting.

Whilst most of the leadership and followership research focuses on either leaders or followers and behaviours or attributes associated with leaders or followers, a newer research field has been developing that aims to improve understanding of the relationship constituting 'leader-follower-ship' as emergent and enacted between people. This is the field that this study aims to contribute to.

Based on the notion of embodied cognition, I used the medium of dancesport (or competitive ballroom dancing) as a lens on leader-follower-ship. In a set of 3 interactive workshops, delivered over a period of 2 months, participants (managers and staff from different organisational backgrounds) explored leader-follower relationships through partnering exercises and dance-based movement activities, which offered opportunities for reflection-in-action as well as reflection-on-action and for enhancing awareness of how relationships are enacted and maintained.

This study takes a phenomenological approach: qualitative data were gathered throughout and between the workshops in the form of written notes (participant observation), complemented by interviews with participants, participants' own reflective notes, and video and audio recordings. My role was complex, a sometimes 'seamless' combination of facilitator, researcher and participant. Data analysis was a mix of interpretative phenomenological analysis and thematic analysis, but also included autoethnographic elements, based on my 'body knowledge' of dance and dancesport.

The findings of this study present contributions to both the theoretical understanding and practical application of leader-follower-ship. The physical-somatic activities, followed by reflection rounds, showed that leadership is deeply embodied and not purely rational, and that leading, leadership, following and followership meant very different things to different participants, which also meant that each individual had a different 'leadership journey'. Through the immediacy of 'body interaction' and sensing, issues of agency, power, follower-leader relating, and implicit assumptions about leadership and followership were explored and expressed. Combined with reflexivity, this enabled individuals to surface and review some of those assumptions. The study also offers a novel model that highlights the fluid and reciprocal nature of leader-follower-ship roles and actions, as well as deconstructing the hierarchical implications from the inside out, as it were, dismantling the view of leaders as 'all-powerful' and the assumption that 'all responsibility rests with the leader' and thus revealing the assumption of leadership as 'being in control' as an illusion. Finally, it introduces methodological advancements by incorporating non-verbal data into qualitative research, thus broadening the scope and depth of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Finally, it adds a useful 'tool' for leadership development and coaching.

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DEDICATION

Für die liebe Brigitte und ihre unerfüllten Träume...

LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP AS EMBODIED AND ENACTED PRACTICE: REFLECTIONS FROM THE DANCEFLOOR

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Der Einsame.

Verhasst ist mir das Folgen und das Führen.
Gehorchen? Nein! Und aber nein — Regieren!
Wer sich nicht schrecklich ist, macht Niemand Schrecken:
Und nur wer Schrecken macht, kann Andre führen.
Verhasst ist mir's schon, selber mich zu führen!
Ich liebe es, gleich Wald- und Meeresthieren,
Mich für ein gutes Weilchen zu verlieren,
In holder Irrniss grüblerisch zu hocken,
Von ferne her mich endlich heimzulocken,
Mich selber zu mir selber — zu verführen.

(Friedrich Nietzsche)¹

¹ in: *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*(*La Gaya Scienza*), Leipzig 1887. My translation:

The Lonely One

I detest following and leading.
Obeying? No! And No again to – Ruling!
Whoever is not a terror unto themselves will terrify No-one,
And only one who instils terror can lead Others.
I already detest leading myself!
Like creatures of forest and sea, I love
Losing myself for a good while,
Hunkering down in musings, delightfully astray,
Enticing myself home from afar, eventually,
Abducting myself to my self.

1 BACKGROUND & WHY I CHOSE THIS TOPIC

1.1 MY DANCE-AND-LEADERSHIP-AND-RESEARCH JOURNEY

The story of this thesis is the story of a journey of (informal) inquiry, which gradually, over the span of two decades, turned into a journey of research. Just like real life, the journey has been messy and personal, and some of that messiness carries over into the ensuing story – but that is also part of its fascination and strength. The story weaves multiple strands and dimensions together: it encompasses two work lives, a shared private life, a shared dance life, a journey in time (over two decades) but also in spaces (dancefloors, dance studios, universities, hospitals, and many other organisational spaces). It connects dance competitions with organisational life, dance performance with organisational performance, leader-follower-ship on the dancefloor with leader-follower-ship in organisations (Matzdorf 2005; Matzdorf & Sen 2005, 2014) but also reflection on dance with reflection on work and reflection on relationships in general. And it is a search for ways to make leader-follower relationships work better.

My interest in leadership and followership began over 20 years ago with the uncomfortable feeling that the term 'leadership' occurs far too often in conjunction with abuses of power, claims of superiority and a lack of emancipation and empowerment. In my work with facilities managers (from supervisor to director level), calls for 'strong leadership' all too often appeared to come from a position of disenchantment and powerlessness (at any level in the organisational hierarchy), as well as a reluctance to take responsibility: "We need some strong leadership here" usually sounded like a cry for a 'big brother', for someone with the determination and power to 'make things happen'. It made me think of *Lord of the Flies*, and I wondered: does a leader really have to be a big bully using scare tactics, oppression, even violence? Out of my discomfort and scepticism came a curiosity to find out what could 'make a difference' to these power games.

Despite 'leadership' being often equated with 'position of authority' or 'high rank in a hierarchy' (the majority of leadership research focuses on senior managers and chief executives), leadership and leadership roles are not necessarily tied to formal authority in

organisations: we talk, for example, of ‘ringleaders’, ‘influencers’, or ‘gatekeepers’ – this indicates that leadership often occurs unofficially and sometimes even unnoticed, away from authority and formal power. Whilst there is clearly an element of power involved, this is not necessarily and narrowly based on formal authority. For example, Mary Parker Follett’s notion of ‘power with’ instead of ‘power over’ (Follett 2013) offers a broader, more comprehensive and, in my view, altogether more inclusive concept than traditional hierarchical models. So the question ‘What makes people (successful) *leaders*?’ turned more into ‘What makes people want to *follow* someone else?’

Apart from my professional experience of working in and with a range of organisations and hierarchies in various roles over the past three decades, I bring to the project also my extensive, in-depth experience of leader-follower-ship in competitive ballroom dance, with about twenty years of competition activity and high-level national achievements within the UK (UK Closed Senior 10-Dance champions 2015 and 2016).

As I grew and developed as a ballroom dancer, with the increasing sensory-somatic sensitivity my notions of ‘leading’ and ‘following’ also developed and became more nuanced, both kinaesthetically and conceptually. For example, as a beginner follower I was often (reproachfully) told by my dance partner or dance teacher, “You’re trying to lead.” I had actually no idea what that meant, hence did not know what to do differently – and usually no clear explanation was given either. One penny dropped on an occasion when the teacher told me not to try and ‘cover up’ for my partner’s mistakes: “Let him do the wrong thing, let him make his mistakes – otherwise he’ll never learn to do it right.” That was probably the first step on the journey to understanding what “letting your partner lead” means physically, in a bodily as well as mental and even emotional sense. As these understandings grew (together with the technical knowledge and skill, in terms of how to physically *do* ‘lead’ and ‘follow’), I increasingly caught myself thinking how much enlightenment about ‘leadership’ the aforementioned managers could potentially glean from an understanding of somatic leading and following, and on many occasions I would have liked to ask them questions that they might learn to answer in a dance: Are you allowing your follower to follow and do their job? Are you giving them the signals they need? Are you ‘inviting’ or ‘pushing’ them? Are you in the right place at the right time? Do they have to cover up for your mistakes, or can you ‘own’ your errors and actually learn from them? Do

you 'sense' where your followers are and how they feel? Are you taking your followers with you? And how do you follow your leaders? Do you trust them enough to allow them to lead? A multitude of relevant questions – but of course I could not tell my clients to take dance lessons!

So why and how is leading and following important in dancesport? Competitive ballroom dancing can be seen as a team sport, similar to bobsleigh, figure skating, or ice dance. Dancers need a high level of physical fitness, including strength, stamina, but also agility and co-ordination, excellent muscle memory, and on top of this precision, style and grace as well as musical interpretation. They need to be showpeople as well as teamworkers. All of this requires a lot of discipline, perseverance and hard work. Achieving a top performance in dancesport requires 'power-ful' and empowered engagement and input from both follower and leader (see Tremayne & Ballinger 2008; Matzdorf & Sen 2015, 2016). Whilst the roles of leader and follower are a necessity in the dancesport world (the leader is in charge of navigation and also wears the competition number, i.e. makes the couple identifiable/recognisable), the performance is ultimately co-created: two excellent dancers do not necessarily make an excellent couple. "1+1=2" does not work for a dance performance – it is more like "1+1=●": the collaboration and teamwork of two 'units' (i.e. dancers) need to create a different 'unit' (i.e. a 'dancing couple'). Listening and following skills are required on both sides to make the dance performance work, as is initiating and 'powering through' – these are all part of both roles (see *Figure 7-5* and *Figure 7-6*). This ties in with followership research and theory: it takes 'powerful' types of followers to succeed in a competitive economic environment (cf. Kelley 1988, 2008; Chaleff 2009); and the relationship between leader and follower becomes more of a 'power-sharing' one, rather than one of dominance and subordination, despite the 'traditional-hierarchical' look of 'female' and 'male' roles, which is preserved and retained (with minor variations) even in same-sex competitions – see *Figure 1-1*.



Figure 1-1: Female world champions Privou and Zimmermann in a showdance (but in competition dress)
(<https://youtu.be/geKzEwOKQ8I>)

As my dance skills improved, my dancing became more sophisticated, and my dance lessons moved on beyond choreography and posture, focusing more on fine-tuning, partnering skills and ‘togetherness’. They gave me food for deeper reflection, and the parallels between competition dancing and leadership became more obvious – they almost imposed themselves. An invitation to run a workshop session for students on an MSc Coaching and Mentoring course, using dance to explore leadership, was the start of a series of such workshops.

I have explored the dance-leadership analogy in a number of stand-alone workshops that I have run over the past 15 years (in collaboration with my partner) with managers, students, coaches and members of the public. These workshops are based on the principle of embodied cognition (Wilson & Foglia 2011) in practice, and encourage and facilitate self-awareness and somatic sensitivity through bodily experience of the physicality of leader-follower-ship (Ladkin 2013). Unlike in many workplaces, participants are asked to ‘swap roles’ within the same context, and thus have the opportunity to explore themselves and others as leaders *and* followers, reflecting on their assumptions, expectations, needs, feelings in a very practical, applied way (‘What works, what doesn’t?’ ‘What do I need/want from my follower/leader in order to fulfil my role?’ ‘What happens when things go wrong?’ ‘How do I establish rapport with another person?’ ‘What happens to me/my partner/us when there is performance pressure?’)

Bringing together those two different perspectives on leadership – an organisational and a dancesport angle – I have been exploring leadership, followership and self-awareness through dance from an autoethnographic perspective, in dialogue with my dance partner and co-author (Matzdorf 2005; Matzdorf & Sen 2015, 2016). The lived dual experience has changed our views on leadership and followership, as well as informed and changed our work practices, demonstrating that this approach can be transformational in terms of leadership practice. Eventually it led to my doctoral research, in which I have taken this approach a step further, both in practice (as a series of linked workshops) and theory (as research project). This is also reflected in the way I write, which is always informed by reflection as well as ‘knowing-in-the-body’ and even ‘gut feeling’, which brings an autoethnographic element into this thesis. I aim to verbalise my insights as far as possible, but there are limits to what spoken and written language can do – so sometimes one just has to get up and move to ‘feel it’.

1.2 WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Dancesport as an embodied metaphor offers an angle on leader-follower-ship that is different from the usual leadership theory, which focuses predominantly on the leader. Here I look at both leadership and followership in connection, not just at one or the other. I see leader-follower-ship as intricately connected and intertwined, not as discrete, separate activities or identities, thus moving away from looking at leadership or followership in isolation, and also away from a focus on leader or follower identities. In contrast to much of the research in the leadership field, which is either leader-centric or follower-centric (cf. the criticism that “research on leadership has been overly leader-centric, and research on followership should avoid simply ‘reversing the lens’ and focusing exclusively on followers” (Riggio 2014:15), this project emphasises relationship from a phenomenological, embodied perspective, addressing the connection but also the traditional power imbalance between leader and follower in an embodied, sensory way, and moving the research focus away from hierarchical models, opening up avenues towards more equal leader-follower relationships. The research links to theories about embodiment, embodied cognition, skilfulness, embodied leadership and embodied followership.

This research works on two levels: it aims to deepen and conceptualise the understanding of how people in organisations can improve their understanding of leader-follower-ship through embodied practice, and how the medium of ballroom dancing can help to achieve this.

1.3 RESEARCH AND THEORY CONTEXT

This research project brings together a range of very diverse fields, but in order to stay within the confines of a PhD thesis, it has to limit the range of aspects and concepts that it addresses. In the first instance, it is rooted in the dismantling of ‘traditional’ leadership theories with their focus on leaders, leader personality, leader attributes, leader behaviours etc. (Meindl et al. 1985). Whilst leadership research and theory has come a long way since ‘Great Man’ and trait theories, through behavioural, situational and contingency approaches, to transformational and servant leadership, they are still all based on the ‘someone’s-got-to-be-in-charge’ notion.

Kelley’s article “In praise of followers” (1988) started a new ‘era’ in leader-follower-ship research, with followers no longer ‘reduced’ to passivity and low status. Followership theories have aimed to gain appreciation for the much-neglected contribution of followers to organisational processes. However, they do not in general seek to ‘undermine’ or ‘de-romanticise’ the concept of leadership – far from pulling the ‘romanticised’ leader figure from its pedestal, they surround it with an alliance of aligned and supportive yet empowered followers to achieve organisational goals. That said, Chaleff also admonishes leaders to listen to the critical voices of ‘courageous’ followers.

However, neither followership theories nor other recent concepts such as distributed leadership actually challenge the concept of leadership itself. Even leader-member exchange (LMX) theories, where the focus moves away from ‘the leader’ or ‘the follower’ to the relationship between them, does not question the hierarchical aspect *per se* of this relationship.

So what could the traditionalist world of competitive ballroom dance, with its entrenched gender and role stereotyping, possibly contribute to 'debunking' the concept of leader-follower-ship?

1.4 LOCATING THE RESEARCH PROJECT IN THE FIELD

In contrast to much of the research in the leadership field, which is either leader-centric or follower-centric, this project emphasises relationship and does so from a phenomenological, embodied perspective, addressing the traditional power imbalance between leader and follower in an embodied, sensory way, and moving the research focus away from hierarchical models, opening up avenues towards more equal leader-follower relationships.

The project is located on the overlap between, and draws on, research in the emerging fields of relational leader-follower-ship and embodied/aesthetic leadership – 'aesthetic' in the sense that Hansen, Ropo & Sauer summarise: "Aesthetic knowledge refers to sensuous experiences (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) that are lived in and through the human body. The focus is on interaction and the aesthetic knowledges that are produced by and guide interactions." (2007:554)

1.4.1 RESEARCH ON LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP

There are three main strands of research that bear on this project:

Relational leadership (e.g. Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012):

A basic tenet for this work is the view that leadership is relational, i.e. enacted, co-created and socially constructed between leaders and followers. In reflecting on leadership, the focus is not on the leader, but on the relationship between leader and follower(s). I would also see leadership less as an established 'hard' structure and more as processes constantly enacted, re-enacted and re-established between leader(s) and follower(s) (Uhl-Bien 2006; Hansen et al. 2007; Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012; Uhl-Bien et al. 2014; Reitz 2015). Gordon Lawrence's concept of 'managing self in role'

(Lawrence 1979) is helpful in that leader and follower can be seen as (temporary) roles, not as fixed identities – nobody is a leader in every context, 24 hours a day (Riggio 2014).

Embodied leadership (Ladkin 2008, 2013; Katz-Buonincontro 2011a; Bathurst & Ladkin 2012; Melina et al. 2013):

The notion of leadership as embodied is closely linked with concepts of embodied cognition, conformed by recent neuroscientific research: cognitive processes are inextricably linked to the body, as we ‘think on our feet’, ‘keep a stiff upper lip’ or ‘have a sixth sense that something is not right’. Hansen et al. (2007) talk about ‘aesthetic leadership’ and emphasise developing and using ‘felt sense’ to make sense.

Ladkin (2008) describes and analyses an orchestral performance, with Bobby McFerrin using his whole body – movement and gestures – to establish and maintain connection and lead both the orchestra and the audience.

‘Power-ful’ followership (Chaleff 2009, 2011; Kellerman 2008, 2012; Kelley 1988, 2008): Followership research is in the first instance a call to move away from an obsession with leaders and shine a light on followers (without whom there would be no leaders!)

1.4.2 RESEARCH AROUND EMBODIED COGNITION, LEARNING AND SKILL

Insights into this aspect of leadership and followership come from a diverse range of research fields, from neuroscience to philosophy.

We learn *through* our bodies, not just *with* our bodies. Skill development is not just a mental or mentally steered and controlled exercise, but requires sensory, physical practice (Gladwell 2005; Sennett 2008; Sheets-Johnstone 2011; Shotter 2005, 2006, 2010; Stelter 2004, 2008; Winther 2013, 2014; Winther et al. 2015) and developing ‘aesthetic agency’ (Hansen et al. 2007; Ladkin 2008, 2013; Sinclair 2005a, 2005b, 2016; Springborg & Sutherland 2016; Strati 2009; Sutherland & Jelinek 2015). Well-known examples are the almost proverbial 10,000 hours of practice that it takes to master playing an instrument or sport well, or the lengthy and intense study plus on-the-job training that healthcare professionals need to undergo. This is about knowledge that is not just held in the brain but in the body as well (‘Fingerspitzengefühl’) and is more often than not a tacit, implicit

skilfulness (Polanyi 1966; Sennett 2008) that even seasoned professionals might find hard to explain fully if resorting purely to verbal language.

Dance is a skill that requires such learning, but it can also be a medium through which awareness of such learning can be developed (Sheets-Johnstone 2011; Hanna 2015; Springborg & Sutherland 2016; Hujala et al. 2016; Powell & Gifford 2016).

1.4.3 POWER AND REFLEXIVITY

Another important base is work around power and reflexivity, which encourages a critical view of the concept of leadership:

‘Power with’ vs ‘power over’ (Salovaara & Bathurst 2018; Pansardi & Bindi 2021)

“Coercive power is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul.” (Follett 1924:xii)

“it is possible to develop the conception of power with, a jointly developed power, a co active, not a coercive power” (Follett 2003:79)

Added perspective on power: ‘power to’ (see Pansardi & Bindi 2021 for those 3 concepts of power)

Reflective practitioners (Schön 1987a, 1987b; Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009)

1.4.4 PARADIGMATIC UNDERPINNINGS

The philosophical and methodological underpinnings are:

- **Intersubjectivism and ‘witness thinking’** (Cunliffe 2011; Shotter 2005, 2006, 2010)
- ***Moveo ergo cogito***: thinking is *always* embodied (Sheets-Johnstone 2011)
- **Social construction** of leadership (Hatch & Cunliffe 2006; shamir 2011a, 2011b; Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012)

Leader-follower-ship as craft includes acquiring tacit knowledge and ‘gut feeling’ as much as rational thinking (Katz-Buonincontro 2011a; Sinclair 2016) and requires engaging body

and mind in the process (Hansen et al. 2007; Sinclair 2016; Springborg 2012), with Springborg (2012) asking for “perceptual refinement”. As Sennett (2008:50) notes:

In the higher stages of skill, there is a constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness, the tacit knowledge serving as an anchor, the explicit awareness serving as critique and corrective. Craft quality emerges from this higher stage.

Similarly, Hansen et al. emphasise that “the roots of aesthetic knowledge lie in experiential knowing and understanding.” (2007:552). Katz-Buonincontro (2011a) lists “sensory and somatic attentiveness” as one of four main aspects of what she calls ‘aesthetic leadership’, although the practice examples she gives are mostly confined to visual experiences and, strangely enough, do not include movement. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Sheets-Johnstone (2011) argues that human cognition is inextricably and inevitably intertwined with movement. In this project, dance-based exercises offer a ‘sandpit’ practice ground to explore and experiment in an embodied way how leadership and followership are constituted and enacted.

1.5 SO WHAT DO I WANT TO FIND OUT?

Following on from the preliminary considerations, this research project brings together these very diverse concepts and areas in a new and unusual way, combining ‘body thinking’, leader-follower-ship and reflection (both in-the-moment as well as post-experience) with the sensate, pleasurable, playful experience of dance movement.

The main research questions would then be:

- **How can the sensory experience of leading and following through the body help to facilitate self-reflection and self-awareness, as well as awareness of others, with regard to leadership and followership in organisational settings?**
- **Can looking at it from a dancer’s perspective help people to make clearer sense of what leading/following entails, become more aware of the power as well as constraints, and develop skilled intuition or ‘gut feeling’ for leading as well as following?**

The aims of the project would be:

- ...to build on, and combine, existing relational leadership research and concepts;
- ...to improve understanding of embodied relational leader-follower-ship;
- ...to find out how people process leader-follower-ship, including 'situated cognition' (perceptions, expectations, experiences, interactions, actions) of and around leader-follower-ship;
- ...to find out how the physical, sensory experiences and reflections influence personal concepts of leader-follower-ship.

In essence, to combine 'body-thinking', leader-follower-ship and reflection (in-the-moment as well as post-experience) with the sensate, pleasurable, playful experience of dance movement.

As an aside: Why is writing about relationships so difficult? Essentially, relationships are not tangible; they are invisible, intangible, inaudible, beyond sensory experience. Philosophers, psychologists, and various academic disciplines have long attempted to define and understand them, but even defining relationships is nearly impossible. Descriptions 'work around' the concept. Empiricists and postpositivists continue to try to quantify relationships into measurable scales to make reliable and generalisable statements, establishing rules and predictability. But these are reductions. A leader-follower relationship, for instance, can be superficially reduced to a set of transactions, but this neglects (or simply ignores) 'undercurrents' and individual differences. This approach works only by categorizing people into stereotypes. I am not preaching 'rugged individualism' – on the contrary, I align with Shotter, Cunliffe, Gergen, and other constructivists, "with the notion of 'relationality', an understanding that individuals and collectives constitute a field of relationships" (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012). That said, Uhl-Bien & Ospina also point out that "clarifying what it means to emphasize 'relationship'" is tricky and much disputed by the different strands in the relational leadership debate. Maybe, in wave-particle-conundrum style, leadership becomes or behaves as what the viewer sees in/into it?

2 BACKGROUND RESEARCH FIELDS AND LITERATURE OVERVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This is an overview and discussion of literature that is relevant to my research. It makes no claim to be comprehensive; instead it is selective and probably eclectic (although I have noticed that some of the authors that I saw as coming from quite diverse fields are actually referencing each other, and sometimes are even in contact with each other). Amongst them are philosophers, organisational theorists, management researchers, artists, sociologists, dancers, dance researchers, psychotherapists, and even sports coaches. Interesting is that several of them do not fit into a single box either (that is very encouraging for me, as I am notoriously 'unboxed', or perhaps a visitor to many boxes, but not a proper 'inhabitant' of any). There is research on leadership and followership, relational leadership, embodied leadership, enacted and co-constructed leader-follower-ship, but nobody has put *all* the pieces together yet.

My research project brings together diverse fields that do not usually link up. Given the breadth and diversity of subjects that have influenced my research, it is almost impossible to present this in a linear, structured way that is usually associated with PhD theses. Instead, the reader will find 'snippets' of sources that have added to the insights as well as the challenges of this project.

The project aims to improve understanding of the L-F relationship, constituting 'leader-follower-ship' as emergent, embodied and enacted between people. In other words, the focus is not on leaders or followers alone, but on the 'in-between'. On the other hand, the 'in-between' does not exist in a vacuum, but has to be enacted by people engaging in relating, so one cannot focus on the relationship alone, but has to take into account those that make it happen.

Bringing together a range of different aspects of leader-follower-ship, the main three underpinning assumptions are:

Leadership and followership are relational, processual and emergent, i.e. actually happen and come 'into existence' when enacted in the moment – hence the term 'leader-follower-ship', implying that one does not happen without the other: they are mutually constitutive.

Leadership and followership are embodied, in that they are enacted not just through 'disembodied' communication and connection, but they involve the whole gamut of nonverbal communication (stance, poise, movement, voice, tone, gesture etc.) as well as feelings, emotions, intuition. (I am not even touching the field of virtual and online communication – however, sensory presence also happens in virtual environments). This also involves concepts of embodied cognition and learning, and thus skill and 'skilfulness'.

My research is rooted in a critical appreciation of leadership as 'post-heroic': leader-follower-ship has power implications, allowing or disallowing trust to happen, and requires reflective practice. I see leader-follower-ship not as attached to roles or individuals, but as contextual and situative.

2.2 LEADERSHIP – A CONUNDRUM?

Historically, leadership theories have tended towards a rational, linear, more science-oriented view of leadership (e.g. trait, contingency theories). From 'Great Man' theories to 'charismatic leadership' and even 'servant leadership', the figure of the leader has been glorified and romanticised, with researchers as well as the general public, and even leaders themselves, attributing organisational successes or failures purely to the leader, and thus overestimating and over-emphasising leaders' control and power (Meindl & Ehrlich 1987; Meindl et al. 1985). As Hansen et al. put it very bluntly:

Somewhere along the way, 'leadership' became a shorthand answer when positive organizational outcomes could not be causally determined. Leadership became the great dumping ground for unexplained variance. (Hansen et al. 2007:544)

Towards the end of the 1980s, a new strand of leadership research emerged, kicked off by Kelley's seminal 1988 article "In Praise of Followers". As it is only logical that there are no leaders without followers, this branch of leadership research aims to fill the gap left by the traditional focus on the leader figure and seeks to give due attention, consideration and

respect to the follower role. Identifying categories of followership, follower behaviour and follower attitudes is an essential part of this field (Kelley 1988, 2008; Chaleff 2011; Kellerman 2008) and has helped to move a step away from ‘romanticising’ leadership and leaders (Meindl & Ehrlich 1987; Meindl et al. 1985), but ‘leading’ and ‘following’ are still seen as linked to attributes of individuals, rather than as a process.

The difficulties in ‘dismantling’ the leadership ‘myth’ start with the language used and the connotations associated with the word itself; and so it comes as no surprise that academics/researchers/management consultants who want to change attitudes and habits around leadership suggest (more or less successfully) alternative terms in order to get away from the fraught word ‘leadership’: e.g. Olsen (2006, 2012, 2014) calls it ‘leadingship’; Raelin (2003, 2004, 2011, 2016) talks about ‘leadership-as-practice’ and ‘leaderful practice’ – attempts to break the linguistic mould as well as disrupt traditional thought patterns. I tend to use the term leader-follower-ship (and will do so here) in order to emphasise the “kinaesthetic empathy and continuous co-operation and negotiation between the leader and the follower” (Biehl 2017:39).

2.3 LEADERSHIP AS RELATIONAL AND ENACTED

Both leadership and followership research have so far focused on either leader or follower, and behaviours, traits and attributes associated with leaders or followers – in this respect followership research does not diverge from the traditional pattern. As the sociologist Kenneth Gergen critiques it very succinctly:

None of the qualities attributed to good leaders stands alone. Alone, one cannot be inspiring, visionary, humble, or flexible. These qualities are achievements of a co-active process in which others’ affirmation is essential. (Gergen 2009:331)

In other words, it is the relationship that makes leadership and followership possible. More recently, a newer research field has been developing since the late 1990s (cf. Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012:xixf.), which sees leader-follower-ship as relational and co-constructed and aims to make the relationship itself, the ‘in-between’, the focus of attention.

A basic tenet for this work is the view that leadership is relational. In reflecting on leadership, the focus is not on the leader, but on the relationship between leader and follower, through

which leadership is enacted (Uhl-Bien 2006; Hansen et al. 2007; Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012; Uhl-Bien et al. 2014; Reitz 2015). I would also see leadership less as an established 'hard' structure and more as processes constantly enacted, re-enacted and re-established between leader(s) and follower(s). Gordon Lawrence's concept of 'managing self in role' (Lawrence 1979) is helpful in that leader and follower can be seen as (temporary) roles, not as fixed identities. If we want to focus on the leader-follower 'in-between', the debate around leader and follower identities becomes a 'red herring', as it turns the spotlight on the actors and away from the relationship – and thus could even be seen as an extension to the old trait theories that find their contemporary continuation in tropes such as the 'charismatic leader' or 'servant leader'.

The bulk of leadership literature and research takes a 'hard' view of leadership as a 'given', frequently relating it to hierarchical structures. Most empirical leadership research chooses senior managers and chief executives as examples of leaders, thus clinging to the 'heroic' ideal of leaders as special individuals that are somehow 'better' than followers. Instead of talking about leadership and followership, or even leader-follower-ship, it would make more sense to speak of leading and following as temporary roles (cf. Gordon Lawrence) and of activities or tasks / task sets that individuals carry out. This helps to take the focus away from leader / follower identities – views that treat leadership and followership as fixed, as firm, clear-cut 'givens' – and move towards a view of leading and following as a (temporary) relationship that is an ongoing process, constantly in flux rather than cast in stone. Denis, Langley & Sergi (2012) speak of "a growing body of organizational research and theorizing that examines leadership not as a property of individuals and their behaviors, but as a [...] phenomenon that is [...] potentially fluid, and constructed in interaction" (Denis et al. 2012:212) and call it 'decentering individuals'. They see "leadership as an emergent property of relations" (Denis et al. 2012:215) – a neat description that I will borrow.

Whilst relational leadership research generally acknowledges that leadership and followership are complementary and mutually constitutive, much of the research still focuses on the individuals involved (i.e. leaders and/or followers) – and the same is the case for followership research (e.g. Chaleff 2009, 2011; Kellerman 2008, 2012; Kelley 1988, 2008). These studies take what Uhl-Bien & Ospina (2012:xxii) call an "entity perspective", focusing on "traits, behaviors and actions of individuals or group members as they engage

in interpersonal relationships to influence one another” (see *Figure 2-1*). Here, too, we recognise the old ‘heroic’ leader figure, albeit in a new cloak. Proponents of this perspective tend to take a more positivist stance, as they see behaviours and actions as objective and measurable – consequently knowledge about leader-follower-ship is generated through quantitative categorisation and calculation, whereas a ‘constructionist’ perspective takes into account leadership as an emergent phenomenon that is contextual, situated, processual, systemic and co-enacted. In a presentation to the 2014 ILA conference, Sonia Ospina and Mary Uhl-Bien talk quite movingly about their ‘journeying’ between those ‘camps’ and their attempts to bring the different perspectives to a mutual understanding.²

The contributors: a continuum from entity to constructionist stances on leadership

Modernist stance: Entity perspective (Privileges individual dimensions)		Postmodernist stance: Constructionist perspective (Privileges collective dimensions)	
From most to least objectivist		From least to most subjectivist	
LOGICAL POSITIVISM	Postpositivists -Reality is discovered-		Interpretivist constructionists -Reality is constructed-
	Seers & Chopin	Fletcher	Barge Kennedy et al. Alvesson & Sveningsson
	Day¹	Fitzsimons	Drath
	Ashkanasy et al. Offermann Treadway et al. Wassenaar & Pearce Antonakis	Crosby & Bryson	Ospina et al. Fairhurst
Part 3	Shamir	Uhl-Bien	Hosking Ospina

¹ Names in bold indicate dialogue scholars and editors

Figure 2-1: Mapping out the ‘territory’ of relational leadership literature (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012)

Of course, this makes leader-follower-ship an elusive phenomenon, which is difficult to research. ‘Great man’ traits and attributes are easier to measure, quantify and generalise. For example, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory focuses on the relationship, but looks at it ‘from outside’ – reifying, quantifying, measuring. Leader-member exchange theory considers the dyadic relationship between leaders and followers. (Note the avoidance of the term ‘follower’ – instead LMX talks about ‘team members’: has this something to do with

² (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2014) Online at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCanZsg8JxY>

the low status that is – potentially – a connotation of ‘follower’?) LMX theory is predominantly grounded in a positivist/postpositivist approach, seeking to isolate and define specific characteristics and make them measurable, such as ‘trust’, ‘respect’, ‘competence’ etc. or ‘offers’ that are made by the leader and accepted (or not) by the member. From a constructionist view, this would be too reductionist, as it does not take into account the complexity and nuances of human relationships. As LMX research hones in on specific characteristics, it has a fairly narrow focus and does not allow for aspects outside those dimensions. Moreover, it treats human relationships purely as a series of transactions – a somewhat reductionist, if not instrumentalist, view, which does not allow for phenomenological approaches.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, “a *constructionist* perspective considers processes of social construction and emergent practices” (Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012:xxii, authors’ emphasis), which are elusive and difficult to ‘capture’, as they deal with the subjective perspectives of the participants in leader-follower relationships, hence require more interpretivist approaches.

Though not coming at it from a constructionist perspective or treating leadership as an emergent phenomenon, Epitropaki et al.’s (2013:874) diagram illustrates this relationship very clearly.

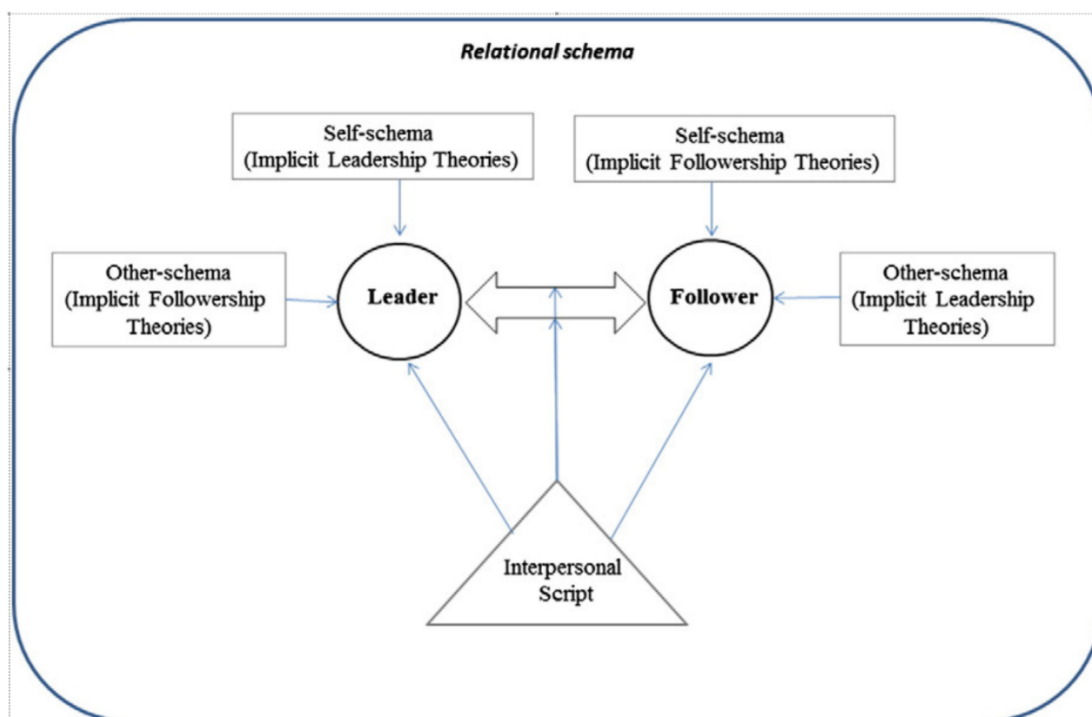


Figure 2-2: Relational leader–follower schema (Epitropaki et al. 2013)

Epitropaki et al. (2013) highlight how implicit assumptions that people hold about leaders and leadership / followers and followership influence and shape their leader-follower-ship interactions. Those theories include assumptions and expectations that are often not at the forefront of people's consciousness – they would need 'drawing out' to a level of conscious awareness in order to explore their applicability or limitations. Questions that remain open are: To what extent are those implicit assumptions actually accessible to the individual, and to what extent are they (or could they be) 'subconscious'? And to what extent is 'surfacing' those assumptions dependent upon individuals' reflexivity and/or willingness to face them? Whilst those questions are relevant to me as a facilitator, as a researcher I will leave them to psychologists and psychotherapists to answer.

Research that takes the view of leadership as emergent locates itself in social constructionism, and many researchers (Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Gergen 2009; Hosking 2011a, 2011b, to name but a few) use phenomenological methods of inquiry. Cunliffe's concept of 'intersubjectivism' provides both a theoretical platform on which to base this argument, but also illustrates how elusive this process is – whilst the theoretical construct makes sense, the question still remains how to 'capture' it in practice. Ultimately the philosophical stance underpinning this approach would not be a view of 'person as individual with clearly defined boundaries', but 'personhood as enacted and engendered through relating' (cf. Gergen 2009). Whilst I can see this stance as 'counterbalancing' the over-emphasis on the individual in western societies and in the economic and political systems of the so-called 'developed world', I would find it problematic to move all the way to the opposite extreme. Personhood may well be 'engendered through relating', but individuals have – and need – boundaries; distinguishing 'self' from 'other' is a necessity for mental health.

Denis et al (2012:254) see their approach "resolutely anchored in a socioconstructionist epistemology" and "conceptualize leadership as a social phenomenon, as a collective process in which formally designated individuals may play a role, but from which it is impossible to ignore other actors. The place of individuals is thus reduced: actors are present in leadership – enacting it, influencing it, and creating it – but they are not

‘containers’ of leadership.” Moreover, they also emphasise “that leadership is fundamentally more about participation and collectively creating a sense of direction than it is about control and exercising authority” (Denis et al. 2012:254). So these ‘post-heroic’ studies help to move away from ‘heroic leadership’ models that attribute leadership to individuals, but they can go even further: “This assumption problematizes the individuality of leadership, which in turn requires a reconceptualization of what leadership is and, for some, what indeed it should be.” (Ibid.)

Whilst Denis et al. (2012) are more specifically focusing on models of collective leadership as a form of relational leadership, their definitions also apply to relational leadership in general. Similarly, Larsen & Rasmussen’s take on leadership is that it happens in the context of “people’s daily task of understanding the situations they find themselves in, and the circumstances under which they take meaningful action that supports a company’s or an institution’s strategy” as “a co-constructive effort of the people involved to develop appropriate solutions to the challenges they suddenly find themselves in” (Larsen & Rasmussen 2015:5). These leadership “processes are particularly emergent and unpredictable” (ibid.) and the authors emphasise the importance of developing a better understanding of those “continuous and unpredictable processes, small everyday changes, everyday communication, incremental and often unnoticed experiments and relational sense-making” (Larsen & Rasmussen 2015:8).

This is particularly relevant, since leadership trainings often deal with lofty issues such as strategy building, decision-making, innovation, change management, and even team building, not only focused on individuals and individual agency, but also going about it in abstract, theoretical and purely rational ways. Larsen & Rasmussen (2015) emphasise how organisational practices like shared assumptions, working patterns and relational meaning-making lead to co-creation of leadership in practice. Leaning on Berger & Luckmann (1966), Larsen & Rasmussen point out that “these patterns are reified over time and thereby are seen as assumptions, interpretations and actions that are generally natural, logical and obvious, in spite of the fact that they are created by people in their efforts to handle current challenges” (Larsen & Rasmussen 2015:9), thus creating organisational contexts and ‘givens’, in which leadership and followership occur and are understood and (often) taken for granted. “The knowledge that people embody, apply and continuously develop is thereby

relationally created and relationally accepted. The knowledge at hand is used to initiate actions and simultaneously makes up the initial framework for constructing meaning and understanding of the very same actions.” (Larsen & Rasmussen 2015:9)

These problematisations of leadership and leadership actors link these concepts with critical management approaches that question management and leadership assumptions such as the need for command and control, hierarchies and the distribution of power.

2.4 LEADERSHIP AS EMBODIED – AESTHESIS, ART, KNOWLEDGE AND THE SENSES

This is quite a complex field, ranging from neurobiological insights to organisational aesthetics – I can only ‘dip in’ here (Melina et al. 2013; Burge et al. 2013; Salovaara & Ropo 2013; Winther 2008; Hansen et al. 2007; Ladkin 2008, 2013; Bathurst & Ladkin 2012; Katz-Buonincontro 2011a; Sinclair 2005a, 2005b, 2016).

Up until the end of the last century, life in organisations in general and leadership in particular had become increasingly ‘disembodied’. The sociologist Richard Sennett considers this a wider societal phenomenon, as he critically analyses “desensitizing the human body” “Sensate realities and bodily activity have eroded to such an extent that modern society seems a unique historical phenomenon.” (Sennett 1996:21) With hindsight, the rise of scientific management and the metaphor of organisations as machinery (cf. Biehl 2017:29) look like homage to the then progress in engineering and technology.

The ‘aesthetic turn’ in organisational research has been going on since the mid-1980s, according to Ropo, Parviainen & Koivunen (2002),

mainly as a protest to the positivist and rational paradigm that dominated organization and management thinking, as well as leadership theory. Aesthetics provided a good philosophical point to develop an alternative to the mainstream paradigm that emphasized logical, rational, and linear nature of organisational practices such as management and leadership. (Ropo et al. 2002:24f)

The 1985 SCOS conference “was an important step in the process of developing the field” which subsequently called itself ‘organizational aesthetics’ (ibid.)

In this context the terms 'aesthetic' and 'aesthetics' do not refer to the more common meanings linked to art and beauty. The Cambridge Dictionary defines 'aesthetics' as "the formal study of the principles of art and beauty"³ and 'aesthetic' as "relating to the enjoyment or study of beauty"⁴. The Merriam-Webster⁵ lists five meanings of 'aesthetic' as an adjective:

- "of, relating to, or dealing with aesthetics or the beautiful"
- "artistic"
- "pleasing in appearance: attractive"
- "appreciative of, responsive to, or zealous about the beautiful"
- "done or made to improve a person's appearance or to correct defects in a person's appearance"

and another three meanings of 'aesthetics' as a noun:

- "a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art, and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty"
- "a particular theory or conception of beauty or art: a particular taste for or approach to what is pleasing to the senses and especially sight"
- "a pleasing appearance or effect: beauty"

The Encyclopedia Britannica joins in, defining 'aesthetics' as "the philosophical study of beauty and taste" (Munro & Scruton 2024).

In contrast to this, in organisational research the term 'aesthetics' has a broader meaning: In terms of its perspective on leadership, organisational aesthetics research aims "to open a discussion of aesthetics in leadership that goes beyond metaphorical reference to leaders as artists" (Ropo et al. 2002:25).

According to Strati (2010:883) "the aesthetic understanding of work and organizational life emphasizes the materiality of everyday work in organizations", including "the activation/deactivation of the perceptive and sensory faculties and the sensitive-aesthetic

³ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/aesthetics>

⁴ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/aesthetic>

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/aesthetic>

judgment in workplaces” as well as “ the pre-cognitive influence of the sensory, emotional and aesthetic dimension of organizational artefacts”. Hansen et al. (2007:545) emphasise that “aesthetics is not synonymous with art or beauty”:

By aesthetics, we refer to sensory knowledge and felt meaning of objects and experiences. [...] Aesthetics involves meanings we construct based on feelings about what we experience via our senses [...] The Greek word *aisthesis* refers to any kind of sensory experience regardless of whether it is sensuous or artistic.

In other words, the meaning of ‘aesthetic’ here moves away from a narrow focus on either art or beauty and judgments about whether something is beautiful or not, and takes on a more epistemological aspect, combining sensory knowing with tacit knowing. Polanyi: “For our purposes, the embodied, tacit knowing corresponds roughly to sensory/aesthetic knowing, particularly as opposed to intellectual/explicit knowing.” (Hansen et al. 2007:546) Similarly, Springborg & Sutherland (2016:95) “use the term ‘aesthetic’ to refer to the felt, sensory aspects of experience. This may include, but is not limited to, the felt, sensory aspects of emotions.” They go even further, talking about ‘aesthetic reflexivity’ and ‘aesthetic agency’:

By ‘aesthetic reflexivity’ we refer not only to the ability to be aware of the aesthetics of everyday life and include such awareness into one’s knowing. We use it to refer to the process of discovering the consequences of using different sensory experiences as the tacit knowledge upon which we ground our skilful knowing and doing. Thus, this way of defining aesthetic reflexivity naturally includes an aspect of ‘aesthetic agency’, i.e. the skilful doing, which is enabled by using specific aesthetic experiences as tacit knowledge to act in and with the world around us. (Springborg & Sutherland 2016:95)

Springborg & Sutherland’s ‘aesthetic agency’ runs along a similar vein as Gladwell and Sennett, as it is about developing sensory expertise, even in occupations that are not considered sensory-based, such as management.

These uses of the terminology broaden the spectrum of the aesthetic considerably and links it more closely to the original root of the word. At the same time, it remains somewhat elusive, staying well within the realm of the subjective and not lending itself to any more positivist methods that involve measuring or calculating.

What makes the issue slightly more confusing is that part of the organisational aesthetics field does indeed deal with arts and artists, creativity and beauty: “Another line of aesthetic organization research has been that of the arts and organizations. These studies have, for

example, focused on creativity, management of arts organizations, and organizational and managerial practices to produce artistic outcomes” (Ropo et al. 2002:25). Katz-Buonincontro (2011a) talks about “engaging in an artistic experience” to “include physiological (senses – touch, feel, hear, smell, etc. – related to perception and attention) and cognitive (feelings and understandings) responses to works of art”, thus taking the narrower understanding of ‘aesthetic’ as ‘arts-related’. Similarly, Schroeder’s (2008) definition is even narrower:

Aesthetic leadership concerns the manner in which artists, and other aesthetic workers, perform leadership functions within groups, communities and culture.

However, I will stick to the broader meaning, as that helps to avoid discussions around what constitutes ‘art’ and the grey areas between artistic and non-artistic experiences.

Ropo et al. “call for the beauty of the living body in professional work and leadership” (Ropo et al. 2002:29), but do not want to see ‘geometry’ in leadership theory (i.e. emphasis on cognitive skills, hierarchical status, goals, control etc.; cf Ropo et al. 2002:26). Instead, their underlying premiss is ‘being a body’, not ‘having a body’. Their starting point is:

People in expert organizations [...] know their work most thoroughly at a sensual, bodily level, not to underestimate the cognitive aspect of these professions. In these professions, the body cannot be treated as a docile object, but the living body becomes the center of subjectivity, knowledge, and social relationships. (Ropo et al. 2002:29)

Similarly, Hansen et al. (2007) talk about ‘aesthetic leadership’ and emphasise developing and using ‘felt sense’ to make sense. Sinclair (2005a, 2005b, 2016) makes a case for looking more at the body in leadership studies, and how people exercise leadership through the body as well as words. Gender also plays a major role (cf. Sinclair & Black’s 1999 presentation “Breasts, babies and universities – reflections of two lactating professors”), as well as issues around social stereotyping.

Here lies one of the problems of the ‘embodied leadership’ concept: to exemplify what exactly ‘embodied leadership’ looks like in practice. Several case studies focus on professions that are already by definition highly ‘physical’ and are also located within the field of the arts, such as orchestra conductors, dancers, musicians etc. For example, Ladkin in her 2008 case study describes and analyses an orchestral performance, with the conductor Bobby McFerrin using his whole body – movement and gestures – to establish

and maintain connection and lead both the orchestra and the audience. But he does not do it *through* his body, he does it *with* his body. And anyway, a conductor's main communication tool (certainly during a performance) *is* her/his body – this does not apply in the same manner to managerial work outside the arts sector.

So this leaves open the question how 'embodiment' manifests itself in other 'body-focused' work contexts, such as medicine and healthcare, but also – and especially so – in fields that are not by definition 'body-oriented'.

Ropo, Parviainen & Koivunen (2002:29) list some examples: "Sitting patiently, listening to colleagues, concentrating on playing, moving, reading, or writing are examples of bodily skills needed in professional collaboration." In my view, these are *actions/activities* in the first instance, rather than *skills*, and certainly not 'bodily skills'. Even though listening, reading etc. involve bodily aspects – they are at best 'body-mind' *activities*. Ropo et al.'s "suggestion [...] that people know in many different ways – conceptually, emotionally, intuitively, and bodily" (op. cit.:30) asks for an acknowledgment of different kinds of knowing, consistent with Gergen, Shotter, Biehl and others. In that way, the challenge goes even beyond their contention "that it is the living body aesthetics in leadership that may challenge the mainstream leadership discourse that emphasizes cognition, control, hierarchy, and linear effectiveness by promoting more lateral and relational social processes of influence." (Ropo et al. 2002:30)

On the other hand, Ropo et al., in making a case for aesthetics in leadership, consider the ability to listen an essential leadership skill that involves more than just hearing and decoding verbal messages, presenting it in the context of conducting an orchestra:

From our senses, hearing has a receptive, communicative, and semiotic relationship to the world. Hearing demands acute attention to the moment and openness to the event, it is the most interior and the most direct in nature. Sounds have a direct impact on our bodies, producing immediate emotional effects. In seeing we are affected least of all, we can keep the world at a distance and control it. Hearing does not keep the world at a distance but admits it; we receive the sounds with our bodies. (Ropo et al. 2002)

Interestingly, listening does not just happen in the acoustic domain – ballroom dancers need to 'listen with the body' in "kinaesthetic empathy", as Biehl (2017:39) calls it. This theme also links in with the research (and practice) field of the use of arts in organisations. Early

on, Schön talks about “the need for artistry in professional education” (1987b:1), with ‘artistry’ meaning “the kinds of competence practitioners sometimes display in unique, uncertain, and conflicted situations of practice” (1987b:22), building on Polanyi’s (1966) concept of tacit knowledge, which he takes further into ‘knowledge-in-action’. Nissley offers a working definition:

Arts-based learning describes a wide range of approaches by which management educators and leadership/organization development practitioners are instrumentally using the arts as a pedagogical means to contribute to the learning and development of individual organization managers and leaders, as well as contributing to organizational learning and development. (Nissley 2010:13)

2.5 EMBODIED COGNITION, BODY-MIND SKILLS AND LEARNING

2.5.1 BODY-MIND THINKING, SENSORY KNOWING

Leader-follower-ship does not just happen in the brain, but also in and through the body, especially when we take the stance that it is processual and co-enacted: human interaction never happens in a vacuum. Nor does it take place just between brains – so far telepathy only occurs in fiction!

The notion of leadership as embodied is closely linked with concepts of embodied cognition: it is about ‘thinking with the body’, moving away from the cartesian dualism of brain vs body. This is confirmed by more recent neuroscientific research: cognitive processes are inextricably linked to the body, as we ‘think on our feet’, ‘keep a stiff upper lip’, ‘have a sixth sense that something is not right’ or are ‘sweating over a difficult task’ – our everyday language mirrors this somatic connectivity. Much of this happens ‘automatically’, without explicit awareness. But ‘sensory knowing’ can also – and in many professions has to – be trained. Sennett (2008) talks about physical and sensory skilfulness as part of professional knowledge, making a case for applied knowledge – which he calls craftsmanship – rather than purely theoretical knowledge.

In a (coincidental?) parallel to Ropo et al.'s 'aesthetic turn' in organisational research, Howes sees an "emergence of the anthropology of the senses" (2003:29). He refutes "European dualisms": "The fact that texts and writing have traditionally been associated with reason in Western culture, while the body is associated with the emotions, for example, does not mean that the text is intrinsically rational in nature or the body intrinsically irrational." (Howes 2003:42) This also involves a critique of treating the senses as 'subordinate': "Just as it has been customary in the West to compartmentalize the senses, it has also been customary to associate the senses and sensuality with only certain social domains, most notably aesthetics and sexuality. However, all domains of life - from social organization to exchange relations to ritual communication - are permeated with sensory practices and values, and all may be better understood by including these practices and values." (Howes 2003:48) He also reminds us that "the word sense in English contains the dual connotations of perception and meaning: to sense and to make sense may be one and the same" (Howes 2003:51)

In "Skinscapes" (Howes 2005), "Sensory Studies" (Howes 2013) and *Ways of Sensing* (Howes & Classen 2014), the authors talk about 'aesthetic knowing' and provide a critical analysis of how some sensory channels have been (and still are) privileged over others. Especially in the Western world, the visual has been prioritised and privileged (Kavanagh 2004 even talks about 'ocularcentrism' and a 'spectatorial epistemology') over the 'lower' senses, smell, taste and touch. Incidentally Howes and Classen also point out that these 'lower' senses have been traditionally associated with women, femininity – and housework (Howes & Classen 2014:6); just as all sensory perception is culturally and socially defined and often compartmentalised. They do make a case for "intersensoriality" and the "processual nature of perception – sensing": "Our ways of sensing affect not only how we experience and engage with our environment, but also how we experience and engage with each other." (Howes & Classen 2014:5).

This is about knowledge that is not just held in the brain but in the body as well and is more often than not a tacit, implicit skilfulness (Polanyi 1966; Sennett 2008; Biehl 2017; Springborg & Sutherland 2016). All this goes back in some way to Michael Polanyi (1966) who developed the concept of 'tacit knowing', which always involves a 'body aspect', a sensory dimension, and in its complexity is pretty much impossible to explain totally in words

and rational concepts. Not only is it “challenging to share tacit knowledge with other people”, but also it “often requires considerable time to acquire.” (Ropo et al. 2002:30).

The German term ‘Fingerspitzengefühl’ expresses this beautifully, meaning literally ‘sensing through one’s fingertips’, a metaphorical expression describing a finely honed, sensitive way of handling things or situations, especially fragile or difficult ones. Howes talks about ‘skin knowledge’, “the knowledge of the world one acquires through one’s skin” (2005:27). He also gives a lovely example of how in the Western world we ‘underuse’ our sense of touch:

When I worked on a railway gang in the mountains of Northern British Columbia one summer many years ago, I learned a different way of telling if a train was coming. One of my co-workers, a Witsuwit’en youth, taught me to always put my ear to the rail before attempting to cross one of the long trestle bridges that spanned the numerous gorges. This practice enabled me to hear and feel a train’s approach at a much greater distance than I would have if I’d simply “stopped, looked and listened”. (Howes 2005:29)

Despite the frequent use of the phrase ‘keeping one’s ear to the ground’, rarely anybody actually seems to do it! But for some professions, ‘sensecraft’ is an essential part of their professional skills: engineers who feel vibrations in wires; dentists, doctors and nurses who assess a patient’s condition by smell, touch and sight; physiotherapists whose hands ‘understand’ a patient’s condition and who use their whole bodies to treat the patient; tailors who feel the quality of cloth through touch; potters who recognise the qualities of clay when squeezing it in their hands. Interestingly, it is those ‘lower’ senses that are highly important – and highly trained in those trades and professions.

Leader-follower-ship as craft includes acquiring tacit knowledge and ‘gut feeling’ as much as rational thinking (Katz-Buonincontro 2011a; Sinclair 2016) and requires engaging body and mind in the process (Hansen et al. 2007; Sinclair 2016; Springborg 2012), with Springborg (2012) asking for “perceptual refinement”. As Sennett (2008:50) notes: “In the higher stages of skill, there is a constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness, the tacit knowledge serving as an anchor, the explicit awareness serving as critique and corrective. Craft quality emerges from this higher stage.” Gladwell (2005) makes a similar case to Sennett, explaining intuition as a mix of sensory expertise and intellectual knowledge. Biehl also points out that tacit knowledge “in organisational

aesthetics research is seen as roughly corresponding to sensory/aesthetic knowing that often is contrasted with intellectual/explicit knowing”, and scholars in this field tend to “equate the concept of embodied knowledge with tacit knowledge [...] and also with aesthetic knowledge as it is derived from sensory experience” (2017:20).

Two authors focusing most thoroughly on the philosophical underpinnings of embodied cognition are John Shotter and Maxine Sheets-Johnstone. Sheets-Johnstone (2011) goes so far as to make the case that cognition begins with movement, not the other way round, arguing that human cognition is inextricably and inevitably intertwined with movement: a human baby begins to ‘understand’ the world through movement – literally *grasping* it (*‘be-greifen’*). Shotter talks about ‘witness thinking’ – sensemaking in the moment and in the body: “Witness (dialogic)-thinking is a form of reflective interaction that involves coming into living contact with an other’s living being, with their utterances, their bodily expressions, their words, their ‘works’.” (Shotter 2005:50) He contrasts this with what he calls ‘aboutness thinking’: “Aboutness (monologic)-thinking, however, is unresponsive to another’s expressions; it works simply in terms of a thinker’s ‘theoretical pictures’” (Shotter 2005:51) “Whereas in the interplay of living movements intertwining with each other, new possibilities of relation are engendered, new interconnections are made, new ‘shapes’ of experience can emerge. [...] our responses occur spontaneously and directly in our living encounters with an other’s expressions.” (Shotter 2005:51) – This is great in theory, but in practice...??? Producing written text is invariably ‘monologic’ and ‘objectivises’ data – there is no way of ‘capturing’ those “intertwining moments”... in fact, the very notion of ‘capturing data’ already resides in the sphere of “aboutness thinking”!

If this applies to research processes, what about leader-follower-ship? Those, too, then happen in the ‘in-between’ of ‘witness-space’ – hence cannot be ‘captured’ either? That would suggest that learning about leader-follower-ship as relational and co-constructed does not really happen in theory lessons, but in leading-following situations. So we learn about relationships in relationships...

Ropo et al. also claim that “bodily presence, that is, copresence and colocation between the transmitter and receiver, are required for sharing tacit knowledge”, and they emphasise that “successful exchange of knowledge requires trust and mutual understanding between

the participants” (2002:34). Whilst their example of orchestra leadership by a conductor has limited applicability, in that the majority of organisations do not involve skilled musicians for whom listening is a focal part of their musical training, it can nevertheless be applied to mainstream businesses, as their “everyday practice in the workplace is characterized by multiple voices, arguments, and negotiation” (2002:36). Other scholars take this concept further and even talk about organisational choreography (e.g. Kolo 2016; Biehl 2017):

In organisation studies it is particularly promising to apply choreography not as a metaphor, but to consider actual forms of movement co-ordination and collaboration on a micro-level and choreography as an ordering structure and framework on a macro-level. [...] Choreography in this chapter is used to explore ways of collaboration, with bodies that are co-ordinated and ‘inscribed’ through previous experiences and embodied forms of knowing and influenced by the space in which they move. (Biehl 2017:86)

This is also one more example how the lens of dance can help us to ‘see’ organisational life differently – this would apply to researchers as well as members of organisations.

Probably the most comprehensive publication to be mentioned when talking about leadership and dance is Biehl’s 2017 book *Dance and Organisation: Integrating Dance Theory and Methods into the Study of Management*. It pulls together the different strands of practice and research that have developed, from dance as a metaphor to dance as a learning tool to dance as a research method, drawing on empirical projects as well as a range of conceptual developments. It is the first (and, to my knowledge, so far the only) attempt to map out the ‘dance and organisations’ landscape and give an overview of the field as well as in-depth analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the different perspectives and, above all, the potential of dance to aid insight into and understanding of organisational life. Biehl sees leadership as relational and embodied, co-constructed between leaders and followers and rooted in kinaesthetic empathy and a kinaesthetic feedback loop, whereby leaders and followers ‘tune in’ to and influence each other (Biehl 2017, Chapter 4: Kinaesthetic Empathy: Leadership).

2.5.2 BODY LEARNING

I need to start with an exclusion note here: the field of leadership learning (in fact, mostly training) is too broad to go into here, as is the experiential learning field; and whilst both

fields impact on both my research thinking and my workshop development, their influence is indirect and not a focus of this research. Leadership learning and training is a multi-million industry, according to Pfeffer's sarcastic critique of this area as 'leadership BS' (2015) - he talks scathingly about "leadership failures" that "continue to occur with unacceptable frequency" and that he puts down to "systemic and psychological processes that produce what we observe every day in the world, in spite of all the leadership-development efforts, training programs, books, TED talks, and so forth" (Pfeffer 2015:6). Other reasons for not delving into this topic further are – as outlined earlier – that leadership learning is mostly focused on rational-cognitive approaches and is usually based on an 'entity approach' (see Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012), focusing on leader identity and the individual, not on relationships (Pfeffer 2015; DeRue & Myers 2014).

The wider field of management development / management learning is also very broad; and although there is much discussion about the need to differentiate between 'leaders' and 'managers', management development often includes a leadership aspect, particularly as 'leadership skills/qualities' are frequently a requirement for management roles.

If we can accept cognition as embodied, then learning is embodied, too: Humans learn with all their senses, regardless of whether or not they are aware of it. As we develop aesthetic knowledge, with that comes also aesthetic agency: aesthetic skilfulness can be and needs to be developed, acquired, learned, trained (cf. Sennett 2008; Gladwell 2005). Old-style apprenticeships used to be based on this principle, through 'learning on the job'; today much of it happens through informal learning opportunities such as mentoring, networking, volunteering or hobbies; and many professional organisations attempt to 'capture' this kind of learning through their continuing professional development (CPD) guidelines. It also happens through experience coupled with reflective practice.

As we 'think with our bodies' (and in some professional contexts more than in others), we also learn *through* our bodies, not just *with* our bodies. Skill development is not just a mental or mentally steered and controlled exercise, but requires sensory, physical practice and presence (Sennett 2008; Gladwell 2005; Stelter 2004, 2008; Sheets-Johnstone 2011; Shotter 2005, 2006, 2010; Winther 2013, 2014; Winther et al. 2015). Well-known examples are the almost proverbial 10,000 hours of practice that it takes to master playing an

instrument or sport well, or the lengthy and intense on-the-job training that healthcare professionals need to undergo to become proficient in recognising, interpreting and treating patients' symptoms.

Aesthetic agency ties in with Sennett's 'craftsmanship' in that it is about sensory and somatic expertise which needs to be trained in order to develop and grow.

2.6 LEADERSHIP, LEADERSHIP LEARNING AND DANCE

It is possible for dance to be used as a topos for leadership, in the sense that dance can serve as a metaphor or analogy for the way that leaders move and navigate in the world. For example, a leader who is skilled in dance might be seen as having grace and poise, and being able to respond quickly and effectively to changing circumstances. In this way, dance can be used as a way to think about and understand leadership, and to explore the qualities and skills that are important for effective leadership. There are a number of examples in the leadership literature, and I will discuss some relevant ones here. For the purpose of this thesis, they fall into two main groups: those that use dance simply as an analogy, a metaphor that allows them to talk about leadership in a more illustrative way; and those that actually employ some form of dance as an 'embodied metaphor', thus using its experiential value, either for their own learning or to facilitate other people's learning. The former approaches are restricted to *talking about* leadership, the second involve *doing* leadership.

2.6.1 A BIT ABOUT DANCE

Dance is one of the skills that requires those famous 10,000 hours of learning and developing somatic skilfulness, but it can also be a medium through which awareness of such learning can be developed (Springborg & Sutherland 2016; Hujala et al. 2016; Powell & Gifford 2016; Hanna 2015; Sheets-Johnstone 2011).

In her 2015 book *Dancing to Learn* Judith Lynne Hanna makes a powerful and well-researched case for engaging with dance, be it as spectator, amateur or professional. She

asserts that “dance as a category of physical activity produces new brain cells and their connections; increases neurotransmitters, nerve growth factors, and the formation of new blood vessels; helps regulate stress; and boosts the production of brain chemicals that enhance learning” (Hanna 2015:28). More importantly, “we think not just with our brains but in collaboration with our bodies because thought processes are in part based on physical experiences of the body, many of which are culturally constructed. Cognitive stimuli engage dance movement and this motor action may trigger conceptual processing.” (2015:41) But dancing does not just affect individuals’ cognitive processes, it also has a social impact, especially where dancing involves partnering others: “Identifying the feelings and mental states of others facilitates a cornerstone of social behavior. Broadly congruent mirror neurons seem to support cooperative behavior among people.” (2015:45)

An groundbreaking empirical study at the Neural Plasticity Lab of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum demonstrated that ballroom dancing more than any other exercise enhanced the cognitive performance as well as posture, balance, tactile and sensorimotor performance in older adults (Kattenstroth et al. 2010, 2011, 2013). This, in connection with the pleasurable feelings that dance can generate (Hanna 2015:66), makes it an ideal ‘vehicle’ for learning. Indeed, the ‘fun factor’ is one of the big attractions of using arts-based methods in leadership and management development (Jelinek 2016).

2.6.2 DANCE AS A WAY OF SPEAKING ABOUT LEADERSHIP

The ‘leadership-as-dance’ trope is often used to evoke associations of harmonious collaboration and aesthetic ‘togetherness’, of ‘give-and-take’ relationships, and not least of elegance and beauty. However, authors who use this trope often use it uncritically, without any attention to – or even awareness of – tacit assumptions around dance and dancing. Some do not appear to have in-depth knowledge of dance and the technicalities involved and/or do not take a critical view of leadership. ‘Dance’ appears to come with a raft of connotations, but often enough these connotations are not clarified or even made explicit, whilst assumptions abound about ‘how it works’. When taking a closer look at some of those (tacit) assumptions, they turn out to be erroneous, based on limited personal experience (which is often generalised and/or presented as fact) or even on stereotypes.

Amongst authors of books, articles and blogs about leadership (e.g. book titles: Senge & Kleiner 1999; Senge et al. 1999; Cammock 2003; Denhardt & Denhardt 2005; Johnson 2005, to name but a few), the ‘dance of leadership’ metaphor seems to be quite popular. Mostly it is used purely to evoke connotations of lightness, balance, grace, skilfulness, artistry, but frequently this does not contribute to a deeper understanding of what leadership is or could be (Biehl 2017). Others emphasise that ‘leadership, like dance, is an art’ – again, is this to make a subject that is often treated as concerned with rational decisions sound more ‘special’, to elevate it to a level of talent and skill that ordinary mortals cannot aspire to? After all, art is supposedly produced by specially gifted, uniquely talented individuals – so, by implication, is that what it takes to be a leader? Could this even be the ‘heroic leader’ walking in by the back door?

Whilst there is much emphasis on creativity and imagination, the craft skills of an artist and the amount of practice required to train and develop them, are often neglected, as is the ‘10 000 hours to master the craft’ aspect that applies in the arts as much as in sport.

2.6.2.1 SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DANCE METAPHOR IN THE LEADERSHIP LITERATURE

Bell & Shea (1999) use the dance analogy in a very extensive way throughout a whole book and very much ‘talk dance’ about partnerships; however (and surprisingly so!), leading is only mentioned once; and they never employ the ‘real thing’.

Johnson (2005) uses the dance metaphor in the title and some chapters of her book *Dance of Leadership*, but not throughout. In the introduction, she emphasises that she learnt much about leadership from being a passionate dancer, then moves on to Gabrielle Roth’s ‘five rhythms’ to illustrate different styles of leadership. It is only in Chapter 9 (the book has 11 chapters) that she discusses the leader-follower relationship, with the subtitle “Lessons from Partner dancing”. Interestingly, she uses the analogy of the Ballroom ‘frame’ (for more detail on this see *Sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.2*) that sets boundaries as well as giving support, enabling dance partners to move together – an accurate description and a helpful insight.

Stumpf & Dutton (1990), in “The Dynamics of Learning through Management Simulations: Let’s Dance” use dance as “metaphor for depicting the learning process” of “learning

through participation in a management simulation". The analogy runs through the programme ("Day 1. Setting up for the Dance", "Day 2. The Dance", "Day 3. Learning from the Dance Experience"), even down to the level of individual activities, whereby "different dancers can take the lead, request a particular song (issue to discuss), seek other partners (facilitators, other participants to learn from/with), choose their dance steps (exhibit specific skills) [...] During the dance, people are performing for themselves as well as others." But the 'dancing' is entirely metaphorical, and clearly the authors do not venture into the physicality of it, despite all the detail they delve into.

Ropo & Sauer (2008) explore different approaches to leadership through the analogy of two dances, Waltz and Rave, although they do not advocate for actually *doing* dance as an embodied way of exploring leadership. For them, the Waltz is an epitome of hierarchy, command and control, fixed/inflexible roles; whereas the Rave stands for empowerment, absence of hierarchy and freedom from leadership/followership. However, their methodology is limited by their personal experiences (or possibly lack thereof?) of those dances – it is highly interpretative and subjective: in other words, someone else's experience could be very different (as is mine, for example).

Ehrich & English (2013), "Leadership as dance: a consideration of the applicability of the 'mother' of all arts as the basis for establishing connoisseurship": Like Bell & Shea (1999) and Stumpf & Dutton (1990), this paper goes into a lot of detail to apply the metaphor of dance to organisational settings and leadership learning. The authors emphasise that dance is a nonverbal language with "its own vocabulary (steps, gestures and physical movements) and grammar", which, "like any other language, requires dancers to be technically proficient [...] and [...] following the rules and structures of the language (derived from the context) that govern the dance". What dance and leadership have in common is connoisseurship, which is based on tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966) as well as conscious technical knowhow, cognitive as well as embodied knowledge. Ehrich & English see leadership as "a reciprocal and relational process" (2013:465) and acknowledge the importance of followers, but cannot let go of the need for hierarchy. But whilst they advocate for change in the language we use to talk about leadership ("by utilizing a different language, new words and new worlds can be envisioned", 2013:473), and suggest more use of arts-based and creative methods in leadership learning, such as drama, role play, pottery-

making or poetry, strangely enough the one creative form they do *not* mention as a learning activity is... guess what? The “‘mother’ of all arts” – dance.

So why do I feel uncomfortable with academics’ use of the dance analogy for leader-follower-ship? A comment from Springborg & Sutherland gave me an ‘aha’ moment:

[...] the use of dance as metaphor is problematic, primarily because metaphors are the use of a more familiar domain to create understanding of a less familiar domain (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), and for most managers (and scholars studying management education) it is reasonable to assume that leadership is a more familiar domain than dance. The use of dance as metaphor may at first glance seem to be inspirational, but it runs the risk of misusing dance as a screen onto which one may project pre-conceived ideas about leadership. Without having substantial, physical experience with actual dance, our ideas about various dance forms are not a good source domain for metaphors of leadership. (2016:98f)

To this I would add that for many managers, even leadership does not seem to be a particularly ‘familiar domain’; plus, from what has been written about leadership and dance, there are probably at least as many pre-conceived ideas about dance as there are about leadership! So whilst dance has the potential to be a powerful analogy, its use often shows a lack of real knowledge and the risk of over-interpretation. On the other hand, the detailed way it is used by Ehrich & English (2013) made me ask: if there is so much potential value here, why use just the metaphor and not the ‘real thing’?

2.6.2.2 ‘IT’S ALL ABOUT IMPROVISATION’ – BUT THIS IS A SKILL THAT HAS TO BE LEARNED

Another frequent misunderstanding: the assumption that ‘it’s all about improvisation’ – leaders are people who have the intuition / gut feeling / instinct to do the ‘right thing in the right place at the right time’. This view neglects the fact that improvisation is a skill that can be and has to be learned and developed through practice, experience and reflection/reflexivity. This links in with Schön’s ‘professional artistry’ as well as Sennett’s view on craft.

For example, the *uncritical* use of ‘leadership is like playing in a jazz band’ shows that those authors have never played in a jazz band and do not know that improvisational solo pieces consist mainly of well-rehearsed ‘chunks’ that are put together in a slightly varied way. Yes, one player takes the lead, and the others follow – but they know what is coming, to quite an

extent. Of course, they have to listen very carefully to pick up any changes in rhythm, sequence or emphasis, but much of what the soloist does is familiar enough to the other band members to an extent that enables them to follow and/or accompany the soloist, rather than stand completely surprised and just ‘make it up as they go along’. Similar misunderstandings can be found in regard to dance: for example, Ropo & Sauer see the Waltz as the epitome of “standardization, formalization and structure” (2008:563). They assume that all it takes to be a good Waltz leader, one needs to know the step pattern, recognise the rhythm of the music and know “the steps well enough not to crush the partner’s toes”. However, dancing with someone who can do *just* that is no pleasure – Ropo & Sauer’s assumption completely disregards improvisation skill (which also takes into account the shape of the room, the amount of space available, other people on the dancefloor), a ‘feel’ for the music, a ‘feel’ for the partner and their level of skill, a sensory connectedness / ‘being with’ the partner. A leader who has that level of skill will often make less experienced followers ‘swoon’ (“They made me do things that I didn’t know I could do!”) – and that enjoyment is certainly not based on “standardization, formalization and structure.” (For a similar criticism see Biehl 2017:128)

2.6.3 DANCE AS A WAY OF DOING, EXPERIENCING AND EXPLORING LEADERSHIP

Whilst the dance analogy has been around in management research circles for a while, its application in practice is relatively new. The *actual* use of dance is like a completely different dimension – the difference between *imagining* something or fantasising about it and actually physically *doing* it! It is about as dramatic as the difference between imagining to ski and actually whooshing down a ski slope: feeling the cold wind in your face, your muscles moving or tightening, the sense of wobbling versus control (depending on experience), the unpredictability of the ground (hello molehill!), a sense of nervousness or even fear when you’re a beginner, but also the pleasure of the speed... and all that at the same time! You certainly cannot get that when *thinking about* skiing (unless you are a high-level ski athlete and thus familiar with those sensory experiences), not even when using virtual reality tools. The following studies all have in common that dancing actually happens, instead of just being talked about. They are of particular interest to me, in that they all take an embodied

approach to leader-follower-ship, so I am looking at a) what actually physically happens as kinaesthetic practice, and b) how this experience becomes meaningful for both participants and facilitators/authors. What is important to mention is that I come at it from a dancer's perspective, so whilst some of my comments may sound critical, they do not apply to the overall academic value of the literature, but to the way dance is used and how it aids and highlights insight into the leadership topic. I also find it important to flag up unqueried and untested assumptions about dance.

Sarah Heyward (2000), frustrated at the lack of progress in a team project, finds herself "imagining how these people might dance tango if they danced it in the same way that they participated in the project" and decides to apply her lead and follow insights to project management. Her essentially autoethnographic list of 'lessons learnt' is fairly straightforward and somewhat superficial, interspersed with some rather stereotypical assumptions about Tango (e.g. very gendered: leader = male, follower = female), although there are some useful insights. Some 'lessons' have little to do with Tango, e.g. "Remember the warm-up", or "The importance of a good finish". The myth of 'the leader does it all' perseveres, and there is nothing about a reciprocal relationship, much less about shared responsibility for the performance.

Peterson & Williams (2004) use a line dance with groups of students, where the 'leading' is happening through the person(s) in the front line that others 'look to'. "It is about being willing to learn to lead and having the courage to choose to lead", as the authors put it (op cit:195). As the choreography is repeated with a quarter turn to the right (90°) after each sequence, the front line consists of a different group of dancers each time, i.e. there is a change in leaders after each turn. Obviously the assumption here (and this remains unquestioned) is that being at the frontline (i.e. highly visible) equals being in a leader position. The focus is quite firmly on the leader – the authors only briefly mention a discussion about "questioning the leader" and "not blindly following" (p195), otherwise the follower role is not addressed. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that arise from the exercise and are required to write a reflection piece on their experiences, but leadership per se is not problematised, nor is the assumption that leadership is linked to organisational hierarchy, as shown in the assignment question: "Using the line dance metaphor as an organization, what does it mean to be a leader within an organization?" This puts the paper

firmly into the 'heroic' leadership tradition. Dancing enables the students to experience leadership as a process and also to deal with issues like confidence, competence, responsibility, dealing with mistakes etc. Learning outcomes include attention to connection between self and others, but also connection with self (such as their emotions, self-image, self-confidence, anxiety). One other issue that might be relevant to mention: Line dancing does not use touch – everybody dances on their own; but there is a sense of 'togetherness', as everyone makes the same moves at the same time (or at least attempts to do so).

Mason & Soekarjo (2007) use Argentine Tango as direct experience of leading and following and as a representation of aesthetic processes in organisational life.

From their work with managers they identify two relevant dimensions:

1. "interplay" (= leader not always leading, follower not always following); characteristics: a) mutuality, b) play, c) trust, d) the 'alien other'
2. "serenity of clarity"; elements: a) 'more ways lead to Rome', b) 'know thyself', c) 'typhoid Mary as leader'

Especially the second dimension might need more clarification, as it is not obvious how this dimension has evolved or how it has been identified – more information about the process would be helpful.

The authors set out with the (now fairly widely shared) view that VUCA organisational environments and business contexts require adaptability and flexibility in thinking as well as in managerial roles, whereas leadership and leadership development are stuck in traditional, 'static' conventional methods. Indeed they are quite scathing about the notion of leadership as treated in the mainstream leadership literature – they see it as little more than "a tautological fiction, an ephemeral, ghostly phantom". They ask "Is leadership anything more than a ghostly vapor evoked in an illusionary search for comfort and security?" But – paradoxically? – they still offer managers leadership training. They see leadership as processual, 'in-between' leader and follower and criticise the way in which traditional leadership training treats it as static. In contrast to this, Argentine Tango would require that "both partners take leadership over their own role", hence allows for and encourages fluidity in the understanding of leading and following and the leader/follower roles and uses "embodied epistemology". The authors "use tango as topos with respect to leadership, thus

serving as both an association of ideas and also as a mnemonic". They also see Tango as "a way of being human 'more than' the rational ideal of the industrial era, and an embodied epistemology that is 'more than' the abstract rationality of that time" (although one would not have to go as far as Tango to find such ways of being). Their claim that "the embodiment in tango of elegance, grace and surprise are also powerfully aesthetic, opening unique possibilities particularly in its principles and lived experience of lead and follow" sounds interesting, but some additional clarification, illustration and evidence would make it more convincing.

Unfortunately, Mason & Soekarjo do not divulge anything about what their workshop participants actually *do*: "Participants were invited to engage in an unworded experience of these principles in a lived, felt way; intertwined with moments of reflection and feedback." Did participants embark on contact or balancing exercises? Did they walk together? Did they actually (learn to) dance Tango? The authors also mention a participant survey, which consisted of three open-ended questions, two of which were leading questions anticipating that a particular learning experience had happened. It would be interesting to know how they established whether this learning had actually taken place or whether they assumed that it had.

Batcheller (2012), similar to Heyward, draws on the autoethnographic experience from her social dance lessons as a follower, probably mainly dancing with an instructor (who would usually have taken the lead), as she does not mention any other dance partner. Social dance lessons, like the ones she refers to, usually include a variety of dances, including Ballroom, Latin, Salsa and/or others. The only dance she mentions explicitly is the Country Two Step (also known as Texas Two Step), an American country dance. As the author draws parallels between dance follower and follower role in organisational life, she highlights the importance of synergy, timing, balance of power, collaboration, courage, trust, partnership, interdependence, anxiety, vulnerability. She also applies the original 5 dimensions of Chaleff's 'courageous follower' (Chaleff 2009; the 3rd edition has 7). One key point is the "value of returning to a novice level": every time she learns something new, she finds that this is "quickly accompanied by anxiety and feelings of vulnerability" – a valuable insight if we accept that organisational life happens largely in VUCA environments and people have to deal with novel and uncomfortable situations. Another key insight was

Batcheller's understanding that she is both leader and follower in her organisation. What is less plausible is her assumption that "leaders must teach their followers not only how to lead but [...] how to be good followers": this puts the whole responsibility for follower development on the leader – and it quite possibly echoes her dancing with a dance instructor who would naturally assume this role; but to apply this to all organisational leader roles would be an overgeneralisation. (It does not help that, to underpin this claim, she quotes an article that neither states nor supports this argument.)

Burge et al. (2013) used Queer Argentine Tango as both a metaphor and a dance activity in their interactive workshops – 'queer', because the lead-follow roles are not heteronormative: dancers can swap roles at any time, which reduces the power gap between partners. This allows challenging not just entrenched roles and attitudes, but also behaviours and practices (although, ironically, this session is part of a *leadership* course!). The authors report that embodied learning, combined with dialogic reflection as well as knowledge of theoretical concepts can lead to a 'paradigm shift' for participants. The leader-follower relationship is seen as symbiotic, a non-dichotomy, with fuzzy boundaries between the roles. Themes emerging from participant feedback include trust, confidence, team dynamics, but also the quality of the relationship. From their paper it is not clear what exactly the workshop activities are – whether participants actually learnt to dance tango or whether dance-related exercises were used. Two interesting factors: the dance activity/activities was/were a 'surprise event' (i.e. not announced in the workshop programme), and participants were not given any followership theory before the dance workshop (only afterwards). I wonder whether the authors/facilitators were worried that participants might 'chicken out' of the activities, or try to 'come prepared'? From the paper, that is not clear. I am also not sure just how much the 'mainstream' Argentine Tango 'scene' differs from Queer Tango – some of the claims about what is and is not done in Tango contradicts my experience, for example that role changes only happen in Queer Tango, or that Queer Tango is fundamentally different from 'mainstream' Argentine Tango: I have seen both styles danced together in the same events – social dancers made their own choices quite freely. But of course no two social dance events are quite the same, and there are also regional differences – hence I tend to be cautious when making statements about the 'truth' of dance events and how representative they are. Another interesting point that is made

about Queer Tango is that it is “possible for the lead to pass from one party to another *without changing the hold*” (Burge et al. 2013:181, authors’ emphasis). This strikes me as an impediment, since the asymmetrical dance hold or ‘frame’ has developed in such a way as to give the leader a position with physical leverage that facilitates leading – leading from a follower’s position is more difficult in terms of initiating movement and supporting one’s partner; and in my experience a change of role is usually accompanied by changing the hold.

Hujala et al. (2014, 2016) have experimented with “creative dance sessions” but do not divulge any specific style or form of dance. Their sessions as well as the papers have a strong autoethnographic element, in that the 2016 group consisted purely of academics, who also co-authored the paper, whilst the 2014 session had (probably) 3 researchers and 4 managers as participants. In both instances the workshops were facilitated by a dance pedagogue (although neither paper gives an explanation what that is). The 2014 paper is somewhat vague about the dance sessions: the physical setting/setup is not explained but appears to be a performance in front of others (“When I was on the stage”); the session starts with a warm-up, but we are not told what it consisted of; apparently participants performed individually (“individual performances”) and as a group (“movement in a group and for the group”). It also mentions that the dance activities were accompanied by a musician, with live music. In the practical dance sessions participants ‘dance’ difficult situations and feelings to do with their roles as managers. The authors speak of a “co-constructive experiment”, taking the perspective of participant observers, which raises questions as to role of the researchers: they are observing and interpreting what the participating managers do, but also raise their own problem issues. Dance activities are combined with dialogical reflection rounds and individual written reflections, using participants’ experiences as well as video footage of their dances as a basis for interpretation. Through this experiment, the researchers aim to explore whether this ‘corporeal method’ could create different kinds of knowledge about interactions and communication in management and come to the conclusion that it would be possible to use this approach as action research, looking into communication at a micro-level.

Their 2016 study takes a similar approach, but each participant creates a ‘dance story’ as “living and embodied interview” to explore a problem issue in their organisational worklife.

Each of them chooses their own music and dance style and, interpreting their specific music piece, ‘dances’ their issue, followed by feedback from the group through “imitating the movements of the performer to the same music”, followed in turn by a “reflective feedback discussion”. Each performance is videoed, with the recordings used in a final discussion and interpretation round. There are altogether 5 ‘dance stories’, two of which have specific named dance styles, Finnish Tango (the Finnish version of Argentine Tango) and Paso Doble (with the misunderstanding that PD depicts the fight between matador and bull – actually it is understood to be about the matador and his cape, or about matador and woman). We are not told to how much dance experience the participants/authors have – certainly for non-dancers or non-performers the dance task must have been quite daunting: “The performer had to enter the stage alone, and – witnessed by ‘the audience’ consisting of other participants – take the initiative in the interaction by asking ‘the boss’ to dance.” It is also not clear whether each participant just danced their own role, or switched between the two roles of ‘self’ and ‘boss’. The authors “aimed to highlight the leader-follower relationship particularly from the perspective of followers” and had therefore specifically invited participants that were “not in leadership positions”. The dance pedagogue acted as facilitator, guide and ‘insurance’ in case of strong emotional reactions and is also a co-author. The authors of the 2016 paper go to great lengths to explain and explore their philosophical underpinnings, even using pictures (drawings that depict the four seasons) to illustrate their foundations – more than a quarter of the whole text is dedicated to this. There are also drawings featuring ‘typical’ scenes/stances from the dance performances, although it is not clear who decided what was ‘typical’, and some dance illustrations are ambiguous and could be interpreted in different ways. None of the drawings were done by the participants – a missed opportunity perhaps?

Helle Winther’s professional background is in psychology and psychotherapy, and both her research and her professional practice focus on body and movement-oriented ways of learning. The style of dance that is used in the paper “The Dancing Nurses” (2015) that focuses on a course which is part of professional nursing training is not specified, but from my own experience of sessions that she facilitated I assume that they involve somatic exercises and creative dance movements with facilitator guidance, followed by group discussions and written reflections (assignments?): “rich learning experiences were written

down and partially worked through in a common space.” The sessions involved working at 3 different levels: 1) somatic (self)awareness; 2) ”communication reading” with body contact; 3) leadership & followership.

Powell & Gifford (2016) used Latin American dancing with a group of students on a corporate MBA course. Whilst the students (all fairly senior managers) engage in some practical somatic exercises (e.g. hand-to-hand connection, eye contact, walking together, falling-holding, shifting weight), they do not undertake any actual dancing – that is performed for them by trained dancers (high-level amateurs and professionals). The students are given explanations and demonstrations of what it takes to produce a high-level competitive performance; they watch the dancers perform, and then analyse and comment on their practice. So the physicality of the dance leader-follower-ship is not something that the students experience in their own bodies, but as an audience, almost ‘second-hand’ – the experience is not in the doing, but in the watching, which makes it more of a behind-the-scenes glimpse than a direct embodied engagement with leading and following. Gender roles are not questioned, challenged or problematised: “the man leads and the woman follows” is taken for granted and “can be ignored” (Powell & Gifford 2016:139); gendered language is used throughout the paper (and presumably in the workshop sessions, too). It is not clear to me how a more collaborative, non-hierarchical approach to leadership (one of the aims of the workshop) could be achieved, if traditional preconceptions about leadership and followership (such as gender stereotyping) are not addressed. Given that the corporate culture of the client organisation is likely to be very male-dominated – the authors emphasise that almost all the participants have a professional background in engineering – this seems like a missed opportunity.

Springborg & Sutherland (2016) offer one of the most clearly conceptualised approaches to the use of dance as a learning experience about leader-follower-ship. They not only “link Polanyi’s ideas of tacit knowledge with Embodied Cognition’s idea of the body as the root of all cognitive processes” (2016:95), but also with the need for reflection and reflexivity, combining this into what they call “aesthetic reflexivity”, i.e. the way “we use sensory experience to achieve skilful knowing and doing” (2016:96). In their workshops, they take their students through “a number of exercises used for teaching tango and contact improvisation”. At least one of the authors/facilitators also teaches Argentine Tango and

Contact Improvisation, thus has himself plenty of experience of dancing. The authors are noticeably cautious with claims of effectiveness, emphasising that the effects of an intervention using arts-based methods are not easily or readily predictable, since developing and building sensory knowledge and developing aesthetic agency takes time and practice. Moreover, transferability of learning into the workplace cannot be taken for granted.

Van Loggerenberg's (2019) dissertation for the postgraduate degree of Master of Creative Practice is included here, as it is in the public domain and is very close to my topic. The author is a professional dancer and senior academic and looks at leader-follower-ship from a dancer's perspective, but also suggests applying partner dancing as a "tool in management education" to "increase participants' awareness of their somatic-self and offer an alternative approach to acknowledge and address often unconscious habitual patterns relating to leading and following in their own work life" (Van Loggerenberg 2019:36f). However, her research is purely autoethnographic, as she explores leader-follower-ship in a series of one-to-one sessions with a fellow dancer who is also her tutor in two of the three dance styles that she uses – he actually has invented and developed those styles (Piloting and TACTICS). Unfortunately, proper understanding of those dance styles is not possible for any reader except those that have actually seen or experienced those styles, since there is no video footage or clear description available in the public domain or via academic libraries, nor does the author give enough descriptive detail, apart from explaining the principles. Whilst she claims "that an in-depth understanding of the terminology, vocabulary and movement mechanics associated with this particular partner improvisation form is not required in this study" (2019:31), I disagree with this stance, as it makes understanding her analysis and interpretations difficult. The dissertation contains photographs, but a) stills can never fully illustrate movement – a problem that I, too, will need to address later – and b) most of the photos lack captions or explanations, so that it is often not clear what they are meant to highlight.

Finally, I do want to reference some of my own work (Matzdorf 2005; Matzdorf & Sen 2015, 2016), as it contributes to my current position, highlights some of my earlier ideas, and also illustrates my own learning journey. Starting from an autoethnographic angle with my dance partner, reflecting on our own experiences and understanding of leader-follower-ship (which

continuously evolved, changed and got modified through our own dance practice), this understanding grew into a workshop for others, not just to share *our* experiences and reflections, but for participants to have, evaluate and reflect on *their own* experience of the physicality, sensory and emotional complexity of leading and following. Whilst I always collected reflective feedback from participants and used it to progress and mature the workshop design, participants' voices were not given much space in the papers – so this current project is an opportunity to rectify this. Somatic exercises and dancing 'with touch' challenged participants' ingrained patterns of perceptions and assumptions about leaders and followers. For me as facilitator it is always essential to be present and participating in body and mind, as well as finding a balance between 'thinking with the body' and 'thinking with the head', both for myself and my participants. It is also important to have a balance between practice and theory (e.g. followership theories, principles of dance) in the workshops, and to address stereotypes and preconceptions (about leadership, followership, Ballroom dancing, gender, hierarchy etc.).

All the authors in the second, 'applied', group (see *Appendix A2* for an overview) confirm that they themselves (where the dance experience is more autoethnographic) and/or their participants/students have found the dance experience relevant to their understanding of leading and following. All of them understand leadership as a whole-body engagement that is about relating, even though not all of them would emphasise the processual nature of it. Whilst some are not questioning the concept of leadership per se or explicitly subscribing to a 'post-heroic' approach, none of them stick to the traditional hierarchical view of leadership: not all of them take an explicitly critical stance on this, but they all emphasise that leading and following require mutual agreement. Most of them emphasise the importance of following and the follower role and see leading-following / leader-follower relationships as co-constructed and based on mutuality. They also – explicitly or implicitly – acknowledge the importance of emotion and emotional involvement. Some address power and power relationships more explicitly than others.

What constitutes an 'embodied experience' might need some clarification: clearly, *watching* someone else performing is not the same kind of involvement as actually *doing* it yourself, and the sensory experiences in both cases are very different. For example, feeling off-balance oneself, feeling a partner being off-balance, or seeing someone else being off-

balance are entirely different experiences, not only in a sensory but also an emotional way: in the first two cases, one might feel surprise, nervousness, irritation, insecurity, even anxiety ('am I/are we going to fall over?', 'I need to support my partner' 'am I letting my partner down?' 'am I looking stupid?' 'do we give the wrong impression?' 'oh, I/we got it wrong' 'my partner got it wrong'). In the third case, reactions would be more likely anything from 'oh dear, that went wrong' 'hope they can recover from that mishap' 'that didn't look good' 'they don't know what they're doing' 'I could do that better' to not even noticing!

These studies also raise some important practical questions:

Firstly, to what extent does it help if a facilitator is an experienced dancer her/himself? Is it a necessary requirement? Where there is no in-depth knowledge or experience, it appears that people are prone to making assumptions about dancing that they themselves are not aware of, and which they do not or cannot check out and verify (or falsify).

Secondly, on the autoethnographic aspects of some of the studies: Just because the author(s) have found their dance experience (plus reflection) an eye opener about leader-follower-ship does not necessarily mean that everybody else will find the same! To what extent do facilitating authors acknowledge and respect their participants' perceptions, interpretations, judgments? And how clearly can they (or anyone) distinguish between *misunderstandings* / *misconceptions* / *misinterpretations* and *different* interpretations?

Thirdly, where studies involve working with participants other than the author(s): what is the balance (if any) between the authorial voice and participant voices? As the purpose of those practical workshops / sessions is for the participants to make sense of leading/following in different / new ways, should there be more of a focus on them? Or are participants' comments only there to confirm the authors' views? In some studies author = facilitator = participant – how are these different perspectives / roles reconciled and/or reflected upon? Except in Hujala et al.'s papers, this issue is hardly addressed at all. On the other hand, 'participant-led' research, as described e.g. by Vince & Warren (2012) or used by Warren (2002) and Shortt (2014) would be nigh impossible in a setting that requires a level of expertise and guidance from the facilitator(s).

And finally, where authors are taking a post-heroic, critical stance on leader-follower-ship and/or are explicitly challenging power relations, they tend use a non-hierarchical dance

style (e.g. line dance, Queer tango, 'creative dance'). Others seem to be less concerned about power imbalance or gender stereotyping and leave those issues out of the equation (at least they are not mentioned in the publications), so the question remains unanswered how they are addressed (or not) in the actual workshops/sessions. As stereotypes, preconceptions and untested assumptions still abound in the leadership field, do these issues *need* to be addressed – or, inversely, what does it do to leave them out, especially in a workshop format that aims to engender new ways of looking at leader-follower-ship?

2.6.4 LOCATING THIS PROJECT WITHIN THE FIELD OF EMBODIED LEADING/FOLLOWING

None of the studies that explore leadership through dance in an embodied, somatic, sensuous way with groups have taken the approach of getting leadership and followership stereotypes actively 'dismantled' with the group participants. Moreover, using a 'stereotypical' form of dance that by many, including seasoned academics like Ropo and Sauer, or even by dancers themselves (e.g. Powell) is seen as gendered, heteronormative and hierarchical, in order to unpick, deconstruct and subvert widely held assumptions, and to uncover the limitations to leader power and the 'invisible' power of the follower, can be considered a novel and unusual undertaking. It would also be useful to have studies that give more space to the participant voice, focus more on the participants' perspective, their experiences and how they make sense of them. Their learning journeys present challenges, not just answers. Most of the studies seem to work with non-dancers – but what about participants with dance experience? How would they respond to what might challenge their own practices and ingrained assumptions?

My take on dance and leading/following is firmly anchored in the post-heroic corner and focuses on relating, the processual aspects, with leader-follower relationship as emergent, co-constructed and mutually negotiated. The sensory aspects of this, 'body thinking' (and occasionally the body doing its 'own thing'), the phenomenological 'being there' and 'being with it' can, in my view, not be entirely fathomed through merely talking about it, but require doing, being-in-the-moment. The whole constellation, the interplay of concurrent movements, sensing 'the other' as well as sensing 'self', the act-and-react, the being-with-

another-body is an experience, or a set of experiences, that cannot be replaced by simulation or (purely rational) discourse.

Furthermore, what does the specific style of *competitive Ballroom dance* bring to this situation? Here we move closer to the dance-as-analogy field, in that the competitive element brings in the 'sharp elbows' of the business world, but also the reliance on partners that goes, for example, with circus acrobats or team sports such as bobsleigh. In dancesport, a couple's performance depends on this – in the fire brigade or on a lifeboat, lives depend on it.

My research brings together autoethnographic aspects (i.e. my own learning through dance and my embodied knowledge of dance) and a phenomenological, experiential approach to facilitating learning in others. Something that not many authors in this field mention – and which I would consider a vital factor in learning – is the fun aspect, the pleasure of dancing, of moving in harmony with the rhythm of the music, in sync with another body. Peterson & Williams (2004) point out that the 'electric slide' is enjoyable to learn and dance, Batchellor (2012:23) admits that she "had a lot of excitement and joy about learning how to dance", but only at the start: "This was quickly accompanied by anxiety and feelings of vulnerability." Winther et al (2015) report that their students expressed feelings of joy. But the majority of the literature mentioned seems remarkably unconcerned with this basic element of human life and motivation. Whilst all the serious aspects of human relationships are also involved – conflict, misunderstanding, stress, lack of connection, frustration, impatience and so forth – dancing together also allows for moments of laughter, joking, silliness, being 'in the flow', feeling relaxed... the pleasure principle should not be underestimated and needs to be given space and acknowledgement.

The current proposal breaks new ground in using exercises from competitive dancesport, which is closer to the 'sharp elbows' of business life than, for example, Argentine Tango, which is used in several of the above approaches. Even though some of the researchers emphasise the 'power' aspects of Tango, this dance is much more focused on personal connection and intimacy – the Tango hold, also known as embrace, has the dancers' slightly 'leaning in' towards each other, with their faces very close and sometimes even touching: a position that many non-dancers would find intrusive and intimidating, especially when

partnering with a stranger or a colleague. Whilst the Ballroom tango has a closer body connection (via ribcage and hip), the dancers are looking away from each other, and they maintain some distance between their upper bodies. Emphasising the 'private spaces' of the partners takes some of the social awkwardness away and gives importance to the 'outward-looking' aspects of the dance. (For a more detailed explanation see *Section 4.1: methodology/description of workshop approach*)

Why is dance – and particularly competitive Ballroom dance – a useful 'vehicle' for leadership learning?

- Because dance is a nonverbal language, and leadership is about communication. Dance involves 'listening with the body', 'tuning in' to a partner and a rhythm, negotiating common shared solutions to 'problem situations' (Hanna 2015)
- Because dance is a process, not static, and leadership is about a continuous process of communication between people.
- Because dance – for managers in organisations, not professional dance practitioners – is not 'work', hence allows them not to take it too seriously. There is a 'fun factor', a 'play factor' that allows for more experimentation and risk-taking than the organisational work context. It is also important that in my workshops participants can (and are invited to) switch roles, so that they get more exposure to and experience of tasks and activities than in their normal work context.
- Because ballroom dance involves leader and follower roles with specific task sets that can be practised 'on the job'. But dance leading-and-following is also 'in flux', as it is a 'give-and-take' process where the leading and following elements of the (inter)actions do not simply 'reside' within the leader's or follower's remit respectively – both roles involve leading and following actions (see *Section 7.3*).
- Using competitive ballroom dance as a focal point of orientation allows for highlighting parallels that link to familiar aspects of participants' work contexts: tasks, skills, responsibilities, performance measuring, teamwork, power, trust and so on. Whilst this encourages reflexivity and self-awareness, it does not happen under the same amount of pressure as in the workplace.

2.7 ISSUES OF POWER

Another important field is work around power and control: My research arises from the critical view that leadership is all too often equated with formal authority, power and seniority. Senior management are regularly referred to as ‘senior leaders’, and leadership researchers in business and management do not have to justify interviewing CEOs when undertaking research into leadership, on the assumption that high-ranking managers must be leaders, otherwise they would not occupy posts at the top of organisational hierarchies. This assumption goes hand in hand with the view that there is a power gap between leaders and followers – the thought that leadership comes with power and control is quite ingrained, even in the language used: followers obviously lack power and only acquire it when they become ‘em-powered’⁶. Even though followership has gained a higher degree of attention, acknowledgement and appreciation, much of the theorising does still take a hierarchical view on it. Chaleff’s third edition (2009) still assumes that “senior leaders” reside at “the upper levels of hierarchies” (2009:xiv), even though there may be “hundreds or thousands of staff who share responsibility for the organization’s mission” (ibid.).

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the fairly broad field of ‘leadership reformers’ who criticise and challenge traditional ‘heroic’ leadership – a concept that refuses to die and remains stubbornly pervasive, even where leadership theories claim to have moved on: when it comes to examples or case studies of e.g. transformational, authentic or servant leadership, the reader usually ends up with another ‘great man story’ (occasionally a woman) exemplifying it.

On the other hand, proponents of participative, collective, distributed or shared leadership argue in favour of flattening (or even removing) hierarchical organisational structures, moving power, in terms of organising and decision-making, away from top-down approaches and more towards a subsidiarity principle, whereby decisions should be taken at the lowest (i.e. most local or closest to the frontline) possible level.

⁶ Collins Dictionary defines ‘empowerment’ in British English as “1. the giving or delegation of power or authority; authorization; 2. the giving of an ability; enablement or permission”. This clearly implies a ‘giver’ who ‘possesses’ power in the first instance, and a ‘receiver’ of said power, who by implication does not have it in the first instance. In sociological contexts the term has more of a bottom-up meaning (e.g. Calvès 2009), but that is not how it is used in management discourse.

Two such scholars have already been mentioned, because they pay attention not just to organisational structures and processes, but also to the discourse that comes with those – and the need to change it: Raelin's vision of 'leadership-as-practice' and 'leaderful' organisations (Raelin 2003, 2011, 2016) aligns with Olsen's concept of 'leadingship' (Olsen 2006, 2012, 2014), which advocates for horizontal power structures over traditional vertical, i.e. hierarchical ones. Both aim to move away from the 'heroic' leadership model, promoting collective, shared and distributed leadership instead. Olsen's work draws parallels to Mary Parker Follett's ideas of 'power with' rather than 'power over,' making the case for collaborative and egalitarian organisational dynamics, shared responsibility and collective decision-making. But whilst Raelin and Olsen attempt to offer pathways for individuals and organisations to develop towards these ideals, their ideas of workplace democracy nevertheless strike me as somewhat idealistic, if not utopian. Moreover, in Olsen's scenario of decision-making power, based on professional authority and competence, residing in individuals rather than enshrined in organisational structures and hierarchies, I see a risk of such power remaining unacknowledged, intangible and as such unchallengeable – ultimately even reverting back to leadership of 'special' individuals... 'heroic leaders' by any other name!

But there are other aspects of power: Achieving a top performance in dancesport requires 'power-ful' and empowered engagement/input from follower and leader (Tremayne & Ballinger 2008; Matzdorf & Sen 2015, 2016). Whilst the roles of leader and follower seem to be a necessity in the dancesport world (which could indeed be questionable), a winning performance is co-created by leader and follower together – a team effort. This requires listening and following on both sides – only the 'powerful' types of follower can succeed here (cf. Kelley 1988, 2008; Chaleff 2009; Kellerman 2008, 2012), and the relationship between leader and follower becomes more of a 'power-sharing' one (cf. Burge et al.'s 2013 comments on "Queer Tango"). In order to do a 'powerful' dance performance justice, I would propose Mary Parker Follett's notion of 'power with' instead of 'power over' (see also Burge et al. 2013; Follett 2013; Salovaara & Bathurst 2018), since that would be a more appropriate concept in describing a dance partnership than traditional hierarchical models (see also Burge et al. 2013). More recently, a third kind of power has been described, as highlighted e.g. by Pansardi & Bindi (2021), who provide a very helpful clarification of Mary

Parker Follett's concept of 'power over' versus 'power with' and add the notion of 'power to' (roughly equivalent to agency or capability to achieve outcomes) – the latter two concepts make a lot of sense in regard to dancesport, far more so than a traditionalist dance teacher's stereotypical instruction to male dancers who are usually the designated 'leaders': "You're in charge here – if anything goes wrong, it's your fault!"⁷

This somewhat eclectic journey through the literature has illustrated the diversity and interdisciplinarity of this multi-faceted project and also the wide range of influences and deliberations that have shaped it – therein lies its strength, but also a major challenge! Bringing together the diverse strands of thought and research, the main purpose of the workshops was to create space and opportunities for participants to experience and explore how leading and following 'feels', how they carried out their 'roles', how they connected with others, and how they dealt with the challenges that arose.

⁷ On a personal note, I suspect that this is probably the biggest 'turn-off' from dancing for men: who would voluntarily put oneself in a situation where one is blamed for things that one cannot even control?

3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH/ES AND METHOD/S USED

3.1 INTRODUCTION: ABOUT INTERPRETATION AND INTERPRETATIONS

To illustrate the qualitative approach I am taking here, I want to refer to the story of the Pixar lamp (*Luxo Jr.*), a pioneering two-minute animation that has become famous.⁸ It tells a little story with an entirely nonverbal ‘conversation’ between two desk lamps. What makes this piece remarkable – apart from its technological achievements – is the fact that, although there is no verbal exchange and the two ‘protagonists’ are actually everyday objects, without any human or even animal features, they clearly ‘interact’ with each other, expressing a relationship and even feelings – purely through movement (although of course the title of the clip sets a clear context for interpretation by giving a name and adding ‘Junior, which already indicates ‘relationship’ and even implies ‘family’). But whilst viewers, irrespective of their nationality or language, immediately recognise the ‘relationship’ and ‘conversation’ elements, their interpretation, by necessity, varies. When I looked up what is known about this award-winning piece of work, I found the Wikipedia entry describing the story full of quite strong judgmental interpretations (with my emphasis here): about gender (“Luxo Sr.... roll-up to *him*”; “Luxo Jr., *his... son*”), feelings (“*happy and excited*”, “*in shame*”, “*embarrassment*”) and actions (“*bounces on it excessively*”; “*admonishes*”). It looked to me as if the author of the Wikipedia entry, whilst simply trying to describe the plot of the story, was quite unaware just how many assumptions and judgments had sneaked into this ‘description’! I replayed the video several times, but was unable to ‘see’ admonition, shame or embarrassment – instead I ‘saw’ explanation, frustration/disappointment and a kind of amused resignation. It made me wonder what the writer’s experiences of childhood and/or parenthood might have been that coloured his/her perception so strongly... and it then made me think about my own interpretation of what I had seen, heard, read and felt throughout the project workshops and my interactions with the research participants, both at the time when it happened, af

⁸ Links to original video here: <https://youtu.be/zmhZm5FRV4s> or <https://youtu.be/FI0T0Oj7WFE>



a few years later, after my own diagnosis as neurodivergent, which substantially altered my perspective on myself, my own life history and the world around me. It was indeed an ‘aha’ moment.

For me, this experience illustrates, in a nutshell as it were, the inherent ambiguity and uncertainty of any interpretation, especially the meanings we attribute to any actions and interactions that are nonverbal. That said, attribute meanings we must if we are to live in the world and interact with it. Actually, the above example also shows that ‘bodies’ (whatever shape they are) and movement are expressive, and lead us to empathise, not just to interpret – something to keep in mind, when we move together. (See also Shotter 2011:448, using a different Pixar example!) As far as (mis)interpretations are concerned: as the researcher changes, so change the findings – this is something about not stepping into the same river twice.

It is also important to remember that text cannot convey everything, especially in a research project that consists to a large extent of sensory exploration. As Howes comments, “the word *sense* in English contains the dual connotations of perception and meaning: to sense and to make sense may be one and the same” (2003:51). So what is presented here is to quite an extent a ‘translation’ into words, which in turn is ‘translated’ into lines of text. As such, I consider this a set of fragments, ‘snippets’ of understanding and knowledge, touching and outlining what might be a leg or a tusk or the trunk of the ‘elephant’⁹ – the whole elephant is simply too large to fit into a thesis.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Much of the L/F research is based on realist assumptions, aiming to make attributes and behaviours measurable and seeking rational explanations, usually with the aim to establish cause-and-effect chains¹⁰ and to make ‘leadership’ more instrumental, controllable and

⁹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_men_and_an_elephant for different versions and a history of this centuries-old parable.

¹⁰ In a recent interview, renowned neo-positivist academic John Antonakis emphasises this: “[...] the research on leadership has been spinning its wheels a lot by finding correlations between outcomes and not looking for causes [...] We know from personality research that certain aspects of personality matter a

predictable (Avolio et al. 2004; Day & Antonakis 2012; Shamir 2007; to name but a few). However, my research deals with relationships and seeks to access how people co-construct, understand and interpret leader-follower relationships in everyday life – subjectively, inter-subjectively in collaboration, and to a not inconsiderable extent through the senses. As this assumes an understanding of social reality through social constructions, the methodological approach has to follow suit. In other words, whether reality is objective or subjective is irrelevant – what counts is how we access it in sensory and interpretative ways, through experiences, individual subjective interpretation and social co-construction and intersubjective interpretation. Strictly speaking, we should not talk about research *data* (i.e. ‘what is given’) but *generata*, *creata*, or even *intellecta*¹¹, taking notions of ‘intellect’ and ‘intelligence’ back to their original roots. This ties in with Alvesson & Skoldberg talking about ‘data construction’ and data being created through interpretation (Alvesson & Skoldberg 2009:249ff).

My research interest is to find out what sense/meaning the participants in ‘leadership and dance’ workshops make of their sensory experiences, their interpersonal exchanges and connections in respect of leading and following – what they actually think and feel, how they perceive ‘body leader-follower-ship’, what sensations, emotions and thoughts that evokes, how it links into their existing thought and feeling patterns, and whether it confirms or contradicts them, how it feeds into their personal concepts and understandings of L&F. This subjective side can only be brought to the fore through intersubjective, dialogical processes. Here a qualitative, interpretivist stance is required, as there is no ‘objective’ way of measuring sense-making in others. This is why my approach is based on Cunliffe (2011; see also Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011), Shotter (2005, 2006) and Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009, 2nd ed. 2022). Cunliffe describes intersubjectivism as “notably different to objectivist and subjectivist problematics in terms of the form of knowing in-situ where all participants are

great deal to make leaders more effective; traits that matter [...] We also know that we can measure it very well” (<https://scienceforwork.com/blog/john-antonakis-leadership/>).

¹¹ Latin *intellegere* or *intelligere* = ‘to understand, get to know, comprehend’, from *inter-* ‘between’ + *legere* ‘to read, pick out, choose, select, gather’. Interestingly, the root of the word emphasises the process of ‘bringing together’ of understanding/knowledge, whether as a ‘collecting action’ of an individual or a ‘collective action’ between people. *Intellecta* (past participle) = ‘what is understood, perceived, comprehended, realised’

implicitly knowledgeable and therefore work together in living conversation to shape meanings, insights, and way of moving on (reflexive hermeneutics)” (Cunliffe 2011:665).

As regards other people’s meaning-making and sensemaking, this cannot be objectively established – I cannot look inside others’ minds or ‘feel into’ their bodies, but have to rely on what they are willing to impart, both verbally and nonverbally (all of which I have to interpret). So my research evolves from describing and interpreting my own “lived experiences” (Creswell 2007:57; cf. Smith et al. 2009, 2022) in phenomenological inquiry, thus offering a body-based understanding of what leading/following entails. This is also one of my ‘lenses’, the glasses through which I see dance and leader-follower-ship – allowing a special ‘view’ but also adding a special ‘bias’. Whilst there are different phenomenological approaches, “the focus on subjective experience has remained a fundamental principle of all phenomenologically informed research methods” (Shinebourne 2011:45). This applies not only to my research participants and their sense-making, but also to me and my own sense-making. And writing this thesis gets further complicated by the elusive nature of the data and the elusive nature of knowledge and knowledge creation when it comes to ‘thinking with the body’, not just the rational part of the brain. This kind of ‘knowledge’ is not only subjective but also precarious, as it emerges in the moment and in the flesh, and is thereby neither quite provable nor quite falsifiable, but always ambiguous, and always in flux.

To give an example: Dancing with a person with whom I have not danced before, I am not familiar with her body and her movement patterns, nor is she familiar with mine. In the leader role, I am trying to convey direction and movement through my body, aiming to be ‘clear’ and ‘readable’, but I feel my partner’s hesitation. Is that her uncertainty/insecurity (as she does not know me well and is not used to my movement ‘habits’), her discomfort, or even distrust of me (as she might equate being led with feeling out of control, and resent that feeling), her not being able to ‘read me’ (as she is not used to ‘reading’ others’ bodies in movement/dance, as well as me being an unfamiliar body? or am I moving too fast? am I not clear enough in what I am trying to convey?), her discomfort at being in close proximity to another body, especially an unfamiliar one (after all, there are so many taboos around touch)? What do I take as ‘truth’ or ‘reality’ in that moment; which interpretation do I follow and act upon? Do I try to soften my touch/hold/frame and risk being even less ‘readable’? Do I firm up to give better support and direction and risk being perceived as controlling and

domineering? Do I slow down my movements, make them simpler or more repetitive, in order to create a more discernible pattern that is easier to read, at the risk of coming across as boring or patronising? Do I rely on the rhythm of the music to give her structure and 'scaffolding'? Do I ignore her hesitation and simply continue moving, trusting that she might 'get into the swing of it', at the risk that she might feel being pushed around? On the other hand, is she actually aware of her hesitation? Or does it happen, because she 'reads' just the next step, takes it, and then has to go into 'listening mode' again? Or is she second-guessing what my next move might be?

This is 'witness-thinking' (Shotter) or 'reflection-in-action' (Schön) – plus the nervous 'butterfly' feeling in the stomach, which those eminent thinkers seem to have forgotten to mention... or is that a gender issue? Do 'butterflies-in-stomachs' not figure in theorising embodiment? In the moment I always have to take an abductive stance: relying on my body, trusting what it tells me, trusting my experience and knowledge of moving in togetherness, but always aware that I might be mistaken, and always prepared to change what I believe to be the current 'truth'. This can be quite an uncomfortable place to be in, one which requires constant alertness, trying to 'tune in' to another body, constantly listening for new messages that may supersede current 'truth', calling for a different understanding and different line of action. Combined with this is the fundamental ambiguity of nonverbal communication (cf. Watzlawick et al. 1967)... Just how amazing is it that in all this 'mess' I still have time, space, mental and emotional capacity to enjoy the sensation of being 'in flux' with another person?

The main principle of the workshops is to work with 'lived experience in the moment', i.e. for participants to actually live the experience and make sense of it, rather than 'just' recalling and making sense of experiences that have been made elsewhere and in the past; so as researcher I am 'witnessing' both the experience, or rather, people's re/actions to their immediate experience, and the sensemaking, or rather, their re/actions whilst making sense. What is special about this engagement in an 'immediate experience' is that it frequently brings up memories (especially 'body memory') of previous experiences that have shaped people's views of and attitudes to leading, following, leadership, followership. The workshops aim to provide 'experience space' as well as 'reflection space' to give participants the opportunity to experiment with ways to enact leader-follower-ship and,

through new experiences and reflection, review 'old' perspectives on this and possibly find new angles. There is a hermeneutic-phenomenological aspect not just to my work as a researcher, but also to the workshop process from a participant perspective, as their interpretations and meaning-making moves through a kind of hermeneutic circle, too, involving cycles of movement with reflection-in-action, followed by a kind of cyclical reflection-on-action (with partners, then in the group, then in RefCons), followed by movement with reflection-in-action and so forth.

To some extent, power and hierarchies are 'objectified'/'reified' in organisational structures as well as in group and relationship dynamics, but many features of those structures are 'imagined'/'socially constructed' – and can therefore also be *deconstructed*, just like the emperor's new clothes. Applying a somewhat overused metaphor, my view is more of a 'quantum view': when researching 'particles' or an objective reality, such relationships display a 'realistic' side and become e.g. measurable, tangible, objectifiable. However, what *is* measurable is not necessarily a helpful answer to my question how people make sense of what they feel. On the other hand, when taking a 'wave view', such as a constructivist stance, such relationships become processes and far less easy to pinpoint or 'capture'. This dilemma is highlighted in the (in places quite heated) exchange between postpositivist Boas Shamir and constructionist Dian Hosking in Uhl-Bien & Ospina (2012 Chapter 16: 'A Dialog on Entitative and Relational Discourses').

This sums up my workshop/research approach – both from a methodical angle as well as an epistemological one: Dancing leader-follower-ship emerges from and is built upon two partners' collaborative action that (ideally) results in teamwork. Physically leading and following in a mindful, reflexive way brings Shotter's 'witness thinking' as well as Cunliffe's and Smith, Flowers and Larkin's 'intersubjectivity' to life, allowing learning to emerge. Similarly, researchers and research participants co-create knowledge: "Both researchers and practitioners alike are engaged in creating sense about lived experience. This sense emerges in the collaborative dialogical activity between them" (Shotter 2005:53f) and hence calls for a hermeneutic approach to data collection and analysis. This includes my own observation, sensing, feeling and interpretation of dancers' body language and movement.

3.3 A NOTE ON REFLECTION, REFLEXIVITY AND EMBODIMENT

Schön's notions of knowing-in-action, reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action are essential underpinnings of my research design – my workshops are about this: people use their 'knowing-in-action', become more aware of it (and are often surprised), have to reflect-in-action, but also post-action, as they make sense of what they have been doing – there is contrast, sometimes even conflict, between doing things 'intuitively' versus 'thinking about it then doing' versus 'having to do things differently because auto-pilot doesn't do the job' (with the latter requiring reflection-on-action and learning from it). On top of this, there is also 'reflection à deux', as it takes two to move and two to make sense! Again, this ties in with Schön: "knowing-in-action is tacit, spontaneously delivered without conscious deliberation [...] Routine responses produce a surprise – an unexpected outcome [...] Surprise leads to reflection within an action-present [...] Reflection-in-action has a critical function, questioning the assumptional structure of knowing-in-action." (Schön 1987a:28)

Both modes of reflection, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action come into their own here: While moving or dancing together, participants need to 'think on their feet', or as Schön describes it, use "on-the-spot surfacing, criticizing, restructuring, and testing of intuitive understanding of experienced phenomena; [...] a reflective conversation with the situation" (1983:241-2):

Our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action. Similarly, the workaday life of the professional depends on tacit knowing-in-action. Every competent practitioner can recognize phenomena – families of symptoms associated with a particular disease, peculiarities of a certain kind of building site, irregularities of materials or structures – for which he cannot give a reasonably accurate or complete description. (Schön 1983:49)

However, there are then also questions about 'tacit knowledge' versus 'tacit assumptions': both result from prior experiences and the (cognitive) processing of those experiences, i.e. are the results of learning. But 'knowledge' can turn into 'assumptions' that would need checking out to assess their validity – and potentially lack or lose that validity if unchecked. Tacit knowledge can also be time-limited, e.g. when driving a different vehicle (minimal when same type, but more substantial when e.g. changing from gears to automatic, fuel to electric, car to lorry etc.). In that case, new operating skills need to be learnt, and old ones

may become obsolete. Similarly, ‘body knowledge’ can turn into ‘autopilot’ action, which might help us to complete routine tasks, but can also cause us to miss important information that would require a different, non-routine course of action. Authors such as Polanyi (1966), Sennett (2008), Argyris & Schön (1978) or Gladwell (2005) highlight the importance of tacit knowledge but also recognise the potential dangers of unexamined tacit assumptions. They underscore the importance of making implicit assumptions explicit and subjecting them to scrutiny to ensure they remain valid and useful – this is where reflective practice becomes a necessity.

‘Knowing’ how we – and others – stand, move, walk, and, to some extent, predicting another person’s next move, falls into the category of ‘tacit everyday knowledge’ – but in everyday life (and for sighted people) this knowledge is based mainly on visual (and to a lesser extent, verbal) information. In dance, these clues are based on other senses, like touch or weight/balance, which makes for ‘surprises’, especially for non-dancers, but also for dancers, where moving with an ‘unfamiliar body’ is concerned. This is echoed by the artist Rosalyn Driscoll, talking about ‘tactile sculpture’, where she emphasises the importance of the senses (beyond the ‘dominant’ visual) for new insights:

The very activity of perception is imaginative, creating connections between what we perceive and what we remember, between present and past. It organizes and synthesizes what we perceive, often generating new linkages and new forms in the process. [...] Linking new and old patterns potentially allows creative, imaginative connections. [...] Every ongoing tactile activity represents a production, a creation in the true sense of the word. (Driscoll 2020)

In my workshops, the ‘snapshot’ or ‘reflection round’ that followed each round of somatic activity provided a dialogic opportunity to process both action and reflection-in-action with others. The one-to-one ‘reflective conversations’ (RefCons) then offered another level of reflection, looking back at the earlier ‘rounds’.

Schön’s ‘reflection-in-action’ is complemented by Shotter’s ‘witness-thinking’:

This is a little book for practitioners, for people who have to think ‘on the run’, in the moment, from within the midst of complexity and a special kind of (dialogical) uncertainty occasioned by always having always to act in relation to others acting. [...] It is to do with a kind of thinking that can only be conducted within fleeting moments, in the course of trying to work out how best to respond to unique and crucial events occurring around one NOW, at this moment in time. I have called it ‘witness’-thinking to contrast it with the kind of ‘aboutness’-thinking (Shotter 2005:1)

This is the essence of my workshops. Yes, there is also 'post-event' reflection, but that, to some extent, is a meta-reflection, following on from the reflection-in-action/witness-thinking that people had to do during the dance activities.

Shotter's judgment sums up some of the development within the research world and the move beyond positivist and post-positivist, objectivist research paradigms:

In recent years, there has been an upheaval in our thought about ourselves and our ways of relating ourselves to the world around us – a shift from thinking of ourselves as static, outside observers of an objective world, able to take a 'point of view' in regarding it as 'out there', to thinking of ourselves as active agents, continually on the move, immersed in the world along with many others similar to ourselves, needing to 'get into' situations and to 'see them from all sides', while being just as much acted on by events in our surroundings as able to act back upon them. (Shotter 2005:13)

This is a fairly precise summary of my researcher role and stance during the project: my actions and my planning were 'dialogical' in that the way in which each event unfolded had an impact on the following event, and within each workshop, I made changes (in my role as facilitator), following the lead that group members and the dynamics within the group gave me. So as a facilitator, I both led and followed my participants in a 'dance of discovery', thinking 'on my feet' as I steered as well as participated, thereby getting a 'feel' where they were going.

Whilst distinguishing between witness-thinking and aboutness-thinking, reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action is helpful, it does not mean that the two are mutually exclusive – I cannot even see a clear dividing line between them. In fact, it is quite likely that there is a grey area: when analysed at a micro level, reflection-in-action moments might well turn out to be 'inserted' between micro-actions and thus carry an aspect of 'reflection-on-action' – it all depends on what level of 'action' we are looking at. In my workshops, both kinds of reflection had their place and meaning.

A further refinement is offered by Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith (2004), who distinguish reflexivity from reflection-on-action, arguing that they are not the same: reflexivity is attitude, not action. They critically comment on reflection-on-action, by associating it with reflective correspondence (i.e. a positivist stance towards reality), rational reasoning (cause-and-effect thinking) and disembodied cognition, accusing it of removing "self, emotion, and subjectivity from the process". They see reflection as "disembodied process":

by reflecting upon situations and our own actions, we frame ourselves as objects to study and thus lose sight of its (our) active subjectivity (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004:34)

They propose 'practical reflexivity' as an alternative, based on a social constructionist view of reality and the assumption that humans are 'beings-in-relation-to-others'. Consequently, learning is always situated within a relational context and hence relational; therefore, meaning (and thus learning) is always subjectively constructed, not objective:

Practical reflexivity incorporates a more subjective stance – engaging in a reflexive questioning of our own ways of constructing and acting, our own 'practical theories' (Shotter 1993) or ways of making sense of situations. (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004:39)

This is precisely what happens in a dance situation when leader and follower are consciously and deeply aware of and listening to each other with all their senses.

Moreover, learning then "becomes a dialogical process, constructed in language and conversation in-the-moment", which makes it a collaborative effort that requires negotiating and co-constructing 'shared sense' (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004:37). This concept of learning gains further depth as I approach dance as a nonverbal conversation between bodies. So rather than seeing learning as an internal, cognitive process, Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith approach it as "an embodied, dialogical, and existential activity intimately tied to how we feel, what we say, and how we respond to others" (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004:37). Embodying the leader-follower relationship and experimenting with different ways of enacting it allows practising and deepening this kind of reflexivity. Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith's notion is a broader concept than Schön's, as they understand reflexivity not just as "conscious experimenting in action" (i.e. reflection-in-action), but see learning processes as emergent and incorporating tacit as well as explicit knowledge – this offers a philosophical and conceptual basis for my workshop approach.

Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith give an example from a student's reflective journal which illustrates the student's questioning of his assumptions and their impact on other people. In dancing, this impact is communicated through the partner's nonverbal reactions and actions – feedback is immediate and continuous. The dance reality is not just 'linguistically constructed' but whole-bodily enacted. Dance partners "consciously and unconsciously construct a collective identity and shared practices as they interact", but "consensual

practice can be disrupted as team members hold different assumptions and ideas about the way things should be” (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith 2004:40) – in fact this happens frequently in dancing, as anyone involved in partner dance can testify, from total beginners trying not to step on their partner’s feet to professionals training for international competitions.

Organisational researchers Swan & Bailey (2004) make the important point that reflection is linked to emotion. Mary Holmes, a sociologist, (2010) talks about the “emotionalization of reflexivity” from a more sociological angle – more to do with societal change. But all three are critical of “the belief that reflection is a cognitive activity, and that cognition and rationality are usually seen as outside of, or superior to, emotions” (Swan & Bailey 2004:106).

Swan & Bailey (2004) see emotions as ‘reflection catalysts’, triggering reflective processes in people, but also point out that reflection triggers emotions, sometimes ‘re-living’ of past emotions. In their empirical research, they found that

emotions were also conceptualized in highly differentiated ways with emotions seen as rewards, corrective punishment, pleasure, pain, personal advantage, and sources of learning. In many cases, emotions were seen from the viewpoint of the rationalist model as interferences to rationality, as overwhelming and potentially dangerous. In some instances, emotions were viewed through more of a romanticist lens, and seen as more truthful or more energising than the intellect or rationality. (Swan & Bailey 2004:121)

Whilst there is a growing trend to get staff to engage emotionally with their work and their workplaces (e.g. via emphasis on the importance of ‘emotional intelligence’), there is the risk that the trend of sharing emotions at work could lead to a ‘therapeutic model of emotions and reflection’ (Swan & Bailey 2004:123), which, just like the rationalist and romanticist models, imply value judgments, with emotions divided into ‘desirable’ and ‘undesirable’ ones, hence ultimately reinforcing the old view that emotions have to be kept under control.

Holmes makes the important point that reflexivity should be defined as “an emotional, embodied *and* cognitive process”, because “to consider reflexivity as emotional and bodily is a step towards rethinking agency without rational/emotional dualism” (2010:140f; her emphasis). In this project the participants’ focus of reflection was on their and their partners’ experiences, rather than their emotions, but of course some of their emotional involvement ‘shines through’ – even if not consciously – in their personal notes, their interactions, and

their contributions in the reflection rounds¹². For example, Jarik's feelings about his authoritarian parent became quite explicit in his 'difficult relationship dance', through his 'throwing around' Martin, pushing Martin to his physical limits (see 5.1.3 'Difficult relationship'). In the reflection round, he then explains how Martin's subsequent embodiment of this parent figure gave him a different perspective on his attitude to and dealings with coercive authority.

Importantly, Holmes also sees 'emotional reflexivity' as relational, involving interpretation of one's own as well as others' emotions. Emotions themselves are "produced within relationships and their associated social and linguistic practices" (Holmes 2010:145). According to her, empirical evidence suggests that understanding and interpreting emotions plays a crucial role in reflexivity, indicating that people have different levels of ability in developing emotional reflexivity. But emotional reflexivity is not just about individual skilfulness: emotions happen through interactions with others, through bodies, thoughts, communication, and actions; and emotional reflexivity not only can change how a person feels, it can also change individuals' relationships with others (Holmes 2010:146ff) – which brings us back to Cunliffe's notion of intersubjectivity.

Reynolds (2011) makes the connection between reflective practice and critical reflection, linked in particular to 'experiential learning' and 'action learning', for both of which they are essential ingredients. He sees reflection as involving thinking about past or present experiences to understand them and guide future decisions or actions. This process uses existing ideas, confirming or evolving them. The appeal lies in connecting learning with action and experience, recognising that people co-create knowledge and learn collaboratively with peers. Aligning with Holmes' view of reflexivity as relational, collaborative and action-oriented, these are also key elements in the workshop design, which will be elaborated further in *Chapter 4: Data collection*.

¹² Of course, there could also be 'body reading', i.e. an expert physiotherapist or dance movement therapist (and I am neither) would, even from the video footage, be able to 'see' tension in the moving body, or identify 'typical' movement patterns and would be able to link this to particular emotional states. However, in order to give an informed professional opinion, an expert would in many cases still need to know the participants personally and be familiar with their individual movement patterns and personalities. This highlights how much a researcher's perspective stands and falls with their individual 'embodied knowledge', but also how much a researcher's skill and experience as well as their relationship to the participants can be essential to the research.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Bringing together two different perspectives on leadership – an organisational and a dancesport angle – I have been exploring leadership, followership and self-awareness through dance from an autoethnographic perspective, in dialogue with my dance partner and co-author (Matzdorf 2005; Matzdorf & Sen 2015, 2016). The lived dual experience has changed our views on following and leading, as well as informed and changed our work practices, demonstrating that this approach can be transformational in terms of leadership practice.

Throughout the past decade, I have also explored the dance-leadership analogy in a number of stand-alone workshops that I have run (again in collaboration with my partner) with managers, students, coaches and members of the public (see for example Matzdorf & Sen 2015). These workshops are based on the principle of embodied cognition (Wilson & Foglia 2011) in practice, encouraging and facilitating self-awareness through bodily experience of the physicality of leader-follower-ship (Ladkin 2013). Participants have the opportunity to explore themselves and others as leaders *and* followers and to reflect on their assumptions, expectations, needs, feelings in a very practical, applied way. These interventions constitute what I would term ‘research-in-action’, as opposed to ‘action research’ – the latter is more closely defined and has a clear target in terms of a change agenda, whilst my approach is more open-ended.

Building on the one-off events I have run so far, my PhD project data collection consisted of a series of ‘research-in-action’-type workshops, in which dance and movement exercises were used to engage participants in the sensory experiences of leading and following, followed by ‘reflection rounds’, in which the participants worked through their experiences and made sense of them (reflection-on-action). In addition to the group work, interviews with participants were scheduled to help to shed further light on their meaning-making and if/when/how they related their sensory experiences to their work context.

My dance partner (and previously co-author) acted as co-facilitator. An ongoing reflective dialogue between the facilitators proved to be helpful as ‘peer supervision’, preventing both of us from becoming blinkered or caught up in our own preconceptions and/or

interpretations. The co-facilitator's perspective adds value to the project as research-in-action, especially since it contributes another autoethnographic element to the overall study.

The approach has an 'ethnographic element' in that it involves participant observation, with me as a 'participant facilitator' (quite literally: on those occasions when there was an odd number of participants, my co-facilitator and I took turns in partnering the 'unpaired' member of the group for movement activities). Of course, the facilitator-cum-researcher-cum-participant role means that the opportunity to take notes during workshops was very limited. Besides, using 'intervention' (i.e. instructions, exercises etc.) means that I set up the context, and that it is not the participants' 'own' (work) context that I would simply move into – which raises issues of power and control. On the one hand, the whole process was not strictly participant-led, but on the other hand, participation had to be voluntary – people *chose* to join the group and attend the workshops – and participants were able to skip individual exercises, or withdraw entirely, at any time, thus remaining in control of *their* process. After WS1, I also took my 'steer' for the planning of the next workshops, as well as the actual running of each event, from the group and the group's dynamics, including ad-hoc changes to the planned schedule. The mere fact that this group environment was *not* the participants' normal context – it was a new, unfamiliar situation for most of them – did *not* make it a 'laboratory situation'. After all, I was not an 'all-knowing' guy in a lab coat with a hidden agenda, nor was I standing back and 'studying' their behaviour in the workshop – I was physically, mentally, emotionally involved in the group process at all times; so my own 'gut reactions', feelings, thoughts and reflections are part of the research process. These elements, together with my 'body knowledge' of dance and 'partnering', add a strong autoethnographic dimension to the project, which also has a bearing on data analysis and conceptualisation. So whilst I had a knowledge advance and was in charge of planning and facilitation, I depended entirely on the trust, willingness and interest of the participants for this research to happen.

My own 'eclectic' background (degrees in English language and literature, education, teaching, applied linguistics, management learning; diverse work contexts – shopfloor, schools, university), being a naturalised foreigner, neurodiverse, with a lifelong history of being an 'outsider', albeit in very diverse groups, plus starting competitive dancing relatively late in life – all this helped with 'bracketing' preconceptions and bias. That said, having a

co-facilitator, and thus having another's perspective, was invaluable, since our 'debriefing conversations' helped me to reflect on what had happened and regain a cognitive and emotional distance, as well as providing more information – obviously it was impossible to be equally attentive to each participant, or even each partnership at any one time during the workshops.

Participants' reflective verbal comments (in 'snapshots' and 'reflection rounds' during group sessions; see *Appendix A8.2*) and written notes (see *Appendix A6*), facilitators' observations, debriefing and journal notes, plus recordings (video and audio) are complemented by one-to-one meetings with individuals ('reflective conversations', RefCons, see *Appendix A5.2* and *Appendix A8.3*). These conversations focus on what participants found relevant, striking, exciting, difficult, enjoyable and so on, and how they make sense of those experiences. Data material of this kind requires in-depth analysis, rather than just looking for content. Originally envisaged to be semi-structured, the interviews quickly developed a different character: they turned into 'reflective conversations', processes of exploration, clarification and explanation between each participant and me that became an integral part of each participant's – and my own – 'learning journey'. Patterns of interaction, collaboration and communal sensemaking emerged from the workshops, as participants negotiated with their bodies and minds, rather than just verbally. Given that communication *purely* by nonverbal means is never unambiguous (Watzlawick et al. 1967), it often required additional verbal clarification and reflection.

An important part of the workshop design was the role of formality versus informality: On the one hand, I see the informality of dance and movement as an enabling element in the exploration of leading/following relationships and actions outside the workplace. On the other hand, there is a sort of dialectic contrast between the formality of L/F situations in work contexts, the formality of L/F roles and interactions in dance, and the informality of interactions and activities, i.e. exploration, playfulness and fun, but also role interpretations and 'ingrained' attitudes to L/F. This dichotomy was present and experienced throughout the workshops. Participants used the formality of the L-F constellation, but played with it and experimented in informal ways. Corazzo & Gharib (2021:160) use the term 'regulated freedom' for this kind of setting, which legitimises informality:

It is simultaneously regulated by powerful norms and expectations while constituted of openness and a sense of possibility inherent in creative practice.

On the other hand, the 'formal' elements within this set-up allow for and encourage analogies and referencing back to the work context.

3.5 SAMPLING

As "IPA is an idiographic approach, concerned with understanding particular phenomena in particular contexts" (Smith et al. 2009:49) and requires detailed in-depth analysis of each participant's data, which is a lengthy process, "IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes" (Smith et al. 2009:49), often with less than 10 participants (Reid et al. 2005; Wagstaff et al. 2014). Brocki & Wearden comment that "small sample sizes are the norm in IPA as the analysis of large data sets may result in the loss of 'potentially subtle inflections of meaning'" (2006:94). This also means that IPA research uses purposive sampling, since it works with more or less homogeneous samples (Brocki & Wearden 2006:95; Smith et al. 2009:49), as it is "essential that all participants have experience of the phenomenon being studied" (Creswell 2007:128).

In terms of the practicalities, Smith et al. recommend that researchers should "be pragmatic" (2009:50). In line with this, I used a mix of purposive and convenience sampling to bring together a group of participants: purposive in that participation was based on experience of leadership and an interest in experiential leadership learning (see *Appendix A3.1* and *A3.2*), but with a 'convenience element' attached, as I targeted people that I knew or had met before.

In order to recruit participants, I used my extensive database of professional contacts (over 700) that I had built over the past decade through my work with facilities management (FM departments and organisations), emailing most of them with a personalised invitation, and also putting out a more general announcement and invitation to contacts on LinkedIn. I also emailed invitations to attendees from previous (shorter) workshops, many of whom had expressed an interest in further participation. Finally, I put out flyers within my own organisation, on the main university campus, in areas frequented by staff, and also sent an

email to the people development manager in HR, with the request for it to be passed on to staff interested in leadership development.

From a pragmatic starting point, I aimed for a group of approximately 15-20 bookings to allow for cancellations, 'no-shows' and drop-outs. A large proportion of my professional contacts were in the facilities management (FM) arena; and as FM departments and organisations operate on tight budgets, both financially and in terms of staffing levels, and managers often have to deal with unpredictable and urgent problems in their own or customer organisations, my experience with conferences and workshops had taught me that late cancellations and drop-outs are common. Moreover, the workshops were to be held in spring and early summer and required a relatively large, uncarpeted room for half a day each – something difficult to find in a university during term and exam times! As my set of workshops were not part of a formal staff development programme offered and advertised by the university, I had to work on a tight budget, hence could not afford the high fees that would have been charged by commercial providers. I therefore had to schedule the events outside 'normal' working hours (Saturdays) which made it harder to attract participants from outside the area – after a busy work week, people are reluctant to commit part of their weekend to professional development activities, especially if it involves travelling and there is no budget for expenses! I approached several organisations with the proposal to run the events within their organisation, and even on their premises, but informal discussions with contacts in FM organisations made it clear that budget and time constraints made this unworkable for them.

So whilst a group of more than 10 participants would have been larger than recommended for an IPA study, it was important to aim for a higher number of bookings to start with. As it turned out, this strategy was the right one.

Participants were 'self-selected' in that participation was voluntary, as it was essential that participants should bring an 'open mind' to the process and be willing to engage in order to work successfully together in an unfamiliar setting. Whether or not some participants knew each other or worked in the same organisation was not an issue: either way they did not 'know' each other in the specific workshop situation.

Since the project aimed to be inclusive, non-elitist, working ‘across’ hierarchy, I was consciously not aiming to appeal exclusively to senior managers, as I wanted to keep the ‘leadership condition’ for participation as generic as possible, asking for ‘experience of leadership’ rather than specific positions of formal authority.

Initially there were 18 bookings, but five people sent cancellations before the programme started. Another two had confirmed their bookings, but one cancelled a day before the first workshop, and the other one simply did not turn up. So the first event had 11 participants in attendance. Two female participants dropped out after the first workshop, citing diary clashes and private pressures respectively. Both of them agreed to be interviewed, but eventually only one short conversation took place, which did not yield much in terms of reflection and, given the large volume of data, I eventually decided not to include it. One male participant could not attend the final one-to-one RefCon due to urgent family matters, and subsequently asked to be released from this commitment. He did, however, attend all three events and contributed significantly to individual and group reflections; so this is included in the body of data.

3.6 INTRODUCING THE PROTAGONISTS

Ultimately, the data that this study is based on come from a small, but very diverse group of 9 participants:

- age range 35-79;
- 3 male, 5 female, 1 binary/female¹³;
- dance experience ranging from 0 to 25 years;
- a mix of ethnic, cultural and national backgrounds and different work contexts.

What follows is a short introduction to the protagonists and their background/context at the time of the workshops (2019):

¹³ Ali

Ali

Ali is a sporty, energetic person in her late 30s. Her preferred title is Mx, and she describes herself as non-binary. However, during the workshops, she does not object to being referred to as 'she'; so I will continue to do so, for simplicity's and clarity's sake (i.e. to avoid confusion with plural pronouns). She works for a large UK retail company with a history dating back to the 19th century and describes her role as software architect, providing "technical leadership for a department of 70-ish". Ali likes challenges: in her spare time, despite describing herself as 'dyspraxic' ("it took me really substantially longer to learn things than anyone else doing the same sort of training", AL3:993), she practices sports and hobbies that require strong co-ordination skills. She is sharp, witty, sometimes sarcastic – a very enjoyable conversation partner and very much 'in the head'. The work context that she brings to the workshops revolves around three major challenges in her workplace: a) being female in a highly male-dominated environment¹⁴; b) working in an organisation with a long tradition (and typically averse to change); c) how to provide 'leadership' without direct line management responsibilities and the associated structural power.

Elvira

Elvira, an energetic female in her 50s, originally comes from western Europe, but has lived in the UK for a long time. At the time she works in education, in an administrative department. She is funny, sharp and can be sarcastic, often in relation to people at work she is struggling with. She has a history of dancing, first ballroom (at one point with Ramen) and is now a very accomplished Old-time¹⁵ and Sequence¹⁶ dancer and dance-leader. Her work perspective is very much that a leader should be there to take responsibility and tell her what to do when she needs it, otherwise leave her to get on with what she is good at. Unfortunately, she has not yet encountered an 'ideal' leader at her workplace.

¹⁴ "Women account for around 16.8 per cent of workers in the UK's tech sector, with the proportion of women working as IT business analysts, architects and system designers falling to 14.1 per cent" (Williams 2020, <https://inews.co.uk/news/technology/1m-women-must-be-hired-in-uk-tech-sector-to-reach-gender-parity-280583>)

¹⁵ <https://oldtimedance.co.uk/index.php/about/>

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequence_dance, <https://sequencedanceuk.com/what-is-sequence-dancing/>,

Jarik

Jarik is a friendly, gentle person in his late 30s, working in website design and branding. Coming across as open-minded and interested in new experiences, he says that he wants to live his life in a way that prioritises cross-cultural communication, community-building and sustainability. His attitude to leadership, as well as his interest in this workshop series, is linked to his childhood experiences of authoritarianism and resultant rejection of hierarchical structures – he even states that this is the underlying cause of the way he works: he is self-employed, even though he craves teamwork and collaboration with others. He comes from eastern Europe, and whilst he speaks fluent English, his grammar and choice of vocabulary are occasionally somewhat idiosyncratic – I have not changed this when using verbatim quotes.

Martin

Well-built, in his early 40s at the time of the workshops, with a sense of humour, a strong, sonorous voice and a hearty laugh, Martin comes across as friendly and warm. Being a very musical person, he has over the years led several choirs, from where he draws his 'difficult relationship' experience (see *Sections 4.4.1* and *5.1.3*). Whilst he has a strong, physical, masculine presence and seems to enjoy and take pleasure from 'being-in-the-body', he does not come across as invasive or aggressive. At times it almost seems as if his sensory body takes over the decision-making, which comes with opportunities as well as risks.

Myra

Myra is a quiet person in her 30s, of Asian or part-Asian heritage (she says), who works as a supply teacher in primary schools and dances Salsa. She seems shy, almost withdrawn – she admits that she does not find it easy to make contact with strangers, feeling insecure in social situations, and more at ease in the company of women than men. In the earlier reflection rounds she only speaks up when directly invited to do so, but gradually she opens up more. Her confidence increases gradually, and there is a marked change in her attitude between the start and the end of the workshop series.

Ted

Ted is an experienced organisational consultant who describes himself as 'Senior Associate of a small number of consultants'. Nearly 80 at the time of the workshops, he has over 50 years of experience working in leadership or management roles, as well as working with a wide range of organisations. He has co-authored a number of publications, about organisational learning, action learning, management development and leadership.¹⁷ He enjoys social dancing, especially at family events of his wife's Caribbean family. Occasionally quite radical in his self-observation, Ted likes a challenge (and is happy to challenge others, too, often with a dry sense of humour) and has a penchant for learning and trying out new things – at the time of the workshops he is also having a go at acting, rehearsing a part in a theatre play with amateur actors. He also mentions that his PhD thesis contained 40 intentionally empty (but numbered) pages and that he would be happy to have his real name appear in my thesis.¹⁸ Given his professional expertise, it is not surprising that Ted has strong views on leadership, but he still discovers some 'intriguing' nuances.

Yasmin

Yasmin is a tall, slim, quiet woman in her late forties who comes across as calm and friendly, albeit slightly distanced. She is from an African-British family and works as a family therapist within the National Health Service. Dancing salsa is one of her hobbies, although she admits finding her role as follower difficult, as she sees herself as an independent woman (although I never asked her why she did not choose to lead!). At times she remains silent for quite a while in the group, but when she speaks, she speaks with a quiet confidence.

The issue she grapples with in her professional life is what leadership looks like in action – when to take the lead and how to enact it, but also what it is based on: expertise, skills and

¹⁷ NB. I felt quite awed having such an eminent practitioner-cum-scholar in the group – it felt a bit like 'teaching your grandmother to suck eggs'. So I was surprised when Ted indeed discovered new aspects to the leadership topic – he found some of the experiences and perspectives 'intriguing', as he put it. He also asked me where I got the helical model from... he obviously found it hard to believe that I had developed it!

¹⁸ Nevertheless, I have given him a pseudonym, in keeping with anonymising the rest of the group.

knowledge versus rank and hierarchy. Using the workshops as a journey of clarification, she comes to the conclusion that she is ready to step forward and take the lead.

Amanda

Amanda is not a participant in this workshop series, but she attended a two-hour, one-off workshop approximately a year before this project started. I include her here because I interviewed her about her experience at the start of this project. She is in her late 40s or early 50s and comes across as warm and friendly. At the time she attended the workshop she worked in a legal office, but was in the process of being made redundant, and more generally seemed to experience a fair amount of upheaval in her life. She had a very emotional moment during the event, when she was dancing with Ramen as a partner – she told us that it was triggered by the reassuring, pleasant feeling of being held and supported: it made her realise what had been missing both from her life and her experience of leadership.

Ramen

Ramen co-facilitates this workshop series, but is also a participant. He is a tall, slim male in his early 50s, of mixed Asian-European heritage. He took up dancing in the mid 1990s after moving to Sheffield for his PhD studies. For a short time, he danced with Elvira, as a beginner. We started dancing together in 1996, first in university competitions, then moving on to the open circuit, gradually improving from beginner to championship level. Ramen's reflective mind and background in engineering are crucial elements in our leadership-and-dance partnership. His insights from dancing have strongly informed his work as a systems engineer in the UK National Health Service (NHS) and his management style as a technical leader and line manager.

4 DATA COLLECTION

The main data gathering process happened between April and July 2019, but I conducted a ‘pilot’ conversation in November 2017 (more about this later in this section), which contributes to this project.

My project approach is partly new, partly similar to other new approaches that are both experimental and experiential, drawing on creative and/or arts-based methods. Two recent examples are Tarr et al. (2018) and Powell & Gifford (2016). Like me, Powell & Gifford (2016) also used a participative, ‘hands-on’ approach with their MBA students, but in their project the actual dance experiences were ‘second-hand’, in that participants *observed* and analysed competitive-style dancing either performed by Mark Powell himself (with his competition partner) or by professional dancers who were brought in to perform for the students, whereas my aim was to get participants to experience the dancing ‘in the flesh’, with their own bodies (though of course not at the level of proficiency expected in a ‘real’ competition). Tarr et al. (2018) used arts-based workshops “to investigate new ways of communicating about chronic pain”; but whilst they had hired professional artists as facilitators, which enabled the researchers to be ‘just’ participants, allowing for plenty of observation time, I was in a dual role of researcher-cum-facilitator, with responsibility not just for my research, but also for the group and the individuals in it. Occasionally the role became a triple one, as I temporarily became a participant when partnering one of the participants if there was an odd number in the group.

As a consequence of this unusual approach, the data collected are highly diverse, from audio and visual recordings to written notes, capturing how participants made sense of leader-follower-ship during the intervention, as well as how their understandings changed over time.

I held three workshops between mid-April and early June, with about 2-4 weeks between events, allowing time for the experience to ‘settle’, for participants to reflect on their experiences and to make links between their dance experience and their workplace.

Participants were asked to commit themselves for the duration of the project, plus to agree to at least two interviews each, one early in the project, one towards the end of the

intervention. Interviews (note change to 'reflective conversations', RefCons, during the project) were meant to provide a 'before' and 'after' snapshot, in order to gauge participants' understanding, how they made sense of their experience, and how they reflected upon it. It is important that a group 'gels', so that participants are familiar and relaxed with each other, in order to generate and support a climate of psychological safety, an important precondition for encouraging playfulness, risk-taking and making and learning from mistakes (West 2015; West et al. 2016). Once this had been established, and with participants' consent (see *Appendix A3.5*), video and audio recordings of the sessions were taken. The one-to-one sessions were also audio- and video-recorded.

Additional data were obtained through oral and written feedback from participants during the workshop sessions, plus my own notes during, after and between workshops.

For the purpose of this project, I set up a JISCMAIL list¹⁹, in order to be able to send information to all participants, but also for participants to communicate with each other during the project, should they wish to do so. The list still exists, but will be closed down when my thesis is completed and submitted.

Clearly, consent is essential in potentially sensitive qualitative research like this. Appropriate measures were taken to mitigate any risks and pitfalls – having two experienced facilitators for each workshop session helped to attend to the needs of the group as well as to individuals who needed support. Detailed information was given via an information sheet (including recommendations for appropriate clothing and exclusion criteria, such as existing health conditions). As participation potentially involved divulging very personal information, confidentiality and a set of agreed 'ground rules' of engagement were negotiated at the start of the first workshop (and revisited in the next workshops), and it was made explicit that participation could be withdrawn at any time. All this had been detailed in the application for ethical approval, which had been granted in September 2018 (see *Appendix A1*).

¹⁹ "The only mailing list service dedicated solely to supporting conversations and collaborations that further UK education and research.[...] JiscMail is a trusted, national service that supports open discussions and knowledge exchange among peers, subject experts and partners, both in the UK and internationally." (<https://www.jisc.ac.uk/jiscmail#>)

4.1 OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOPS

Each workshop took just over half a day (approx. 9:30-14:00, including lunch) and consisted of two parts, with a break approximately halfway, finishing with a finger buffet lunch provided by the facilitators. All 3 workshops were held in large halls (Workshops 1 and 3 in a university hall, Workshop 2 off campus, as the hall was in use for student exams), where we could use different parts of the room for seating (for discussion/reflection rounds), refreshment breaks/lunch and movement exercises respectively. Some of the dance movement activities are described in more depth in a book chapter for lecturers teaching leadership to university students, which is also meant to be used as an 'instruction manual' (Matzdorf & Sen 2018).

The start to each day had a warm-up round – this consisted of a round of introductions (just in WS 1), agreeing 'ground rules' of working with each other (e.g. confidentiality, 'Chatham House' rule²⁰, mutual support, being non-judgmental etc.), and (in WS2 and WS3) identifying and sharing personal priorities for the day.

²⁰ <https://www.chathamhouse.org/about-us/chatham-house-rule>

Overview of workshop structure		
WS1	WS2	WS3
Arrival & registration	Arrival & registration	Arrival & registration
1. General introduction Housekeeping & contracting	1. General introduction Housekeeping & contracting	1. Reminder: housekeeping & contracting
2. Intro round: Who & why? Dance / leadership experience?	2. Catch-up: what happened? Issues arising	2. Catch-up: what happened since last time?
3. Video: Mirko & Edita & discussion of L&F		3. Intro to topic
	3. Finding themes	4. Finding themes
4. Warm-up Mindfulness – coming to our senses	4. Warm-up Mindfulness – coming to our senses	5. Warm-up Mindfulness – coming to our senses
5. Tuning in Establishing connection / rapport / relationship (Nonverbal)	5. Establishing connection / rapport / relationship (Nonverbal)	6. Establishing connection / rapport / relationship (Nonverbal)
6. Leaning in: giving & receiving weight (Nonverbal)	6. Mirroring (Nonverbal)	7. Dancing the 'difficult relationship' 1 (Nonverbal)
7. Background & research	7. Snapshot Writing notes...	8. Snapshot 1 Writing notes...
Break	Break	Break
8. Practice frame (ATango)		
9. Snapshot Writing notes, then sharing in the round	Snapshot cont'd ...then sharing in the round	Snapshot 1 cont'd ...then sharing in the round
		9. Dancing the 'difficult relationship' 2
		10. Snapshot 2
10. Dance frame (Ballroom)	8. Partnering	11. Follower types & 'power of the follower' discussion
11. Dance L&F	9. Practice frame (Ballroom)	12. 'Just dance', meeting everyone
12. Reflection round & emerging themes Writing notes, then sharing in the round	10. Reflection round & emerging themes Writing notes, then sharing in the round	13. Reflection round Writing notes, then sharing in the round Close
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch

Table 4-1: Overview of workshop structure

Each of the workshops followed a similar pattern (see Table 4-1: Overview of workshop structure), in that each of the two sessions focused essentially on one type of movement activity (often with variations, role swaps and partner changes) and ended with a reflection round, with participants sitting in a semi-circle or circle. The first of these rounds I called a 'snapshot' (it usually took about 20 minutes), the second 'reflection', in which participants reflected both on the second session as well as on the whole workshop (this usually took longer – 30-40 minutes). For 'snapshots' and 'reflections' participants were given sheets

with a set of guiding questions (see *Table 4-2: Snapshot & Reflection questions*) and asked to jot down notes, observations and comments – whatever had ‘popped up’ during the sessions. The questions were numbered, so that the notes could more easily be transferred to a spreadsheet; and the sheets were blank on the reverse, to provide space for longer notes and comments where participants wanted to write more.²¹ Participants were also asked not to consider this a formal questionnaire and to use the questions just as a general stimulus for reflection, rather than trying to give precise answers. Approximately 15 minutes of quiet writing/reflection time was then followed by a round of sharing experiences, feelings and thoughts. At the end of each workshop I collected the note sheets where participants were willing to submit them, otherwise I asked if I could take a photocopy (either of these was consented to in all instances).

'WALKING THE TALK' – SNAPSHOT	FEEDBACK & REFLECTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did it feel to lead / follow? 2. What did you feel from your L / F? 3. Did you trust your partner? 4. Did you trust yourself? 5. What signals did you pick up / send? 6. Did you get your message across / feel 'heard'? 7. How did you deal with 'mistakes'? 8. Anything else...? (cont. overleaf) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. How did you experience your 'job' / your responsibilities? 10. What felt good, what felt uncomfortable? 11. How did you work as a team? 12. Did one particular role feel more comfortable / 'natural'? 13. How did you perceive and deal with the wider environment, i.e. other people, the floor, the room? 14. What issues did the whole experience raise for you? 15. Did the exercise raise any particular issues for you that are relevant to your work (e.g. power, resistance, energy etc.)? Which? 16. Anything else...? (cont. overleaf)

Table 4-2: Snapshot & Reflection questions

4.2 WORKSHOP 1

For the sake of clarity, the workshops are described in some detail here. This is necessary because of the complexity of the process and the linkages between the different parts of the data collection phases.

The main purpose of the first workshop was to familiarise participants with the research project, getting them to know each other and to work towards and become familiar with the physical contact required for competitive ballroom dancing, as well as building the trust

²¹ With hindsight, the wording is a bit of a misnomer, since *all* questions are really 'reflection questions'. Making the distinction simply made it easier to keep the note sheets apart.

necessary for sharing experiences and for experiencing and voicing discomfort. During the (fairly informal) arrival and registration time at the start of the day, over a cup of coffee or tea, participants filled in and signed their consent forms, and I answered any questions that they might have.

GROUND RULES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidentiality – Chatham House / ‘stays here’ rule. • Mutual support & supportive feedback; no criticism, but invited feedback. • Risk-taking encouraged – don’t be afraid of making a fool of yourself. • Boundaries: there may be discomfort – voice it if necessary, but be prepared to experience it and work with it.* <p>(*Remember it’s always o.k. to stop.)</p>

Table 4-3: Ground rules

4.2.1 SESSION 1: WARM-UP, WEIGHT GIVING

After the introductory round, in which we all introduced ourselves and highlighted why we were participating and what we expected from the event, we briefly discussed and agreed on a set of ‘ground rules’ to stick to during the workshops (see *Table 4-3: Ground rules*). These rules were written down and displayed on the wall in each workshop. This was followed by a more formal introduction to the project, giving the rationale for the workshops and explaining my research. We then watched a short video clip – a professional couple (world champions) in a dance practice, shown in slow motion (see *Figure 4-1a and b*). This gave the group the opportunity to identify ‘lead’ and ‘follow’ elements in the dance, as well as making observations about power and energy and about the relationship as it played out in the couple’s movement together.



Figure 4-1a and b: Illustration of dancesport (stills from video of Mirko Gozzoli & Edita Daniute, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGCfcoYt1Eq>)

Before getting into partner exercises, we started the activities with building contacts – finding a partner to work with, feeling comfortable with others, making eye contact, then body contact. The first major exercise was a nonverbal ‘trust exercise’ (‘giving and receiving weight’): standing opposite a partner, touching hands, palm to palm, and leaning in, essentially creating an ‘A’ line. By trial and error partners find out how much weight they can mutually support, but also how much they dare to ‘lean on’ the other person, as this involves relinquishing being entirely in control of one’s own balance, without overburdening the partner (see Figure 4-2a/b/c/d). The exercise requires being attentive to ‘self’ as well as ‘other’, and requires a lot of ‘fine-tuning’, especially where people are ‘adventurous’ and try out more extreme positions (see Figure 4-2b and c). An extension to this exercise was to start moving, first in a standing position, moving just arms, then experimenting with further movement (as detailed in Matzdorf & Sen 2018). A further extension was the invitation to change partners and repeat the exercises in different pairings.



Figure 4-2a/b/c/d: Giving and receiving weight: a demonstration and several examples. Note that in Figures b and c Myra & Elvira are giving more weight to each other and are taking more ‘balance risks’ than Yasmin & Ali in d.

Whilst there were moments of difficulty and discomfort (with very different amounts of 'risk-taking'), there was also enjoyment, and even giggles and laughter (though some of that may have masked nervousness or embarrassment). The practical part of the session concluded with a 15-minute 'snapshot' – a short reflection round, with the group sitting in a semi-circle and taking notes before moving into experience-sharing.

There is already an element of leading and following in this exercise: Who initiates what? Who 'directs' changes in position or movement? How easy/difficult is it to lead a change/follow the lead? But this fairly simple exercise also threw up a whole raft of issues, questions and 'thinking-on-one's-feet' decisions: how does one communicate agreement or disagreement, how does one know whether the other person is happy or uncomfortable with what is happening, without using words? When it comes to movement, who (if any) initiated, who (if any) decided what 'we' do as a partnership, how was communal movement negotiated? Does one feel 'listened to' or pushed about? Who is more adventurous, or more cautious? Who is happy to make 'bigger' shapes or lean in more? Is weight 'offered' or 'imposed'? What happens if one partner is not willing or not comfortable to give any weight – or too much? Issues like size, strength and self-image also come into this – if partners are of different height, different weight, different gender: what difference does this make to their relationship? These and other issues surfaced quickly. After developing a 'communication pattern' with one person, how does it feel doing the exercise with a different partner? Does it become easier or more difficult to communicate with a 'new' person? What makes it easier or more difficult?

The session ended with an introduction to the theory underpinning the workshop approach and to the research on which it is based. A slide presentation was used for this, and participants discussed leader/follower roles and issues relating to those.

4.2.2 SESSION 2: LEADING/FOLLOWING THROUGH WEIGHT SHIFTING

The next session was the first explicit lead-and-follow exercise. Using an idea from Argentine Tango, partners stood opposite each other. The leader presented their arms forward to their follower, palms up. The follower put their arms on top of the leader's arms,

together creating a 'frame' which they had to maintain strong, so that the 'lead' could be transmitted through it (a variation on exercise 2 in Matzdorf & Sen 2018).

Once a connection was made, the leader moved sideways, shifting their balance, inviting the follower to do likewise. The first few tries involved making sure that this shift of weight could be successfully communicated. This requires 'soft' knees, straight standing and a complete shift of weight from one leg to the other (see *Figure 4-3: Balancing – Lead and Follow*). Where a leader just rocks through the hips, without moving the upper body, it is impossible for the follower to 'read' the movement, unless they stand at a distance and look at the leader's body, using this as a visual clue. The task, however, was to communicate/'read' the movement through *feeling* it, rather than *watching* it.



Figure 4-3: Balancing – Lead and Follow



Figure 4-4a/b/c: Balancing problems
(a. Ali & Myra; b. Rachel & Martin; c. Yasmin & Jarik)

Once this worked, the leader would try to move, first sideways, then forwards and backwards, then moving around the room using a mix of forwards, backwards and sideways

steps. Whilst this was meant to be a nonverbal exercise, participants resorted to verbal means of clarification or mirth, and had to be reminded to communicate first and foremost with their bodies – obviously not an easy task, as *Figure 4-4a/b/c: Balancing problems* illustrates! The leader of couple (a) does not shift her balance, or the follower cannot sense the shift. Leader (b) starts walking backwards without any shift in weight, so follower (b) misreads the movement and tries to move backwards, whilst his weight is getting moved forwards, so he looks slightly off balance. Leader (c) resorts to looking at her partner's feet in order to work out where the movement is happening; she also does not have a stable frame through her arms, which makes it difficult to convey any change in balance.

As an extension, we played slow music with a clear rhythm to give participants an opportunity to negotiate/develop a shared rhythm. There were role swaps (i.e. taking the opposite role with the same partner) as well as partner changes. This went on for about 20 minutes and was followed by another 'snapshot' reflection round.

As the group had now 'gelled' somewhat, and participants were keen to keep moving, I decided to follow their lead and 'go the whole way', introducing the dancesport concept. The main element here was the competitive 'frame' (*Figure 4-5a/b: The dancesport 'frame': top view and diagram*), which was introduced through technical explanation (using a diagram to convey the main spatial and body-relational elements: 'leader space', 'follower space', 'communal/shared space'; 'four-legged balance'; 'shared axis') and demonstration. As before, participants teamed up in pairs and worked on putting this into practice, again including swapping roles and changing partners; first without, later with music (see Exercises 3 and 4 in Matzdorf & Sen 2018).

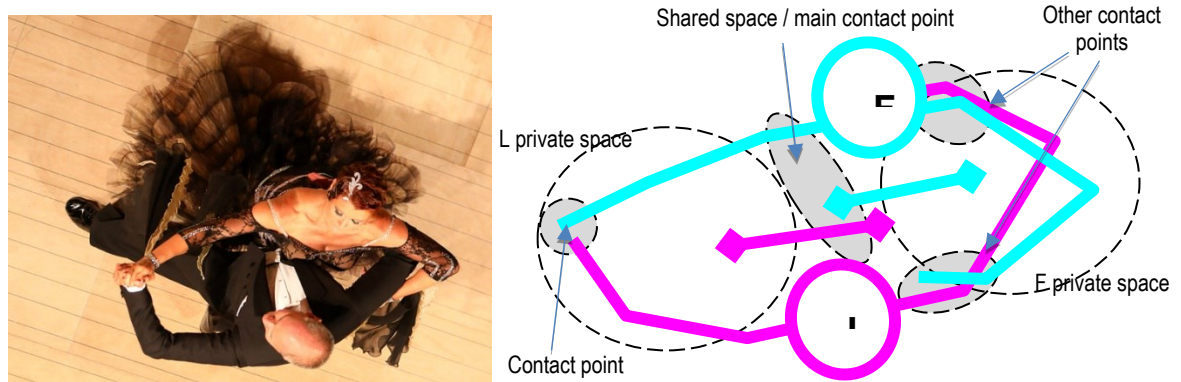


Figure 4-5a/b: The dancesport 'frame': top view and diagram

The workshop finished with a major reflection round, kicked off with another set of questions and note-taking, followed by participants sharing their experiences, observations and comments.

4.3 WORKSHOPS 2 AND 3

After the first workshop, before the second one, I held a round of one-to-one reflective conversations (RefCons) with each participant²². From participants' comments (verbal and written) during Workshop 1 (WS1) and during the RefCons, a set of themes emerged in relation to leader-follower-ship – issues that participants felt strongly about, that they felt were interesting or problematic. I compiled these into a list (see *Appendix A7.3*) and fed them back to the participants, first via email, then in printed form as a display at the start of WS2 and WS3. To help participants gain insights relevant to them, I invited them to select up to 3 personal priorities that they wanted to work on during the sessions.

WS2 and WS3 followed a similar pattern to WS1, with different exercises. WS3 was then followed by a final round of RefCons.

The main exercise 'bundles' in WS2 were as follows:

4.3.1 SESSION 1: MIRRORING

'Mirroring' is a well-known set of nonverbal exercises used in drama teaching, improv and acting training (see e.g. Spolin & Sills 1999:61ff; Sergeant 2011; Anonymous 2016; Boyke 2020). The exercises are done in pairs: one partner starts as the leader and the other partner as the follower, with the follower acting as the 'mirror' to the leader's movements, following their every move. After a while, the roles are reversed, and the follower becomes the leader. In the third part of the exercise, there is no designated leader or follower, and the pair have to negotiate nonverbally how they move together, still in an exact 'mirror image'. In teaching/training contexts, these exercises are done with a fair amount of guidance or instructions from the teacher (e.g. 'move further', 'reach higher'). As this was not a training

²² except one participant who decided to drop out of the project due to family issues

session, instructions were kept to a minimum, and rather than having multiple ‘switches’ in quick succession, each leader-follower constellation was given some time to allow for mindful focus and exploration of the relationship. The aim was not to train participants to lead or follow better or faster, but to enhance their awareness of how it feels to be leader or follower, what ‘power’ and ‘constraints’ each role has, to explore what makes leading/following easier or harder (e.g. fast, abrupt, or extreme movements are harder to follow; leading has to work within the physical, mental and emotional constraints of the follower).

The first round of mirroring was done without touching (see *Figure 4-6: Mirroring without touching*), then partners switched ‘lead’ and ‘follow’ a third into the exercise, and for the last third ‘gave up’ the designated leader/follower roles.



Figure 4-6: Mirroring without touching

In the second round, the mirroring was done with participants touching each other, palm to palm (see *Figure 4-7: Mirroring palm-to-palm* and also video footage), which made leading and following easier (through the added connection via touch), but it also made it harder to stay within the ‘mirror image’, rather than moving in a complementary way. It also restricted the range of movements, e.g. partners could not walk away from each other, turn round, or open out, as all these moves would have involved losing the hand-to-hand touch. Thus, spatial options were limited, and imagination and creativity had to happen within fairly narrow constraints – a precursor to the actual dance exercises.



Figure 4-7: Mirroring palm-to-palm (<https://youtu.be/MgzP9WcMVcc>)

The lead-follow sections were accompanied by Slow Waltz music, but when it came to the last part ('relinquish leading and following, and see what happens'), an extra challenge was added in the form of a fast-paced Quickstep, inviting faster movements and thus rendering 'togetherness' and precision far more difficult. Most participants chose to stick to their previous slow rhythm; others attempted to follow the music, which resulted in some confusion and laughter. There were two types of reactions to the music: One set focused on the partnership or the task (to keep the mirroring going), so speeding up would have destroyed that harmony and diminished task performance; so they stayed with the speed that worked for both of them. The other set went with the music (or perhaps it was just individual 'leaders') and tried to speed up their movements, resulting in loss of coordinated movement, loss of 'harmony' and confusion of (current) follower, especially where an experienced dancer, used to fast-moving dances, took the lead: as a result, the follower did not take over where they could not follow, but 'resigned themselves' to staying in F role and 'chasing' the leader (especially Martin & Elvira; see *Figure 4-8* for an example of this).



Figure 4-8: Martin struggling to keep up with Elvira
<https://youtu.be/86MnqH4SmkU>

After participants revisited their personal ‘themes’, the whole exercise was repeated with a change of partners, followed by a snapshot round.

4.3.2 SESSION 2: DANCING WITH A BALLROOM ‘FRAME’ / ‘COMPETITIVE ROUND’

After revisiting and reviewing their personal themes, participants regrouped in new partnerships. The group were reintroduced to the formal Ballroom frame (see Exercise 5 in Matzdorf & Sen 2018) as illustrated in *Figure 4-9* and in action in *Figure 7-4*, and participants practised moving with this frame with different partners, first without, then with music. There was no choreography involved – this was *not* meant to be a dance class, and having to grapple with ‘steps’ would have changed the focus, away from paying attention to one’s balance, one’s partner and the connection between partners. Besides, in this way participants could work out their own modes of moving and their own rhythm – again, this put the focus on collaboration and on the relationship between leader and follower. As expected, a lot of attention was caught up on the close proximity of the Ballroom frame – an uneasy closeness by ‘normal’ Western European standards that participants struggled with. This is always a ‘shock moment’ for non-dancers, and even for many social dancers, who are not used to close body contact. The purpose of this was to ‘draw’ participants out of their ‘comfort zone’ and increase their awareness of their own and others’ boundaries that are involved in leading and following.

Towards the end of the session, I announced a 'surprise competition' round (with my co-facilitator as adjudicator), which added (perceived) performance pressure for participants. For this activity there was no role reversal – the choice whether to lead or follow was left to the pairs to negotiate. Since we had an odd number of participants, I partnered one of them and danced as follower in the 'competition round', in order to avoid providing an 'unfair advantage' (meaning that my partner did not really have the choice whether to be leader or follower). Afterwards, the 'competition' was revealed as a 'trick' to raise 'practical awareness' of a situation where participants had to perform unfamiliar tasks under pressure (this was met with much laughter and jokes, especially when the 'adjudicator' refused to name a 'winner' – although he gave feedback to each of the couples from a dancer's perspective).



Figure 4-9: Demonstrating the Ballroom 'frame'

4.4 WORKSHOP 3

4.4.1 SESSION 1: DANCING A DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP

This was a highly complex activity (in pairs), which brought together elements from different interaction techniques and activities:

- embodying a character (a technique commonly used in dance movement therapy),
- role-play and role reversal (techniques originating from psychodrama, but now commonly used in other fields, such as management education),
- a variation of the social game 'guess who I mean', played by giving clues such as 'if this person were an animal/flower/household item, what would they be?'; in this context: 'if this person were dancing, how would they dance/move?'

Participants were invited to think of a challenging L/F situation in their work context (such as a 'difficult' relationship with line manager, team member, or colleague) and to embody that person's behaviour in a dance. The music provided for this exercise had a slow, regular rhythm, to ensure that group members were not distracted by any complications other than the ones set by the task (and predictably the rhythm was largely ignored). In the first half of this exercise, partner A would embody and dance their 'difficult person', moving 'in character', without any verbal explanations, with partner B simply reacting to this behaviour in any way they possibly could, without any prescriptions other than to keep dancing. The second half required partner B to take on and embody this role, to enable the person with the 'difficult relationship' to face the 'difficult behaviour', experimenting with their own actions when faced with it, and thus exploring different ways of engaging with the situation, in a physical, 'thinking-on-your-feet' way. Whilst the dancing was supposed to be ballroom-style, the enactment of the 'difficult relationships' led to some interesting variations that would not fall into any specific dance pattern, such as different hand/arm connections, turning away, leaving the partner and keeping a distance, or refusing to dance altogether.

The purpose of this exercise was twofold:

- for participants to explore their own actions and behaviours within the 'difficult relationship', but in a playful way and with a partner with whom they did not have the problems embodied here;
- to explore this through the nonverbal medium of dance and movement, rather than through talking, involving the senses and (bodily as well as emotional)

‘feelings’, in order to create an alternative context with the possibility of ‘reframing’ (essentially reflection-in-action).

Following this, there was ‘snapshot’ round, i.e. an opportunity for reflection-on-action and sharing strategies, insights, problems – and laughter.

In part 2, those exercises were then repeated (in the same pairs) for partner B’s difficult relationship.

Table 5-1 gives an overview of the different ‘difficult relationship’ partnerships and themes (my labels, based on how participants described their relationship issue).

This will be discussed further in Section 5.1.3: ‘Difficult relationship’.

4.4.2 SESSION 2: MEETING AND RELATING

In the last session participants were invited to do some more relaxed ‘free dancing’ with the task: “Move in any way you like, to the music and to your main theme(s), whilst relating to others, ‘meeting’ and dancing with each group member at some point.”

As this was the final set of dances, it seemed appropriate to give participants the opportunity to show their appreciation to each other, whilst acknowledging, experiencing and exploring their relationships, as well as bidding each other farewell, and thus moving towards a close. The music ‘provided’ a very diverse range of rhythms and moods, from slow and dreamy to joyous and bouncy, giving participants and facilitators plenty of opportunity for self-expression and light-hearted playfulness.

4.5 REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS (REFCONS)

As a ‘pilot run’, I interviewed a participant from an earlier workshop, reflecting a year after the event on a very emotional moment that had triggered an important insight for her. Following this, I planned to conduct one-to-one interviews with participants after each workshop. However, two things happened that changed the ‘interview plan’:

1. The 'first interview following Workshop 1 was quite an eye-opener for me: halfway through it I realised that this was actually more of a dialogue than an interview, reflecting on what had happened for this person during the first workshop, but also clarifying understandings as well as misunderstandings. It dawned on me that this was part of the participant's 'learning journey', and it turned out to be far more interactive than an interview would have been – I was more a 'sounding board' or mentor and thus more involved than an interviewer would have been. So I decided to move away from the 'interview' idea and instead label these one-to-one sessions more accurately as 'reflective conversations' (RefCons), also referring to them as such in communications with participants. The first set of conversations took between (approximately) 30 and 80 minutes each, generating a large amount of data.
2. Time constraints (the Easter period, availability of venues) led to a rather short gap between WS2 and WS3 – too short to schedule another 7 conversations into this time. Further deliberations were: participants' busy schedules, an overload of data (3 sets of RefCons would have meant 22 transcripts), and the assumption that gaining an understanding of start and end of participants' journey would give me sufficient insight and data, in addition to the video recordings of all three workshops.

So I had two reflective conversations with most participants, after WS1 and WS3 each, with some exceptions: two participants dropped out after the first workshop, citing schedule clashes and family issues respectively, although I managed to have a very short conversation with one of them. 7 participants remained and attended all workshops, but with one of them I could not have a reflection after WS3, again due to personal and family issues.

4.6 DATA SOURCES

Ultimately, I had the following data sources:

- Audio recording of RefCon 0 (28:38)

- (Near-)complete video and audio recordings of all 3 workshops (total time: 10:04:31); plus an additional video recording of a dance activity from a different angle, to provide more complete coverage (an extra 30:30)
- Audio (and largely also video) recordings of all reflective conversations (total time: 11:34:17):
 - 8 post-WS1 (total time: 6:57:08)
 - 6 post-WS3 (total time: 4:37:09)
- Transcripts of all reflective conversations²³
- Transcripts of the 'snapshots' and 'reflection rounds' from all 3 workshops²⁴
- Participants' written notes from all 'snapshots' and 'reflection rounds'
- Occasional notes from reflections with the co-facilitator.

This gives a total recording time of 22:37:56, plus the written material.

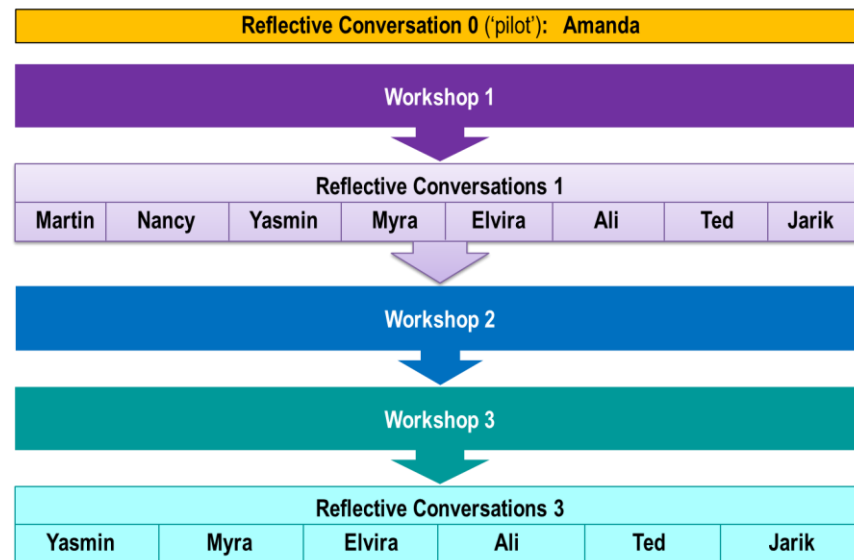
The workshop transcripts were long, WS1 coming in at 33 pages (1571 lines), WS3 having 43 pages (1918 lines), each including descriptions of movement during the workshop exercises, plus transcripts of snapshot and reflection rounds.

The RefCon transcripts vary considerably in length, depending on duration of recording – they are between 8 and 25 pages in length (i.e. 335-1179 lines) each (see *Appendix A8.1*)

Figure 4-10 shown below gives an overview of the data collection process:

²³ Some of those were 'outsourced' to professional transcription services, others I transcribed myself.

²⁴ I transcribed all of those myself (with help from my co-facilitator), to preserve confidentiality (all the footage was video footage, hence individuals were recognisable).

Data collection: overview*Figure 4-10: Data collection overview***4.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data I have gathered are very complex (and plentiful!): video recordings, audio recordings, notes from participants, my notes, transcripts of reflective conversations , transcripts of sessions from videos and audios. Plus, there are 'intangibles' that cannot be captured or verbalised, such as my memories of sensory and emotional 'feelings' when partnering up with participants during the workshop sessions – but they are there, and I know that they influence my thoughts and my writing.

The process of analysing this large body of data happened in several stages, which are illustrated in the following diagram (*Figure 4-11*) to give an overview:

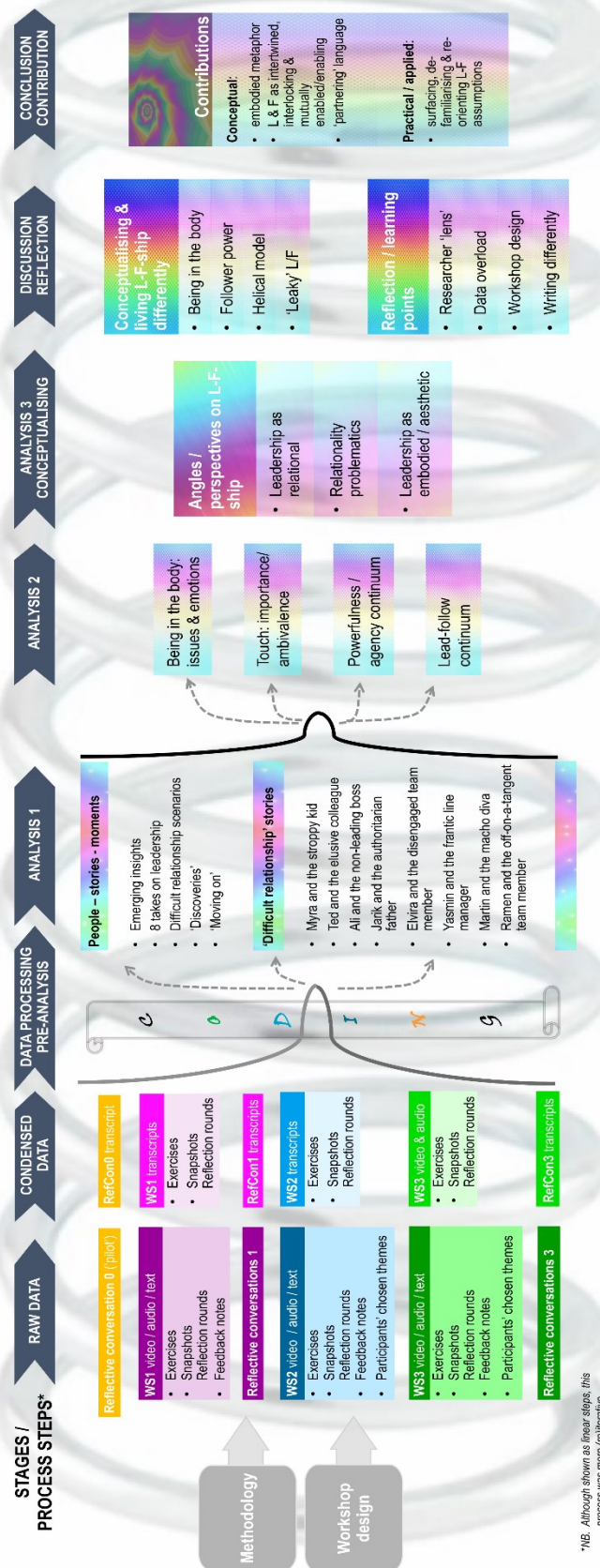


Figure 4-11: Stages / steps of the research process from data processing to analysis

What the diagram shows as a set of ‘steps’ or ‘stages’ was in fact an iterative / re-iterative process, with a lot of jumping forwards and backwards between those ‘stages’ – hence the spiral pattern in the background. Yes, it does make the diagram look somewhat ‘busy’ and ‘cluttered’ or even ‘messy’ – and indeed the whole process was just that! For example, I made a start with the difficult relationship exercise in WS3, going through the videos and describing what I saw, as well as what I remembered feeling, putting it into context with participants’ notes and what they told me afterwards in RefCon3. For each participant, I wrote their ‘difficult relationship story’. This helped me to understand and clarify the leader-follower-ship issues that each participant expressed in this exercise and how they worked through those issues.

4.7.1 PROCESSING THE DATA

Transcription converted the raw data into text, which then was read, re-read and coded. The audio/video recordings of the one-to-one reflective conversations (RefCons) were then transcribed, partly by me, with the help of online transcription software, partly by paid transcribers. For the group reflections I used mostly online speech-to-text software, which still required a lot of listening, re-listening and correcting (and sometimes asking others to listen to ‘snippets’ to help my understanding, since English is not my native language). I sorted the transcripts into 5 folders, one for each workshop and one each for the RefCons. I also ‘transcribed’ many of the movement exercises, seeking to capture and describe people’s movements and also give the reader an impression of how I see and ‘read’ movement. This was extremely time-consuming, since in the group exercises everybody moved at the same time. Of course these ‘transcriptions’ could only be partial – in both senses of the word: incomplete and subjective (i.e. via my perception, since a) the camera could not capture everyone all the time: some people were at times obscured by others, turned their back to the camera(s) or moved out of reach of the camera(s); and b) what I see and hear will be different from what another person sees or hears. Moreover, movement is more complex than speech (i.e. more concurrent than sequential), hence it is not possible

to capture and document it fully, unless very sophisticated hardware and software are available and/or the camera moves with the participants²⁵.

The transcripts aim to be as descriptive as is feasible, but there is already a certain amount of interpretation involved, e.g. when stating that someone moves ‘cautiously’, ‘energetically’ or ‘adventurously’, rather than trying to describe their movements ‘objectively’ in great detail – this would have been too time-consuming and would have resulted in an unnecessary level of detail.

When transcribing, it took some time to work out the right level of detail. Whilst not much attention is usually given to this part of the research process, those researchers who do mention it emphasise that transcription “is an interpretive process which is therefore the first step in analysing data” (Bailey 2008). When considering ‘naturalised’ versus ‘denaturalised’ transcription (Oliver et al. 2005), I decided to include some nonverbal cues such as pauses, laughter, hesitation and some gestures where this was important to grasp the meaning of what was communicated, as for example inflection or the use of fillers can significantly impact on the meaning of the actual words. I did not aim to capture every detail – for example, pauses are usually just indicated by “...” rather than described in words, unless there are longer silences. Descriptors of nonverbal cues, such as giggling, chuckling, taking a deep breath or shrugging, are inserted in square brackets, since they often provide some insight into the ‘mood’ of a conversation, whether someone makes light of a difficult or problematic topic, feels embarrassed or irritated, or finds something amusing (which others might or might not find so). When working on the analysis, I noticed that those details are actually helpful for *me* (not just for other readers), as they make it easier to recall the situation and help to ‘conjure up’ the participant’s ‘presence’ and attitude towards the topic of the conversation or the people involved or talked about, as well as my own sensations and feelings.

²⁵ To some extent this is done in sports and exercise science and elite sports coaching; it requires sensors on research participants’ bodies. However, the focus is then on the movement itself, whereas my research was not about the technicalities of physical movement, but on the meaning this had for participants and the feelings and (inter)actions around it. Apart from the technological aspect, a moving camera would have been highly intrusive: after all, my aim was to make participants feel comfortable and relaxed enough to move without feeling self-conscious or ‘under surveillance’.

4.7.2 MAKING SENSE OF THE DATA

My approach to making sense of the data was based upon interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA, see Smith & Osborn 2008; Smith et al. 2009, 2022), “an approach to qualitative, experiential and psychological research which has been informed by concepts and debates from three key areas of philosophy of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography” (Smith et al. 2022:11). It is a hermeneutic approach which is “concerned with the detailed examination of lived experience” (Smith et al. 2022:47) and is based on the assumption that “our data [...] can tell us something about people’s involvement in and orientation towards the world and/or about how they make sense of this” (Smith et al. 2022:46), hence focuses on exploring ‘sensemaking’ in a double hermeneutic loop (i.e. researchers making sense of participants’ making sense). As a form of action research, IPA also comes from a background of valuing people as research participants, rather than research subjects. This is an important aspect, especially in regard to the emancipatory element of the workshop approach: respecting and maintaining the personal integrity of all those involved in the research is an essential value.

Rather than resorting to software for coding the transcripts, I did it ‘semi-manually’, using MS Word, with a landscape page layout and margins to either side of the text. Smith, Flowers and Larkin recommend using the righthand margin for “exploratory comments” (now called “exploratory notes”²⁶) and, in the second step, re-reading the transcript and identifying “emergent themes” (now called “experiential statements”) in the lefthand margin (Smith et al. 2009:79ff, 2022:75ff):

²⁶ The second edition of the ‘IPA bible’ has introduced a new terminology, but the ‘old’ terms are still in use: “[...] if your analysis is well under way, we think you can use either the old terminology or change to the new. [...] We realize that both sets of terms will be used for a period of time, and that many researchers will also draw on methods papers and chapters outside this text to develop their research plans” (Smith et al. 2022:76). I had done much of the analysis before the 2nd edition; so I will here use both terms in parallel.

Emergent themes 2021: Experiential statements	Original Transcript	Exploratory comments 2021: Exploratory Notes
The questioning self Lost self Time period Coping as a process Excessive thinking Finding the self (process) Relationships as problematic Work of managing the self The self as performance Diagnosis transforms the self Denial as protecting old self Disclosure as making diagnosis and new self real? Excessive thinking (Rumination)	I: Are you alright to tell me more about that? R: More about that um ... don't know if it was, hm ... I think that was really because I had, I just I just didn't know who ... in lots of ways I didn't know who I was, at that time, in the early days of being diagnosed and coming to terms with it, I couldn't stop thinking about it and um ... I had to go through a process of finding out or finding myself again, um, and whilst I was around people that knew me well well, I found it really really exhausting because, well well maybe they couldn't tell but I was sure, I was paranoid that that they would know that something was wrong, so I was constantly trying to be as near to how I imagined myself to being without HIV so ... that in itself made it even more impossible, because the more you try to stop thinking about something, then the harder it becomes, you know so ...	Is there an underlying difficulty in articulating something this emotive and complex (repetition of 'I' and 'to')? Clear sense of struggling to articulate some very strong and confusing difficult feelings. Use of 'just' emphasizes his struggle to explain. Major issue of questioning self. Who is Jack? Many ways in which self-questioning occurred. Who are you if you're not yourself? Diagnosis and self-questioning are clearly linked? Impact of diagnosis Critical sense of time frame (these experiences are embedded within time, has he come to terms with it now?) Maybe ideas like stages or vulnerable periods? Overwhelmed with thinking about HIV If something was found what was lost? Who does the finding in finding themselves? Impact of diagnosis Does diagnosis mean you lose yourself? Importance of people who knew him What does this say for the importance of social context? Is the self social? Emphasizing the enormity of the task with repetition of 'really' Found it exhausting Hesitant repetitions (well, well and I, I) Is paranoia an over concern with others' view of self? 'Wrong', the old self was 'right'? Performance. Working to manage people's perceptions of himself. Some sense of performing, some pivotal loss of authenticity implicit within this, how can you perform yourself? Who is doing the performance? How can a medical procedure lead to this radical sense of being lost? Tells off Things were impossible Internal thinking about himself Intrapyschic process implied, thinking about thinking, major change in sense of his own mind. Impact of diagnosis Does diagnosis make you think about thinking? Think about self?

Figure 4-12: Example of IPA coding technique (Smith et al. 2009:93)

This format worked well for MS Word documents: I used the transcript text for underlining and highlighting, the righthand margin for exploratory coding/noting (via comment boxes) and the lefthand margin to add text boxes for emergent themes/experiential statements. Line numbering was added to help locate verbatim quotes, and I frequently added references to audio and video recordings in order to make it easier to find relevant sections. Here is an example:

'Normal mode' := verbal mode
'Instinct' := following habitual pattern/behaviour; resorting to 'comfort mode'

'Debugging', 'toolbox', 'physical situation not working': social interaction as technology
'Trick': do people need manipulating?

279 Ali: "Er... my instinct was to do exactly what I would normally do... and... and...
280 erm... stop and describe the situation that I see... and then wait to see if the
281 other person goes 'oh yes, I see the same thing', or usually they have
282 something interesting to say about it... as I..."

283 F: "So you went into... into spoken language?"

284 Ali: "I... went into 'debug mode' [F: "Okay"], but mainly, in that circumstance, I
285 tried to listen... 'cos usually I find..."

286 F: "Sorry... just to clarify... for that clarification: you mean in talking..."

287 Ali: "In talking, yes."

288 F: "...or physically?"

289 Ali: "In talking."

290 F: "In talking, okay."

291 Ali: "Yes. So... so, yeah, the physical situation was really really... you
292 know... as I found it not working. [F: "Mhm"]... So I... I started nego... you
293 know... 'I'm perceiving the situation this way'... And this is just my really
294 standard debugging trick when I'm having an interaction with someone that is
295 not really working. And... erm... [chuckles] 'cos I have to do a lot of that...'
296 [F: "mhm"]... [Ali giggles]... it's my job... it's funny! I mean... And then
297 usually... usually I find that if I just listen to someone and just encourage them
298 to keep talking, we can almost debug it by... and they'll say something and I'll
299 go, 'you know, do you... so... Are you saying this, that and the other? You
300 know, I don't have to put my own point of view into it a lot... usually you can
301 just listen your way out of the problem... I find... but I couldn't. Did not work!
302 My toolbox was insufficient for... to solve this problem inside of five minutes.
303 [Chuckles.] Yeah. Yeah. We... we didn't solve it."

FM
'Instinct' := following habitual pattern/behaviour; resorting to 'comfort mode'

FM
'normal mode' := verbalising

FM
'debugging': social interaction as technical system
'debug mode': she is a 'fixer' = the one who solves the problem

FM
'debugging': IT technical approach to remedy difficult communication situations → 'fixing'

FM
Technical approach to interpersonal communication: 'toolbox'

Figure 4-13: Example of transcript and coding (RefCon1, Ali)

Initially I used printed copies, highlighters and coloured pens, but then decided to do the work online, because it was easier to keep track of soft copies than to chase around for lots of papers that kept getting lost. Each transcript required several rounds of reading and re-reading, with further annotations in each round.

Participants' notes from the workshops were typed up and saved in a spreadsheet (see *Appendix A6.1*). The notes were mostly responses to a set of guiding questions; so they were structured by workshop, participant and question, which allowed a good overview. Since I had also kept a spreadsheet identifying which 'partnerships' had occurred during the exercises (see *Appendix A5*), this made it possible to identify e.g. the views from each partner about an exercise where they had worked together and to look for commonalities and differences. Participants' comments fed into the development of emergent themes/experiential statements (ES) and patterns from RefCons and snapshots/reflection rounds.

After coding/noting all the transcripts of the two reflective conversations that I had with each participant (using the comments feature in MS Word, inserting comments in the right-hand margin of the pages), I pulled out the emergent themes/experiential statements that arose from those conversations (using textboxes in the left-hand margin of the pages; see sample in *Appendix A8.3*). I then copied and pasted all themes/ESs and issues into a new document for each participant, so that I could work out which themes were relevant to each individual in RefCon1 compared to RefCon3, and cluster the themes. This provided some good insights, but was still very detailed (see sample in *Appendix A9*).

Following IPA process guidance, I then clustered and condensed the themes into broader themes – now called personal experiential statements (PETs, see Smith et al. 2022) – which I put into a table with two columns, one for RefCon1, the other for RefCon3 – again for each participant. The idea was to get an overview of what was important to each participant – a kind of before and after exercise. I also entered the broader themes into a table for all participants, so that I could compare themes for all participants across RefCon1 and across RefCon3 (see *Appendix A7.3*), looking for superordinate themes. Neither of the last two steps worked particularly well: The broader themes were so broad that they did not really

tell me much – they neither showed evidence of participants' 'journeys' nor did they work as 'group themes' (cf. Smith et al. 2022, Chapter 7).

I then tried yet another approach: using the documents with the more detailed themes, I started writing the story of each participant. This proved very complicated, since I had to use a lot of different documents concurrently: the 'themes' document, the transcripts with codings of RefCon1 and RefCon3, transcripts from various sessions (WS1, WS2 and WS3), and, for clarity/movement/body language, I had to revisit some of the video recordings as well. I had used line numbering for the transcripts, and I tried to reference each and every verbatim quote from a participant, which turned out to be extremely time-consuming.

Facilitators' observations and notes (including post-workshop 'debriefing' sessions and reflections) were also used within this interpretative framework. The themes that emerged from the RefCons, snapshots, reflection rounds and participants' written feedback notes were then collated into working documents, with at least one file for each participant.

During the first round of analysis (Analysis 1 in the diagram) three main groups of findings came out of the coding process:

- a set of main themes for each participant (PETs);
- participant 'stories' ('narrative fragments'/'elements of language in action'): each participant had their own 'leader-follower-ship story' resulting from their past experiences, their individual self-understanding, their work situation, their own way of resolving problems, the way they interacted with others, their take on the issue of leadership and followership, and so on;
- a 'difficult relationship story' for each participant, resulting from the first exercise in WS3, which brought to the fore some deep-seated problem issues around leader-follower-ship.

Once these findings started coming together, a range of issues and concepts linked to leader-follower-ship emerged (see Analysis 2 in diagram), from individual participants' 'leadership journeys' (each person's starting point at the beginning of the workshops, and where they were at the end of the two months after the start) to a continuum with leadership and followership as the two extreme points. A second continuum was the attitude towards

powerfulness and agency in regard to leadership and followership. Further issues include 'being in' the body and the importance (and ambivalence) of touch.

At this stage it was clear that I diverged from the 'normal' IPA process and its highly structured step-by-step process that focuses on individuals' experiences through the detailed, systematic analysis of mostly verbal data. However, my research included 'embodied' data: movement and nonverbal interaction, captured via video recordings, which presented challenges in maintaining the rigorous IPA process. This made it essentially impossible to follow the 'proper' IPA approach.

I faced "data overload" due to the extensive and varied nature of the data, including video footage and movement sessions, alongside 12 one-to-one reflective conversations (see *Section 4.6* for overview of data sources). Once all the verbal parts were transcribed, the sheer volume of the material beyond the usual number of interviews – Smith et al. (2009:52) suggest approximately 12 cases for PhD research and between 4 and 10 interviews for professional doctorates – made complete IPA processing impractical.

So whilst I adhered to IPA principles in my analysis, such as iterative coding and theme development, I could not apply the methodology in its full, systematic form to *all* data types. I followed the IPA process selectively, applying it more rigorously to verbal data while using visual and movement data as supplementary material to enrich the findings.

I would however argue that this approach represents a tentative step towards broadening the use of IPA, retaining its core principles but adapting them to include types of 'embodied' data. This adaptation aims to capture and address the relational and interactive dimensions of participant experiences, adding insights beyond what research participants can verbalise.

Smith, Flowers & Larkin have repeatedly emphasised that their descriptions of the IPA methodology are meant to as guidelines but not straightjackets, and that they welcome researchers to be innovative and creative when using and further developing IPA (see for example Smith et al. 2009:203ff, 2022:47 and 76; also Pietkiewicz & Smith 2014:11).

Integrating visual and movement data with IPA can therefore contribute to the methodological expansion of IPA. Whilst IPA is by definition idiographic, focusing on the individual's lifeworld and experiences, its *intersubjective* aspects, i.e. the understanding that human selves are embodied and relational, call for more diverse data forms, enabling a

deeper understanding of this embodied relationality. This modified IPA approach still respects the essence of IPA by focusing on the detailed exploration of personal experiences but broadens its application to provide richer data, which helps to capture the dynamic, relational aspects of participant experiences, offering a more holistic understanding of the phenomena under study by allowing researchers to attend to and interpret non-verbal, sensory cues and patterns. This would enhance the IPA capacity to explore complex, relational dynamics whilst maintaining the methodology's spirit and preserving its integrity.

5 FINDINGS, MEANINGS, SENSEMAKING

Due to the nature of the research, I decided against a straightforward linear account of the findings. Therefore this section is more a collection of insights, rather than a linear documentation of a traditionally structured process. As indicated earlier, the process was messy – nothing unusual for qualitative research with a deeply ‘enmeshed’ researcher, as Ward & Shortt (2020:4) reassuringly acknowledge:

Too often (we find!) the messy, challenging and unexpected parts of research are ignored or left out of method books. We find methods are presented as ‘clean’ systematic processes and, as we know, most research does not follow this neat pattern.

This was not least due to the ‘overload’ of data mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, I did not want to discard any of the data, because even material that I did not analyse in depth contributed to the understanding of the whole.²⁷ Those insights will help to answer the research questions (see *Section 1.5: So what do I want to find out?*) and form the basis of conceptualisation and discussion in the next chapters (6 and 7).

5.1 PEOPLE, STORIES, MOMENTS...

5.1.1 INSIGHTS EMERGING

While wading through the mass of data, several things became clear:

Each participant had a different ‘journey’. This might be stating the obvious, but nevertheless it is important to acknowledge it. Responses to the workshop experiences fall mostly into three broad categories: epiphanies, intellectualization and rejection. Some participants experienced profound ‘aha’ moments when they discovered new perspectives on issues they were grappling with, which allowed for reframing the problem and thus looking at new and different solutions or ways forward. Where solutions were not yet on the horizon, at least that moment disrupted a familiar pattern. For some people this meant a change in their attitude, deep learning about ‘self-and-other’ and a re-evaluation of

²⁷ Cf. Alvesson & Sköldberg on the hermeneutic circle (2009:53ff)

themselves and their sense of leadership. Others' insights were of a more intellectual nature – they 'stayed in their heads' and did not 'reach their feet', to use a dance metaphor. Some people discovered that bodywork was not for them, as it posed too much of a challenge (or even a threat) to their professional self-image, their self-understanding and/or their (body/emotional) boundaries or possibly had too many painful connotations.

Another 'obvious' point: leading and leadership meant very different things to different people – each had their own 'take' on it, interpreted it differently, and 'took the lead' in a different way. Moreover, these meanings were often beset with memories, previous experiences, unchecked assumptions – some of these surfaced through exercises and subsequent reflection, but many remained untested and unaddressed, and it would have taken far more 'exploration time' than was available in those three workshops.

This also confirmed my hunch that 'leadership' is not a purely rational concept that can be acquired through study, training, a 'fake it till you make it' or 'method acting' approach. Where people resort to recipes and prescriptions whilst hanging on to deep-seated prejudices and preconceptions, what difference does this make to their credibility?

Usually leadership and followership will fall into two different 'boxes'; leader and follower are seen as discrete roles. However, throughout the workshop, it became physically and intellectually clear that leader and follower roles are often not entirely separate, but overlap and merge – the boundaries are fuzzy.

Through analysing the data and looking at where people 'stood' with regard to their own personal sense of 'leadership'/being-a-leader or 'followership'/being-a-follower, a continuum emerged – and not just one where I could simply position each participant: there was movement along this continuum, showing people's journeys towards leadership or/and followership. There were also no end points to the continuum – the ends were merely directional, so I drew them as arrows. Of course there is no scale, as this visualisation is merely my interpretation of the data, rather than any attempt at an accurate measurement.

There is no 'black-and-white' distinction, no 'hard border' between leader and follower, leadership and followership, and the various ways in which participants made sense of leadership and followership were not just shades of grey – they were 'coloured' by individuals' histories, experiences, expectations, assumptions and ways of sensemaking.

So I ended up with all the colours of the rainbow to visualise the diversity within the group (see *Figure 5-1, Section 5.2.3*).

Moreover, the way I see each individual's movement along the continuum is not fixed: As I think and rethink, watch and re-watch, analyse and re-analyse the data, the mapping changes. Rather than a diagram I would call it a 'thinking graph', and the version that has ended up here will not be a final judgment, but merely a snapshot. And if any of the participants were to position themselves and the other group members, each picture would look different.

5.1.2 8 LEADERS, 8 FOLLOWERS – 8 TAKES ON LEADERSHIP: A QUICK OVERVIEW

Here is a brief overview of the 'protagonists' (other than the facilitators, who also figure in this) of the project. This is not a dismissal of other participants, who left the project after WS1, but obviously I did not have the same opportunity to gather data or become more acquainted with them and their leader-follower-ship issues, nor can I see a process over time. Given the large amount of data that there is, it seems justified to focus on those who had more 'presence' (i.e. throughout WS1 – WS3, and RefCon1 and/or RefCon3) or a where there is evidence of a process of engaging (Amanda).

So here is the protagonists' view of leadership and the issues that they were grappling with. Those are based on what they said (in the group sessions and the RefCons) and what they did (as far as I could observe or feel it). The leadership 'portraits' are in alphabetical order of group members' names (with abbreviations used in transcripts):

Ali (AL)

Leadership is about influencing others: Ali currently exercises it from a 'powerless' position, i.e. without any formal/structural authority – but she feels that she has to do this, since her line manager does not provide it (at least not as she thinks he should). It is something one can achieve with a 'toolbox' of instrumental behaviours, such as listening, non-confrontational conversations, putting people at ease and keeping them within their 'comfort zones', without them noticing. It is important to keep oneself out of harm's way, control one's

emotions, and not to get drawn into 'fights'. To achieve this, it is necessary to analyse situations quickly, to 'suss out' colleagues and potential as well as real adversaries, and to give them the feeling that they are being listened to.

Elvira (EL)

Leadership is about understanding people and offering solutions to problems. Good leaders (provided they are in positions of authority) should act as a 'shit umbrella' for their teams instead of passing on the pressure from above. From what she mentions about her workplace, it appears that there are no good leaders in the organisation that Elvira works for – at least that is her conclusion. On the other hand, leading from a follower position is possibly a 'safer' option, as one does not have to 'carry the can'.

Jarik (JA)

Leadership has in the past been associated with formal authority, and, due to a family background where parental authority was experienced as 'power over', domination and coercive control, Jarik strongly rejects even the notion of 'leadership'. But being curious and open-minded, he explores 'new' concepts of what leadership could mean and entail for him and his working life. His 'epiphany' moment is the insight that fighting against authority is not the only way to deal with it.

Martin (MA)

Leadership is about helping people to achieve something together, a good performance to which everyone can contribute. This means that it is important to build relationships with followers. But being 'in the lead' has its pitfalls and limitations: Martin's experience is that leadership comes at a price – no less than a certain amount of self-denial. Another issue is that too much closeness carries the risk of slipping into relationships that transcend boundaries; but on the other hand one has to make allowances to keep followers happy in their following, otherwise they might reject being led and turn to revolt and disruption.

Myra (MY)

Leadership is difficult and often gendered. Getting ready to take the lead requires not only confronting one's own assumptions around leadership/followership but also building self-confidence, moving away from stereotypes (e.g. about gender, culture etc.) and summoning up courage to take risks. It also requires understanding what followers need, preferably without neglecting self-care. Acknowledgement and appreciation of follower agency help.

Ted (TE)

Leadership is more often about control and dictatorship, even if there is a benevolent dictator. A different take on leadership as inviting and initiating, rather than commanding, is quite a radical idea. Taking the lead can also mean looking after oneself and being independent, instead of trying to take or hold on to control. If one is not (or does not strive to be) a dictator, accepting others' agency is essential.

Yasmin (YA)

Leadership is about taking the lead, stepping forward in situations where one is experienced, knowledgeable and skilful enough to give guidance to others and make or influence decisions. Self-confidence and self-reliance are necessary for this. It is important, however, not to interpret followership as giving up agency altogether – being a follower does not imply being weak or powerless.

Amanda

(Not a group member, but she attended a one-off workshop a year earlier, where she had a very emotional 'epiphany moment'. I interviewed her at the start of this project, which led to the concept of the RefCons.)

Leadership has become more fluid and relationally enacted, less of a predetermined, structurally entrenched role. Amanda's take on leadership used to be strongly influenced by her husband's military career, centring on command and control (interspersed with donuts for the 'followers'), with the sharp, clear-cut differentiation between "either lead, follow or shut the fuck up and get out of the way". Amanda concedes that she "always

tended to view the follower as being a lesser person than the leader”. Experiencing a leader as supportive (whilst dancing with Ramen) was a shock – totally new and unfamiliar. It resonated emotionally so strongly that she burst into tears and subsequently questioned her previous rigid assumptions. Involving the whole body and one’s own feelings in leader-follower-ship work was new and exciting, but also confusing, opening up new perspectives and moving away from predetermined structures, prescriptions and formally defined relationships towards an awareness of others, but also of one’s own feelings – an uncertain but more authentic and ‘holistic’ way of leading.

5.1.3 ‘DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP’ SCENARIOS

As described in *Section 4.4.1*, the first session of WS3 focused on participants’ experiences of situations in which ‘leading’ or ‘following’ was problematic. Participants were invited to portray, embody and explore a ‘difficult relationship’. This resulted in 8 ‘scenarios’ or ‘mini stories’, which are outlined here. I have ‘named’ them so as to distinguish them easily, based on how participants described their ‘issue’. See below (*Table 5-1*) for the list (the names in bold are the ‘issue owners’. The person ‘in the lead’ is named first, the follower second.²⁸), followed by a short summary for each scenario.

Part 1a&b

Elvira & **Myra**: ‘stropky kid’

Ted & Yasmin: ‘elusive colleague’

Jarik & Martin: ‘authoritarian father’

Ali & Ramen: ‘non-leading boss’

Part 2a&b

Myra & **Elvira**: ‘disengaged team member’

Yasmin & Ted: ‘frantic line manager’

Jarik & **Martin**: ‘macho diva’

Ali & **Ramen**: ‘off-on-a-tangent team member’

Table 5-1: ‘Difficult relationship’ dance: pairings and themes

Myra and the stropky kid

In the first half of this dance, Myra portrays a stubborn primary school child who resists interaction and communication. Elvira attempts to reach out and coax Myra into

²⁸ This is a dancesport convention – the leader’s name is always mentioned first, the follower second. Whilst there is obviously a hierarchical element in this tradition, I am using it here for simplicity’s sake, i.e. to avoid an explanation each time a pair is mentioned.

engagement, eventually succeeding, albeit briefly, leading to a moment of connection between the two.

In the second half Elvira, now the defiant child, resists Myra's attempts to connect, mostly standing still or making evasive moves and avoiding contact. Myra persistently follows Elvira around and tries to grab her wrists. Their interaction escalates into a playful struggle, almost a wrestling match, ending with laughter and Elvira walking away. Elvira's resistance seems to have the upper hand, with Myra struggling.

Ted and the elusive colleague

In the first half, Ted and Yasmin take ballroom hold, with Ted as leader, dancing the 'elusive colleague' {A30:30}. After a few steps, Ted abruptly lets go of his partner, turns away and walks away, completely ignoring her and her attempts to reconnect, but then, just as abruptly, turns back towards her, resumes the dance hold and continues to dance with her. This pattern is repeated several times.

In the second half, Yasmin dances as Ted's 'elusive colleague'. They move in a calm, controlled way, with Ted still in leader position (perhaps 'old habits die hard'?). Yasmin periodically leaves, moves away from Ted, but eventually returns and continues dancing with him. Ted then starts initiating separations himself. Their dance evolves into a smooth pattern of separating and rejoining.

Ali and the non-leading boss

In the first half, Ali portrays her non-leading boss, leaving decision-making to Ramen, who leads and navigates from a follower position. Ali's sudden moves and unclear actions create a chaotic dynamic, pulling Ramen off course. Ali frequently laughs and disengages, embodying a boss who sporadically takes charge but often leaves direction to others.

In the second half Ramen dances the non-leading boss, with Ali leading (albeit from a follower position). They initially stay apart, talking and laughing. When they dance, Ali moves backward and sideways, pulling Ramen along, who remains fairly passive. Ali maintains strong eye contact but avoids close physical proximity, apparently preferring verbal interaction over touch.

Jarik and the authoritarian parent

Jarik, dancing a dominant authoritarian figure, leads Martin in a ballroom hold, disregarding rhythm and partner. He bends, even distorts, Martin into various shapes, moving erratically and without consideration. Brief moments of rhythmic, intimate dancing change abruptly into rushed, reckless movements until the music stops.

After the role swap, Martin leads. At first they move cautiously, then Martin sways more vigorously, with Jarik reluctantly following. They maintain a close hold, heads bent and looking down, their dance resembling an intimate Argentine Tango. Martin takes wider steps and turns, but appears introspective, focusing on his own movements. They end with an underarm twirl and a ceremonious bow, both laughing.

Elvira and the disengaged team member

Elvira, portraying a disengaged team member, remains passive as Myra attempts to engage through gentle swaying movements. With Myra holding Elvira's hands, Elvira passively follows with minimal response, creating an 'arm dance' led by Myra. They briefly laugh together, breaking character, which prompts Elvira to respond more, and they continue moving together until the music stops.

In the second half, Myra embodies the disengaged team member. Elvira attempts to initiate movement, encountering resistance from Myra, who remains passive. What follows are hesitations and brief struggles, interrupted by Fides's brief intervention. Elvira eventually releases Myra's hands in resignation. Fides suggests exploring different directions, prompting a renewed effort from both.

Yasmin and the frantic line manager

Yasmin, embodying the frantic line manager, nevertheless dances in follower position. She moves erratically and unpredictably, with bursts of frantic energy – forward, backward, sideways, with sudden arm gestures—ignoring rhythm completely. She almost runs into Ted several times, manoeuvring him into underarm turns despite him being the leader, visibly confusing Ted, who laughs and tries to keep up. Throughout, Yasmin keeps her gaze

on Ted (possibly out of concern?). They stop when the music ends, Yasmin visibly exhausted and laughing, Ted sighing with relief.

In the second half, Ted, in the role of the frantic line manager, leads Yasmin in a chaotic dance. Ted's movements are unpredictable and fast-paced, dragging Yasmin along with hurried steps. He twirls her in underarm turns and rushes back and forth, ignoring the music's rhythm, often abruptly stopping and starting again. Yasmin tries to keep up in a rushed manner, appearing more frantic than Ted. Despite the chaos, they maintain a strong personal connection through verbal communication, eye contact and smiles, and discussions between sequences. Their rapport and mutual understanding are evident throughout the energetic and disjointed performance.

Martin and the macho diva

Martin, dancing the 'macho diva' choir member, leads Jarik in a hesitant dance. Despite Jarik's efforts to engage, Martin appears detached, swaying minimally and showing little engagement. Eventually, Martin disengages, stepping back with folded arms. Jarik attempts to reconnect, but Martin tolerates rather than fully participates. They laugh together when the music ends.

In the second half, Jarik, now embodying the 'macho diva', hesitates as Martin invites him to dance. They eventually settle into a ballroom hold with Jarik leading reluctantly. Martin engages more actively, swaying gently with Jarik. Eventually, Jarik withdraws briefly in resignation, but later accepts Martin's invitation to dance. They move slowly, gradually syncing their movements until the music ends. Jarik ends the dance with a nod and step back, while Martin crosses his arms, reflecting their mixed interaction.

Ramen and the off-on-a-tangent team member

In the first half, Ramen, dancing the 'off-on-a-tangent' team member, reluctantly follows Ali's erratic lead. Ali moves unpredictably, out of sync with the music. Ramen resists, unwilling or confused, and nearly loses balance. Ali persists, seemingly dancing around him. They stop, laughing and talking, but Ramen remains physically 'detached', illustrating the team member's tendency to stray from team efforts.

In the second half, Ali, embodying the off-on-a-tangent team member, reluctantly follows Ramen's lead. She hesitates and manoeuvres him sideways, maintaining distance. Ramen surprises her with a sudden 'embrace' (= dance hold), then leads her swiftly across the floor, mostly moving backwards, pulling her with him. With a nervous, mirthless laugh, Ali reluctantly accepts a 'distanced' hold and after a brief stop (with discussion) they resume dancing. They stop again, laugh, and discuss, Ali freeing herself and maintaining distance until the music ends.

5.1.4 'DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIP' INSIGHTS AND DISCOVERIES

Despite the playful interactions – the session triggered much laughing – the 'danced problematic' was quite serious, as the post-session 'snapshots' confirmed. Several 'eye-opening' moments were mentioned in the 'snapshot' rounds immediately following the activity – and one I only found out much later (bold = my emphasis):

Ali's expectation that 'the boss' *had* to do the leading got shaken:

My disinterested leader is perfectly well **interested, just not in the same things**.
(Ali, 'non-leading boss', WS3:352f)

Same phenomenon, but **it looks very different from both sides** [...] I'm a little bit reassured almost, to **discover that you can't really solve it from being a boss** either (Ali, 'non-leading boss', WS3:777ff)

Ramen: Her boss appears to not lead... so I was 'okay, **if I don't lead either, then nothing's gonna happen**' [...] What would Ali do with that sort of character? **I'll lead!**

Ali: 'What would Ali do' – **you've got Ali sussed!** (WS3:466ff)

Jarik discovered that there might be alternatives to fighting authority:

I should be working on the fact to stay focused and try to be calm and just cope with it. Don't go overcome with emotions, not fighting back – **just be there and follow what's going on**, try to, maybe, **communicate in different ways**. (Jarik, 'authoritarian father', WS3:445f)

Yasmin discovered that it 'takes two to tango':

On reflection... What do you **both bring to the table to make it a difficult relationship**, rather than putting it in one person – 'that difficult colleague', kind of, like? (Yasmin, 'frantic line manager', WS3:785ff)

Ted realised that it was okay for him not to be ‘in control’ – and even enjoyed it:

I shouldn't get annoyed 'cos **she's got every right to go away... I could go away** and enjoy myself without her (Ted, 'elusive colleague', WS3:365f)

When you [*i.e.* Yasmin] did your double twirl, er... you were definitely the leader at that moment. You'd asked me to do a single twirl, which I sort of managed, just. But then you did a very stylish single and doubled it round, which, also, I enjoyed – it gave me a physical sensation in the arm of some form of creative tension when you did that. So **as alleged leader I enjoyed it when you actually took the lead at that point.** (Ted / Yasmin's 'frantic line manager'; WS3:990ff)

Ramen discovered that 'pull' worked better than 'push':

This really was my 'ah-ha' moment: if I pulled rather than pushed, she came along, despite not wanting to. Ever since then, this has been a guiding principle for me as a manager, when I have to deal with 'difficult relationships' – not 'pushing' people, but 'inviting' or 'coaxing', creating a space for them to step into, so they move forward... probably with a bit of 'pull', so that they take that step. And ideally without making them hate it... (Ramen, pers. comment, 12/06/2024, about 'off-on-a-tangent team member' dance)

Judging from these insights, something had 'moved' in movement, which enabled a new angle on an old issue – and a new angle opened up new possibilities to deal with the problem. These will be discussed further in *Chapter 7: Discussion: conceptualising and living leader-follower-ship differently*.

5.1.5 'STORIES' ABOUT 'MOVING ON'

Overall, existing data provided six 'full' 'people stories' – there is a full dataset of all sessions plus two RefCons for 6 participants – and two partial ones: For two people, 'partial' datasets exist, which still provide relevant information: Amanda's key experience happened a year before, and my 'pilot interview' with her made it clear that I was not conducting 'typical' interviews, consequently triggering the change to 'reflective conversations' (RefCons), as my role in them was researcher/interviewer plus 'sounding board'/mentor. Martin cancelled RefCon3 for family reasons, although I also suspect more personal factors to do with Martin himself and the issues that the sessions brought up for him – and that he found them difficult to face (he hinted at this in the final reflection round). For an example, see *Appendix A9*.

A note on 'stories': the meaning of 'story' is not fixed, as Yiannis Gabriel emphasises:

[...] the meanings of four key terms, namely, story, narrative, text and discourse, have multiplied, merged, overlapped and fragmented. [...] Terms, concepts and so forth are approached not as immutable essences, but as elements of language in action. What constitutes a story may change as culture moves from an oral age, where every story is spoken, to a written age, where stories are written and illustrated, to an electronic age of SMS texts and images, tweets and so forth. (Gabriel 2019)

My use of ‘story’ here is more on the ‘elements of language in action’ side: not strictly ‘story’ as in a story book or in (organisational or otherwise) storytelling, with a plot and a resolution (or even a ‘moral’) but ‘narrative fragments’ that bring together *my* subjective understanding and sensemaking of an individual person, combined with how I interpret *their* sensemaking of actions, interactions and events throughout our ‘project time’ together, *their* understanding of and attitude towards leader-follower-ship.

Participant ‘stories’ fall into three broad categories:

<u>Participant</u>	<u>‘Story’ focus</u>
Myra	Attitude change: taking the lead
Yasmin	Attitude change: taking the lead
Jarik	New angle on leadership: leadership vs authority/power-over
Ted	New angle on leadership: leadership vs dictatorship
<i>Amanda</i>	<i>New angle on leadership: leadership vs command/authority/power</i>
Ali	Boundaries & barriers: preconceptions around leadership
Elvira	Boundaries & barriers: preconceptions around leadership
<i>Martin</i>	<i>Boundaries & barriers: compromise/allowances to be allowed to lead</i>

Table 5-2: Participant ‘story’ types

Myra’s and Yasmin’s stories are about their personal ‘journeys’ in regard to leadership. For both of them, the workshops were helpful in changing their stance on leadership roles: both of them voiced their discomfort with the follower role in partner dancing. For Myra it was a gender-based expectation which was somehow inescapable – she felt she had no choice.

I wouldn’t lead in salsa...’cos you don’t, do you, as a woman? You never lead. You’re always following. (MY3:669ff)

Yasmin saw it as a loss of agency that she found ‘risky’ and that she was very reluctant to accept:

[...] just following without thinking, y’know, that sort of risk-taking. [...] following’s always harder [...] that sense of letting go, just to follow, is quite a hard thing to do. [...] You know, that sense of letting go to do something that... I’m not sure where I’m going or what I’m doing, so, uncertainty, that sense of... yeah, I’ve not

got... I've not got all the information... that somebody else has got that information, so that's the risk. (YA1:275ff)

And the gender perspective also creeps in, albeit not explicitly, but simply from the way she describes herself:

[...] quite a challenge for somebody who's an independent woman, and has her own thoughts (YA1:151f)

Yasmin's way around this perceived loss of agency is by 'giving herself permission':

I have to really, kind of... consciously think to myself 'it's okay to follow', y'know... [F: mmm] it's okay to be... it's okay to be led. [...] I think 'relax and let go!' So I allow myself, and I talk to myself about... the self-talk around letting go – so when I'm dancing, I think 'it's okay', so I give myself permission. (YA1:324ff)

This is actually a subtle way of retaining a sense of 'being in control', since it is *her* choice, *her* decision, *her* authority to give that permission, even to herself. For both Yasmin and Myra a new perspective opens: to take a different view of followership as 'powerful'/'empowered' and to move on towards readiness to 'take the lead' in their respective professional capacities.

For Jarik and Ted, the workshops led to a discovery of 'new' aspects of leadership: Jarik had in the past associated leadership with authoritarian behaviour and the claim of power over others (see Follett 2003:78ff: 'Power-with versus Power-over'). In the workshops he was able to explore new ways of dealing with others' exertion of unwanted 'power over', especially in the 'difficult relationship' dance, where he used physical strength and mobility with great energy to bend his partner to the limit of Martin's ability. Ted had theorised leadership as dictatorship (even when dealing with a 'benevolent dictator'), emancipation from which would be the sign of truly meaningful organisations, and was surprised to find definitions and applications of leadership that would not involve 'power over' but 'power with' / 'power to'. Whilst Jarik and Ted did not change their whole attitude towards leader-follower-ship, they both explored new behaviours and ways of dealing with difficult situations involving leadership issues. This also relates to Amanda's experience of a 'supportive leader', which had triggered such a strong emotional reaction that she burst into tears as she realised that she had never before encountered leadership as support. In her life, leaders had commanded, pushed, demanded: in other words, been authoritarian, not helpful. Followers had to meet expectations, and if they did not deliver, they had to 'get out

of the way'. Her key experience of an alternative to this kind of leadership was so strong that she still remembered it vividly a year later.

Ali and Elvira did not seem to change their views on and attitudes to leadership, for various reasons. Both of them were up against difficult barriers: both worked in top-down organisations with encrusted power structures that made their work lives very stressful. Both of them expected 'leadership' from their senior managers, but felt they did not get it. This was partly due to their work context and managers' lack of engagement, but also had to do with their expectations of how 'leaders' should behave – at times more like a 'big brother' or a wizard, making things happen and bringing about change, essentially fulfilling yearnings, wishes, dreams that Ali and Elvira had no power (or felt powerless) to 'push through' and put into practice.

[...] my boss will *absolutely* go with... I can lead him, it works. But as soon as you stop and wait for him to do *his* thing, he doesn't... Like 'now what?' And it's... it's 'Okay, I'll drive then'. (Ali, WS3:831ff)

If we haven't got leadership that gives us solutions to the problems, then where are we going to get these solutions from? And why... why should I be the magic person when I'm *not*... (Elvira, WS3:1620ff)

At times their personal experiences and preconceptions seemed to cause their workshop experience being 'filtered' in a way that made it difficult for them to make new 'sense' of their perceptions, just as their 'body interactionality' at times seemed to fall into some kind of 'self-fulfilling prophecy' pattern – using a dance analogy, I can only 'feel a lead', if I am prepared to 'listen', allowing my body to sense and be sensitive to touch; and openness always brings with it some level of vulnerability and risk. Touch is always close to emotion – and what I might feel might be pleasant or unpleasant, revolting or erotic, rather than just 'neutral'. (See also 5.2.2: *A note on the importance (and ambivalence) of touch.*)

Yasmin's insight on difficult relationships might have provided an alternative – and potentially helpful – angle:

What do you *both* bring to the table to make it a difficult relationship, rather than putting it in one person – 'that difficult colleague', kind of, like? What aspects do I bring as well, kind of, like, in order to make the relationship less difficult? So, looking at the difficult relationship as opposed to the difficult colleague. (Yasmin, WS3:785ff)

However, neither Ali nor Elvira seemed to be ready to take the mental ‘step back’ that would be necessary for such an alternative – and which would have allowed a ‘reframing’ of the situation.

Martin’s ‘difficult relationship’ in WS3 highlights the dependence of a leader on their follower(s), although it remains unclear to what extent that was the sense he made of this experience. I could not have a final reflective conversation with him; so that left his ‘story’ somewhat open-ended – and it left me with the feeling that something remained unfinished.

5.2 SOME TAKES ON PARTICIPANTS AND LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP

5.2.1 ‘BEING IN THE BODY’: ISSUES AND STRONG FEELINGS

How does this contribute to answering the research questions? Sensory experiences have an immediacy and are not just intellectually processed, but also emotionally, i.e. are processed in a ‘holistic’ way, engaging our whole human existence and being-in-the-world, which arguably leaves us with a more ‘multi-dimensional’ understanding than a merely rational approach would. If leader-follower-ship is something that can be experienced through the senses (and in partner dancing it is), then this offers us the opportunity to deepen our understanding of what it means to lead and to follow, to be led and to be followed. It also gives us a chance to come to deeper understanding of ‘the other’ – the partner who leads or follows. However, in order to fully grasp this sort of experience, we have to be open to our sensory impressions, be they pleasant or uncomfortable, ‘feel the feelings’ and acknowledge them, in order to make sense and gain new knowledge.

This issue brought out a wide diversity within the group, especially during activities that did not just require *using* the body, but *focusing* on sensory input and experience, such as ‘listening with the body to another body’. This involves focusing on one’s own bodily presence as well sensing another person. For some, this might be easier with close friends and family members than with strangers, as the research field around personal space, distance and proximity shows – on the other hand, most dance teachers have anecdotes to tell about relationships nearly breaking up over couples’ experiences in a dance class

and their fights over 'who leads'. Though all participants agreed to – and actually took part in – the movement activities, some of them felt quite uncomfortable, as some of the exercises were 'too close for comfort', challenging people's body boundaries. Even though the emphasis was clearly put on the 'technical' aspects of close-touch encounters, participants could not leave their personal feelings behind.

Myra and Ali both voiced strong reservations about being in close proximity to male bodies, especially with strangers. Both were quite put off by Ted's admission that the sensory (and sensuous) experience of touch in a hand-to-hand encounter triggered erotic feelings. Ali's emotional response was very strong – Ted's admission that his shock and confusion arose from the fact that it was an encounter with a *male* partner that triggered the sense of the erotic made no difference.

As a salsa dancer, Myra initially associated leader/follower roles very strongly with gender – men lead, women follow – but eventually began to see the roles as choice rather than diktat. A hint of this is evident in her taking the lead in the final dance session (albeit with female participants).

Ali, being a self-declared non-dancer and even labelling herself 'dyspraxic', did not seem to have gender assumptions specifically relating to dance – hers were more generic and not entirely tied to gender: when I danced with her, she also tried to keep as much distance as possible, and her favourite 'ready stance' was at arm's length to her partner, regardless of their gender. Ali was often the last to get 'in touch' and the first to let go, seeking physical distance from her current partner and resorting to verbal communication ("I usually spend all my time analysing and living on a 'meta-everything'"; WS2, Reflection Round), spending the minimum time in close contact. On the other hand, she describes vividly her purposeful use of body position, posture and nonverbal language to control her snowboard and her colleague:

The other thing that directly compares from skiing and snowboarding, actually, is that [...] some things you have control over, but a lot of things you don't. (AL1:456-8)

[...] you learn when you are progressing [...] a sort of 'ready position' where you're in a position to adapt to whatever happens [...] Whereas if you feel the need to control all the things, you'll be on your nose. [...] that 'ready position' feels exactly the same as where... what you have to click into if you want a

decent reciprocal 'who's-leading-who's-following-we-don't-really-know'
relationship with a total stranger who's shown up at a workshop. (AL1:467ff)

'Listening in' to her own body *and* someone else's is not a mode she is comfortable with. This may well have something to do with 'listening' being 'receptive', implying at least temporarily relinquishing control over what is being 'said' or what one 'hears' – both in verbal and nonverbal dialogue. This openness and 'receptive-ness' for many people means letting down one's guard, i.e. being less protective of one's body boundaries and therefore being more vulnerable – a source of discomfort for many, especially where 'leadership' is associated with 'power over'. This also explains Ali's resistance to 'being moved' by Ramen in the 'difficult relationship' exercise (as Ramen's 'off-on-a-tangent team member'):

After I pulled her rather than push into her, Ali said to me (I paraphrase) "I really *hated* that, I felt coerced into going where you went". She laughed, but her laugh sounded quite unhappy – I think it was just a release of tension. I can still remember it quite vividly. (Ramen, pers. comment, 12/06/2024, about 'off-on-a-tangent team member' dance)

This ties in with Ali's stance on control – on a purely rational level, she is quite aware that one cannot always be in control, but her 'gut feeling' says something quite different:

Someone was hired in... into my position – there should be two of us for our department [...] he was super, like, aggressively controlling about stuff and [...] I completely went into defensive [...] I could definitely tell I lost more control of the situation... by doing that. I'm not sure I had a better alternative... (AL1:484ff)

From the way Ali describes it, her reaction sounds more like a panic reaction, where the 'gut feeling' clearly got the upper hand when a sense of being 'taken over' and losing agency was triggered. This also happened on the one occasion where she had partnered up with Ted:

He was a – surprise – control freak! He didn't sound like that when he was chatting. He sounded like the cheery sort of gent that I would really get on with. Stick him on the dancefloor, and he was super-aggressively up in my space, trying to drive the whole thing, and the moment I tried to get into it, he would... collapse; so I could not... direct anything, and the only thing I could do was collapse with him, and then he'd be back... like, literally, physically, in my space! (AL1:502ff)

When I heard that description, I initially thought that they had actually paired up for a dance exercise – it sounded like a male leader resorting to Ballroom dancing convention without taking into account that the follower might not share those conventions. So I was quite

surprised when I realised that Ali was referring to the weight-giving and 'leaning-in', where there had not been much body proximity, participants only touching each other palm to palm (see *Figure 4-2*). I had noticed that Ted remained fairly straight, not leaning in very much, but had put it down to the fact that he was almost twice Ali's age, and that their levels of flexibility and tone were not alike. The weight-giving exercise requires people to be attentive to their own and each other's bodily abilities and limitations and to negotiate a stance that works for both partners. Obviously this had been an encounter between two rather incompatible 'stances' – Ted had casually admitted not being 'very good' at listening, and I suspect that he had been unaware that Ali felt uncomfortable about him being too close to her. On the other hand, Ali had taken her interpretation as a 'fact' and acted upon it. Neither of them had thought of 'checking out' their impressions with the other, neither immediately after the activity, when participants had an opportunity to talk to each other and exchange one-to-one feedback, nor in the Snapshot round that followed. Ali subsequently decided not to work with Ted again, and stuck to that decision for the rest of the workshops.

This encounter and its consequences give a vivid illustration of the fundamental ambiguity of nonverbal communication – it is always open to interpretation, and without being attentive to 'the other' in the moment, willing to explore and negotiate, seeking confirmation or 'triangulation', the risk of misunderstandings is high. But it also shows how powerful bodywork can be and the 'surprises' it can trigger.

In contrast, Martin is very much an 'in the body' person. He has a strong, clear, resonant but not booming voice that gives him a 'presence' in the room, and he also has a very 'physical' presence. Both he and Ted made explicit that sensory, sensuous contact for them has potentially sexual or erotic aspects (without linking this to any specific person or persons). My impression was that they both seem to fully 'inhabit' their physicality, in a way that many women do not, reflecting the way physicality is often defined by men and 'imposed' on women, making women feel sexualised and objectified, 'barring' them from enjoying their sensuality. I did not have the impression of an 'imposition', but from my own experiences of participating in experiential self-awareness group work, and also as a facilitator, my acceptance threshold of people 'opening up' and being more frank about their feelings than under 'normal' social circumstances is probably higher.

The reservations and even aversion that Martin's and Ted's openness triggered in some of the female participants are regrettable, but not entirely surprising. In RefCon1 it became clear that Martin to quite an extent felt 'led' by his body, almost to the extent of feeling 'overwhelmed' by his physicality and sensuality, and even experiencing it as a risk – his final decision was to not 'give in' to his body and to avoid 'temptation' by proximity:

The experience for me of [...] giving my weight, as a follower [...] and [...] as a leader, has raised all kinds of awarenesses, of... the sort of issues I have about doing that in physical proximity with people [...] I actually found it very hard to come back this time. [...] I don't think I'm going to be doing any more dancing with other people... [...] I think I've come to the decision that it's not something I'm comfortable doing with anyone other than my wife. It's... not something I enjoy. So it's been really good to, kind of, experience that, and enjoy that, but for me it's just not something I'm comfortable with. So if you do any more, I... I won't come. [...] ...but I'm really glad that I did. (Martin, WS3:1801)

Obviously he was expressing very mixed feelings, as he was switching back and forth between enjoyment and discomfort. For a disconcerting moment, Ted even doubts his sexual orientation:

Well, I did find it quite erotic, actually. I'm not making a joke here. So that was interesting, yeah. [...] Erotic. Found each other... but not necessarily... Yeah... There was something about... it made me start thinking about sexuality... yeah, definitely. If that's erotic or not – it definitely brought that to mind. Yeah. (Ted, WS1, Snapshot1:363)

[Takes deep breath] Yeah... I'm blushing now... if you notice. I feel it. Er... it made me... [pause] ...it did make me wonder, slightly, if perhaps... I might have been bisexual. [...] I found it quite... stimulating. Well, that's not quite the word – it definitely had a... erotic flavour to it... yeah. (TE1:516)

Both Ted and Martin go into more detail about these troubling feelings in the one-to-one RefCons, but they also voice some of those feelings in the group situation – leading in one instance to a long silence and a change of topic through other participants, which in turn leaves me with a sense of ambiguity: do the two men put enough trust in the group to risk this kind of vulnerability or 'self-exposure', or are they oblivious to the sensitivities that others, especially women, might have in regard to those issues, or both? No answer to this question – it is one of the ambiguities that we sometimes have to live with: they often create misunderstandings and conflict.

Yasmin, a psychotherapist, is probably used to people voicing difficult feelings. She herself never verbalises any specific 'body feelings', and my own perception of her, in that respect,

is somewhat 'foggy'. She moves with ease, but expresses mixed feelings about her role as a follower in salsa dancing, struggling with the notion of 'giving up' agency to her – male / leading – dance partner. But this did not appear to be linked to physicality as such, but more to (mental) self-understanding and self-image as an 'independent woman' who chooses and determines her own moves. Of course it has to be kept in mind that in partner dancing it is not only the follower's movements that are 'restricted', but also the leader's – be it by syllabus, dance style, rhythm of the music etc. But dance instructors will often take a 'do as you're told' stance towards following (and followers), which then again makes dance leaders think that they are 'in control', thus promoting role (and often gender) stereotyping – typically leading to assumptions such as Myra's 'you're *just* following'. My encounter with Yasmin in the final 'free dance' round was quite intense – I realised that I had never been her partner before and felt that it was almost 'overdue'. It was very enjoyable to move with her, and I got almost carried away by the sense of togetherness, the pleasure of flow and 'being in the moment'. I cannot even remember whether there was any obvious 'leading' or 'following' involved, but I found it difficult to 'let go' and move on to someone else – I almost felt that I had to tear myself away to follow my own instructions and 'meet' everybody in the room.

Jarik explores the physicality of movement and dance with curiosity and enthusiasm – and sometimes gets surprised about others' boundaries. He 'jumps in' with much energy and then finds out that others might not be able to cope with too much momentum, so he has to scale it down (which he does). In the introductory weight-giving exercise he 'gives' too much weight to start with, but then gets more cautious, when he realises that his partner cannot cope. He pushes Martin to the limits of his mobility in the 'difficult relationship' exercise, despite Jarik being slimmer and lighter. But Jarik also listens, senses where others are and respects the boundaries that he finds.

I have to include myself and my co-facilitator here, as we both participated in some of the exercises, either to demonstrate an activity or to partner someone else when there was an odd number of participants. Ramen, both as a dancer and as a facilitator, is an experienced and attentive 'body listener' and takes a caring and cautious approach to his partners' 'body messages' and boundaries. It was obvious that in his facilitator-cum-participant role he was somewhat reticent to 'throw himself in' and participate fully, because he felt responsible for

his partners' wellbeing and tried to avoid causing discomfort, hence put more emphasis on 'listening'.

My own sense of 'being-in-the-body' fluctuated throughout the workshops. Although I was very conscious of my 'research agenda', my main focus during the sessions was on 'getting it right' for my participants, from the pace to the food, the room layout to the music, the explanations to the activities. I was grateful for the presence of my co-facilitator, both in terms of his technical support and his sensitivity and caring for the group members. Partnering up with participants when there was an odd number in the group helped my to be 'in there' instead of just looking on from the outside and provided some very strong 'sensory encounters' with individuals – some felt adventurous, playful, light, others 'nervous', 'on edge', tense, some caring, intimate, affectionate. The immediacy of 'knowing in the flesh', being 'in touch' with the corporeality of others gave me a different understanding of the individuals in the group and also made me feel less like a 'researcher in a lab coat', reducing the distance between my three personae: researcher, facilitator and temporary participant within the group. On the other hand, touching and feeling others is also a source of bias, as it invariably links to *my* emotions, prior experiences and attitudes, part of which are not even in the conscious domain.

5.2.2 A NOTE ON THE IMPORTANCE (AND AMBIVALENCE) OF TOUCH

When we get to the point in the workshop where we 'take up hold', there is always a threshold that needs crossing: a threshold made of a tangled mix of cultural and societal norms, personal boundaries, trust (in self, others, 'the process', the facilitators...), fear/uncertainty, self-image, attraction/rejection – all beset with a mix of emotions, rationalisations, life histories... it often requires a rather big leap of faith when it comes to touching another person, particularly if this person is a stranger, a colleague, someone of the opposite sex, someone of the same sex, someone with 'non-typical' bodily features, and so on... Mature adults giggle like children who have been told a naughty joke. People take a deep breath. There may be a momentary awkward silence, while everybody is trying hard not to look embarrassed. What is so difficult about putting your hands on another person? Even just the spoken word 'touch' can trigger a reaction.

In the ancient 'hierarchy' of the senses, touch is the basest of senses and is often seen as close to 'sinfulness', 'vulgarity', the 'animal' part of human nature. (Howes 2005; Classen 2012; Kambaskovic & Wolfe 2014) On the other hand, movement and touch are the first 'exploration senses' through which a human baby gets 'in touch' with the world. Interpersonal touch is as closely linked to sexuality as it is to violence. And in all cultures it is beset with taboos and socially regulated, so one cannot overestimate the "important role that background and culture can play in modulating people's interpretation of, and hence their response to, interpersonal touch" (Gallace & Spence 2010:247f). In all societies, human bodies have 'taboo zones' and social prescriptions and conventions around what is touchable and in which circumstances.

Touch is also a sense of learning and a sense of knowing – our everyday metaphors give it away, such as English "grasping a concept" and "knowledge at your fingertips", or German "be-greifen", "Fingerspitzengefuehl". For example, medical professionals have a lot of embodied knowledge and use their hands (e.g. doctors, nurses) or even the whole body (e.g. physiotherapists) to feel for symptoms or treat patients.

Touch can be ambiguous, especially where issues of power / hierarchy / gender are involved, and insensitivity often leads to misunderstandings – the 'me too' movement has (arguably) exacerbated this.

Touch is also the sense of dance communication in the Ballroom world (and generally in partner dancing), and, more importantly, the sense that 'carries' the body language of leading and following in competitive Ballroom dancing. In order to make participants more comfortable with touching each other, the first workshop activities require only a minimum of touch: when weight-giving, participants only touch each other palm-to-palm, keeping (at least in theory) more than arms'-length distance between them. As the 'moving together' practices progress and participants get to know each other better (through frequent partner changes), they gradually build trust and find partners that they 'gel with', which usually lowers the 'resistance/anxiety threshold'. However, individual tolerance of proximity varies – see for example Ali's strong reaction to Ted's way of moving (discussed in previous section) – and this can lead to difficult situations. At this point it is particularly important to remind participants of their personal choices, encourage them to gently 'stretch' their

boundaries (rather than ‘pushing’ or ‘overcoming’ them), and to be patient with themselves and each other.

In competitive dancing, it is the close connection through the body that communicates how and where each partner is moving, where the main balance is and how it shifts. Usually participants’ reactions vary from slightly taken aback to shocked when they are faced with the invitation to set themselves up in a dance hold, since they perceive it as highly intimate – which it is and is not: there are only four main connection points (righthand side of trunk, leader’s hand on follower’s shoulder blade, follower’s hand on leader’s shoulder, L/F hand-in-hand grip), as illustrated in *Figure 4-5 a/b: The dancesport ‘frame’: top view and diagram*; and ‘taking the hold’ can be seen on video (via the YouTube link in *Figure 7-4*). Introducing the dance frame in this technical way tends to mitigate the ‘shock effect’, especially as I tend to put special emphasis on the ‘space’ aspects of ‘leader space’, ‘follower space’ and ‘shared space’, with the latter being the smallest. These areas of the body I refer to as ‘communication spaces’, in order to emphasise ‘permission to touch’ and reduce the level of discomfort that might be triggered. I also emphasise the head positions – not being ‘in each other’s face’ but looking away from the partner – which reduces a sense of ‘confrontation’ and vulnerability. At this stage I often demonstrate or try this out with participants, in order to give them a sensory signal what is ‘safe’ to do.

Nevertheless, the amount of close touch required to ‘feel’ the lead/follow tends to be (and indeed was) disconcerting, not just for non-dancers but even for dancers – social dancing does not usually require such close proximity. This added a considerable challenge, but also provided the opportunity to be more aware of one’s own sense of ‘personal space’ and ‘body boundaries’, of the partner’s bodily presence, and of the interaction between the two. Inevitably, the physical proximity constitutes an ‘invasion’ of one’s ‘personal space’, and as a facilitator, I need to convince participants to give themselves and each other ‘permission’ to enter each other’s space without causing offence. Also inevitably, this whole process is usually bound up with emotions, hence a ‘whole person experience’. Periods of verbal exchanges between partners as well as reflection rounds facilitated voicing one’s own feelings and emotions and checking out those of others.

Did this help? To some extent – although for most of the time, the avoidance of close body contact prevailed... which was no surprise. But at least some touch was involved, and, most importantly, it helped to create a space where physical contact was not automatically an encroachment on personal boundaries, a taboo violation or something ‘unmentionable’, but was explicitly encouraged, allowed to exist and to be talked about.

5.2.3 THE LEAD-FOLLOW CONTINUUM

Leadership and followership are not a dichotomy or separate, nor are the roles of leader / follower – they are more of a continuum. Working through the data (transcripts, recordings) and my coding notes, I attempted to map participants onto this continuum (I resist the word ‘scale’, as these are not strict measurements!) – with my latest attempt in *Figure 5-1*. And then I noticed that I am revisiting this continuum again and again, moving people and arrows – realising that this is a map in movement, not a static ‘pinpointing’ tool. The dimensions are not really linear and not black-and-white (hence the colours). And as I read and re-read, people’s names and movements (visualised as arrows) keep shifting in an elusive ‘dance’ across the page and my understanding.

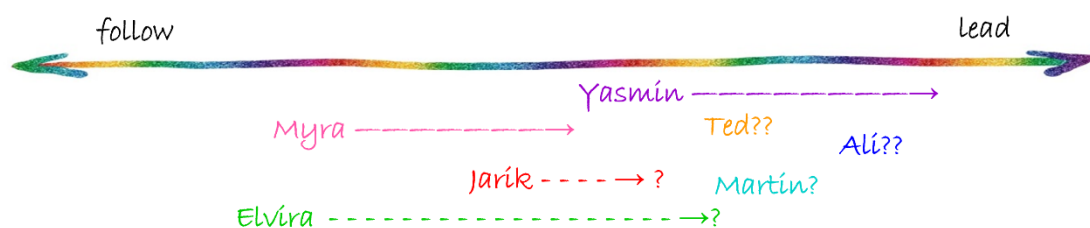


Figure 5-1: Participants’ ‘journeys’ of self-understanding as leader or follower

Both Myra and Yasmin, who as dancers find themselves ‘always’ in follower roles and in their work contexts seem to be somewhat reluctant to see themselves as leaders, use moving with others to explore not only their capacity to lead, but also their own followership ‘patterns’, and subsequently take steps towards leadership.

Jarik begins to question his connotations of leadership with authoritarian and even violent behaviour and, instead of ‘resisting’ and ‘fighting back’ as the only option, plays with ‘following’ as exploration and understanding rather than ‘weakness’, finding the possibility

of connecting and probably cautiously moving towards what leadership research might term 'shared leadership'.

Elvira's case is more complicated: As a dancer, she clearly positions herself as a follower – however, a very powerful follower, as it turns out: often she very clearly takes the lead, albeit always from a follower position. It is not clear whether she is always aware of this – only on one occasion she makes it explicit that she does it deliberately:

"Yeah, there was a point where... it became very clear that I was actually leading. It wasn't a conscious decision, it just happened. [...] I was the first to follow... and I didn't!" [giggles] (EL1:145)

And she does not follow lightly – as she voices her expectations of a leader, this becomes obvious:

"One of the expectations I have is that the leader doesn't make me do things I can't perform." (WS2:RefNotes)

"That's where trust comes in, isn't it? [...] if you trust that they can hold you, you might try something that you would otherwise not be entirely comfortable with. So, if I know that I can't fall if I do this silly figure, then that's fine, because the person I'm dancing with can hold me. But if I don't trust them to be able to look after me, then, well, you know – they can forget about it, 'cos I'm not gonna do it!" (EL3:196ff)

Ramen's experience matches this:

"It was difficult. I found it really difficult. [...] I found it difficult to dance with Elvira, and she wouldn't follow. (FM&RS_Notes_190607_002.docx, 32ff)

Elvira's expectations are very high, and she seems to be caught in a vicious circle: the responsibilities which she attributes to leadership come from her own expectations. On the one hand, she associates 'leadership' with 'authority' and 'power to change things'; on the other hand, she feels frustrated about the lack of leadership from more senior managers who clearly have that power (or at least she seems to think that they have it). I suspect it is anxiety about the 'burden' which she associates with leadership that prevents her from taking an explicit leading position. Myra starts out with similar connotations, but makes a conscious, albeit cautious, move away from them, whilst Elvira does not give up what is

‘familiar territory’ to her. So it would be debatable whether Elvira makes any change at all.²⁹ Elvira’s and Ali’s situations are similar in that they both expect ‘leadership’ from their managers and end up frustrated about not getting what they want. But Ali deals with this in a different way: by collecting ‘influencing techniques’ to enable her to take the lead ‘invisibly’, without being seen to be in control. Is this manipulation? Possibly – but it is one method for finding a way out of a feeling of powerlessness, which Ali pursues as a strategy, whereas Elvira seems to feel ‘stuck’ in this conundrum.

Ali, Ted and Martin I do not see as moving much in terms of their attitudes towards leader-follower-ship. Both Ted and Ali are interested in intellectual insights into aspects of leadership and leadership concepts – Ted from an academic / consultancy / theory angle, Ali more from a practitioner’s perspective: she is always on the lookout for new ‘tools’ for her ‘toolbox’ of ‘leadership techniques’. Neither of them are ‘easy’ followers – Ted seems quite settled in his self-understanding and actually explains that he is ‘not good at’ listening; Ali prefers ‘being in her head’ rather than focusing on sensory perceptions through touch. Martin’s focus is less on aspects of leading or following and more on how he experiences relating through touch, as well as on the importance that physicality has in his life. That said, his ‘difficult relationship’ story says a lot about the limitations of ‘leadership power’, but it is questionable to what extent he is aware of this – he is quick to dismiss the ‘difficult relationship’ as ‘sorted’:

“I’m cheating really, ‘cos I think it’s a thing which has been resolved. [...] I don’t feel like I have to... You know, when you [to Jarik] and I were dancing, I really was, sort of, quite rigid and, sort of, almost like watching you as a predator, out of the corner of my eye, kind of thing... and then... like, y’know, ‘if you go for it, I’ll go for it’... hehehehe [laughs] ...sort of a bit of a stand-off kind of feel. And I... I don’t feel that so much now. Erm... er, I think we have a bit of an understanding.” (WS3:666ff)

²⁹ That said, both Elvira and Ali have changed jobs within 2 years after the workshop series, leaving organisations that they repeatedly described as dysfunctional. Amanda split up with her husband within a year. I am not alleging a causal relationship between the workshop experience and people’s life events. But it is not unlikely that the somewhat unusual topic of the workshop attracts people who are on a ‘personal change journey’, and that their experiences and reflections contribute towards gaining clarity about how, where and in which roles they want to live and/or work.

Comparing a follower to a predator is a very powerful (indeed!) image of ‘follower power’ – not only can a follower make demands, s/he can also be seen as a threat: it is indeed the follower who maketh the leader...

5.2.4 THE POWERFULNESS / AGENCY CONTINUUM

Similarly, a sense of empowerment or ‘powerfulness’ (as in ‘agency’ or ‘power to achieve’, rather than ‘domineering’ or ‘power over’) could be mapped onto a continuum, although this is even more difficult. In the first instance, what do I mean by ‘power’? Without going into too much detail, I would follow Pansardi & Bindi (2021), who explore extensively the various meanings and definitions of ‘power’ that have been under discussion since Mary Parker Follett’s differentiation between ‘power over’ and ‘power with’. Here is my simplified version of the three main meanings:

type of power	‘power over’	‘power to’	‘power with’
meaning / connotations	hierarchy domination asymmetrical violence	ability empowerment (individual) <i>agency</i> ³⁰ <i>‘powerfulness’</i>	collective ability empowerment (collective)

Table 5-3: Types and meanings of ‘power’

In the management arena, ‘leadership’ is often associated with ‘power over’: most empirical leadership studies will focus on senior managers, i.e. equate leadership with high rank in an organisational hierarchy; managers in large organisations commonly describe their level of seniority – and hence their importance – by the number of staff ‘below’ them. For Jarik, the association of leadership with ‘power over’ was particularly strong. On the competitive dance circuit, this assumption is also still very present, albeit often reduced to a ‘theatrical’ feature: leader = man = ‘display of dominance’; i.e. this is a) gendered; b) it is more important to ‘showcase’ the male partner as dominant, regardless of whether the relationship is *actually* asymmetrical (in many, or even most, cases it is not!). The ‘real’ power (as opposed to the ‘demonstrated’ one) of a competitive couple lies in their individual

³⁰ These are my preferred terms, not used by Pansardi & Bindi (2021).

‘powers to’, which ideally combine into ‘power with’ and communal ‘power to’, the collective ability of the couple as a unit to deliver a high-level performance.

Since ‘power’ is an important theme in regard to leader-follower-ship, *Figure 5-2* is my attempt to picture participants’ movement on a continuum that reaches from ‘powerful’ to ‘powerless’. There is no ‘measurement’ involved – this is more of an ‘impression-map’, with ‘powerful/-less’ in the sense of agency / ‘power with’ / ‘power to’, rather than ‘power over’.

Elvira, linking the dance experience to a work context, sees ‘power’ as part of the leader role – and associates it with control. But it is also a burden – and Myra shares this view:

With power comes responsibility; relinquishing power gives respite but forward planning still needs to be there to be ready to take back control. (Elvira, WS1, Snapshot notes, Q15)

The leader has a more powerful position. (MY1:704f)

I was aware that today I didn’t want to have the power. I felt much more comfortable being led, as it meant I didn’t have to make any decisions. (Myra, WS2, Snapshot notes, Q8)

It is not clear whether Elvira means ‘power over’ or ‘power to’, or a combination of the two. Often she feels powerless in her job, being pressurised from all sides, but without enough ‘leverage’ to make a real change or even achieve her own goals. On the other hand, she is a ‘powerful’ follower, at times even dominant from a follower position – but she does not necessarily acknowledge this.

In other words: Elvira’s self-perception differs significantly from how I would describe her behaviour. This would to some extent explain why it is so difficult for her to move on from her current position that is causing her so much stress and pain. When talking about her situation, she makes light of it through using sarcasm and irony:

If we haven’t got leadership that gives us solutions to the problems, then where are we going to get these solutions from? And why... why should I be the magic person when I’m *not*... I might have one or two little tricks up my sleeves, but my sleeves tend to be very short! (Elvira, WS3:1620ff)

But it is obvious that the problems are always on her mind, and in RefCon3 she sounds quite despondent.

Ted, on the other hand, a mature, successful individual with plenty of professional and life experience and self-confidence, discloses his near-vulnerability when it comes to his

relationship with his colleague – a relationship where connection seems to happen almost entirely on his colleague's terms, which is quite disconcerting for him, as he is clearly not used to feeling 'disempowered'. Acknowledging his lack of control, Ted seems to move towards powerlessness, but regains his sense of agency when he decides to change his stance, from 'waiting for X to make a move' to 'making a move (for) myself'.



Figure 5-2: Participants' 'journeys' of perceived 'powerfulness'/agency

Interestingly, this sense of 'empowerment' (or lack thereof) is not something that Ted has associated with leadership in the past:

The four stances that are in there are: Stance 1 is doing things well. And in that case, yes, the leader is all... all deciding, really – you could say dictator... well, you could have a slightly friendly dictator. [...] Stance 2 is doing things better... Which is still hierarchically determined by a person... so it's still semi-dictatorial, but often disguised with humanistic psychology, so [...] Perhaps pseudo-benevolent, so really, actually, quasi-benevolent. [...] Stance 3 is about working together, on challenging problems [...] so it's doing better things [...] and with what is often called distributed leadership. [...] distributed leadership tends to mean delegation, which is just another form of getting the dictator's orders carried out. So, the phrase 'distributed leadership' I'm wary of, because I think that's what it often means. Stance 4, which I only added recently, a few months ago, is doing things that matter to the world. Which is really about [...] purpose, doing things for a socially and ecologically beneficial purpose. (TE1:75ff)

I have put Ted's whole model here, because it shows his fairly sceptical (not to say cynical) attitude towards leadership. Referring to Bill Drath's book *The Deep Blue Sea: Rethinking the Source of Leadership*, he emphasises that he leans towards a view of leadership as process, and his 'Stance 4' aligns essentially with those theories that aim to do away with hierarchies and 'power-over' structures:

Leadership goes on whenever anyone makes an intervention that helps people make meaning from what's happening. (TE1:151f)

A good, concise definition indeed. The question here is: how does this relate to Ted himself and the way he relates to others?

Yasmin and Myra discover a new sense of agency, self-confidence and courage to 'take the lead'. This is most visible in the final dance round, when Myra quite 'naturally' leads Ali and Elvira into a 'pas de trois', so to speak – a move that, interestingly, both Ali and Elvira are happy to follow, probably because it does not diminish or threaten their own agency: it is very much 'leading by invitation'.

Jarik's insight that leadership does not necessarily mean dictatorship or violence (very visible in his 'difficult relationship' dance with Martin, see *Sections 5.1.3* and *5.1.4* and also *Figure 5-3*) and therefore does not have to involve conflict, makes him less wary of the notion of taking the lead or being a follower. He admits that his rejection of authoritarianism has made it almost impossible for him to work in organisations, but self-employment can at times be a lonely place, as he craves collaboration with others. But he feels ready to move on, now that he feels that he will not have 'to fight authority'³¹:

...in the fighting that I've had with my parent, before... I remember when I was a child I couldn't fight 'cos I was weak – I wouldn't been having the mental capabilities to say any words. And then when I got them in a physical sense, then I was fighting back... [...] and it was mad – I left... So when I was dancing with Martin... and he was doing those sudden moves [...] then I didn't fight back, I was just flowing with it... and there was no resistance. [...] I should perhaps not fight back – I need to stay focused and aware and follow the moves. But the thing is when you are facing the aggressive situation [...] your behaviour mind is shutting down, you can't think – fight or flight...so it's difficult for me. But I believe that I should be working on the fact to stay focused and try to be calm... and just cope with it. Don't go overcome with emotions, not fighting back – just be there and follow what's going on, try to, maybe, communicate in different ways. (Jarik, WS3, Snapshot 1:432ff)

Martin's personality probably contributed to this epiphany: Jarik commented that Martin was not 'harsh enough' when embodying the violent father figure, that he slowed down when Jarik was about to fall; but Martin's sensitivity, the fact that he 'cared' and did not continue

³¹ This evokes Aesop's fable of the oak and the reed: the reed, because it bends, does not get broken by the storm (cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Oak_and_the_Reed).

as recklessly as Jarik had expected (and as he had enacted it in the first part) contributed to the 'flowing' and the reconnection.



Figure 5-3: Still from video: Jarik and Martin dancing Jarik's difficult relationship
(<https://youtu.be/Aw91PSwx9r0>)

Ali seems to stay where she is. On the one hand, she complains about a lack of formal power, on the other hand she seems to enjoy her position and, armed with her 'toolbox' of influencing tools, feels quite capable of achieving her goals, especially when she can influence others who do have 'ranking power'.

In his 'difficult relationship' dance, Martin claims to have 'cheated', his 'difficult relationship' case having been resolved... but has it really? As his story unfolds, the resolution looks more like an uneasy compromise: Martin had to give up his preferred style of leadership to appease one 'awkward' follower. This constellation illustrates well the 'power of the follower' and how leaders depend on followers – one can only lead as long as others are willing to follow: this choir member managed to dictate the conditions under which he would accept Martin's leadership, threatening disruption when his expectations were not fulfilled. Martin seems to have strong feelings about this situation, as he even refers to the stropky follower as a "predator" and the compromise for him has "a stand-off kind of feel". Together with situational constraints (such as the type of formal contract that Martin had), this forced Martin into a leadership behaviour that he actually disliked and which was not 'his style'... Clearly the 'difficult follower' must have felt that his needs were met, as he followed Martin into another choir! And Martin has 'resolved' the situation by living with another

compromise, giving the demanding follower the kind of attention that he craves. Leadership can come at a price!

6 CONCEPTUALISING LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP

The purpose of this research project was not just to give me as a researcher a deeper insight into how leader-follower-ship is enacted and perceived in bodily-spatial practice, but also to give participants the opportunity to explore and deepen their own practice and understanding of themselves as leaders and followers, and, potentially, to reflect on, surface and question some of their own preconceptions and assumptions about leaders and followers, leading and following. What emerged from this process, as well as my 'journey' through the leader-follower-ship literature, was not so much *one* specific concept or theory, but several perspectives or angles on leader-follower-ship, revealing different aspects – the parable of the blind men and the elephant springs to mind again. I also need to emphasise that there are more questions asked than answered. But the lenses do allow for a different view on roles and relationships, away from 'mainstream' leadership literature, and they highlight questions that everybody will need to answer for themselves.

6.1 LEADERSHIP AS RELATIONAL

Whilst 'relational leadership' was one of the starting points of this project (see literature review), the interactive nature of the workshops gave participants as well as me as a researcher the opportunity to express and explore (but also to observe) this relationality in sensory and, to some extent, emotional practice.

6.1.1 'RELATIONALITY' IN PARTICIPANTS' STORIES

Jarik searches for shared, non-hierarchical leadership. From his own personal history, he associates 'leadership' with autocratic (parental) domination, exercising 'power over' those that are seen to be subordinate. He perceives this as a kind of violence or bullying relationship, ignoring and even oppressing follower agency and choice. In his dance encounters, he looks for 'fluidity' and a sense of harmony:

[...] the whole experience... should be, in a way, holistic, and the people who are working together – interconnected, in a way [...] When the leadership swaps

over, that maybe depends on the personalities of the people involved in it, and how the swap takes place, in regards to its fluidity (JA1:30ff)

The most fluid ones, and kind of warm and friendly... and open and trustful – that kind of interaction I enjoyed... very well, and I felt that I can perform better in that environment, you see. (JA1:119ff)

my mind have created an illusion of... that I'm continuously leading and following at the same time, which was happening because... when you are leading, you have to still be open, your awareness has to be open, because when other person's going to pick it up, you need to be aware about it. So you are leading and following at the same time... [...] So that was a continuous movement. [...] And it was very interesting. It was just a continuous fluid feeling (JA3:252ff)

He is also quite keenly aware of the 'interlacing' nature of following and leading, as the quote above shows. When Jarik talks about encounters with different people he tends to describe the ones he enjoyed as 'fluid', 'interconnected', 'tuned in', 'warm', 'synchronised', 'trustful' and 'open', and the less enjoyable ones as 'jerky', which, as a physical 'dissonance', translates into lack of connectedness, and thus a lack of collaboration:

[...] with some people I had kind of fluidity in it, but with some people I experienced kind of jerky movement, and wasn't really clear who is doing what, 'cos it felt to me that... we want to do both at the same time, like, following or leading. (JA1:31ff)

[...] some are quite stiff or rigid and jerky... And... and that's what I perceived [...] the communication, the exchange of information is not as fluent as with others [...]. That was the... the worst. (JA1:115)

You know, like, jerky, and then quite stiff, and... felt like we are fighting for power (JA1:264f)

The third quote above refers to Jarik's first partnering up with Ali – the quality of the physical movements translated into somatic as well as emotional feelings: a sense of discomfort and 'fighting' rather than leading or following. In order to make 'connection' happen, Jarik paid close attention to his various partners and the body-to-body communication, aiming to focus as much as possible on the sensory input he was receiving and which he was responding to:

I closed eyes, when I was a follower... to be able to perceive... what *she* wants to do... the focus on the movement only. And it seemed to work better when I wasn't distracted by people moving around... and all. (JA1:239ff)

Where the 'connectedness' is not instant, Jarik aims to make it happen, e.g. during the weight-giving:

I tried to be more gentle with my movement about expressions... and then I let the person... have some time... to get used to my presence and all with the closeness [...] And then, when I felt that this person feels more comfortable to be doing those more... advantageous movements, or take more weight, then I started to slowly increasing the... load. (JA1:128ff)

Elvira left me (as no doubt I left her) with more questions than answers, as her feelings and views were somewhat ambiguous or ‘mixed’ – or at least difficult to ‘read’. At times I got a sense of ‘relating through convention’, when she appeared to stay within dance conventions without checking whether her partners were familiar with those. This is well illustrated in her first written comments, indicating that her expectations of leader and follower ‘acting-in-role’ are fairly clear-cut:

Leading is weightier (i.e. carries more weight), as one supports the partner; more responsibility as one is not just moving the pair but has to ensure the safety of the pair. Follower also looks out for ‘danger’ and might have to take action. But less so. (WS1, Snapshot notes, Q1)

‘Carrying more weight’ is an interesting phrase here – in ballroom dancing, right from beginner level, followers are always reminded (by their instructors or partners) to hold up their own arms rather than leaning on the leader’s arms (“don’t be heavy”), but all too often they are unaware of the downward pressure they exert... For the leader, holding up this weight can become more like a weightlifting exercise than a dance. When dancing as leader with beginners, I have experienced this, and I have often seen men leaving the dance floor rubbing or shaking out their aching arms and shoulders. But for Elvira this seems to be simply part of the leader’s job, and as such it is ‘off her radar’, since she sounds almost surprised that this is difficult, even though she has had the experience in the past, as evidenced by the words in brackets :

Not being used to leading (any more) I found it harder. Interesting to see that it is harder to hold the frame as a leader. (Elvira, WS1, Snapshot notes, Q9)

She also mentions ‘falling back into followership’, which in her usual dance activities is her ‘normal’ role. On the other hand, her answer to the question whether one particular role felt more comfortable or ‘natural’ is “not really” – but then she adds the observation:

I found it interesting that I was very comfortable leading moving backwards than forwards. (WS1, Snapshot notes, Q12)

Moving backwards is fairly typical of a follower's role in Ballroom dancing, since the leader is tasked with the navigation for the couple, hence needs to see where s/he is going, subsequently mainly moving forwards rather than backwards. So this would again indicate that 'following' is Elvira's habitual role, and she explicitly confirms this:

I found it hard to lead forward. Much better at leading backwards. [...] It was interesting, but then I normally follow, I don't normally lead, so I normally walk backwards, so that's a motion of mine, that's a pattern... (Elvira, WS1:1363ff)

On the other hand, Ramen found that he could best lead Ali (as the 'off-on-a-tangent team member') by walking backwards, rather than stepping 'into' Ali, thus avoiding being 'pushy', 'confrontational' or 'intrusive'. For Ramen this was a 'surprise', as it involved an 'unfamiliar' way of moving – he was used to leading, hence moving forwards more often than backwards; and consciously 'breaking' with a bodily movement habit 'felt' strange and unfamiliar, thereby raising awareness and focusing attention.

In comparison to Jarik, Elvira's attention appeared to be more focused on her own role, whereas Jarik emphasised that he was trying to see and understand other people's perspectives, especially when it came to problem-solving. Whilst Elvira was aware of her 'patterns', such as being in a follower role and walking backwards, she did not come across as questioning or even 'bracketing' them, as evidenced in her 'mirroring dance' with Martin that she led, in which Martin found it hard to follow her rather fast steps (which were quite alien to him) and quick changes of direction (see *Section 4.3.1* with *Figure 4-8*). This is particularly interesting, since Elvira's expectations from a leader included, in her own words:

One of the expectations I have is that the leader doesn't make me do things I can't perform. This is fairly easy to establish in these exercises. Also in these exercises the leader carries out everything the follower does. (WS2, Snapshot, Q8)

When she herself was the leader, this did not seem to apply, possibly because the 'follower' perspective was so ingrained that she did not 'transfer' her expectations when she changed roles, or focused so hard on the 'unfamiliar' job of leading that this took all her attention. What is clear from the video footage is that the follower in this situation was literally left behind and struggling to follow.

From seeing Elvira interact with others, listening to what she said about her 'leadership issues' in her workplace, and feeling/sensing her as she danced/moved with me, I got a

sense that there were some tacit assumptions about how relationships work that remained tacit rather than being questioned: How does 'relating' work within conventions? Does it mean 'following a set pattern / pre-set assumptions' that come with a leadership role? How much can one assume as 'given' when building relationships with 'real people' rather than just their roles? In other words, does 'relating' mean 'relating to person-in-role' or 'relating to role-embodied-by-person-X'? Does 'relating' involve the need to question / check out one's own assumptions about others?

That said, Elvira was aware that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution:

Each pairing clearly works differently, the dynamics change as do the methods employed. Some pairs work better with eye contact others without. Some leaders are strong enough to create enough trust to close one's eyes and immerse in the following. (WS1, Snapshot notes, Q8)

The third exercise showed that we can have different partnerships to the same music and work with different people in different ways using different moves; being more or less close, holding eye contact for longer or less long. (WS3, Snapshot B notes, Q5)

What 'creates trust' is 'strength' in a leader, even to the extent of enticing a follower to follow 'blind'. And creating trust is a leader's business, not a follower's – this almost sounds like leadership stereotyping (how often have we heard the call for 'strong leadership' or even a 'strong man'!). At the same time, Elvira concedes that "relinquishing power gives respite" – an acknowledgement that leadership is hard work, while at the same time equating 'leading' with 'power'. Moreover, she then adds that "forward planning still needs to be there to be ready to take back control"; implying that 'power' and 'control' are closely linked or even 'belong' to leadership (and probably conflating 'power' with 'control').

For both WS2 and WS3, Elvira picked 'flexibility and choice' and 'expectations of leader(ship) / follower(ship)' as her personal themes to work on – a choice that highlights some ambiguity towards leadership: on the one hand, there are a lot of implicit assumptions about leader-follower roles, on the other hand there is a desire for variety and flexibility, which is 'more fun' than sticking to predetermined roles:

Each pairing clearly works differently, the dynamics change as do the methods employed. Some pairs work better with eye contact others without. (Elvira, WS1, Snapshot notes, Q8)

I noticed that I 'took over' and became the leader on a few steps then relinquished leadership back to the 'leader'. More fun to share the leading more give and take which creates more variety (Elvira, WS1, Snapshot notes, Q5)

Yasmin and Myra are very different people in very different work contexts, but they both come from a problematic – i.e. imposed and unwillingly accepted – self-definition as 'follower': Yasmin finds herself constrained by organisational structure and hierarchy; Myra has grown up with the notion that women are followers rather than leaders. Myra, struggling with anxiety, seems to have resigned herself to that role and finds leadership a challenge, whilst Yasmin actively strives for independence and self-determination.

Both of them explore what 'permission to lead' and 'permission to follow' means and entails for them – both 'permission to others' and 'permission to self'. Do these permissions arise mainly from each specific relationship/context or from self-understanding and 'giving permission to self' – or from a mix of both? In the workshop setting, the latter seems to be the case: positive, supportive connection with others encourages self-permission – it is within those connections that each of them explores leadership.

6.1.2 ...BUT RELATIONALITY IS NOT UNPROBLEMATIC

On the other hand, 'relational' can also mean 'adversarial' or 'fighting for power', as in Martin's 'difficult relationship', where one is left with the question who is *actually* leading: Martin, who (formally) leads the choir, or his 'difficult person' who (informally) pretty much dictates the terms of Martin's leadership, and who apparently can challenge or even dismantle Martin's standing by being disruptive and withholding his consent?

Relationality is not unproblematic, because 'relationship' and 'relating' is interpreted differently by each individual and thus carries personal, idiosyncratic meaning, connotations and 'baggage', most of which remain implicit – albeit highly influential – in everyday actions and interactions. There is also a link here to Watzlawick, Beavin and Jackson's famous communication theory, in which Axiom 2 postulates: "Every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication." (Watzlawick et al. 1967:54) Whatever the 'content message' may be, it always carries a relationship element or meaning, which is contextual and often

nonverbal (tone of voice, gesture, posture etc.). What complicates a dance situation and makes it particularly ambiguous is the fact that in a lead-follow situation often both the content *and* the relationship aspect are nonverbal.

On the other hand, the 'practice ground' here allowed for one-to-one relationships at a time – and even this was fraught with complexities. When it comes to leadership beyond individual, one-to-one relationships, the complexity multiplies, as it involves group relations, group dynamics, with webs of relationships, assumptions, interpretations. So the one-to-one partnering in dance, together with short, time-limited exercises enabled a temporary reduction of complexity: focusing (mainly!) on one person and one task at a time. What makes this particularly effective is the close proximity and body touch – a challenge for non-dancers, but also an opportunity to experience and face difficult feelings. Of course, there are others on the floor, in the room – they are always 'stakeholders' to some extent, as no relationship is acted out in isolation (arguably not even if no-one else is *physically* present).

In dance, leadership is necessarily and evidently physically 'enacted', since it is a physical interaction, a bodily 'conversation' where 'togetherness' is a requirement because it is a partner dance – but how does this translate into non-bodily leadership, situations where 'body leading' is not a requirement, not appropriate, not even possible?

6.2 LEADERSHIP AS EMBODIED AND AESTHETIC

The notion of leadership as embodied (Melina et al. 2013; Ladkin 2008, 2013; Bathurst & Ladkin 2012; Katz-Buonincontro 2011a) is closely linked with concepts of embodied cognition:

Cognition is embodied when it is deeply dependent upon features of the physical body of an agent, that is, when aspects of the agent's body beyond the brain play a significant [...] constitutive role in cognitive processing. (Wilson & Foglia 2011)

In other words, we perceive, think, act and learn *through* our bodies, not just *with* our bodies – they are part of the learning and the knowing, not just instruments. For example, skill development is not just a mental or mentally steered and controlled exercise, but requires sensory, physical practice (Sennett 2008; Gladwell 2005; Stelter 2004, 2008; Sheets-

Johnstone 2011; Shotter 2005, 2006, 2010; Winther 2013, 2014; Winther et al. 2015) and ‘aesthetic agency’ (Springborg & Sutherland 2016; Ladkin 2008, 2013; Sinclair 2005a, 2005b, 2016; Hansen et al. 2007; Strati 2009). Cognitive processes are inextricably linked to the body. Intuition is more often the result of a lengthy learning process, rather than something ‘innate’ or a special ‘talent’, something that ‘comes naturally’ to some people more than others (Sennett 2008; Gladwell 2005). Evidence from different disciplines, including science and philosophy, confirms these close linkages, although the constraints of this project do not allow for delving too far into these underpinnings.

In both dance and organisations, embodied and aesthetic leadership is often not obvious or explicit, and is simply ‘just happening’. In our first few years of dancing we were told that “the man leads”, or I was reprimanded that I “was leading” (when I was expected to follow), but there was no explanation what ‘leading’ (or following) actually entailed physically, or how to make it happen – which parts of the body are involved and what they *do*. It was only when we started to learn Argentine tango (where ‘leading’ is explained in detail and practised from the start) that we began to explore this, and subsequently queried it in our ballroom dance lessons. Once we were asking the question, it became more of a focus for our trainers. If this experience is more widespread (and I have no doubt that it is), is not surprising that many ‘dance learners’ confuse ‘leading’ with ‘being in control’. Similarly, in organisations, if the question is not asked, does it get addressed?

Here are some instances of ‘embodied leading’ that made an impact, raised awareness or led to insights during the workshops:

Strong physicality of leadership can be experienced as positive (as in Yasmin & Ted’s ‘difficult relationships’) or negative (as in Jarik’s ‘difficult relationship’). Jarik acts it out with Martin experimentally in an interesting dialectic, enacting a very negative experience within in a positive and friendly relationship, attempting to embed the negative component without hurting his current partner. Firstly, transferring the painful experience into a different context enables adult control, but also playfulness, i.e. takes the violence and recklessness out of it. Secondly, Martin being a warm and considerate person makes it impossible for him to hurt Jarik – and whilst Jarik ‘complains’ that Martin was not ruthless enough, it seems to be

precisely this aspect that enables Jarik to see beyond the 'fighting' and recognise the possibility of reconnecting.

Ted's past experiences and memories of the pleasure and enjoyment of dancing at family celebrations with his wife's Caribbean family in a non-white environment and his rapport with Yasmin enables the enactment of a difficult situation (rejection, feeling left out) in a context of connectedness, rather than loneliness/isolation and leads to him finding a solution. Similarly, it is through this rapport that he takes pleasure in Yasmin's sudden switch from follower to leader that enables him to enjoy being a follower.

Myra takes the lead when 'in her body': it suddenly 'feels right', when she is with the 'right' people, when she feels safe and confident, trusting both herself and the others when she follows her 'gut feeling' and lets her body 'take over'. Interestingly, she cannot explain the 'how' and 'why' of the situation – 'it just so happened' in a moment of 'witness thinking'.

Martin's story unfolds very much around the physicality of leadership in many different ways, from L-F intimacy through close collaboration to 'macho management' that requires a physical stance as well as a certain choice of language, conversation topics, etc. to 'bribe' another person to be a follower. Actually, who *is* leading in that situation: the designated leader or the follower who sets the conditions and manipulates the situation to fulfil his conditions? Leading can be interpreted in different ways – one only has to look at dog owners in a park: is it the owner walking the dog, or the dog walking the owner? It is often unclear who has trained whom to do what... The dog example also illustrates beautifully the difference between 'leading' and 'being top dog'/dominant/in control. Does this tie in with phrases like 'to lead someone on' or 'to lead astray', which imply or even emphasise the willingness to be a follower – and usually with an undertone of moving in the 'wrong' direction? Martin's story also illustrates the difference between 'leader' as a designated/labelled/permanent role (regardless of whether that person is *actually* leading at all times, which they usually are not) and 'leader' as 'person who is currently leading'. If we were to take the second meaning as the main one, then this will also result in a different understanding of 'leader identity' – it would imply a person's awareness of whether and when it is appropriate to 'take the lead' and when following is the right thing to do.

The data illustrate leadership that is not – or not *just* – prescribed as a role but contextual and situational, that often depends on, or arises from, being the ‘right’ person in the ‘right’ place at the ‘right’ time, feeling confident, knowledgeable and ‘ready’. Conversely, following ‘emerges’ in the same way, where people put trust in the other person, give them the benefit of doubt, or are willing to ‘give it a go’. ‘Demanding followers’ can be just as domineering, exhausting and hard to work with as ‘demanding leaders’ – but can also be challenging in a positive way, inspiring and encouraging.

7 DISCUSSION: CONCEPTUALISING AND LIVING LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP DIFFERENTLY

The complexity of the data, as well as the complexity of the approach would allow for multiple 'layers' of interpretation – from a focus on movement technicalities to depth psychology to group dynamics. However, with my focus on leader-follower-ship in organisations, I am pulling together the most relevant issues arising from this study that throw a light on leader-follower dynamics. This will also help to locate the study in the relational and aesthetic leadership literature and draw out implications for leadership learning and development.

7.1 'BEING IN THE BODY' REVISITED

In the realm of leadership learning, integrating physicality through dance offers a profound approach to understanding and developing leader-follower-ship. This grounds the concept of 'aesthetic leadership' in tangible, sensory experiences, aligning with Hansen et al.'s (2007) advocacy for knowledge linked to sensing and the interplay between thoughts and feelings. My workshops, rooted in the concept of embodied cognition, have operationalised this by emphasising the importance of dance-related bodywork to foster a deep, embodied understanding of leader-follower-ship dynamics. Despite the dominance of rationalist paradigms in organisational settings, which often overlook the physical and emotional facets of learning, this approach highlights the critical connection between sensory experiences, emotional readiness, and effective leadership learning.

One of the strengths of this sensory-reflexive approach to leadership learning is its grounding in the physicality of leading and following, taking 'aesthetic leadership' literally, so to speak. My workshops have put Hansen et al.'s call for "knowledge that is created from our sensory experiences, which includes a connection between our thoughts and feelings" (2007:550) into practice – and not just in terms of leadership research, but also for leadership learning.

Beard & Wilson highlight the importance of sensory experiences that "can raise awareness of our flow with, or against the natural rhythms and energy levels of the body" (2013:176),

but also emphasise that learning from experience is inextricably linked to emotional states and ‘readiness’ to learn – which of course varies between individuals, their energy levels and affective states at any given time. ‘Bodywork’ (and specifically dance) is known to be closely linked to emotional experiences and memories, which is why it is so effective in dance movement psychotherapy that “acknowledges the fusion of mind and body and the expressive and communicative primacy of nonverbal body movement in revealing aspects of a person’s mental and emotional state” (Hanna 1995:329), “mobilizes the cognitive, creative, and sensorial spheres of the subject” and helps people to find “new ways to express the emotions stored in the body and traumatic memory” (Tomaszewski et al. 2023:3). On the other hand, dance therapists acknowledge that there is also a “feeling of well-being induced after dancing which suggests that it improves affective states. [...] Involvement in dance provides for distraction from stressful situations and anxious thoughts” (Payne 1992:6). This echoes Beard & Wilson’s (2013) appeal to educators and facilitators to design learning experiences that engender positive emotional states, relaxed alertness and a readiness to engage with sensory feelings as well as the corresponding emotions. It was precisely for this reason that the workshops were designed on a step-by-step basis, with warm-up and ‘distance’ activities, before moving on to actual dance exercises.

But in our ‘rationalism’-dominated organisational world this is not entirely unproblematic. Using such techniques in a non-therapeutic, work-related context is not without its challenges, but it also offers participants the opportunity to become more aware of their own, often deep-seated, assumptions. Dancing and moving with others can be a powerful way to access personal attitudes, surface implicit theories and convictions, and thus enable ‘deep’, whole-person learning. Being ‘close to home’ and touching personal boundaries, bodywork techniques and exercises can trigger strong emotional responses, and as facilitator, I have to be (and indeed I was) prepared for such unpredictable situations (for example Amanda bursting into tears during what might seem a relatively ‘safe’ activity). On the one hand, I had to rely on my judgment, but on the other hand, I tried to be as non-judgmental as possible – not always an easy balance.

Factors such as perceived relevance to a work context, physical limitations, cultural sensitivities, gender dynamics, privacy concerns, professional image all had to be taken

into account, both in planning and facilitation of the workshops. As individuals differ, so do their notions of personal space, safety, personal boundaries or acceptable expressions of feelings and thoughts.

Using competitive dancing as a 'framework' added an extra challenge, in that close body contact is needed not just to create an image of 'togetherness', but also for technical reasons, i.e. for two partners to move as one. (For example, achieving moves such as fast turns (pivots) together would be impossible at arms' length). This required moving beyond normal social and workplace conventions, where touch is regulated and restricted, but also often ambiguous and ambivalent, as demonstrated in current public discussions (and court cases!) about what constitutes gender discrimination and sexual harassment. In that respect it might not have been pure coincidence that the only two participants who actually worked together in the same department on a day-to-day basis decided to leave the group after WS1, although they did not give this as a reason. This added challenge brought the whole leader-follower-ship exploration into a very personal domain, as it encouraged participants to explore not just 'theories' (implicit or explicit) but also emotional aspects, thus moving beyond the realm of rationality. Arts-based methods typically involve this kind of learning process "which often creates both insecurity and engagement, due to the fact that the result of creative processes in itself tends to be unpredictable" (Lund 2015:1).

On top of the 'body boundary' challenges, people may (if they are ready to do so) also discover some uncomfortable truths about themselves – 'the body does not lie': so someone who might consider themselves a democratic leader at work might find out that when it comes to 'body leadership', they resort for more to command-and-control, reluctant to give up enough control to truly 'listen' to another body, trusting their partner to lead or follow them. The immediate feedback from another body, unfiltered and unmoderated by (post-)rationalisation and verbal explanation, can be bewildering, frustrating, irritating, even shocking – but also surprisingly familiar, comforting, exciting or pleasurable. An example mentioned in the previous chapter (5: *Findings, meanings, sensemaking*) was Ted's admission that the weight-giving exercise triggered erotic feelings for him (even though there was only a minimal amount of touch involved), which shocked not just the rest of the group (because of his frankness in verbalising something this private in a group setting), but most of all him, because it was completely unexpected and somewhat unsettling!

On the other hand, Yasmin's surprise at feeling comfortable in the leader role after discovering that 'leading' can mean helping, supporting, enabling (rather than commanding and controlling) was certainly a pleasant one and contributed to her developing a new self-image – in the final one-to-one (RefCon3) she emphasised that as a professional she felt more confident now to take the lead, rather than waiting for it to become available. Amanda, a year after her workshop experience, still remembers vividly "that sense of intimacy [...] and feeling supported" in a dance, which in a flash insight (that made her burst into tears) made her realise that throughout her life she had frequently followed what others wanted her to do, without ever feeling supported – and this insight contributed to her journey towards making her own life decisions. And Myra's ("you *just* follow") 'taking the lead' in the final dance, twirling two followers at the same time, expressed more than her words a reassurance that leading was not just a burden but could be enjoyable. Move the body, and the mind will follow...

Whilst the body does not lie, what does it tell us? What does my body tell me? Even trickier, what does *your* body tell *me*, and what does *my* body tell *you*? Hansen et al.'s statement "Aesthetic practices include language skills, listening, gazing, touch, and treating emotion and feelings as important sources of knowledge" (2007:553) may sound straightforward, but it is far less so in practice. What is the knowledge that the senses convey? We interpret our sensory perceptions, they mean something to us, but is that 'knowing', or is it more 'assuming'? And when do assumptions become knowledge? How 'reliable' are our interpretations, or how prone to error? These are just some of the questions that will arise for participants taking part in bodywork practices. We can easily 'misread' others (and even ourselves) – what is meant as a friendly touch can be felt as a threat, a gesture intended to express courtesy may be perceived by one person as respectful, by another as patronising or diminishing. Nonverbal communication is always (and in principle) ambiguous – and bodywork often throws this into sharp relief. This fundamental uncertainty was always present, manifesting itself in frequent verbal exchanges between partners to 'enhance' communication (and prompting frequent reminders from me to refrain from talking when involved in somatic practices). So sensory engagement with others without (or with less of) the reassurance of verbal clarification is in some ways quite a risky business, before we even take into account preconceptions, social 'conditioning' and 'body memory' issues.

Cunliffe's (2011) 'intersubjectivism', characterised by 'transitory understandings' and 'witness' thinking' is indeed at work in those workshop sessions: Thinking and feeling come together in moments of connection, flashes of 'oops', surprises, unpredictability – I never know exactly what it will be like; I might anticipate but each encounter is different and unique.

Just in case you ask why on earth anyone would want to expose themselves to all this 'malaise', remember that there is also a lighter side to it: Whilst exploring (and thus pushing) such boundaries invariably brings with it discomfort, we need to bear in mind that the 'fun' aspect of moving to music adds some counterbalance through playfulness, enjoyment and at times light relief, keeping workplace issues at bay. But it does take some courage to take risks, an open mind and almost a sense of 'adventure' to engage with such an unfamiliar context (cf. also Beard & Wilson 2013). This is why careful planning is required to address cultural sensitivities, physical limitations, and gender dynamics and to ensure a safe, inclusive environment.

7.2 LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP OR PARTNERSHIP? 'FEELING' THE POWER OF THE FOLLOWER

A key point of the workshop series was to highlight followership, using concepts from followership research as well as participants' own experiences. In research terms, leadership has attracted far more attention than followership – in practice terms (HR and organisation development) even more so. Generally, being a follower is not seen as a desirable role or position – followers are usually presented as inferior, explicitly or implicitly: they are 'subordinates' or (where researchers want to avoid attracting attention to a power differential or even a 'value gap') 'members' who need to be 'directed', 'impressed', 'influenced', at worst 'controlled', 'dominated' or 'manipulated', at best 'cared for', 'involved' or 'empowered' (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014). In other words, they are seen to *need* and even *want* leaders. Even in seemingly unbiased and objectivist research speak, followers are afforded less value and lower status than leaders. So it is not surprising that whilst leadership training is an industry generating millions in any currency, there is little chance of making a buck from followership training! And this image is deeply rooted in most people's minds and their

everyday concepts of ‘leaders’ and ‘leadership’ – I am including myself here. However, years of dance training and competition experience have changed my perception and led me to question those implicit leadership and followership theories and to chip away at that mental pedestal.

The lasting influence of this memetic baggage manifests itself nicely in a paper by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), which gives a comprehensive overview of how the leadership literature treats followers, grouping it into five main perspectives, illustrated by the following diagram (L = leader; F = follower; O = outcomes). The diagram in *Figure 7-1* is quoted from this paper (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014:85), but I have ringed each ‘L’ in it to draw attention to the ‘elevated’ position of leader in contrast to the ‘lowered’ position of follower. Even though this paper is fairly critical of ‘traditional’ leadership perspectives, the authors still place the L *above* F in their diagram (without distancing themselves from this vertical arrangement), which probably says something about how deeply ingrained the mental model is that continues to put leaders ‘above’ followers.

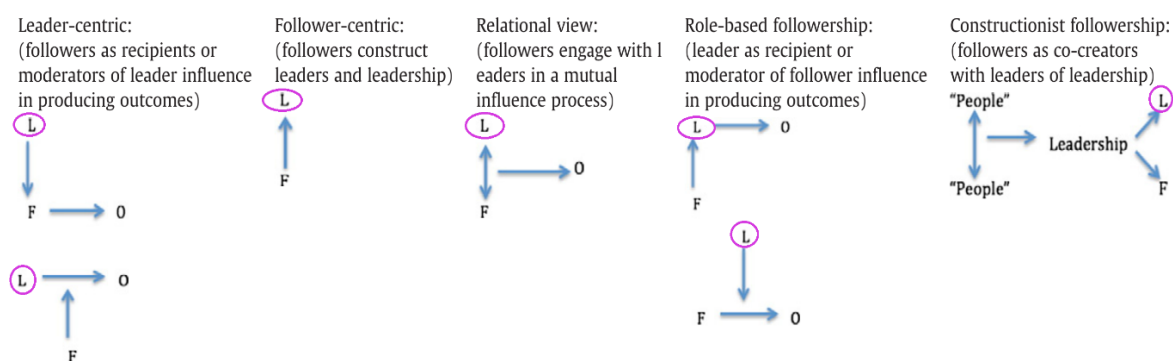


Figure 7-1: Treatment of followers in leadership and followership literature (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014; my annotations)

One of the interesting outcomes from this project: what happened in the workshops does not fall just into the two categories of ‘leader’ and ‘follower’. Yes, there were leader and follower ‘roles’ assigned – but for most of the exercises, participants changed roles and thus experienced both L and F perspectives. Each participant took (in turn) a leader-centric and a follower-centric stance, in that they focused on their given role and how that helped or hindered them in achieving a given task. They also worked on the relational aspect and how they influenced (or attempted to influence) each other. And there were also ‘constructionist tasks’ where there were no ‘set’ roles; instead each pair was asked to

relinquish any assigned leader-follower-ship and consequently had to work out how to negotiate ‘togetherness’ in movement and how and when ‘leading’ or ‘following’ happened. This set of tasks showed some interesting results: there were striking differences between pairs who seemed to ‘get into the flow’ and experimented ‘boldly’ with shapes and space and those who resorted to ‘minimalist’ solutions with small movements, looking more ‘cautious’ or ‘less confident’. Note the inverted commas here – these are my interpretations: what do you ‘read’ here?



Figure 7-2: The balancing exercise, Myra and Elvira (left), contrasted against Yasmin and Ali (right)
https://youtu.be/UgwJ2_jaqZM

Moreover, research participants’ initial ‘everyday assumptions’ about leadership (what Epitropaki et al. (2013) refer to as implicit leadership/followership theories) would sit mostly on the lefthand side of Uhl-Bien & Ospina’s (2012) map (*Figure 2-1 in Section 2.3*): people associated leaders and leadership with ‘power over’, domination, authority, hierarchy, as well as certain traits and behaviours: Ted with dictatorship, Jarik with dominance, ‘power over’ and even violence, Myra with ‘the power’, Ali with hierarchy and dominance, Elvira with hierarchy, control, ‘power over’ and ‘power to’, Amanda with dominance and control. In line with this (and unsurprisingly), followers were associated with low status or value, as documented by Myra’s phrase “you *just* follow”, Amanda’s view of followers as “lesser persons”, or Yasmin’s inner struggle with the idea of giving up agency when dancing as follower.

To quite an extent the workshop design aimed to facilitate a different view of leader-follower-ship, away from the entity/hierarchy focus that attributes more value to leaders, more towards a view of co-creation and process and, in particular, of equal value. In this learning process the use of assigned L/F roles did not follow the rule that “role-based views consider how individuals enact leadership and followership *in the context of hierarchical roles*” (Uhl-Bien et al. 2014:90; my emphasis). On the contrary, the tasks were set in a way that emphasised equal value, even with a warning that a command-and-control stance would most likely not produce desirable outcomes.

Valuing followers and followership was an essential part of the workshop approach, with emphasis on followers’ agency and decision-making – quite a surprise for most participants: obviously followership research / theory has not had quite the same impact as leadership theories, neither in management circles nor within the wider public. That said, the choice of how to interpret and how to embody leadership and followership rested entirely with the individual – their ‘learning journey’ was meant to be one of discovery, not of indoctrination. So there was no directive or recipe how to treat followers – instead participants were presented with evidence and analysis of follower actions (e.g. a slow-motion video clip of a world champion couple demonstrating a dance in a training session; ‘live’ demonstrations of L-F interactions by facilitators; the helix model of leader-follower-ship – see *Section 7.3.1*) and encouraged to explore and ‘feel’ followership as well as leadership. The emphasis was not on ‘empowering’ followers, since ‘empowering’ implies a leader *giving* a follower power – a perspective that can be interpreted as condescending or patronising (cf. e.g. Weidenstedt 2016a, 2016b, 2020). Instead it was about ‘revealing’ the power that a follower already *has*, even when not aware of it. In my experience, followers are often unaware of their own strength or the strength of their position, which raises the question whether leaders tend to overrate themselves or their own importance, whilst followers tend to underrate theirs (cf. Epitropaki et al. 2013; Sy 2010). For some participants this increased sensitivity to follower power ‘eased’ their relationship with leadership: Ted developed a new awareness and acceptance of follower power (as well as rediscovering his own agency); Jarik played with alternatives to ‘fighting back’ against dominance and control; it also seemed to reinforce Ali’s and Elvira’s strategy of ‘leading the leader’ from a follower position. Interestingly, feeling ‘powerful’ as followers encouraged Myra and Yasmin to also explore

and embrace leadership – increased awareness of their ‘follower power’ enabled them to be more confident as ‘followers’ and (almost paradoxically) encouraged them to ‘take the lead’. And Martin’s ‘difficult relationship’ story about his demanding – arguably controlling or even coercive – follower is a particularly powerful (pun indeed!) illustration of follower power.

The notion of ‘discovering’ followers’ power (bottom-up) instead of ‘empowering’ them (top-down) goes beyond the more mainstream followership research. For example, Kelley, Chaleff or Kellerman do not actually challenge hierarchical organising per se (nor do they challenge the leader = senior manager equation) – they merely make a case for ‘mitigating’ it and reducing the power gap, rather than eliminating it. So whilst they all recommend leadership to be(come) more collaborative, participatory, democratic, their proposals for change are firmly anchored within the ‘traditional’ top-down business world, where the post-positivist relational leadership proponents are also located.

7.3 LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP AS A CYCLICAL PROCESS: A GROUNDED MICRO-MODEL

One way of deconstructing deeply seated preconceptions about leader power and ‘heroic’ leaders was by looking at leader-follower interactions more closely. As explained in the introduction (*Section 1.1*), achieving a top performance in dancesport requires ‘power-ful’ and empowered engagement and input from follower as well as leader (Tremayne & Ballinger 2008; Marion 2006; Matzdorf & Sen 2015, 2016, 2018). Whilst the roles of leader and follower are a necessity in the dancesport world (the leader is in charge of navigation and also wears the competition number, i.e. makes the couple identifiable/recognisable), the couple’s performance is ultimately co-created. Listening and following is required on both sides to make the dance performance work, as is initiating and ‘powering through’ – all these activities are part of both roles (see *Figure 7-5* and *Figure 7-6*).

This ties in with followership research and theory: it takes the ‘powerful’ types of follower to succeed in the competitive dance environment (cf. Kelley 1988, 2008; Chaleff 2009); and the relationship between leader and follower becomes more of a ‘power-sharing’ one, despite the ‘traditional-hierarchical’ look of ‘female’ and ‘male’ roles, which is preserved and

retained (with minor variations) even in same-sex competitions. This also applies in organisational life: even where organisational structures are hierarchical, nothing works unless people in follower roles agree to following and enact this out of their own agency – this is nicely expressed in the phrase ‘work to rule’ for a form of industrial action: it is not the ‘rules’ that guarantee smooth workflow and high-quality outcomes, but the goodwill, energy and diligence of those who carry out the work: in other words, how staff apply themselves to their tasks and how they live and embody the spirit of those rules – and the decision is entirely theirs, not their ‘superiors’.

7.3.1 AN ANALYSIS OF LEADER-FOLLOWER (INTER)ACTIONS IN A DANCE: THE DNA OF LEADERSHIP?

In order to illustrate the co-creative nature of dancing, *Figure 7-3* shows a move-by-move analysis of the first few steps in a Waltz choreography (see *Figure 7-4* for a video of these), visualised as a spiral that ‘moves’ from left to right, as the partners move together through the dance. The leader’s actions are coloured in purple, the follower’s in turquoise. (Abbreviations are explained in the text.)

Just a reminder: the leader initiates (not ‘controls’) movement, creating space for the follower to step into, providing the ‘frame’ as support, stability and protection. The follower helps to uphold this frame whilst using it to perform their own tasks and also creating space for the leader to move into. The notion of ‘creating space for one’s partner’ is a useful aspect to apply to organisational life and leader-follower-ship.

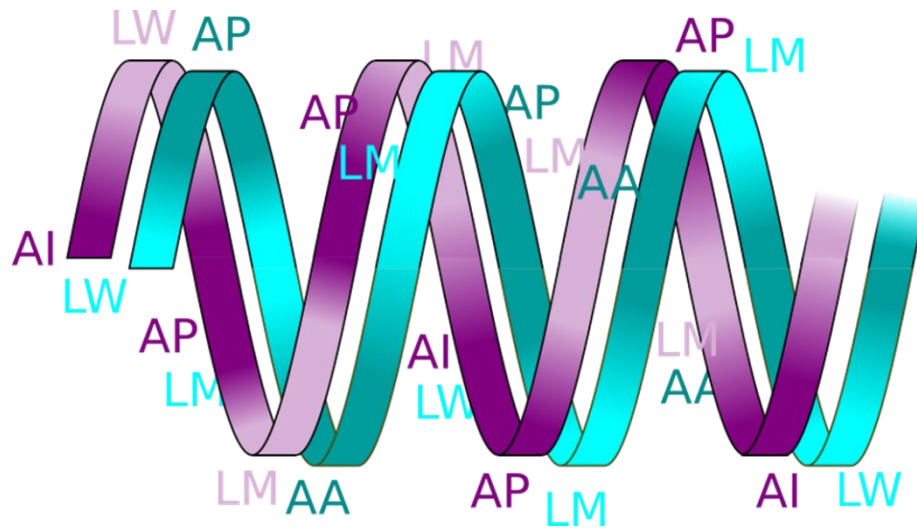


Figure 7-3: A micro-analysis of leader/follower actions in a Waltz (*leader in purple, follower in turquoise*)



Figure 7-4: Ramen and Fides taking the preparation and first step of a waltz during a competition (<https://youtu.be/MqzP9WcMVcc>)

AI	The leader starts the action by making an initiating move (AI), whilst
LW	the follower is listening (with the body, not the ears) and waiting (LW) for the leader's input.
AP	The follower then starts their action by performing their move (AP), whilst
LW	the leader is in listening mode, waiting (LW) and sensing the follower's actions.
AP	Then it is the leader's turn for action to perform (AP), taking into account what the
LM	follower just did, with the follower listening and monitoring (LM) the leader's moves, ready to pick up the next signal.

AA | The follower then picks up the signal and gets into adjusting action mode (AA),
 LM | following the leader's body, with the leader listening and monitoring (LM), sensing the follower's body and movement.

This back-and-forth switching pattern continues throughout the whole dance, and while the description here is by needs sequential, these dance moves in action would be more concurrent than it appears above, or at least overlap closely. For example, in AP/LW, the leader, albeit in 'listening mode' would not stand still, but move along with the follower (clearly there is a lot of 'witness thinking' going on here!). So the model above shows the elements, but does not attempt to display the precise timing of those, as movements 'flow' into each other, without a precise start or end point. Raelin (2016:138) very succinctly describes this process as "collaboratively and intersubjectively agentic", although I would not agree with his view that "to distinguish each micro-move in the course of the endeavor as individual agency or influence seems to distort the interactive or relational nature of the effort": it would simply be impossible to capture *fully* this symbiotic-systemic 'flow' of interaction and mutual influencing in a two-dimensional illustration! However, the helical model highlights the agentic aspects of the leader-follower-relationship even in a context of predetermined roles and therefore helps us to think about leader-follower-ship as a process (which is indeed Raelin's aim).

To put this into context, it is worth mentioning that the sequence described above is only what happens during a 'preparation step', before the actual choreography starts. This would take hardly more than a couple of seconds, but even this short time span has already seen 3 switches of leading/following actions.

It obviously requires a lot of practice to develop the 'fine-tuned' sensing that enables the 'togetherness' required to make a dance appear seamless, smooth and effortless. Over time dancers develop these 'partnering skills' (this is the term used in dancesport training, cf. Vidrin 2020) to achieve mutual attunement – from technical skills (connection, balance, support, resistance etc.) to communication capability, from fine-tuning sensory responsiveness to dealing with mistakes, navigating space or coping with stress. It is precisely this skillset that we observe, for example, in organisations where work processes happen smoothly, and where people work 'hand in hand', often even without the need for much verbal explanation.

Terms like ‘listening’ and ‘waiting’ (for input / instruction), ‘responding’ and ‘reacting’ are typically associated with followers, whilst ‘initiating’, ‘action’ and ‘decisiveness’ would be assigned to leaders. But what this very simplified helical representation illustrates is the constant switch between leading and following actions on *both* sides of the partnership. ‘Leading’ and ‘following’ *actions* are not reserved only for the designated leader and follower respectively, but the leader also has to listen and the follower also jumps into action, which the leader then has to follow. Importantly, the *decision to act* lies with both partners, as do responsibility and commitment. If we are to build an understanding of leader-follower-ship beyond and away from hierarchies, rigid roles and implicit value assumptions, and more towards agency and mutuality, then replacing the traditional leader-follower discourse with ‘partnership language’ would be a step in the right direction.

7.3.2 CONCEPTUALISING LEADING AND FOLLOWING: THE LEAD-FOLLOW CYCLE

So in order to achieve a smooth performance, ‘lead’ and ‘follow’ actions have to complement each other: if both partners stay in ‘waiting mode’ for seconds too long, nothing will happen – the flow of the dance is interrupted. If both partners go for action at the same time, without ‘listening’ to each other, the result will look more like a battle than a dance, as Jarik recognised when Ramen and I demonstrated a ‘non-listening’ partnership – he commented that it looked like a fight.

Furthermore, what this also demonstrates is the cyclical nature of the leader-follower interactions: leader and follower constantly switch between lead and follow activities. This is summarised in the next two diagrams (*Figure 7-5* and *Figure 7-6*). Biehl (2017:80) seems to hint at this, when she describes L/F roles as “possibly reversible” and “driven forth by a kinaesthetic feedback loop”.

Note that there is no fixed starting point to the cycle in the next two diagrams. This is intentional. Most often the ‘initiating’ move will come from the designated leader, but even in the conservative world of heteronormative dancesport we see initiating moves from followers (e.g. an opening where the follower starts the dance by ‘running into’ the leader).

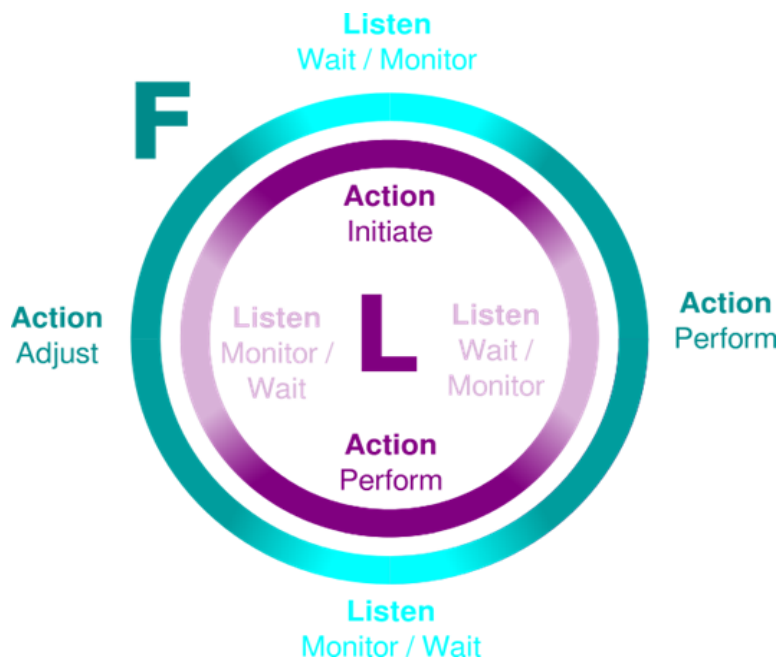


Figure 7-5: A micro-model of leader-follower-ship in Ballroom dancing, with leader/follower actions detailed

At a more abstract level, the lead-follow cycle looks like this (Figure 7-6): leading and following moves can be seen as complementary – the ‘switching’ between leader and follower happens continuously.

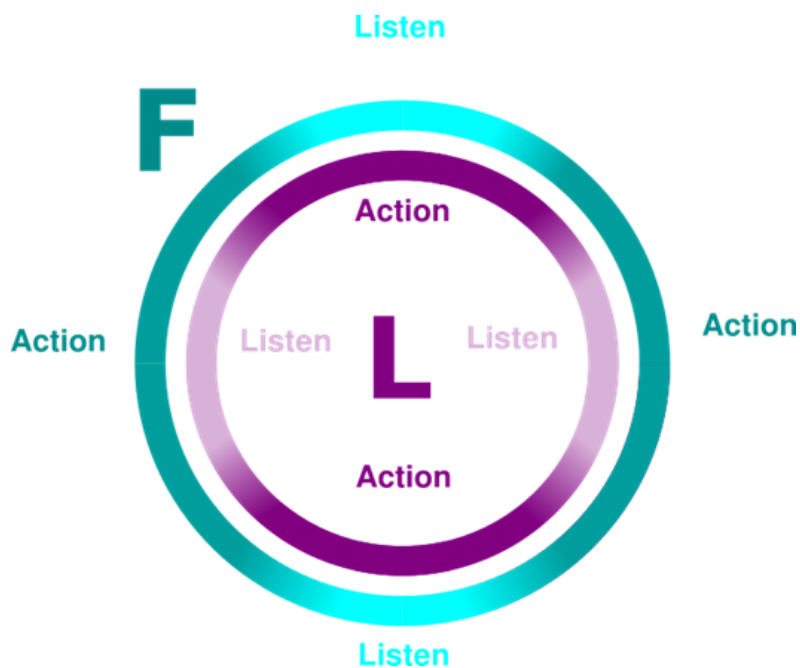


Figure 7-6: A micro-model of leader-follower-ship

7.3.3 CONCEPTUALISING LEADING AND FOLLOWING: FLEXIBILITY AND FLUIDITY

As we have seen in the helical model, both roles have aspects of leading and following, regardless of the 'official' labels. The way in which people 'enact' their roles is a matter of both compliance as well as choice, with choices being made individually, but also negotiated between partners. In the workshops, some participants reported 'role switches' within one dance or movement exercise and enjoyed the flexibility that it gave them. Interestingly, the same-sex competitive dance circuit has adopted this option as part of their competition rules: partners are officially allowed to switch between leading and following, even within the same dance, regardless of their 'nominated' role – the 'mainstream' dance circuit with its gendered and stereotypical appearance still has a long way to go in this respect.

In dancing as well as in organisational life, leader/follower roles are often 'assigned' and 'fixed', albeit contextually dependent. For example, the dance leader on the floor may well turn out to be a follower off the floor, as the dance follower turns out to be the main driver or decision-maker. A 'leader' in one organisational context might be a 'follower' in another one, even within the same 'assigned' role and the same organisation. And in work contexts such as multi-disciplinary project teams, different team members may take the lead role at different stages in the project, depending on their area of expertise.

In contrast to predominant leadership and followership models, the concept explored and practised in the workshops, but also in my own practice as a competitive dancer, takes the view that leading and following are not just separate roles and distinctly discrete activities and responsibilities, but have to be seen as 'fuzzy' in that each roles includes and requires largely the same types/categories of actions (e.g. 'taking the lead', 'listening', 'monitoring', 'responding', 'picking up a lead and running with it') and equal amounts of motivation, commitment and energy, in order to bring about satisfactory results.

This makes L-F enactment 'porous', as, regardless of the 'assigned' role, leading/following actions 'leak' into the opposite role, as shown in the matrix below. From this perspective, the boundaries between leader and follower roles are fuzzy and 'soft' instead of rigid and clear-cut.

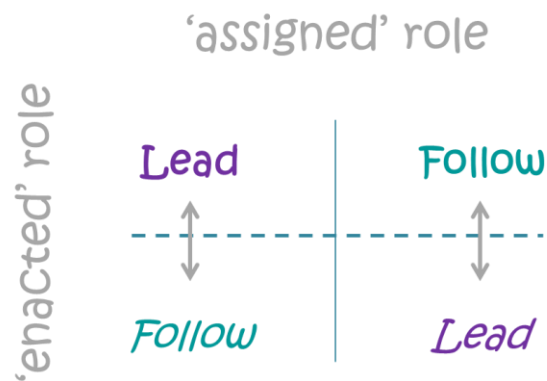


Figure 7-7: Leader and follower: 'assigned' versus 'enacted' role

Unlike the 'assigned' leader/follower role, the 'enacted' roles tend to be more flexible, depending on context, choices, personalities, personal relationships etc. The 'assigned' labels are often 'official', explicit, fixed and non-negotiable, whereas the 'enacted' leader/follower roles may be all this, too, but can also be negotiated, emergent, informal. So whilst the demarcation between the 'assigned' roles is likely to be rigid and exclusive, the boundaries between the 'enacted' roles are porous and permeable, allowing for balance of power, more partnership and a less hierarchical approach. That said, even in hierarchical organisations followers always have agency and make choices to follow, even though they may not always be aware of it.

7.4 BEYOND HEROES AND HIERARCHIES? REFRAMING LEADERSHIP AND FOLLOWERSHIP

One of the most important practical outcomes of the workshop series: it gave participants the opportunity to reframe leadership and followership and move towards a new, different understanding of what leading and following entails. However, the cyclical model of lead-and-follow differs from other models in that it does not present a normative model of leadership, but one that is a) metaphorical (dance is not the same as life in organisations, but it does constitute a micro-context of relating, collaborating, organising, performing and creating an output), b) descriptive (aiming to identify key elements involved in enacting and creating leader-follower-ship), c) to some extent compatible with other leadership models (it offers choices, rather than tying 'leadership' to a specific set of rules or attributes). In

some way it also ‘precedes’ other models in that it aims to unpick at a micro level what leaders and followers actually *do*, rather than what they should *be* or *be like*; but at the same time leaves it to individuals to make their own choice how they want to exercise leadership / leader-follower-ship. This is also what the aim of the workshops was: rather than prescribing any particular style of leadership, it was about developing enhanced awareness in participants of their own personal way to lead and follow, enabling them to subsequently make a more conscious choice of how they *wanted* to do this.

Three examples of what happened in the workshops illustrate this ‘reframing’:

- Through ‘dancing out’ and enacting his sense of leadership as authoritarian control, Jarik found that he did not need to ‘battle it out’ when encountering this kind of leadership style. Instead, he took the approach of ‘going with’ the leader’s movements, aiming to influence the direction of the flow of energy and momentum – the principle of martial arts.
- Awareness of choice and agency as a follower encouraged Myra and Yasmin to be more confident as leaders. It also helped Ted to review his mental model of leadership as dictatorship and to let go of a need to control and a sense of being ‘demoted’ or devalued when not ‘in control’.
- Reframing how he interacted with followers, when he dealt with ‘difficult relationships’, Ramen (now Rani) discovered not ‘pushing’ people, but ‘inviting’ or ‘coaxing’, creating space for them to show their abilities, was more effective. To this day Rani still uses this with her many teams in her work within the NHS.

Despite challenges and discomforts, dance fosters trust and mutual understanding, its playful aspects balancing the intensity of exploring personal and professional boundaries. The physical and emotional engagement in dance allows participants to reassess deep-seated assumptions and personal attitudes, leading to profound insights and growth. Drawing upon dance in leadership learning offers a holistic approach that goes beyond conventional rationalist methods. As it illustrates the transformative power of embodied leadership learning, this approach contributes to enhancing leadership capabilities and personal growth.

8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

8.1 REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Returning to the research questions, I will summarise the results of the study. I did set out to explore the following two questions:

1. How can the sensory experience of leading and following through the body help to facilitate self-reflection and self-awareness, as well as awareness of others, with regard to leadership and followership in organisational settings?
2. Can looking at it from a dancer's perspective help people to make clearer sense of what leading/following entails, become more aware of power as well as constraints, and develop skilled intuition or 'gut feeling' for leading as well as following?

The discussion so far has already provided much detail towards an answer, from linking participants' lead-and-follow insights to their professional lives to a more nuanced understanding of leading and following and the potential for personal and organisational change that this offers.

As the data have shown, the sensory experience of leading and following through the body, in particular through dance-related exercises, can profoundly enhance self-reflection, self-awareness, and awareness of others, and this can be applied to organisational settings. I emphasise 'can', because individuals vary in their willingness and capability to engage with deeper reflection, often depending on the level of discomfort triggered by cognitive conflict or dissonance. Sensory L/F experience takes the proverbial 'horse to the water, but cannot make it drink'. That said, participants had no difficulties relating their somatic experience in the workshop sessions to their workplaces and professional lives.

Dance-related exercises bring the mind-body connection to the fore, revealing how somatic factors are linked to emotions and vice versa – influence goes both ways, as demonstrated in Amanda's emotional reaction to the corporeal feeling of support or Jarik's change of feeling about 'fighting' authority. These 'embodied insights' are furthered by space and time for reflection (reflection rounds and RefCons). Thus, engaging in 'unfamiliar' somatic

practices can disrupt habitual behaviours and encourage new ways of thinking and acting. This disruption allows participants to experiment with different approaches to interaction and decision-making.

The intimate nature of ballroom dancing requires partners to explore and negotiate physical boundaries and comfort zones, which can prompt personal insights about vulnerabilities, fears and strengths, but also about personal likes and dislikes, such as smell and touch – topics that in normal social interactions, especially in the workplace, are mostly taboo – shown in the group’s reaction to Ted’s mentioning of an ‘erotic sensation’. For such topics to be talked about more freely, it would take a much longer time (and probably also a less ‘official’ and more ‘private’ environment than a large hall on a university campus) for a group to get to know each other, to ‘gel’ and develop enough mutual trust.

Insofar as dance and partnering activities provide immediate physical feedback, they help to reveal habitual behaviours and behavioural ‘patterns’ (e.g. how one copes with losing balance or ‘misreading’ a partner’s signals). Together with an understanding of their emotional responses, this creates opportunities for participants to recognise how they handle stress, uncertainty and conflict.

Dance relies heavily on nonverbal cues such as touch and body language. On the one hand, developing sensitivity to these cues enhances empathy and attunement to others’ needs and states. On the other hand, effective leading and following in dance involves giving clear, unambiguous signals as well as interpreting and responding to signals accurately and appropriately. There is a certain dialectic tension between clear determination and sensitive ‘listening’ with the body, and it takes more than just a few practice sessions to develop and fine-tune these skills, but the workshops provided a starting point. Practising this enhances communication skills and learning to be both assertive and receptive (Martin’s experience of the ‘demanding follower’ illustrated this dialectic very well). In organisational leader-follower-ship, active listening and responsiveness are valuable skills – a Google search on “active listening as a leadership skill” brought up 5,370,000 results in 0.24 seconds! – but whether supply matches demand in contemporary workplaces is another question.

The shared experience of a range of somatic practices, together with role reversal and partner changes, facilitated gaining insight into the challenges and perspectives of each role and helped to develop trust, empathy, mutual support and also 'comfort with discomfort'. Participants became more attuned to their partners' needs and responses, a crucial ingredient for effective teamwork and leader-follower-ship. In several partnerships, there was a noticeable move towards a 'collaborative' or 'shared leadership' approach, with both partners taking responsibility for the outcome, regardless of the role they happened to be in at the time.

To sum it up, the sensory experience of leading and following offers a unique and powerful method for enhancing self-reflection, self-awareness, and awareness of others and applying this to organisational settings. By engaging in somatic exercises, individuals can uncover and explore deep-seated behaviours and emotions, improve nonverbal communication, and build more empathetic relationships. These insights and skills are crucial for effective leader-follower-ship and help to foster a more collaborative organisational culture. The embodied approach complements traditional cognitive methods, offering a holistic pathway to personal and professional growth.

Viewing leadership and followership through the perspective of ballroom dancing provides a powerful framework for understanding the complexities of leading and following and offers a rich, embodied understanding of these roles, highlighting the balance of power (with, over and to) and constraints, and the importance of clear communication and skilled intuition. Integrating ballroom dance principles into leadership development and team-building activities offers opportunities to cultivate the intuition and skills necessary for effective leader-follower-ship.

8.2 CONTRIBUTION TO ACADEMIC KNOWLEDGE

This research makes several contributions to the field of leader-follower-ship research and leadership development, particularly through the lens of dance as an embodied metaphor.

8.2.1 CONCEPTUAL CONTRIBUTIONS: EMBODIED METAPHOR, HELICAL MODEL, LANGUAGE

8.2.1.1 DANCE AS AN EMBODIED METAPHOR

Using dance as a powerful embodied metaphor for leader-follower-ship and engaging participants in dance and dance-based practices allows them to experience principles of leading and following in an embodied way, which contrasts with traditional rationalist approaches. The use of dance draws attention to the authenticity and immediacy of somatic experience, suggesting that the body often reveals truths that the mind might overlook or rationalise away. Dance as a lens on leader-follower-ship highlights the importance of holistic learning experiences that integrate body and mind. Such embodied learning experiences can lead to significant epiphanies or ‘aha’ moments that are crucial for developing self-awareness and a better understanding of one’s own notions of followership and leadership than abstract, theoretical learning could achieve. This learning concept also aligns with broader educational research advocating for experiential and holistic learning methods, and as such falls into the developing field of arts-based approaches to management and leadership learning (Springborg & Ladkin 2018; Taylor & Ladkin 2009). However, whilst arts-based embodied methods such as theatre/drama (Antonacopoulou & Bento 2004; Beirne & Knight 2007; Katz-Buonincontro 2011b; Taylor 2012), sculpture (Katz-Buonincontro 2008) or drawing (Garavan et al. 2015; Katz-Buonincontro 2008), to name but a few, have been used more extensively, dance is still a bit of a ‘stepchild’ in this family. In her review of arts-based management education, Katz-Buonincontro notes that “dance remains a largely untapped arts resource” (2015:102) and that the “art form of dance has not been a key focus of arts-based management education” (2015:110). Whilst there has been more use of dance and dance-related methods in recent years (as discussed in *Section 2.6.3*), it is still an underused opportunity, especially for the kind of deep personal exploration used in my study. One significant issue here (which constitutes a strength of this study, but also a limitation to its applicability in organisational practice; cf. *Section 8.4*) is the in-depth skill and insight that experienced dancers bring to this developing field, both in the facilitation of workshops like these and as researchers. Whilst Boncori’s point that “pursuit of understanding, inquiry and expression through arts-based methods in research

does not necessarily require excellence or mastery in the arts” (2022:104) might apply to some arts-based methods, I cannot wholeheartedly agree to it where dance (or any other movement-based approach) is concerned. Whilst there is no standard meaning of “excellence or mastery”, I would contend that a lack of familiarity with this medium can (and does) lead to misinterpretations (at least that is my conclusion after making my way through the literature involving dance-related metaphors and practices – see *Section 2.6*). To discern what dance and movement practices can achieve, and to use them appropriately, requires at least a high level of familiarity with and understanding of the medium. No-one would be a successful football coach, if their experience of the game was based entirely on an audience perspective or on kicking a ball round the playground as a kid – they would lack that ‘embodied understanding’ that is necessary to make sense of and empathise with the players’ experiences.

8.2.1.2 *THE HELICAL MODEL OF LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP: FOLLOWER POWER*

The helical model constitutes a significant theoretical contribution in that it demonstrates the dynamic and continuous switching of leading and following actions between leader and follower. This takes it beyond existing models of followership, as I will explain in this section, focusing on three key proponents of followership research: Robert Kelley, Ira Chaleff and Barbara Kellerman. Challenging static role definitions, the helical model illustrates how both followers and leaders engage in actions typically associated with the other role – something that other researchers have indeed noticed, for example Rost who sees leadership and followership as a false dichotomy, calls followership “an outmoded concept” and wants to do away with the term ‘follower’ due to its pejorative connotations (Rost 2008), or Stech (2008) who proposes talking about leadership and followership as ‘embodiments’, ‘conditions’ or ‘states’ rather than as roles or ranks, thus emphasising their situatedness and limitation, even interchangeability. Whilst Kellerman (2008, 2012, 2013) acknowledges and comments on the difficulty to draw a clear line between leaders and followers and to give clear definitions of either role, clear differentiation seems to be of the utmost importance for her. The fact that she approaches this lack of a clear demarcation as a problem seems to be rooted in her belief in hierarchy as a human ‘given’: she maintains hierarchical structuring as a necessity, even considering it to be ‘hard-wired’ in human

nature. This is reflected in her language, as she defines followers by (lower) rank and power, and throughout her book *Followership* (2008) consistently refers to followers as 'subordinates', occasionally even 'underlings'. And despite talking about "the end of leadership" (title of her book published in 2012), Kellerman does not think that humanity can exist without it:

Because leadership taps into our deepest, most primitive human impulses. We hunger ourselves to have power, authority, and influence and, simultaneously, we long ourselves to be led wisely and well. (Kellerman 2012, Ch.8, no page number)

And although she argues that followers and leaders are equally significant and that followers have become more powerful than they used to be, hence more importance and attention should be given to them (Kellerman 2012, 2013), she nevertheless continuously refers to the leader-follower relationship as "patterns of dominance and deference" (Kellerman 2012, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 2013:135f) throughout the book.

In contrast to this, the helical model actually reveals in a very tangible, physical way just how small the difference between follower and leader actually is, and how leading and following elements interlace regardless of role. This is further detailed through a matrix that distinguishes between designated roles and concrete actions (see *Figure 7-7*), showing how these roles and actions 'leak' across traditional boundaries, thus reducing the perceived power gap between the roles, and – in contrast to Kellerman – emphasising this as a positive aspect rather than a problem.

In Kelley's model agency and decision-making are associated with 'strong' followers, but these represent only certain types of followership, as shown in the diagram below (*Figure 8-1*):

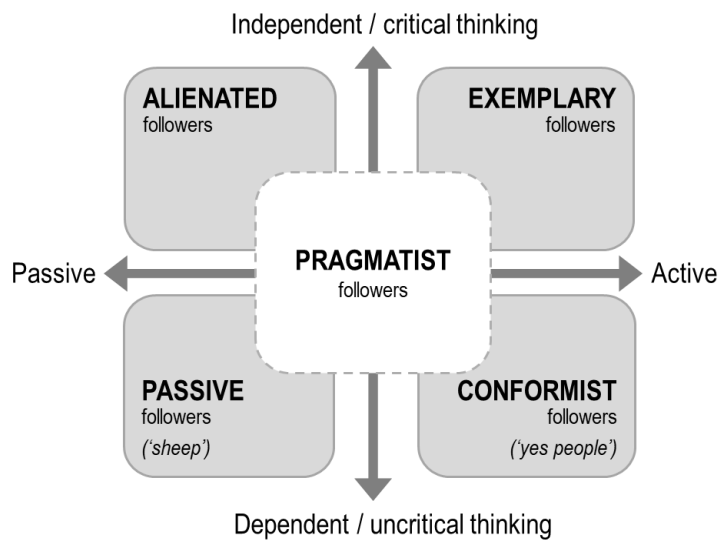


Figure 8-1: Kelley's categories of followers (after Kelley 1992, 2008)

Only 'conformist', 'exemplary' and 'pragmatic' followers are seen as 'active' here, whereas the helical model is more generic in that it covers *all* types of actions and decisions that followers make, including the 'non-action' ones: being passive, not making any decision or taking any action, is in itself also a decision and an action. This is based on the premiss that in regard to human relationships 'non-behaviour' is not possible:

there is no such thing as nonbehavior or, to put it even more simply: one cannot *not* behave. [...] all behavior in an interactional situation has message value [...] no matter how one may try, one cannot *not* communicate. Activity or inactivity, words or silence all have message value (Watzlawick et al. 1967:48f)

In other words, *not* to follow is still a follower's action.

By comparison, Chaleff's followers (as shown in *Figure 8-2*) all seem to be more or less 'active' – he differentiates them by the degree to which they support and challenge leaders.

His understanding of what constitutes a follower is much narrower than Kelley's:

Follower is not synonymous with *subordinate*. A subordinate reports to an individual of higher rank and may in practice be a supporter, an antagonist, or indifferent. A follower shares a common purpose with the leader, believes in what the organization is trying to accomplish, wants both the leader and organization to succeed, and works energetically to this end. (Chaleff 2009:15; author's emphasis)

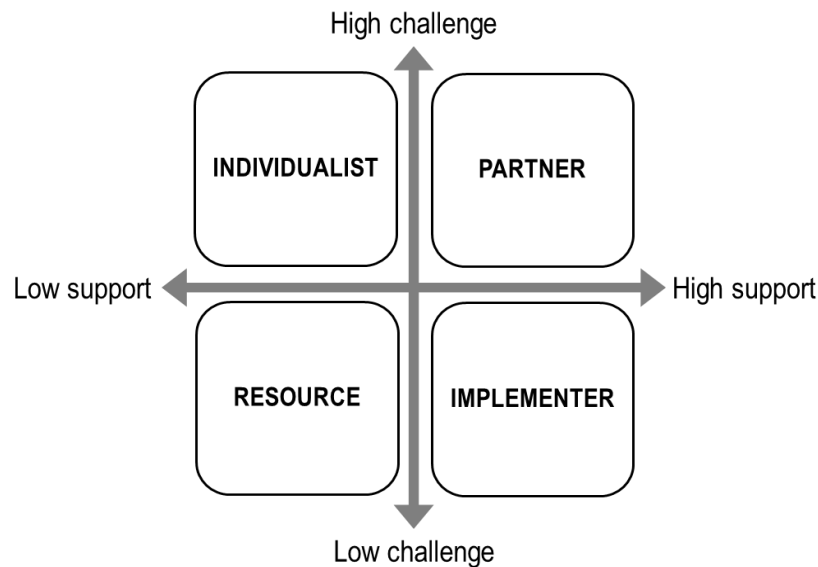


Figure 8-2: Chaleff's categories of followers (after Chaleff 2009)

So Kelley's 'sheep' would not even figure as 'followers' within Chaleff's categories that are based on followers being engaged and 'on board'. Chaleff's followers are all 'on board' to some extent – they just vary in the ways their engagement manifests itself, and in their attitudes to and relationship with 'the leader'. Furthermore, Chaleff still emphasises the power gap between leader and follower, even though he highlights follower power:

As followers, our formal powers are unequal to the leader's [...]. We may have far more power than we imagine, however, and too often fail to exercise the power we do have. It is critical for followers to connect with their power and learn how to use it. (Chaleff 2009:18)

He does see the follower's decision-making potential as power, and specifically mentions "power to follow or not follow in a given direction" and "power to withdraw support". Moreover, he realises that leader/follower roles are context-dependent: "In different situations, at different times, we are all followers or leaders." (2009:30) But he still insists on clear demarcations: "If we are leading, we must lead; and if we are not, we must follow" (2009:31); it is an 'either – or' dichotomy that is refuted in the helical model, since the latter demonstrates that both leader and follower carry out leading and following actions. What is important and makes this relationship 'work' is timing and punctuation: the actions have to complement rather than compete with each other, i.e. avoid both sides performing 'leading' or 'following' actions at the same time (which in turn requires negotiation and agreement, verbally or nonverbally). That said, Chaleff's call for "followers to connect with their power"

is vital – but the first step is to become aware of it. Traditional hierarchical patterns of conceptualising leader-follower (such as Kellerman's "dominance and deference") are so ingrained in our thinking and our language that it is very difficult to rid followership of those connotations of 'lesser value', even for critical-thinking academics (see *Figure 7-1!*) – no wonder then that some scholars (e.g. Rost) see it as impossible, rejecting the very word 'follower'.

Kellerman's followership types are more or less a 'narrowed-down' version of Chaleff's, in that followers are categorised by level of engagement and thus sit along a single continuum (Kellerman 2008:85f):

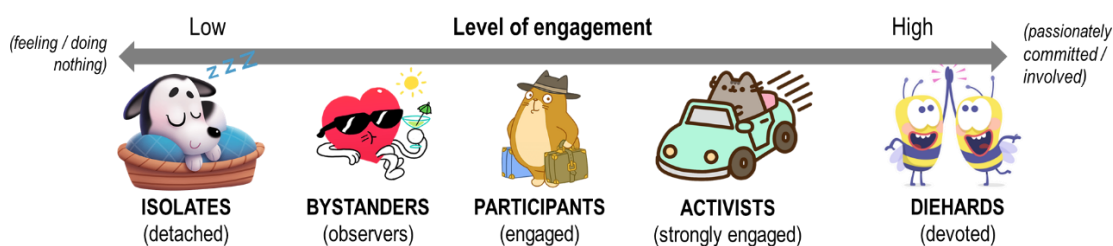


Figure 8-3: Kellerman's categories of followers (after Kellerman 2008)

Interestingly, the relationship between follower and leader, between following and leading as interdependent and mutually constructed, is entirely absent from this model, whereas in Kelley's and Chaleff's models, it is at least hinted at or implied. In the helical model, 'relating' is actually what constitutes leading and following, hence focusing *just* on follower or leader would be pointless, as it would mean missing out the most essential element.

The helical model moves on from all those concepts of followership in that it demonstrates via the dance example that followers – consciously or not – constantly make decisions about whether and how to 'follow', in other words, designated leaders are not the only decision-makers, and even 'passive followers' have and make choices – including *choosing* to be passive! This, too, stands in contrast to Kellerman's view that followership is 'hard-wired', i.e. genetically determined as part of the human condition, as some kind of herd instinct – which then begs the question why anyone would want to be a leader. Or is there a generic leadership 'instinct' – in which case, why do some people have it and others do not?

Whilst Stech's leadership-follower state paradigm and Rost's rejection of followership connotations as passive, obedient, subservient etc. are conceptually close to the helical

model, I have added an embodied, empirical dimension to these concepts – a ‘somatic reality check’, so to speak, which also helps to refute the hierarchical implications that still pervade academic language, if not academic thinking. This is not about a ‘need’ for hierarchy and ‘power over’, nor is it about rejecting all hierarchical systems or structures, nor would I deny that the dynamics of human relationships, group behaviours and individual differences often lead to power differentials. It is about putting roles and actions, ‘leading’ and ‘following’ under a microscope, as it were, to look at what *actually* physically needs to happen to allow ‘leaderful’ (using Raelin’s term) collaboration to occur and succeed, acknowledging and affirming both leader and follower agency.

Drawing attention to their ongoing decision-making, and thus raising participants’ awareness of their own choices, had an empowering effect: Not only did it change participants’ attitudes towards followership, but participants began to ‘feel’ that they had agency when in the role of follower, not just as leaders. In Myra’s, Jarik’s and Yasmin’s case, this was particularly striking (as discussed in *Sections 5.1.5, 5.2.4, 6.1.1 and 7.2*).

This also links into fields that aim to move away from traditional assumptions of leadership being provided by a single individual, for example discussions around shared and distributed leadership³². However, shared leadership models tend to work on the assumption of ‘leadership teams’, i.e. leadership frequently remains firmly located within the higher echelons of hierarchical organising systems, without being extended to frontline staff or marginalised groups (see Fitzsimons et al. 2011; Harding 2019), thus perpetuating a leader-centric perspective. As for distributed leadership, Lumby (2013) sharply criticises its claim to inclusivity and equal opportunities for all to take the lead as an illusion: he accuses the research (and practice) field of ignoring, or at least not problematising, issues of power and authority (see also Bolden 2011), and even concludes that “distributed leadership can be used as an obscuring mechanism” (Lumby 2013:588) rather than a recipe for empowerment, as ‘leadership’ often means delegation of tasks or responsibilities onto staff without giving them power or autonomy to make their own decisions.

³² Other terms are around, such as ‘collaborative leadership’, ‘collective leadership’, ‘co-leadership’ etc. However, going into this in more detail would require another literature review.

In contrast, the helical model of leadership is more generic and thus could be applied to any leader-follower constellation, formal or informal, regardless of whether the constellation is 'vertical' or 'horizontal' and involves 'power over', 'power with' or 'power to' (cf. Pansardi & Bindi 2021). That said, the model draws attention to the 'power-with' and 'power-to' aspects of leader-follower situations and the insight that, where 'power over' is involved, this can (and often will) constrain *but not negate or eliminate* the follower's 'power to': to have choices and make decisions. In that sense, it is more radical than other models, as it starts from the 'in situ' power of the follower, rather than empowerment bestowed 'from above', i.e. its perspective is inherently a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' one.

8.2.2 METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION

My research also makes a methodological contribution by using a qualitative mixed methods approach: it combines interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) with thematic analysis to include non-verbal data. Traditionally, IPA has focused on verbal data and transcripts. Incorporating the transcription and thematic analysis of movement sessions and physical interactions points IPA towards an enhanced capture of the richness of embodied experiences and thus provides a deeper and more comprehensive approach to understanding embodied leader-follower relationships 'in action'. Combining a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach with the inclusion of nonverbal data can also be applied in other experiential settings to provide a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon in question.

8.2.3 CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE: LANGUAGE AND TERMINOLOGY

A contribution to both research and practice (e.g. leadership learning, organisational change, mentoring and coaching) is the use of terminology derived from dance. Terms like 'partnering' and 'partnering skill' highlight the interplay of togetherness, mutual commitment, and the leader-follower 'contract' and carry with them concepts of mutuality, shared responsibility and shared performance, all of which are relevant to organisations and organisational change. These terms and the embodied experiences they describe help to

draw attention to aspects of leader-follower-ship that otherwise remain abstract or underexplored in traditional leadership studies and training courses. They also carry ‘change potential’, in that they constitute a change of perspective and a move towards less hierarchical, less rigid approaches to organising and managing.

Together with the helical model, which moves the focus away from ‘power over’ and puts emphasis on follower agency, this perspective has considerable emancipatory potential, as participants’ experiences and insights have shown, enhancing the value of the follower role (and hence follower self-value and self-confidence) and moving away from attaching too much importance to the leader, towards a partnership approach.

8.3 WHAT’S IN IT FOR LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

There is some overlap between my approach and other models that have attempted to move leadership away from heroes and hierarchies. Two examples are Joe Raelin and Rune Kvist Olsen. Much of Raelin’s work (e.g. 2003, 2004, 2011, 2016) revolves around the aim of creating ‘leaderful organisations’ with non-hierarchical structures, where leadership is collective, “distributed across all members of the community” (Raelin 2003), and also collaborative: people take responsibility for their work and do the ‘leading work’ themselves. This is echoed by Olsen’s work (e.g. 2006, 2014 otherwise largely off the academic ‘circuit’) on ‘leadingship’ and his campaigning for ‘horizontal’ power structures instead of ‘vertical’ (i.e. hierarchical) ones – these spatial metaphors bear obvious parallels to Follett’s concepts of ‘power with’ and ‘power over’³³.

Whilst I find Raelin’s and Olsen’s scenarios of workplace democracy and their visions of leaderful organisations and leadingship highly attractive, they do seem somewhat utopian, even though both authors try hard to create and demonstrate pathways for individuals and organisations to turn these visions into reality. Ted expresses this conundrum very nicely:

It’s a bit paradoxical – you need a leader, semi-autocratic, [...] a very strongly semi-autocratic... but at it’s strongest, you need an autocratic leader to set off

³³ although Olsen only seems to have ‘discovered’ Follett’s work fairly late – at least he does not mention her before his 2014 paper.

the process of developing non-autocratic leadership, or otherwise, no-one's going to do it, are they? (TE1:154ff)

It takes changes at the organisational as well as the personal level to move away from the deeply ingrained hierarchical models of leadership – and probably even more, as these models also dominate the political and economic spheres.

My approach, in comparison, is less visionary, but probably more 'subversive', in that I do not reject the notion of leadership outright, but deconstruct the hierarchical implications from the inside out, as it were, dismantling the view of leaders as 'all-powerful' and the assumption that 'all responsibility rests with the leader' and thus revealing the assumption of leadership as 'being in control' as just an illusion. There is indeed a certain irony in using dancesport as a vehicle to dismantle entrenched and implicit leadership models – a sport that has a reputation for stereotypical gender roles, where coaches tend to use highly gendered language, where performance is even judged (in part) on impressions of gendered dominance... but this dance also offers a blueprint for 'togetherness', seamless collaboration, a need and opportunity to develop 'power with' and 'power to'. And, paradoxically, dissecting the more visible side of dancesport, i.e. the appearance of 'dominant leader', is a beautiful opportunity to dismantle said dominance as an illusion, a make-believe – could one ask for a better way to pull 'heroic leader' assumptions off their mental pedestal?

The project results show that ballroom dancing, and specifically competitive dance, provides a unique lens through which we can examine non-hierarchical leadership models. It complements other embodied, hands-on 'sandpit' approaches to leadership learning; like them, it offers insights that can be applied to contexts beyond the learning situation, in that many of the sensitivities and skills required to produce a high-quality dance performance are also ingredients of excellent performance in other contexts. It also aligns with 'leadership reformers' asking for more inclusive and distributed approaches (*cf. Section 2.7: Issues of power*). Located in a growing field of arts-based and 'embodied' management and leadership development approaches, it goes further than, for example, 'adventure' approaches, equine assisted leadership development, or business simulations, in that it combines authentic, in-situ relating to other humans with nonverbal communication and immediate feedback. Dancing not only illuminates the dynamics of leadership and

followership, emphasising self-awareness, shared control, and collective responsibility, but, taking into account the competitive element, it also relates to performance, the need to deliver to a high standard, work at high stress levels and the need to negotiate relationships and resolve conflict.

The embodied metaphor of partner dancing can be applied to organisational life through aesthetic and somatic practices and interactions, engaging the whole body and encompassing rational, emotional, and physical aspects of leader-follower-ship. It highlights the importance of sensitivity, open-mindedness, and reflexivity, essential for high-quality performance both on the dance floor and in organisational settings. It can thus significantly benefit organisational change efforts by fostering attitudes of collaboration and mutual respect, prioritised over hierarchical dominance. Incorporating lessons from dance into leadership training is not about creating 'great leaders' but about fostering self-awareness and collaborative skills, encouraging leaders and followers to embrace more adaptive, responsive, and empathetic modes of interaction. It is also about individuals discovering and developing their very own leader-follower-ship style, rather than attempting to match and comply with some preconceived 'template' of what a follower or leader should be like. As Raelin (2003) and Beard & Wilson (2013) emphasise, leadership learning begins with self-awareness, reflexivity and embracing vulnerability and shared control:

Since leaderful practice will likely require a change in outlook, especially regarding questions of control and participation in your community, it requires initiators who have become comfortable in their own inner world. Change may need to start with the 'reflective stance' [...] (Raelin 2003:59)

To acquire leaderful skills, many of us need to concentrate on our ability to give up control. Ask yourself and ask others if you are more able to share power and control with others. Do you believe in the capabilities of your associates? Are you willing to exhibit any vulnerability about your own actions and assumptions? Are you willing to own up to your inadequacies and to admit that you may not always have the answer? (Raelin 2003:242)

The practical application of these concepts through partner dancing requires an open-minded approach and a willingness to review and challenge existing preconceptions and organisational labels, hence such an approach would be less suitable where people hold firm beliefs in fixed concepts and rigid roles.

Dancing as such does not necessarily lead to enhanced self-awareness or to reflection on what it can mean for non-dance leadership. What we did in the workshops was *mindful* movement and dance, not just dance for its own sake, as entertainment or sport. Surfacing assumptions and bias required mindful, focused attention to specific elements of movement, dance and togetherness that would not normally be required (unless one is training for dance competitions). However, by engaging *mindfully* in the physical and emotional dynamics of dance, individuals can develop a deeper understanding of leader-follower-ship as a collaborative and fluid process. With appropriate facilitation the somatic learning can translate into more effective and empathetic leadership practices within organisations, laying the foundations for a culture of trust, mutual respect, and continuous learning.

Raelin's concept of 'leaderful practice' and Olsen's idea of 'leadingship' both advocate for breaking down hierarchical structures and promoting shared leadership. A dance-based approach can be part of the transformation strategy for organisations seeking to move away from traditional top-down management styles. By cultivating a culture where leadership is seen as a dynamic, shared process, where staff have a sense of ownership, of 'power-with' and 'power-to' (Pansardi & Bindi 2021), organisations can become not just more democratic, but also more innovative and responsive to change. This also improves employee engagement and satisfaction, as individuals feel more valued and empowered within a non-hierarchical structure where their knowledge 'counts' and they are involved in the decision-making processes.

In summary, the embodied metaphor of ballroom dancing provides a framework for rethinking leader-follower-ship in organisations. The embodied experience of dance, with its inherent requirement for collaboration and responsiveness, demonstrates the benefits of shared leadership, by emphasising the importance of self-awareness, shared control, and collective responsibility. So this model not only challenges traditional hierarchical leadership but also offers practical insights for fostering organisational change.

8.4 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

While this study offers fresh insights into leader-follower dynamics through the unique medium of dancesport, it is also important to acknowledge its limitations. In the following sections I will discuss key constraints and how they may or may not have affected the research outcomes.

Self-selection bias: As discussed in *Section 3.5*, the participant group was essentially a self-selected sample, biased in favour of experiential learning, openness to change and self-development. However, this would constitute a limitation for any study involving non-mandatory learning and development – learning from and through experience is not and cannot be compulsory. Besides, there is no claim or implicit assumption that this approach would work for everybody.

Transferability and context-specificity: Can dance-based leadership insights be applied to traditional organisational contexts? I would argue that they can: key aspects of this approach (e.g. leader and follower making choices and decisions on lead/follow actions, or the notion of the leader ‘creating space’ for the follower to move into) that highlight the parallels between leadership in dance and leadership in work contexts make the insights broadly transferable.

Subjectivity and researcher bias: The interpretative nature of data analysis invariably involves a degree of subjectivity, particularly as it relies on the facilitator-cum-researcher’s expertise in dance, although steps were taken to minimise bias (e.g. triangulation of data sources). The inherent ambiguity of nonverbal communication (which has been discussed in earlier sections, especially *Chapters 3, 5 and 7*) also adds a subjective element to interpretation.

Time limitations: The study’s short time frame (two months) makes it difficult to determine whether and how participants can and/or will integrate workshop insights into their day-to-day work lives. Besides, immediate feedback cannot capture the long-term impact of the workshops – an issue that is shared by many other developmental activities: frequently participants will be asked to fill in an evaluation questionnaire at the end of an event, even though enhanced capability would only be noticeable in the long run. A later evaluation or

follow-on event (after 6-12 months) would be useful here, as the reflective conversation with Amanda shows.

Reliance on a specific activity (i.e. dancesport) inevitably constrains the applicability of the workshop approach, for example due to cultural differences in regard to comfort with physical proximity and embodied practices. However, the very ‘alien-ness’ of the dance experience can also help participants become more aware of habitual behaviours. This again is an issue that would apply to most experiential, arts-based and/or non-traditional development approaches: being in an unfamiliar context heightens awareness and creates room for new experiences as well as bringing (back) to attention what is taken for granted in everyday life and work. Another issue here is that the workshop format may be unsuitable or would need to be modified to accommodate participants with impairments, such as limited mobility or constraints due to neurodiverse conditions. That said, detailed information on prerequisites and requirements was given out prior to the workshops – see *Appendix A3.1 Invitation to participate, A3.2 Participant information leaflet*.

Cultural bias: Cultural differences in regard to comfort with physical touch and proximity could affect participant experiences and longer-term outlook, as some participants may feel discomfort with close-contact activities. On the other hand, running similar workshops throughout the past decade has shown me that a clear introduction, clarification of rules and boundaries, a gentle step-by-step build-up of embodied practices and a facilitation style that acknowledges personal and cultural sensitivities, coupled with participants’ curiosity and interest in ‘doing something different’, reduces their concerns and encourages playful experimentation.

Reliance on facilitator’s knowledge and skill: Whilst any workshop approach requires – and to quite an extent depends on – facilitation competence, dance-movement-based methods like the one used here also rely on the dance expertise of the facilitator(s), to an extent that might arguably not be as essential when using other arts-based leadership development methods (e.g. poetry writing or drawing). On the research side, it was my knowledge and experience of dance that enabled me to develop the helical model of leadership. I have to some extent revised my earlier view that there is “no assumption that the facilitator has to be a dancer, but some understanding of what competitive dancing

entails would help, as would an understanding of the basic concepts and principles of bodily movement, e.g. stance, balance, axis, weight transfer, momentum, energy etc.” (Matzdorf & Sen 2018:190), as this combination of knowledge, understanding and practical application could hardly be expected from a non-dancer.

8.5 FURTHER RESEARCH

Future research could enhance the study's applicability, contribute to a more robust understanding of embodied leadership practices across different settings and address some of the limitations. Here are some suggestions how this research could be extended:

Longer-term, in-depth leadership courses, with longitudinal and follow-up studies:

There is a dearth of studies on long-term effects of leadership development. Existing studies seem to show promising results (Garavan et al. 2015; Romanowska et al. 2013, 2014), but their evaluation methodology has been criticised (Sandberg 2024; Sandberg et al. 2022). Conducting longitudinal studies with repeated sessions over time would not only enable participants to delve deeper into their own leader-follower-ship behaviours, but would also allow the use of other techniques and exercises, for example employing video recordings as learning tools to help participants observe their own movements and behaviours in detail. It would also enable investigating the longer-term effects of embodied leadership learning by conducting follow-ups several months after workshops to better understand lasting changes in behaviour and attitudes, as well as transfer of skills and insights into organisational context and practice. Such studies could employ quantitative measurements such as standardised leadership evaluation questionnaires before and after the workshop series, and potentially 6–12 months later, to assess shifts in leadership and followership attitudes over time. This would provide useful evaluation of the workshop approach as a management development tool.

Similarly, tracking changes in specific leader-follower behaviours over time could be considered, using quantitative methods, though isolating the effects of the workshops from other factors in participants' lives remains challenging.

Gender and power dynamics in embodied leadership studies: Given the gender stereotyping in mainstream dancesport, the workshop approach offers itself as a useful tool to investigate how gender and power dynamics manifest in embodied leader-follower practices, focusing on whether such practices reveal or disrupt traditional gender roles and assumptions about authority. Qualitative analysis of participants' experiences could shed light on how gender influences both self-perception and perception of others with regard to leadership and followership in embodied contexts.

Comparative studies across different embodied practices: A meta-study looking at alternative embodied practices exploring leader-follower and team dynamics, such as martial arts, theatre, team sports, drawing, sculpture, music, orienteering etc., could compare their effects with those observed using the dancesport-based approach. This would contribute to the research fields of experiential and arts-based management and leadership development (see *Sections 2.4* and *2.5*).

Impact of embodied leadership on team cohesion and communication: Widening the focus and moving beyond dyadic leader-follower interactions, further research could examine the impact of embodied leadership practices on team cohesion, communication and trust, with a focus on team-based outcomes rather than individual leadership. This could involve both qualitative research methods and quantitative measurements (such as team performance metrics) to assess whether embodied practices foster improved collaboration and mutual understanding within teams. This could e.g. involve running a series of workshops within one organisation. A challenge here would be to enrol all or at least a critical number of members of the same organisation or organisational unit, overcoming the 'self-selection hurdle'.

Role of emotional and somatic awareness in leadership: The role of emotional and somatic awareness in leadership and leadership development is a more specific angle that deserves further research. Is this kind of awareness an essential skill in leadership? A number of well-known researchers have already made the case for embodied leadership, bringing the body back into leadership, leaders becoming more attuned to their own emotions and those of others (for example Bathurst & Ladkin 2012; Katz-Buonincontro 2011a, 2011b; Ladkin 2008; Ladkin & Taylor 2014; Sinclair 2005a, 2005b, 2007, 2016;

Sinclair & Black 1999; Springborg & Ladkin 2018). It would be helpful to explore how embodied practices can help, pulling together and complementing such existing research such as Amanada Sinclair's, who has been making a case for bringing back the body into Katz-Buonincontro who mentions "sensory and somatic attentiveness" (2011a) and empathy (2015) as leadership skills that need developing. This could involve qualitative studies, exploring the impact of somatic awareness cultivated through such practices on empathy, emotional regulation, and responsiveness in leadership contexts. Quantitative studies could assess those skills through survey instruments and include feedback from co-workers to provide more 'objective' evaluation.

Further research is needed not just to extend the understanding of embodied and relational aspects of leadership and to provide insights for both theoretical development and practical applications in leadership training and organizational development, but also to provide better justification for the resources and expenditure that flow into leadership development.

9 CONCLUSION

The main outcomes of this research are twofold, conceptual and practical, providing an alternative to mainstream approaches to leadership and leadership learning.

On a conceptual level, the new model proposed in this research suggests that leader-follower relationships are intricately intertwined. Whilst traditional perspectives on leadership often treat 'leader', 'leadership', 'leading', 'follower', 'followership', and 'following' as distinct and separate entities, this delineation, drawing artificial boundaries, is actually unrealistic, as it ignores the fluidity of roles in real-life scenarios: leaders do not *just* lead, and followers do not *just* follow. Even where leading and following are not treated as separate roles but considered temporary sets of actions/activities within appropriate contexts, this does not fully do justice to what actually happens in lead-follow interactions: 'leading' and 'following' are not separate, discrete actions. My dance analysis shows that leading also involves 'following actions' and following also involves 'leading actions'; so whilst the roles of 'leader' and 'follower' can be assigned, the boundaries between 'leading' and 'following' are fuzzy and permeable, not rigid and clear. Where people are putting energy, effort and passion into a 'lead-follow' situation, their ongoing inter-actions contain a myriad of micro 'leading' and micro 'following' actions that constitute a team performance.

The practical implications of this intertwined model of leader-follower-ship suggest a shift in how we interpret leadership – a move towards seeing 'leading' *and* 'following' as taking responsibility and accountability in the production of a performance or outcome, where both roles are active, not passive. Conventional ways of assigning 'leadership roles' in organisational settings are unhelpful and disempowering, as they come with a lot of 'baggage' of (often tacit) expectations and assumptions that are rarely made explicit, checked or challenged. Typical examples are the assumption that leaders provide solutions to problems, or organisational achievements being attributed to leaders. Conflating leadership with hierarchy, 'power over' and control is counterproductive for both 'leaders' and 'non-leaders'. To some extent, this is a language issue – my approach is an opportunity for cutting the 'leadership BS' (Pfeffer 2015) and being clearer and more explicit about the requirements, but also the affordances, of organisational roles.

Dance-based workshops address these issues, as they aim to ‘de-familiarise’ and re-orient assumptions and attitudes towards leader-follower-ship. As a management development concept, partner dancing has been shown to be a powerful tool to highlight the complexities of leader-follower-ship dynamics. By placing participants in an unfamiliar context (or, for dancers, making a familiar context unfamiliar), the workshops raise awareness of needs, surface (often deeply held) assumptions, and address conflict and problem-solving (where often the solutions to problems exacerbate the problems or create new ones). Using body connections – which are inherently ambiguous – means that perception and interpretation are almost inseparable (‘thinking with the body’). The goal here is to shift participants’ thinking away from ‘acquiring leadership qualities’ to ‘being prepared to take the lead’.

Participants need to bring a willingness to take risks, to work at their personal boundaries, and sometimes stretch or challenge them, and potentially face uncomfortable insights about themselves, their attitudes, and behaviours (a sense of humour can be a valuable asset in this process!). With hindsight, it became clear that those participants who continued to attend the workshops had misgivings and doubts about ‘leadership’ and were questioning conventional leadership approaches, whether in theory or practice – or both. Conversely, those comfortable in their own leadership concepts and unwilling to consider alternative perspectives are unlikely to see any benefit in ‘rocking the boat’. Training courses that confirm their existing assumptions will be more appealing to them.

In conclusion, this research highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of leadership and followership as interconnected roles, looking at leader-follower-ship as emergent through relating. By challenging traditional boundaries and assumptions, I hope it will be possible to create a more dynamic, responsive and empowered approach to ‘leadership’.

10 HOW WAS THE JOURNEY? REFLECTIONS FROM A MEANDERING RESEARCHER

The journey? It's been a rocky road. Lots of potholes and diversions. Also rabbit holes. And rather dense forests, where I got lost, and all I could see was trees... I can empathise deeply with Nietzsche on this, although I don't think that to be terrifying is a necessary precondition for leadership. Maybe it's enough to be terrific... And maybe he has a wicked sense of humour. Yes, I do feel clearer (and more opinionated?) about my topic, the research area and most of the concepts. That said, the more I know, the more is left to find out (obviously that hasn't changed since Socrates). I have also developed quite profound scepticism in regard to leadership, leadership development, clear categorisation of research philosophies, the 'cleanliness' of research methods, and about how equine-assisted leadership development (supposedly) works...

With hindsight (and all the wiser), I would process the data in a more systematic fashion, since I now have a somewhat clearer idea of 'steps' (rather than vagaries), in terms of how to 'select' data material, then turn it into analysable data (transcripts), in order to make an informed decision about what to focus on. That said, the complexity of the project did not really lend itself to dismissing or omitting anything easily – workshop footage, reflection rounds, participant notes, RefCons were all relevant and valuable parts of the documentation. The workshop format would hardly have worked with a smaller group of participants. The only way to reduce the research material would have been to focus on one or two participants only; but having a few 'select' participants in a group would risk influencing the group dynamics negatively and might not even be feasible in practice – understanding *interaction* just from *one* side makes no sense.

A noteworthy point on the workshop design and process is that I have come to a different appreciation of the facilitator role. Whilst a book chapter that I co-authored with my co-facilitator (Matzdorf & Sen 2018) was written as a guide to running such events, I would now go with Claus Springborg's (Springborg 2020:56) recommendation that it is "a good idea to involve a professional dance pedagogue to facilitate the session if the researchers are not themselves dancers/dance teachers", since I became aware just how much 'autoethnographic background' and embodied dance knowledge was involved in facilitating

the events as well as in doing the research. (This answers one of the questions posed at the end of *Section 2.6.3*, on how much dance knowledge would be required to facilitate a leadership-and-dance workshop.)

Another learning point in terms of facilitating workshops: using the video recordings as feedback for participants would be an excellent ‘mirroring’ tool to highlight or raise their awareness of important aspects of their ‘somatic interactions’; although this needs doing sensitively to avoid people becoming too self-conscious – some participants had initial concerns in this regard when I told them that I needed to video the sessions for my research.

What changed me personally and professionally, and also my perspective as a researcher was the fact that I was diagnosed as neurodivergent in 2022. It is not an exaggeration to say that my life fell apart – and is coming together again, slowly, in a different way. This also explains why I had felt overwhelmed by the sheer mass and ‘messiness’ of data, and also my struggles with structure and structuring. On the other hand, the new understanding of how I perceive, react, reflect and learn has also led to a better appreciation of my strengths, such as imagination and ‘seeing connections’ – without the latter, this research would not have happened.

However, it was not just my outlook on life and my understanding of my own life history that changed, but also my understanding of human behaviour, actions and words – and subsequently my perspective as a researcher. To give an example of such an ‘aha moment’ (cf. (Cf Yanow 2009:589 on reflective practice requiring ‘the ability (or willingness) to recognize an interruption’): During the workshops and RefCons a phrase that a participant used several times to describe their behaviour in difficult situations, “remove self from situation”, struck me as strange, and at the time I had interpreted this as ‘rejection of physicality’, ‘being in the head’, ‘objectivising self’, ‘distanced from body’. Being more familiar now with neurodiversity, its many different facets, and the many different ways in which people can be affected (and hence struggle), I recognise this phrase as an important coping mechanism, an example of ‘self-talk’ that many neurodiverse people use to cope with ‘overwhelm’ or anxiety. Consequently, “removing self from situation” acquired a different meaning, and my interpretation changed to ‘self-protection’ or ‘protective action to avoid overwhelm, emotional outburst or meltdown’. Similarly, understanding emotional

dysregulation (through listening to others' neurodivergent experiences and perspectives) led to a change of assumptions about *why* people may (re)act in 'peculiar' ways – new understandings of apparently 'non-rational' behaviour, but also new understanding of others' 'lenses'. As a practical consequence, I have decided to include a section about neurodiversity in future participant information leaflets as well as the sign-up form for future workshops.

Finally, I would have loved to be more experimental in the way I have presented my research data, findings and outcomes, but I have felt bound to more traditional ways of thesis writing. Looking at literature and sources that do 'dance the data' (Bagley & Cancienne 2001; Snowber 2012; Winther 2008; Ricketts & Snowber 2013; Bassetti 2013, to name but a few), I don't think that I have quite found 'my way'... not yet.

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

(T.S.Eliot)

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12 APPENDICES

A1 RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL

Leader-follower-ship as enacted practice: Reflections from the dancefloor

Ethics Review ID: ER7056140

Workflow Status: Application Approved

Type of Ethics Review Template: Very low risk human participants studies

Primary Researcher / Principal Investigator

Fides Matzdorf
(Sheffield Business School)

Converis Project Application:

Q1. Is this project ii) Doctoral research

Director of Studies

Susanne Tietze
(Sheffield Business School)

Q4. Proposed Start Date of Data Collection: 30/08/2018

Q5. Proposed End Date of Data Collection : 31/05/2019

Q6. Will the research involve any of the following

- i) Participants under 5 years old: No
 - ii) Pregnant women: No
 - iii) 5000 or more participants: No
 - iv) Research being conducted in an overseas country: No
 - v) Research involving aircraft and offshore oil rigs: No
 - vi) Nuclear research: No
 - vii) Any trials/medical research into Covid19: No
- Q7. If overseas, specify the location:**

Q8. Is the research externally funded?: No

Q9. Will the research be conducted with partners and subcontractors?: No

Q10. Does the research involve one or more of the following?

- i. Patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or Social Care: No
- ii. Relatives/carers of patients recruited because of their past or present use of the NHS or Social Care: No
- iii. Access to data, organs, or other bodily material of past or present NHS patients: No
- iv. Foetal material and IVF involving NHS patients: No
- v. The recently dead in NHS premises: No
- vi. Participants who are unable to provide informed consent due to their incapacity even if the project is not health related: No
- vii. Prisoners or others within the criminal justice system recruited for health-related research: No
- viii. Prisoners or others within the criminal justice system recruited for non-health-related research: No
- ix. Police, court officials or others within the criminal justice system: No

Q11. Category of academic discipline: Social Sciences

Q12. Methodology: Qualitative**P2 - Project Outline**

Q1. General overview of study:

This study is about understanding leader-follower relationships in work contexts. Most of the leadership-follower research focuses on either leader or follower and behaviours associated with leaders or followers. A smaller research field is now developing, which aims to improve understanding of the relationship constituting 'leader-follower-ship' as emergent and enacted between people. This is the field that this study aims to contribute to.

Based on the notion of embodied cognition, this study proposes to use the medium of dancesport (or competitive ballroom dancing) as a lens on leader-follower-ship. In a set of interactive workshops, including partnering exercises and dance-movement-based activities, the research participants (organisational managers and staff) will find opportunities for reflection-in-action and for enhancing awareness of how relationships are enacted and maintained.

Data will be gathered throughout and between the workshops, as well as through interviews with participants. The research aims to deepen and conceptualise the understanding of how people in organisations can improve their understanding of leader-follower-ship through embodied practice, and how the medium of ballroom dancing can help to achieve this.

Q2. Background to the study and scientific rationale (if you have already written a research proposal, e.g. for a funder, you can upload that instead of completing this section):**LEADERSHIP AS RELATIONAL AND EMBODIED**

This research aims to deepen and conceptualise the understanding of how people in organisations can improve their understanding of leader-follower-ship through embodied practice, and how the medium of ballroom dancing can help to achieve this.

The research arises from the critical view that leadership is all too often seen as synonymous with formal authority, power and seniority. It proposes that Mary Parker Follett's notion of 'power with' instead of 'power over' (Follett 1949/2013) would be a more useful concept than traditional hierarchical models.

In contrast to much of the research in the leadership field, which is either leader-centric or follower-centric, this project emphasises relationship from a phenomenological, embodied perspective, addressing the traditional power imbalance between leader and follower in an embodied, sensory way, and moving the research focus away from hierarchical models, opening up avenues towards more equal leader-follower relationships.

A basic tenet for this work is the view that leadership is relational. In reflecting on leadership, the focus is not on the leader, but on the relationship between leader and follower, through which leadership is enacted (Uhl-Bien 2006 & 2014; Hansen et al. 2007; Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011; Uhl-Bien & Ospina 2012; Reitz 2014 & 2015). Gordon Lawrence's concept of 'managing self in role' (Lawrence 1979) is helpful in that leader and follower can be seen as (temporary) roles, not as fixed identities.

Leader-follower-ship as craft includes acquiring tacit knowledge and 'gut feeling' as much as rational thinking (Katz-Buonincontro 2011; Sinclair 2016) and requires engaging body and mind in the process (Hansen et al. 2007; Sinclair 2016; Springborg 2012), with Springborg (2012) asking for "perceptual refinement". As Sennett (2008:50) notes: "In the higher stages of skill, there is a constant interplay between tacit knowledge and self-conscious awareness, the tacit knowledge serving as an anchor, the explicit awareness serving as critique and corrective. Craft quality emerges from this higher stage." Similarly, Hansen et al. emphasise that "the roots of aesthetic knowledge lie in experiential knowing and understanding" (2007:552). Katz-Buonincontro (2011) lists "sensory and somatic attentiveness" as one of four main aspects of what she calls 'aesthetic leadership'. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Sheets-Johnstone (2011) argues that human cognition is inextricably and inevitably intertwined with movement.

WHY DANCESPORT? WHAT CAN ORGANISATIONS LEARN FROM DANCE?

Leadership and followership do not exist separately – there are no leaders without followers and vice versa. Effective leadership and followership requires skilfulness, which has mental, emotional and corporeal elements.

Dancesport has leaders and followers – participants take on leading & following roles & tasks, hence the parallels to organisational life where people lead and follow. Dancesport is also highly competitive and takes place within a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment, which corresponds well with a business environment.

Dance as a medium for embodied, experiential, 'whole-person' learning helps to develop aesthetic agency and skilfulness. It offers an embodied, holistic reflection and learning approach. Hence, dance movement

and partnering exercises provide a 'sandpit' practice ground to explore and experiment in an embodied way how leadership and followership are constituted and enacted. The dance movement approach also has the advantage of immediate sensory feedback on leader/follower actions. Plus, dance offers fun, enjoyment and pleasure – it is not just 'painful' learning. Dance-based activities gently 'tease' participants to stretch the limits of their usual comfort zone, rather than 'push' them beyond their own boundaries.

Achieving a top performance in dancesport requires 'power-ful' and empowered engagement/input from follower and leader (Tremayne & Ballinger 2008, Matzdorf & Sen 2015 & 2016). Whilst the roles of leader and follower are a necessity in the dancesport world, a winning performance is co-created by leader and follower. This requires listening and following on both sides – only the 'powerful' types of follower can succeed here (cf. Kelley 1988 & 2008; Chaleff 2009; Kellerman 2008 and 2012), and the relationship between leader and follower becomes more of a 'power-sharing' one.

Whilst the dance analogy has been around in management research circles for a while, its application in practice is relatively new – see for example Springborg 2016; Powell & Gifford 2016. However, the current proposal breaks new ground in using exercises from competitive dancesport, which is closer to the 'sharp elbows' of business life than, for example, Argentine Tango.

The dance-leadership analogy has already been applied in a range of workshops that I have run with managers, students, coaches and members of the public. These workshops are based on embodied cognition (Wilson & Foglia 2011) in practice, and encourage/facilitate self-awareness through bodily experience of the physicality of leader-follower-ship (Ladkin 2013). This includes participants swapping roles and reflecting on their experiences.

WHAT DO I BRING TO THIS PROJECT?

As well as my professional experience of working in and with a range of organisations and hierarchies in various roles over the past three decades, I bring to the project also my extensive, in-depth experience of leader-follower-ship in competitive ballroom dance.

Combining those two different perspectives on leadership – the organisational and the dancesport angle – I have also been exploring leadership/followership and self-awareness through dance through an autoethnographic lens, in dialogue with my dance partner and co-author (see Matzdorf 2005; Matzdorf & Sen 2015 & 2016). The lived dual experience has changed our views on leadership and followership, as well as informed and changed our work practices.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH FIELDS AND LITERATURE - OVERVIEW:

This research project brings together diverse fields:

- # It draws on research on leadership and followership:
- # relational leadership (e.g. Uhl-Bien & Ospina, Cunliffe, Hosking),
- # embodied leadership (Ruskai Melina, Ladkin, Sinclair),
- # power-ful followership (Kelley, Chaleff, Kellerman).
- # It also builds on research around body-mind learning and skills:
- # embodied cognition & learning (Sennett, Gladwell, Stelter, Sheets-Johnstone, Shotter)
- # aesthetic agency (Sutherland & Springborg, Ladkin, Sinclair, Hansen, Strati)
- # learning through dance (Springborg, Powell & Gifford, Hanna, Sheets-Johnstone)
- # Another important base is work around power and reflexivity:
- # 'power with' vs 'power over' (Follett, Salovaara & Bathurst)
- # reflective practitioners (Alvesson & Sköldböck, Schön)
- # The philosophical and methodological underpinnings are
- # intersubjectivism and 'witness thinking' (Cunliffe, Shotter, Hosking).

Q3. Is your topic of a sensitive/contentious nature or could your funder be considered controversial?: No

Q4. Are you likely to be generating potentially security-sensitive data that might need particularly secure storage?: No

Q5. Has the scientific/scholarly basis of this research been approved, for example by Research Degrees Sub-committee or an external funding body?: Yes

Q6. Main research questions:

MAIN QUESTION:

What impact does competitive ballroom dance (as a bodily experience requiring and based on 'leadership with and through the body') have as a suitable/helpful experience to initiate/facilitate self-reflection and self-awareness with regard to leadership, as well as awareness of others?

FURTHER QUESTIONS:

How do managers (especially those in formal 'leadership' positions) experience dance-related concepts of leading/following and the leader-follower roles and tasks in dance-based exercises?

How does this impact on their perception of their work role(s)?

How can they use the dance experience to further their own reflexivity on leadership/followership?

What impact does the experience have on developing a more critical perspective towards leadership/followership?

With those who consider themselves leaders: How does seeing themselves as followers help them as leaders?

Q7. Summary of methods including proposed data analyses:

Qualitative methods:

- interactive workshops, delivered through co-facilitation (data to include facilitators' journal/debriefing notes, facilitators' participant observation notes, participants' notes/journals/written feedback, plus potentially video footage – with participants' consent, see P8);
- interviews with participants, using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) technique for both interviewing and analysing; may include some video footage (with participants' consent, see P8)

P3 - Research with Human Participants

Q1. Does the research involve human participants?: Yes

Q2. Will any of the participants be vulnerable?: No

Q3. Is this a clinical trial?: No

If yes, will the placebo group receive a treatment plan after the study? If N/A tick no.: No

Q4. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (e.g. food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?: No

Q5. Will tissue samples (including blood) be obtained from participants?: No

Q6. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study?: No

Q7. Will the study involve prolonged testing (activities likely to increase the risk of repetitive strain injury)?: No

Q8. Is there any reasonable and foreseeable risk of physical or emotional harm to any of the participants?: No

Q9. Will anyone be taking part without giving their informed consent?: No

Q10. Is it covert research?: No

Q11. Will the research output allow identification of any individual who has not given their express consent to be identified?: No

P4 - Research in Organisations

Q1. Will the research involve working with an external organisation or using data/material from an external organisation?: No

P5 - Research with Products and Artefacts

Q1. Will the research involve working with copyrighted documents, films, broadcasts, photographs, artworks, designs, products, programmes, databases, networks, processes, existing datasets or secure data?: Yes

Q2. Are the materials you intend to use in the public domain?: Yes

P7 - Health and Safety Risk Assessment

Q1. Will the proposed data collection take place only on campus?

: No

Q2. Are there any potential risks to your health and wellbeing associated with either (a) the venue where the research will take place and/or (b) the research topic itself?: None that I am aware of

Outline details of risks to your health and wellbeing: The risks associated with this research (in particular the workshop sessions) are the same as with any normal teaching session involving group work.

Q3. Will there be any potential health and safety risks for participants (e.g. lab studies)? If so a Health and Safety Risk Assessment should be uploaded to P8.: No

Q4. Where else will the data collection take place? (Tick as many venues as apply)Researcher's

Residence: false

Participant's Residence: false

Education Establishment: true

Other e.g. business/voluntary organisation, public venue: true

Outside UK: false

Q5. How will you travel to and from the data collection venue?: Other (please specify)

If other travel - please specify: Any or all of these, plus potentially by bicycle

Q6. Please outline how you will ensure your personal safety when travelling to and from the data collection venue.: By taking all normal precautions appropriate to each mode of travelling.

Q7. If you are carrying out research off-campus, you must ensure that each time you go out to collect data you ensure that someone you trust knows where you are going (without breaching the confidentiality of your participants), how you are getting there (preferably including your travel route), when you expect to get back, and what to do should you not return at the specified time. (See Lone Working Guidelines). Please outline here the procedure you propose using to do this.: Research schedule (incl. travel plans where applicable) will be shared with partner and supervisor, who also have my mobile phone number. Travelling to and from workshop venues will happen together with the co-facilitator, either by car or by public transport. Where travelling in order to conduct interviews is concerned, the supervisor will receive sealed envelopes with the names and contact details of interviewees (to be opened in case of emergency only). Interviews will only be held in safe locations such as offices or meeting rooms.

Q8. How will you ensure your own personal safety whilst at the research venue, (including on campus where there may be hazards relating to your study)?: Observing the normal H&S and security procedures.

P8 - Attachments

Are you uploading any recruitment materials (e.g. posters, letters, etc.): Yes

Are you uploading a participant information sheet?: Yes

Are you uploading a participant consent form?: Yes

Are you uploading details of measures to be used (e.g. questionnaires, etc.): Non Applicable

Are you uploading an outline interview schedule/focus group schedule?: Non Applicable

Are you uploading debriefing materials?: Non Applicable

Are you uploading a Risk Assessment Form?: Yes

Are you uploading a Serious Adverse Events Assessment (required for Clinical Trials and Interventions): Non Applicable

Are you uploading a Data Management Plan?: Yes

Are you uploading a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA): Non Applicable

Upload:

Participant-Invitation_Flyer-
text_FMatzdorf_draft01.docx
Participant-Information-
Leaflet_FMatzdorf_draft02.docx
Participant-Consent-Form_FMatzdorf_v1.docx
ParticipantConsentForm_UseOfImages_2018_FMatzdorf_v1.docx
RiskAssessment_Form_PhD_FMatzdorf_v2.docx
DMP_PhD_project__Leader-follower-
ship_as_enacted_practice_v3.docx
Confidentiality-
agreement_CoFacilitator_FMatzdorf_v1.doc

P9 - Adherence to SHU Policy and Procedures

Primary Researcher / PI Sign-off:

I can confirm that I have read the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics Policy and

Procedures: true

I can confirm that I agree to abide by its principles and that I have no personal or commercial conflicts of interest relating to this project.: true
Date of PI Sign-off: 05/08/2018

Director of Studies Sign-off:

I confirm that this research will conform to the principles outlined in the Sheffield Hallam University Research Ethics policy: true
I can confirm that this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge: true
Director of Studies' Comments: Please amend the title to be complete and reflect what we agreed.

Upload:

Date of submission and supervisor sign-off: 08/08/2018

Director of Studies Sign-off

Susanne Tietze

P12 - Post Approval Amendments

Amendment 1

In my judgement amendment 1 should be: Select Amendment Outcome

Amendment 2

In my judgement amendment 2 should be: Select Amendment Outcome

Amendment 3

In my judgement amendment 3 should be: Select Amendment Outcome

A2 'DANCE AND LEADERSHIP' LITERATURE: PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS (OVERVIEW)

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Heyward (2000), "How I taught my team to tango"	Argentine Tango	Experience from author's Argentine Tango lessons and social dances as a follower.	Lessons drawn from dance experience to apply in project management.	Fairly straightforward and a bit superficial, with some rather stereotypical assumptions about Tango (e.g. very gendered), although there are some useful insights. Some 'lessons' have little to do with Tango, e.g. "Remember the warm-up", or "The importance of a good finish". The myth of 'the leader does it all' perseveres, and there is nothing about a reciprocal relationship or even about shared responsibility for the performance.
Peterson & Williams (2004)	'Electric slide' (line dance). 'Leading' is happening through the person(s) in the front line that others 'look to'. As choreography repeats with quarter turn to right (90°) after each sequence, the front line consists of a different group of dancers each time, i.e. there is a change in leaders after each turn.	Perspective of teacher. Dance/leadership exercise is part of a taught course. Authors offer some student reactions, behaviours, quotes.	Evidence of student learning through their written reflection pieces (self-assessment). Dance exercise addresses not just the cognitive domain but also affective & conative domains. Dance enables students to experience the leadership process and also to deal with issues like confidence, competence, responsibility, dealing with mistakes etc.	Important: attention to connection between self and others, but also connection with self (own emotions, self-image, self-confidence, anxiety etc.) Emphasis on leading/leaders, not followers Assumption that the people in the first line are the 'leaders': Does being in the frontline make a you a leader?? No problematisation of leadership per se or of the link between organisational hierarchy and leadership – underlying concept in the 'heroic' tradition

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Matzdorf (2005), “‘You can tell your follower where to go, but you can’t put them there’: Leadership as partnership – a dancer’s perspective” Matzdorf & Sen (2015), “Feeling your way forward: Questions about autoethnography, embodiment and sensemaking” Matzdorf & Sen (2016), “Demanding Followers, Empowered Leaders: Dance as an ‘Embodied Metaphor’ for Leader-Follower-Ship”	Ballroom dances: a) authors’ own experiences, b) management workshops consisting of dance-based movement exercises, dance and reflection rounds, plus written feedback from participants	Autoethnographic ‘snippets’ and insights; perspective of participating facilitator(s).	Challenge to ingrained patterns of perception and assumption. Balance/connection between theory / models (e.g. principles of dance, followership theories) and personal experience. Challenges stereotypical notions of Ballroom dancing as gendered and hierarchical.	Workshop format gradually developed based on experience with different groups and reactions and feedback from participants. Moving away from actual dance steps to participants finding their own movements to different rhythms. Attention to connection and connectivity.
Mason & Soekarjo (2007), “Tango for Managers: A Dance of Lead and Follow”	Argentine Tango “as a topos”, “both an association of ideas and [...] a mnemonic”. Workshop as part of leadership training programme. 39 survey responses = 3 samples of 13 participants each. Not clear what the actual activity is.	Perspective of facilitators. Grounded theory approach to analysing survey data (full dataset in appendix to paper, but not clear what somatic/physical experiences the survey responses relate to).	Not clear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “leadership as experience by the workshop participants is less a thing, than it is an event or a happening” “insights were highly specific, concrete, vibrant, and by all accounts, meaningful to practice”, but this is neither clarified or exemplified 	<i>[Strikes me as a rather arrogant stance!]</i> No description of what happened in practice. Did they actually teach their participants to dance Argentine Tango? Not clear: “Participants were invited to engage in an unworded experience of these principles in a lived, felt way; intertwined with moments of reflection and feedback.” Survey: 3 open-ended questions – 2 of those are leading questions.

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Batcheller (2012), “Learning How to Dance: Courageous Followership”	Presumably a variety of dances, but only one dance mentioned by name (Country Two Step, also known as Texas Two Step, an American country dance).	Autoethnographic: experience from author’s social dance lessons as a follower, incl. dancing with an instructor.	Author draws parallels between dance follower and follower role in organisational life. Importance of synergy, timing, balance of power, collaboration, courage, trust, partnership, interdependence, anxiety, vulnerability. Uses/applies original 5 dimensions of Chaleff’s courageous follower (3rd edition has 7). Points out “value of returning to a novice level”. “Leadership is experiential.”	Realises that she is both leader and follower in her organisation. Uses herself as an ‘autoethnographic case study’. Strange statement: “leaders must teach their followers not only how to lead but [...] how to be good followers” – quoting an article that does not claim or support this! Also, this puts whole responsibility for follower development on leader.
Burge, Batchelor & Cox (2013), “Shall I Lead Now? Learner Experiences of Leader–Follower Relationships Through Engagement with the Dance”, in: Melina et al (2013), <i>The Embodiment of Leadership</i> , Ch.9	Queer (Argentine) Tango; ‘surprise’ event (dance activity not announced in advance). ‘Queer’ = roles not heteronormative, dancers can swap at any time; reduction of ‘power gap’ between partners. Participants get ‘surprised’ by dancing part of workshop – not announced in advance. Not clear what the activities are – proper dance lesson or dance- related exercises (such as walking together)?	Perspective of teacher/facilitator, with quotes/reflections from participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership as activity, not position. • Embodied learning + dialogic reflection + theoretical concepts = paradigm shift. • “process that challenges prevailing beliefs, behaviours, and practices” • Participants understand the non-dichotomy / fuzzy boundaries / symbiotic relationship of leader and follower. • 5 emerging themes: a) trust, b) L/F symbiotic relationship, c) quality of relationship, d) role of confidence, e) team dynamics 	Authors make some uncritical assumptions about queer Tango. Embodied learning as useful tool: “Participant reflections demonstrate that this strategy can develop learning”; Tango “has potential as an embodied metaphor”: “participants’ discovery”. No followership theory <i>before</i> dance workshop.

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Hujala, Laulainen & Kokkonen (2014), "Manager's dance: reflecting management interaction through creative movement"	No specific dance style/form: "Creative dance sessions" led by a dance pedagogue and accompanied by live music (1 musician). Participants: 3(?) researchers + 4 managers	Perspective of researchers as participants and observers – raises questions as to role of researchers. "Co- constructive experiment". Approach based on social constructionism & phenomenology.	Experimental study to establish whether corporeal method could create different kinds of knowledge about interaction in management. Combination of practical dance sessions (dancing difficult situations and feelings), dialogical reflection rounds and individual written reflection. Possibly usable as action research. Micro-level.	Use of participants' experiences and video recordings as basis for reflection and discussion. Not explained: physical setting ("When I was on the stage"); warm-up; apparently participants performed individually ("individual performances") and as a group ("movement in a group and for the group"). Not explained what exactly a 'dance pedagogue' is or does (may be clear in Finland?).

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Hujala et al. (2016), "Dancing with the Bosses: Creative Movement as a Method"	<p>"Creative dance sessions" led by a dance pedagogue. Group warm-up, then individual performances.</p> <p>5 'dance stories'. Dance as "a living and embodied interview". Participants: 5 (orig.6) female academics (in 'non-leader' roles). Participants chose their own music and danced their L-F relationship.</p> <p>Dances: (Finnish) Tango, Paso Doble, interpretations of specific music pieces.</p>	<p>Autoethnographic (communal? shared? group?)/ phenomenological perspective.</p> <p>Ontol/epist stance: phenomenology, social constructionism, practice-based/pragmatist, critical realism.</p> <p>Authors = participants + dance pedagogue.</p> <p>Interpretation comes from participants and dance pedagogue (during / after / between workshops).</p> <p>Study "aimed to highlight the leader-follower relationship particularly from the perspective of followers".</p>	<p>Experimental study. Dance as method "highlighted the embodied dimensions of interaction", providing "knowledge and meanings beyond our rational and discursive-level understanding".</p>	<p>NB. Paso Doble is not usually about matador+bull; it's about matador+cape and matador+woman.</p> <p>Not explained what exactly a 'dance pedagogue' is or does (may be clear in Finland?).</p> <p>Challenging: "The performer had to enter the stage alone, and – witnessed by 'the audience' consisting of other participants – take the initiative in the interaction by asking 'the boss' to dance."</p> <p>Dance pedagogue as facilitator, guide and 'insurance' in case of strong emotional reactions, also co-author.</p> <p>Illustrations of philosophical underpinnings (as 4 seasons) take up a lot of space in the paper.</p> <p>Drawings depicting 'typical' scenes/stances from the dance performances: a) not clear who decided what was 'typical'; b) some dance illustrations are ambiguous and could be interpreted very differently.</p> <p>None of the drawings were done by the participants – a missed opportunity?</p>

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Winther et al (2015), "The Dancing Nurses"	Not specified, but probably somatic exercises and creative dance movements with facilitator guidance; plus written reflection by students (journals? assignments? stories?): "rich learning experiences were written down and partially worked through in a common space." 3 levels: 1) somatic (self)awareness; 2) "communication reading", body contact; 3) leadership & followership.	Perspective of researcher/facilitator; "practitioner research". Basis of theory & interventions: phenomenology, "sensual philosophy", body psychology, movement psychology. Data collection: phenomenological & narrative-inspired; students as co-researchers.	"The project examines whether a course comprising theory, dance and movement lessons, and increased focus on the tiny bodily communication between students and patients may have innovative educational potential." "This course has after the evaluations become a part of the obligatory curriculum in the nurse students' education."	Not much information about the actual dance sessions, but I have an idea from personal experience (Helle Winther has led several sessions at AoMO conferences). 19 students signed up for the course, 12 completed.
Powell & Gifford (2016), "Dancing Lessons for Leaders: Experiencing the Artistic Mindset"	Latin American dances, performed by professionals, watched, analysed and discussed by MBA students, with some somatic exercises (hand-to-hand connection, eye contact, walking together, falling-holding, shifting weight) but no dancing	Mainly facilitators'/researchers' perspective. "[...] no 'hard data' was gathered, the authors have gathered materials from post-programme interviews with delegates, [...] mentors and the two client programme directors involved in the project over time, which reflect the experiences of delegates."	"conclusion by the client was that the arts-based programme was indeed responsible for changed attitudes and behaviours over time, and that there were improved project outcomes and real financial benefits from this." Participants show "willingness to be guided by felt experiences rather than by preconceived solutions" and "willingness to engage proactively and positively with other stakeholders" (although at least one example is questionable!)	Not designed as research study. "[...] feedback is essentially anecdotal", "desired shifts in behaviour and mindset would be difficult or impossible to 'measure'". But claim that "client expectations that the benefits of the programme would be [...] difficult or impossible to assess were disproved, with the programme delivering identifiable and improved project outcomes resulting from delegates' changed attitudes and behaviours". Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender roles not questioned or challenged: man leads, woman follows – gendered language throughout. • Actual dancing is always performed by others (semi-professional or professional dancers) and merely watched and commented on by students. • The "real physical experience" is second-hand – more of a behind-the-scenes glimpse

Author / publication (in order of publication)	Dance / practical application	Perspective	Outcomes/conclusions	Comments
Springborg & Sutherland (2016), "Teaching MBAs Aesthetic Agency Through Dance"	1-day workshop within MBA programme. Several exercises "used for teaching tango and contact improvisation", guided by facilitator/researcher, plus "debate and discussion". Paper describes 2 exercises (weight-shifting + step; communicating with hands)	Facilitators / researchers. No student voices (except 2 pieces of feedback from students, not verbatim).	"effects are effects of experiencing [...] art – not analysing it or talking about it" "sensory body experiences learned in the context of dance exercises can be used to achieve skilful knowing and doing in the context of management practice. However, it may well involve an ongoing process of discovery to become aware of the effects." Effects of dance intervention not easily/readily predictable: developing, 'building' sensory knowledge and developing aesthetic agency takes time, and transferability of learning cannot be taken for granted.	'Dance' in this context = "movement exercises used in the teaching of [...] dance" For someone so concerned about definitions and meanings of terminology, it is astonishing that they use "debate and discussion [...]" to unpack these experiences" with their students, rather than something like 'reflexive dialogue' or 'reflection conversations'. 'Experiencing' ≠ 'making'/'doing'!! → Powell & Gifford
Van Loggerenberg (2019), <i>A Life Between Us: Exploring Embodied and Relational Aspects of a Post-Heroic Approach to Leading and Following through Dance</i> (Master Diss.)	Argentine Tango and two partner improvisation forms developed by Michael Parmenter (Piloting and TACTICS) [no descriptions or video footage available in the public domain or via library]	Dancer's own experience (dancing with M.P.), but suggestion to use these dance techniques with non-dancers and people in organisations.	Leading / following as processual rather than fixed leader/follower roles. Continuum between 'heroic' and 'post-heroic' concepts of leadership.	Issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piloting and TACTICS never get described properly, so not clear to reader who hasn't experienced them. • Whilst movement is part of research method, there is no link to any footage (and no evidence in text that there might be any). • Continuum is argued but also refuted – contradiction or progress? This is not made clear. • Photos without captions and minimal explanation (illustrating what exactly?)

A3 SAMPLING

A3.1 INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE – FLYER

Leadership Revisited: Leading with Mind, Heart and Body



Are you interested to learn more about leadership, what it entails, how it impacts on followers, what you want from a leader or a follower, and how your ‘gut feelings’ influence your actions? With not too much theory, but lots of practice?

Between March and June 2019, there will be a short course exploring mindful leadership in practice. Approx. 3-4 sessions will take participants on an interactive journey of discovery of what embodied cognition means for leadership, opening their senses to themselves as well as others in an unusual and different way.

Based on research into leadership, followership, communication and embodied cognition, it takes a new look at ‘thinking on our feet’: We think with our bodies as well as our brains, as cognitive processes are at least in part based on physical experiences of the body. So the workshops provide a sensory way of learning about leadership and followership: participants discover their own leading or following style – how we lead with the whole body, not just the brain, giving new insight on how we interact with others.

Following on from the facilitators’ work with managers and health professionals, this course is part of a PhD project and as such is funded through a Sheffield Hallam University scholarship.

Following an introduction, the workshops will be based on structured interactive movement and dance exercises, plus reflection sessions. We will use hands-on, practical exercises, based on dance (Tango Argentino and competitive Ballroom), to look at how we lead and how we follow – and what we expect from leaders and followers respectively.

If you work in an organisation and have (or aspire to) a management role, you are invited to join in and experience, explore and experiment in a safe, supportive and fun environment where participants can push their boundaries and not worry about looking silly!

The aim of this course is twofold:

- ☞ for participants to explore in some depth their own approaches, assumptions and expectations in regard to leadership, and to learn more about using and developing their own leadership potential;
- ☞ for the doctoral researcher to understand the participants' learning journey, how they make sense of their experiences, and the meaning this can have for their work context.

Central questions that participants will explore will be, for example: "What does leadership mean for me? What does my leadership mean for others? What does leadership/followership feel like? How am I working with others, leading and/or following?"

There are some **prerequisites for participation**, since this course is part of a PhD project:

- ☞ **Management role in an organisation (at any level).**
- ☞ **Being in (or aspiring to) leadership.**
- ☞ **Interest in self-development.**
- ☞ **Ability to walk unaided and move around in a larger room – otherwise no particular level of fitness required (each session involves some gentle movement). NB. No dance experience required!**
- ☞ **Being prepared to engage in the process.**
- ☞ **Commitment to attend all events.**
- ☞ **Consent to being interviewed twice.**

However, participation is entirely voluntary, and participants can withdraw from the project at any time, without any negative consequences, and without having to give any reasons.

Course fee: As the research is funded through a university scholarship, the course fee has been waived. In return, participants will be asked to commit themselves to attending all 3 workshops, to agree to at least 2 interviews over the course of the project, and to take some notes about their experiences, insights and work issues. Full confidentiality is assured.

NB. This is **not** a dance class! You won't need dance shoes, but comfortable clothes (easy to move around in) and smooth soles are highly recommended (e.g. pencil skirts or trainers would not be suitable).

For more information or to volunteer, email [Fides Matzdorf](mailto:f.matzdorf@shu.ac.uk) on f.matzdorf@shu.ac.uk and/or have a look at <https://shu.academia.edu/FidesMatzdorf> or https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Fides_Matzdorf.

Dates & venues: Sat 13 April (Sheffield Hallam University), Sat 18 May (The Circle, Sheffield), Sat 1 June (Sheffield Hallam University).

A3.2 PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

LEADER-FOLLOWER-SHIP AS EMBODIED AND ENACTED PRACTICE: REFLECTIONS FROM THE DANCEFLOOR

Dear participant

Thank you very much for taking part in this leadership (and followership) course April to June 2019. The course is a central part of my PhD project at Sheffield Business School, which has also granted ethics approval for this study. It is supervised by Professor Susanne Tietze and Dr Christine Gilligan.

The purpose of these workshops is twofold:

- for participants to explore in some depth their own approaches, assumptions and expectations in regard to leadership and followership, and to learn more about using and developing their own leadership potential;
- for me as a researcher to understand the participants' learning journey, how they make sense of their experiences, and the meaning this can have for their work context.

Following an introduction, the workshops will be based on structured interactive movement and dance exercises, plus reflection sessions. We will use hands-on, practical exercises, based on dance (Tango Argentino and competitive Ballroom), to look at how we lead and how we follow – and what we expect from leaders and followers respectively.

Please note that this is not a dance class, nor is any dance experience required. You won't need dance shoes, but comfortable clothes (easy to move around in) and smooth-soled shoes are highly recommended (e.g. pencil skirts, stilettos or trainers would not be suitable, as they don't give you freedom of movement).

Your views, thoughts, feelings and reflections during and after these interactive workshops will be essential as qualitative data to aid my understanding. I am interested in your experience and what you 'make of it', how you understand and interpret 'leadership' and 'followership' as an immediate sensory experience as well as in a work context.

So your participation would involve the following:

- participation in and engagement with various individual, pair and group exercises (which involves movement to music, but not formal dancing - it is not a dance class);
- two recorded interviews (audio and/or video) – one early on, one later during the project – in an informal setting (if possible – definitely a place that allows for privacy), which would take about ½ to 1 hour each. Place and time are negotiable. *(NB. I won't need to interview all participants, but I need everybody's agreement in principle.)*
- I will also ask you to take some written notes during and between sessions, which, together with my own notes, my co-facilitator's notes and observations, and the interviews, will all be relevant data.

The sessions will be facilitated by myself and my co-facilitator, Dr Ramen Sen. We are both experienced workshop facilitators and amateur dancers (but not professionals – we don't teach dancing!).

There will be some visual recording (video, photography) during the workshops – the details of this will be discussed and agreed within the group.

I will transcribe the recordings and may send you a copy, in case there are any errors or misunderstandings which you might want to correct or clarify. The data will be kept secure and password-protected. Apart from my co-facilitator my supervisors and possibly my PhD examiners, no other researchers would have access to the material, but I will need to keep it until the end of my PhD studies. *(NB. Supervisors/examiners would only see the material in an anonymised form.)*

What you say will be kept confidential. As this study is part of my PhD, I may have to submit transcripts to my examiners as evidence, but they will not go any further. I may use the material for my PhD work and subsequent publications, but any quotes will be anonymised and made unattributable to any individual person. I will also anonymise (as far as possible) any visual material relating to workshops and interviews (e.g. through facial blurring).

Of course, participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time, without any repercussions and without having to give any reasons. If you change your mind, it would be helpful if you could let me know as soon as possible (for interviews, within a week of the interview).

If you have any conditions that would affect your mobility, please let me know about them beforehand, or as soon as they arise.

If you are interested in any of the outcomes of this project, just contact me – I am happy to share findings (subject to confidentiality).

Any questions? Please don't hesitate to contact me (phone [REDACTED] or email f.matzdorf@shu.ac.uk). If you are curious about this research, feel free to visit my pages on www.researchgate.net and www.academia.edu – papers relating to this approach can be downloaded from these sites.

All the best,
Fides

Fides Matzdorf MA FHEA
Doctoral Researcher
Sheffield Business School
Sheffield Hallam University

A3.3 PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM****TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:**

Leader-follower-ship as Embodied and Enacted Practice: Reflections from the Dancefloor

To be completed by the participant – please read the following statements carefully and tick the appropriate box.

- | | YES | NO |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I have read the information leaflet 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 the time limits outlined in the participant information leaflet, 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 researcher under the conditions of confidentiality set out in the information leaflet. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the participant information leaflet. | <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"/> |
| 7. I confirm that I am able to move unaided around a larger room. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. <i>Female participants only:</i> I confirm that I am not pregnant (as far as I know).* | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Participant's signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant's name (printed): _____

Contact details:

Researcher's name (printed): Fides Matzdorf

Researcher's signature: _____

Researcher's contact details:

Fides Matzdorf, Unit 5 Science Park, City Campus, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield S1 1WB.

Tel [REDACTED]

Please keep your copy of the consent form, the consent form for use of images and the information leaflet together.

**This is a condition of Sheffield Hallam University's insurers.*

A3.4 PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – USE OF IMAGES



PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM FOR USE OF IMAGES

TITLE OF RESEARCH STUDY:

*Leader-follower-ship as Embodied and Enacted Practice:
Reflections from the Dancefloor*

Having photos / videos taken is entirely voluntary. Photographs / videos taken of you would be used to a) help the researcher to analyse data gathered through workshops and interviews and to exemplify research findings. **They will not be used in any way that would show you in a bad light, and they will only be used in an edited form that preserves confidentiality.** Further explanations will be given in the workshops.

Consent can be withdrawn at any time and without any repercussions.

To be completed by the participant – please read the following statements carefully and tick the appropriate box.

	YES	NO
• I agree to have my photograph / video taken.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I would like my notes or interview comments to be linked to the photograph(s) / videos.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I would like my name to be linked to the photographs / videos.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I would like to be given credit for my appearance in photograph(s) / videos.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I would like my photos / videos to be anonymised (e.g. through facial blurring).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I give the researcher permission to:		
• use my photos / videos to aid data collection and analysis (this includes use of visual footage for exam purposes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• use my photos / videos to disseminate research findings (e.g. for presentations, conferences, seminars etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Participant's signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Participant's name (printed): _____

Contact details:

Researcher's name (printed): Fides Matzdorf

Researcher's signature: _____

Researcher's contact details:

Fides Matzdorf, Unit 5 Science Park, City Campus, Sheffield Hallam University,
Sheffield S1 1WB.

Tel [REDACTED]

A3.5 PARTICIPANT CONSENT – OVERVIEW

Consent

	1.Images	2.Int/notes linked to images	3.Name linked to images	4.Credit for images	5.Images anonymised	6a.Use in findings (exam)	6b.Use in findings (dissemin.)
Ali	Y	-	-	-	-	Y	Y
Elvira	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Jarik	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y
Martin	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Myra	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
<i>Nancy</i>	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
<i>Rachel</i>	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Ted	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Yasmin	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	Y

1. I agree to have my photograph / video taken.
2. I would like my notes or interview comments to be linked to the photograph(s) / videos.
3. I would like my name to be linked to the photographs / videos.
4. I would like to be given credit for my appearance in photograph(s) / videos.
5. I would like my photos / videos to be anonymised (e.g. through facial blurring).
6. I give the researcher permission to:
 - use my photos / videos to aid data collection and analysis (this includes use of visual footage for exam purposes)
 - use my photos / videos to disseminate research findings (e.g. for presentations, conferences, seminars etc.)

A3.6 PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION FORM

Participant registration

Thank you for registering to participate in these workshops.

I would be grateful if you would complete this questionnaire to help me make the workshops a useful and enjoyable experience for you. All the information you give will be held in strictest confidence.

Personal details

Title: _____

First name: _____

Last name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone/Mobile: _____

(This is just needed to get in touch with you in case of late changes, cancellations, or to arrange interviews.)

Start and finish times of workshops

Workshop 1 is planned to run from 9:30 to approx. 13:00, with a 30-minute break halfway.

Is the start time about right for you?

Start time is ok for me ☐

Start time is too early for me ☐

I would prefer (state time) _____

Catering and dietary requirements

No special requirements ☐

Vegetarian ☐

Vegan ☐

Other – please state _____

A light sandwich lunch can be provided if required. Please indicate if you would like this:

Yes ☐

No, I need to dash off ☐

Work details

Company/Organisation: _____

What is your role in your organisation? Please give your job title (if applicable) and briefly describe your responsibilities:

Length of time working in organisations: _____

Length of time working in leadership or management roles: _____

Dance experience *(just for information – remember that dance experience is **not** required!)*

None ☐

Some ☐

Plenty ☐

No. of

years _____

Style(s) _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire! Please feel free to add any other comments here:

A4 WORKSHOP PLAN

NB. This is the detailed 'pre-event' plan – during the event it was used for approximate timekeeping, but was spontaneously modified in practice as the event unfolded, following the dynamics of the group.

WORKSHOP OUTLINE – WS 3: 'DIFFICULT' RELATIONSHIPS

Time	Phase	Activities
	0. Arrival & registration	0. Arrival & registration.
9:40 5'	1. Reminder: Housekeeping & Contracting	<p>Introduction, housekeeping (& First Aid), reminder of ground rules/contract:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording – important: agree! What's in it for you – what's in for me? → Supervisors & examiners! Confidentiality – suggest Chatham House rule "respecting confidentiality" (or "What happens in the room stays in the room"?). Mutual support & supportive feedback; no criticism, but invited feedback. Risk-taking encouraged – don't be afraid of making a fool of yourself. Explore boundaries: Enjoy it where it's fun – but there may be discomfort! Voice discomfort where necessary, but also experience it and explore it; it's always o.k. to stop. Before you decide to stop, take a deep breath, maybe take a physical step back, close your eyes and locate where in your body you can feel it.
9:45 5'	2. Catch-up; what happened since last time?	<p>What has happened since the second workshop – any 'hindsight' thoughts?</p> <p>Also, has anything popped up in your minds? your organisations? Any new 'leadership'/'followership' thoughts? Anything relating to your 'issues'/focal points?</p> <p>How do you feel now?</p>
9:50 5'	3. Intro to topic	Looking at 'difficult' work relationships involving L/F elements and exploring how we can 'dance' those relationships.
9:55 20'	4. Finding themes	With that in mind, find 'your' themes/issues arising for today – find your 3 top issues and stick your name underneath.

10:15 5'	5. Warm-up Mindfulness – coming to our senses	<p>Tuning into body: How are you feeling at this moment? How was your journey to this point?</p> <p><i>“Before we start on our learning journey, let’s fully embrace this moment. Sit back in the chair, rest your hands by your side, or in your lap. Softly close your eyes. Take three full breaths. Then breathe normally. Feel the weight of your feet on the floor. Bring awareness to the noises outside the room, and let the noises pass by, without holding onto them. Notice the weight of your body in the chair. Let’s enjoy a few more seconds of breathing, noticing your stomach expand as you breathe in, and contract as you breathe out. {Breathe with them}. I’m inviting you to come back into the room. Softly open your eyes when you are ready.”</i></p> <p>You can use all the senses, so you can say ‘What is the light quality like in the room?’ (even though we have our eyes shut, we will be aware of the light).</p> <p>Or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close your eyes. Breathe – in for 3, out for 4. Feel your posture, release tensions, stand tall. • Thinking about what it takes to connect with another person – here and now and in your theme.
10:20 10'	6. Establishing connection / rapport / relationship No talking	<p>Move around the room, feeling the space around you. Focus on yourself, feel how much space you want and need, and take that space. But also be aware of where the others are, and what spaces they occupy.</p> <p>Then look around at the others, acknowledge them. Move around until you’ve made contact with everybody else. Find your own gestures in a silent greeting. Be aware of your own movements and sensations, and also how others move and how you feel about them.</p> <p>When you’ve met everybody, find a partner who shares the same theme or whose theme you can relate to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a connection – make eye contact. When you feel ready, move towards the other person. • You might feel you want to do this quickly, but try to take your time... and don’t rush ‘over’ the other person! Remember not everybody functions at the same pace/speed. Try to be aware of ‘the other’, not just yourself. • If you feel the connection break, stop. If it feels too strong or uncomfortable, maybe move back a step. You can close your eyes if you want. Keep going until you stand together (.5m) in connection. • When it feels right, touch the other person’s arm – and be aware of how that touch happens and how it feels – be attentive to the other person’s reaction.

10:30 10'	7. Dancing the difficult relationship 1	Explanation & demonstration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Come back to yourself for a moment – close eyes and think of a L/F situation in a work context – maybe a 'difficult' line manager, team member, or colleague. We'll invite you to 'dance' that relationship in 2 stages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember that the task is to <i>dance</i>, i.e. to move in a smooth, coordinated, harmonious manner. Demonstrate stage 1: R = difficult team member; F = team leader → dance Short feedback: How did it feel to be 'difficult'? How did it feel to lead a 'difficult' team member? What did F do to cope with the 'difficult-ness'? Demonstrate stage 2: F = difficult team member; R = team leader → dance Short feedback: How did that feel? What do you think about the situation now that you have 'felt' both sides? Any insights? 'Difficult' relationship 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide who goes first and whether as L/F. Dance the role, stage 1 & 2 (15')
10:55	8. Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Break & Snapshot 1(write) (15')
11:10 15'	9. Diff.rel. 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Difficult' relationship 2 Dance the role, stage 1 & 2 (15')
11:25 15'	10. Snapshot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick snapshot 2 round – incl. writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What/how was the experience of 'difficult', both as L/F? How did it feel? Heavy/light? Resistance? Struggle? Safe/risky? Reliable? Strange? Bodily sensations? Listening with the body? What did you 'hear'? How did you cope with 'difficult'? What strategies/tactics did you use? Any insights/different perspectives?
11:40 5'	11. Tuning in	Stand still, come back to yourself, breathe Find new dance partner on your main theme, or rejoin one of your previous partners.
11:45 10'	12. 'Just dance'	Dance to the music and to your theme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any style, proximity, speed you like – but relate to others; this is not a clubbing night! You can move around, change partners, but keep the connection every time. Be aware of L&F

11:55 20'	13. Reflec tion round	Take notes, share in pairs, then in plenary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did the exercise feel like? • How did it feel like to lead/follow? • How did it feel.... • ...when it worked? • ...when it didn't? • What made things easier? What made things harder? What worked? Why? Leader/Follower • What didn't work so well? Why not? Leader/Follower • How did you work as a team? Improvements in different 'partnerships'? • What about the wider environment, i.e. other people/pairs, the floor, the room? • What issues did the whole experience raise for you? • Back to initial flipcharts: how does session/experience relate to them? Link to work? • Lessons for the workplace? •
12:15 15'	14. Windi ng down	What was the whole course like? One thing you might take away from today to help you to be a better leader/follower? (Green feedback sheets)
12:30	15. Lunch	Close

A5 OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS, PAIRINGS, EXERCISES ETC.

A5.1 PAIRINGS AND EXERCISES

Couples / partnerships		3x in different workshops	2x in different workshops	2x in same workshop (WS1)						
WS1 Ex 1 (Weight-giving)		Elvira Myra	Ex 2 (Arms-length U/F)	Ted	Nancy					
		Jarik		Yasmin	Jarik					
		Martin		Ali	Myra	(F&A)				
		Ali		Martin	Rachel					
		Ted		Ramen	Elvira					
		Jarik		Martin	Jarik					
		Martin		Yasmin	Nancy					
		Elvira		Ted	Myra					
		Yasmin		Fides	Elvira					
WS2 Ex 1 (Mirroring)		Ted		Ali	Rachel					
		Rachel		Jarik	Nancy					
		Jarik		Yasmin	Ted					
		Ted		Myra	Rachel					
		Yasmin		Ali	Elvira					
		Nancy		Ramen	Martin					
WS3 Ex 1 (Difficult relationships)		Ted		Ted	Elvira					
		Jarik		Ali	Fides					
		Yasmin		Martin	Yasmin					
		Martin		Myra	Jarik					
				(Comp-L)	(Comp-F)					
		Martin								
		Ali								
		Jarik								
		Myra								
WS1 Ex 1 (Weight-giving)		Elvira Myra	Ex 2 (Arms-length U/F)	Ted	Nancy					
		Jarik		Yasmin	Jarik					
		Martin		Ali	Myra	(F&A)				
		Ali		Martin	Rachel					
		Ted		Ramen	Elvira					
		Jarik		Martin	Jarik					
		Martin		Yasmin	Nancy					
		Elvira		Ted	Myra					
		Yasmin		Fides	Elvira					
WS2 Ex 1 (Mirroring)		Ted		Ali	Rachel					
		Rachel		Jarik	Nancy					
		Jarik		Yasmin	Ted					
		Ted		Myra	Rachel					
		Yasmin		Ali	Elvira					
		Nancy		Ramen	Martin					
WS3 Ex 1 (Difficult relationships)		Ted		Ted	Elvira					
		Jarik		Ali	Fides					
		Yasmin		Martin	Yasmin					
		Martin		Myra	Jarik					
				(Comp-L)	(Comp-F)					
		Martin								
		Ali								
		Jarik								
		Myra								
WS1 Ex 1 (Weight-giving)		Elvira Myra	Ex 2 (Arms-length U/F)	Ted	Nancy					
		Jarik		Yasmin	Jarik					
		Martin		Ali	Myra	(F&A)				
		Ali		Martin	Rachel					
		Ted		Ramen	Elvira					
		Jarik		Martin	Jarik					
		Martin		Yasmin	Nancy					
		Elvira		Ted	Myra					
		Yasmin		Fides	Elvira					
WS2 Ex 1 (Mirroring)		Ted		Ali	Rachel					
		Rachel		Jarik	Nancy					
		Jarik		Yasmin	Ted					
		Ted		Myra	Rachel					
		Yasmin		Ali	Elvira					
		Nancy		Ramen	Martin					
WS3 Ex 1 (Difficult relationships)		Ted		Ted	Elvira					
		Jarik		Ali	Fides					
		Yasmin		Martin	Yasmin					
		Martin		Myra	Jarik					
				(Comp-L)	(Comp-F)					
		Martin								
		Ali								
		Jarik								
		Myra								

A5.2 REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Post-workshop reflective conversations									
After WS 1 (chronological)									
Name	Day	Date	Time	Length	Venue	Aud	Vid	WrUp	Transcriber
Martin	Tue	07/05/2019	17:15	56:24	Charles St Building	a	v	✓	RS/FM
Nancy	Thu	09/05/2019	10:00	32:25	Robert Winston Building	a	v	✓	RS
Yasmin	Thu	09/05/2019	19:00	34:03	My kitchen	a	v	✓	RS
Myra	Sat	11/05/2019	11:30	48:25	My kitchen	a	v	✓	FM
Elvira	Mon	13/05/2019	19:00	1:22:50	Her sitting-room	a	v	✓	FM
Ali	Tue	14/05/2019	18:00	1:18:38	Charles St Building	a	v	✓	FM
Ted	Wed	15/05/2019	15:30	1:00:25	Charles St Building	a	v	✓	RS/FM
Janik	Wed	15/05/2019	18:30	23:58	Meersbrook Park	a	v	✓	FM
Rachel	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
After WS 3 (chronological)									
Name	Day	Date	Time	Length	Venue	Aud	Vid	WrUp	Transcriber
Ted	Wed	05/06/2019	11:00	57:46	Stoddart Building	a	v	draft	KB
Myra	Sat	08/06/2019	10:00	54:42	My kitchen	a	v	✓	UKTr (£94.84)
Janik	Mon	10/06/2019	10:00	30:29	Meersbrook Park	a	v	draft	UKTr*
Ali	Tue	11/06/2019	18:00	1:06:07	Charles St Building	a	v	draft	KB
Yasmin	Wed	12/06/2019	19:00	31:31	My kitchen	a	v	draft	UKTr*
Elvira	Tue	02/07/2019	19:00	36:34	Her sitting-room	a	v	draft	UKTr*
Martin	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
									*UKTr x3 = £166.14
						KB		£120.00	
						KB		£90.00	
						UKTr		£94.84	
						UKTr		£166.14	
								£470.98	

A5.3 REFLECTION ROUNDS IN WORKSHOPS

Reflection rounds (in workshops)									
WS 1									
			Recording: 3:39:45						
Day	Date				Venue	Aud	Vid		
Sat	18/04/2019	Snapshot 1			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Sat	18/04/2019	Snapshot 2			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Sat	18/04/2019	Reflection round			Hallam Hall	a	v		
WS 2									
			Recording: 3:09:10						
Day	Date				Venue	Aud	Vid		
Sat	18/05/2019	Snapshot			The Circle	a	v		
Sat	18/05/2019	"Competition" feedback			The Circle	a	v		
Sat	18/05/2019	Reflection round			The Circle	a	v		
WS 3									
			Recording: 3:15:36						
Day	Date				Venue	Aud	Vid		
Sat	01/06/2019	Snapshot 1			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Sat	01/06/2019	Snapshot 2			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Sat	01/06/2019	Presentation and discussion: Follower types / models			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Sat	01/06/2019	Reflection round: last dance session			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Sat	01/06/2019	Final reflection			Hallam Hall	a	v		
Total WS recording time				10:04:31					
All recordings				22:09:18					

A6 OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS' WRITTEN FEEDBACK AND REFLECTION

A6.1 PARTICIPANTS' COLLATED REFLECTIVE NOTES (SNAPSHOTS / REFLECTION ROUNDS)

A6.1.1 ALI

Participant feedback from dance & leadership workshops							
[] = comment/insert from researcher n/a = not answered							
Feedback & Reflection							
Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16
How did you experience your job/ your responsibilities?	What felt good, what felt uncomfortable?	How did you work as a team?	Did one particular role feel more comfortable/ 'natural'?	How did you perceive and deal with the wider environment, i.e. other people, the floor, the room?	What issues did the whole experience raise for you?	Did the exercise raise any particular issues for you that are relevant to your work (e.g. power, resistance, energy etc.)?	Additional comments/Anything else...?
Lots of followers wanting to manage up!	is having increased level of contact / control caused the leader/follower dynamic to become much more pronounced, I preferred it before!	mostly 'be standing'. One person completely unable to feel where I was trying to go and just did their own thing	no	sometimes other people were leading us since we were obliged to take evasive action	-	-	-
Did not frame it in that way in my head at all. I guess since I don't know how to do this I am the follower even when leading, and didn't have spare brain space for meta thinking...	It was neither of those things.	That only worked when I completely emptied my brain (which is hard) and sometimes not even then	Nope all unnatural :)	Required some cooperation with other couples, some more easy to anticipate than others!	That was challenging due to complete lack of understanding!	Nope spent too much time thinking about felt I'm pretty dyspraxic so adding feet in is maybe exacerbating differences in our dance backgrounds (or lack of)	
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
-	Following someone whose direction I don't believe in is uncomfortable!	-	Leadership is more natural, but either is fine when we're all actively participating & listening.	-	I'm not comfortable without a framework to operate in, and if there isn't one, I want to build it, but how to tell when to stop trying?	How to build that framework for listening and collaboration?	

Participant feedback from dance & leadership workshops										
[] = comment/insert from researcher										
— = not answered										
Walking the Talk' - Snapshot										
Event	Participant	Gender	Q1 How did it feel to lead/follow?	Q2 What did you feel from your L/F?	Q3 Did you trust your partner?	Q4 Did you trust yourself?	Q5 What signals did you pick up/send?	Q6 Did you get your message across/feel heard?	Q7 How did you deal with 'mistakes'?	Q8 Anything else...?
WS1	AL	X	Comfortable!	Varying amounts of confidence / trust / comfort	Some more than others!	More afterwards than before, I think!	I'm not sure!	In some cases more than others. People with more confidence in their own movements are easier!	laugh, learn, carry on!	With one very much less listening person, it was interesting to see that the skills & techniques that work with the others are relatively distasteful in the different context.
WS2	AL	X	Easier to follow when the lead was also 'listening' and choosing directions the follower is ready for.	Sharing of ideas. One partnership had closer connection but less creativity - harder but also more interesting to work with people who have different ideas.	Yes	Sometimes! until I was leading and ran out of 'ideas'.	Still oblivious on this one.	Yes, on the occasions when I knew what the message was. When I felt unclear about that it didn't work.	Lots of laughter. Also there are no mistakes!	Building movement vocabularies made it easier but less interesting. Alternating between building shared vocabulary & then disrupting it is an interesting idea. Periodicity of lead switching was interesting. You can switch off every beat almost, or switch every phrase, and it produces a very different result. Reminded me of 'yes and' from the world of improv. You can build on other people's ideas or just change back to your own thing and ignore them. RE listening: It's harder to listen when going fast! Easier to get 'hooked' on a direction and then get a surprise. See Pema Chodron :)
WS3a	AL	X	Difficult Unproductive! No flow	Confusion	Yes (as a person) No (as a leader, when impersonating the awkward person)	Yes ...ish To resolve this situation?	As leader: none As follower: leading from back seat	Heard, yes! ...That's not enough....	No such thing as mistakes only learning experiences ☺	A reminder to lean into other people's enthusiasms where possible.... But that's hard across seniority levels, because boundaries. [sic]
WS3b	AL	X	Frustrating (as a leader) Scary (as a follower)	We are not on the same journey at all!	No	No - trying to reconnect As a follower: - very hard to signal at all	As a leader: trying to correct - trying to reconnect As a follower: - very hard to signal at all	No	As a leader: go with & redirect As a follower: I don't feel agency in this at all.	When leading it was hard to distinguish poor leadership from poor followership

A6.1.2

ELVIRA

Participant feedback from dance & leadership workshops					
[] = comment/insert from researcher n/a = not answered					
Feedback & Reflection					
Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14
How did you experience your 'job' / your responsibilities?	What felt good, what felt uncomfortable?	How did you work as a team?	Did one particular role feel more comfortable/ 'natural'?	How did you perceive and deal with the wider environment, i.e. other people, the floor, the room?	Q15 Did the exercise raise any particular issues for you that are relevant to your work (e.g. power, resistance, energy etc.)?
Q16 Additional comments/Anyth else...?					
Not being used to leading (any more) I found it harder. Interesting to see that it is harder to hold the frame as a leader but also Ramen followed with a less clear frame than the one he adopts when he leads.	There is a temptation to get too close rather than trusting that the frame works. Also the frame tends to collapse which then leads to ambiguity.	Good or rather well. At this point in the practice sessions enough trust and self confidence has been built for us to just laugh it off if we get it wrong. It really isn't a competition and it doesn't matter what the others do.	Not really. It is more natural to lead someone who is not obstructing one's vision though. I found it interesting that I was very comfortable leading moving backwards than forwards.	As I am short I tried to steer towards the empty /sic/ part of the room away from the others	Dynamics are not straight forward + change with every step taken like a surge of confidence that raises willingness to experiment with leadership to then fall back into followership.
I found both hard. My usual dancing covers ground, it is not merengue on the spot. I found the small steps very hard to recognize. This was better when I closed my eyes. As leader I found there was an unwillingness in my partner to step. It took a while to establish that movement was possible and not just 'smooching' on the spot.	Changes of direction and turns were initially very difficult. Once we learnt to trust that the other would not be in the way, it worked better.	We had not worked together before, and it took a while to follow each other's movement.	I only led once, thus followed more with the same partner, and as the relationship improved, the movements improved. Not sure whether this is because I was more comfortable as a follower, or whether the improvement came with general experience.	We both looked out for obstacles and signalled danger to the other nonverbally. There was some talking, but more as a comment/reflection on what happened than as an instruction.	Preparation needed to get to become a good team you need good results. Movement patterns to establish length of stride, type of turn. The more practice there is, the better the performance.
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
In some ways it was easier as we were both impersonating other people - one of us wasn't themselves, so whatever didn't work was the fault of the impersonated 3rd man. Final 'exercise' was low on responsibility, as there was very little structure to it.	Because we were dealing with the 3rd character, the engagement was one step removed, which made it more comfortable, as anything that didn't work was because the team was working together to understand the 3rd character better.	Very well, I thought. The external 3rd man element gave close alliance to the two partners.	Neither role was particularly comfortable. Leading the unwilling is hard, as is the total refusal of co-operation.	In the third free dance I tried to work out whether moving away & into danger would make my casual partner act. Moving away too far just made them turn to their own dance.	The third exercise showed that we I still need to work out how to get the resistant worker to embrace more rhythm & different styles of movement, as it were. using different moves; being more or less close, holding eye contact for longer or less long.

Participant & leadership workshops									
[] = comment/inse									
— = not answered									
Event	Participant	Gender	Q2 What did you feel from your L/F?	Q3 Did you trust your partner?	Q4 Did you trust yourself?	Q5 What signals did you pick up/send?	Q6 Did you get your message across/feel 'heard'?	Q7 How did you deal with 'mistakes'?	Q8 Anything else...?
WS1	EL	F	Some lead clearer. It is obvious where the next step goes, others are more hesitant	Yes	Yes	I noticed that I 'look over' and became the leader on a few steps then relinquished leadership back to the 'leader'. More fun to share the leading more give and take which creates more variety	Mostly. Once movement is initiated it is difficult to stop it or change direction. Walking forwards + changing to a sideways step is less easy to signal or pick up.	Go back to basics to steady the pair i.e. stand and just re-balance and then start moving out of the re-grounding exercise	Each pairing clearly works differently, the dynamics change as do the methods employed. Some pairs work better with eye contact others without. Some leaders are strong enough to create enough trust to close one's eyes and immerse in the following.
WS2	EL	F	Confidence in ability both to lead and to follow. 2nd person I worked with started off faster than I expected which was harder to follow but the moves felt coarser as a result, not as well mirrored.	Yes	Yes	Some moves didn't work; either tried again more slowly or not at all.	Yes	Either ignored them and moved on or gone back to the same move and repeated (moving arms either side of body instead of both in front)	The music forced a style of movement - what suits a fast waltz does not necessarily work well in a rag. Correction of posture happened by both L&F to create the mirror image, regardless of who was leading. Anticipation of moves was either adopted by the leader or not but if not giving the follower extra time to follow the move esp. in the early exercise of no-touch mirroring. Moving from no-touch to touch initially seemed more limiting rather than more controlling -> management at a distance vs hands-on micromanagement? One of the expectations I have is that the leader doesn't make me do things I can't perform. This is fairly easy to establish in these exercises. Also in these exercises the leader carries out everything the follower does.
WS3a	EL	F	As a follower there was resistance to all moves; then 'runaway' attempt which I managed to follow a bit & then arrest the movement. Further run away attempts were stopped by applying strength. On the spot movement was facilitated. As a leader, my partner tried to hold & guide me by force and by coaxing, but I turned away whenever I could.	Yes	Yes	As leader, I realised this person does not want any interaction, any contact at all. As follower, I 'dug in' my heels and kept turning away, irrespective of kindness or force experienced.	Yes - but I'm not sure that we discovered a solution; at least there is more understanding of what it is like to be so very resistant.	In this setting 'mistakes' don't really apply.	n/a
WS3b	EL	F	Trust but with resistance (as follower) or with persuasion (as leader), inventiveness as L and a certain amount of permission as F.	Yes, very much so, some of the resistance was pulling away from the partner, which we could do, as our hands were locked & we trusted that the other would hold us.	Yes	- Resistance - Experimentation / persuasion - Target/direction	Yes. Some things just weren't going to happen, but others were alright.	I think the only 'mistake' was when my partner stepped across herself following my lead. I did not expect this to happen. We noticed & laughed.	-

Participant feedback from dance & leadership workshops										

A7 PARTICIPANTS' CHOSEN THEMES FOR WS2 & WS3

A7.1 EMAIL ABOUT THEMES EMERGING FROM WS1



Fides Matzdorf <fidesmatzdorf@gmail.com>

Leadership Revisited: Emerging themes / Can I talk to you?

1 message

Fides Matzdorf <fidesmatzdorf@gmail.com>

2 May 2019 at 21:08

To: leadership-dance@jiscmail.ac.uk

Hi all,

Here is an update on what's happening - sorry that it's taken me so long to get this out! 'Dad-sitting' wasn't really very conducive to working, so I've been catching up over the past few days...

There is an amazing number of themes and issues that are emerging from the first workshop:

- Offering vs imposing
- Power
- Listening
- Trust
- Responsibility
- Flexibility & choice
- Physicality
- Flow vs structure
- Confidence
- Expectations of leader(ship) / follower(ship)
- Teamwork
- Performance

For now, I've attached the list of themes (including some pertinent quotes and some of my notes). I've also added a few questions for each theme - things I want to think about for myself, but also thoughts I want to offer you. On some issues, we have only scratched the surface - for example, our expectations of and assumptions about leaders/followers/leadership/followership: sometimes there can be quite a difference between our rational thinking on the one hand and our 'gut feelings', how we (re)act 'on autopilot' on the other hand. One example: we might think that leader-follower-ship should be a lot less hierarchical, but when it comes to the crunch and we need to act fast, the 'autopilot' goes straight into 'command-and-control' mode (I'm talking about myself here - but I think I'm not the only one). Some of these assumptions are quite deep-seated, probably even ingrained in our 'body memory', and may be hard to 'reach' with our usual logical selves - that's why we're going on a 'sensing journey' to explore some of those deeply held assumptions.

So there is plenty to work on in the next workshop!

In the meantime, I am also interested in your thoughts and feelings about the first event, and what it brought up for you; so it would be great if I could have a conversation with each participant before the second event (it can be a very short one, if you're tight on time). Originally I had planned to do some of this before Easter, but family stuff got in the way. Oh, and I prefer the word 'conversation' to 'interview', as it's meant to be a less formal affair... :)

So I want to ask you a big favour: Could you get in touch with me directly (not via the list - email f.matzdorf1@shu.ac.uk) and let me know

a) when would be a good time for you to have that conversation (ideally within the next 10 days), and


b) where you would prefer it to be.

As it's personal, and I need to record the conversations, a quiet space with little disturbance would be ideal. If you're in town, I can book rooms at SHU, but it could also be at your place, my place, or any other place that's convenient for you and where you feel comfortable.

Let me know what your preferences are.

All the best,
Fides

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 **WS1_EmergingThemes.docx**
26K

A7.2 WS THEMES – FLIPCHART HEADINGS

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes	
<h2>Offering/inviting vs imposing</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer of weight – offer of leading? • Offering & accepting: weight, trust... • Willingness, readiness, taking responsibility, tolerance • Offering vs imposing: music • 'willingness to do well' • Control / power vs trust <p><i>Possible explorations:</i> <i>When does an offer become pressure?</i> <i>How do I know whether an offer is accepted or rejected?</i></p>	<h2>Power</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control / power vs trust <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "increased level of contact / control caused the leader/follower dynamic to become much more pronounced" • "Following felt uncomfortable giving someone the power" • "With power comes responsibility" • "relinquishing power gives respite, but forward planning still needs to be there to be ready to take back control" • "I kept trying to lead to be in control even when I was the follower I had to be conscious to stop" <p><i>Possible explorations:</i> <i>Who is 'in control' – and in control of what?</i> <i>How do I deal with my discomfort?</i> <i>Where and how do I 'feel' power? trust? powerlessness? powerfulness?</i></p>
<h2>Listening</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "With one very much less listening person, it was interesting to see that the skills & techniques that work with the others are relatively dysfunctional in the different context." • "One person completely unable to feel where I was trying to go [...] just did their own thing" • "Clear leadership by some people, confusing signals by others" • "I could tell that one of them was trying to make it easy for me and thus for us as a couple" • "message quite clear with some partners" • "we haven't got the [work] culture that allows a leader to step back and not lead, because they seem to have that expectation" <p><i>Possible explorations:</i> <i>How do I know that what I 'hear' is what was meant in the first place?</i> <i>What do I do if I feel 'unheard' or misunderstood?</i></p>	<h2>Trust</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust: developing over years vs constant re-establishing. • Offering and accepting trust • Growing confidence and trust • "as we continued, trust slowly built up" • "There were degrees of trust which increased when clarity of intent (and sensitivity) was greater." • "challenge myself to be more trusting" • "trust built over time" • "I assumed / believed that they [i.e. different partners] were competent and knew what they were doing." <p><i>Possible explorations:</i> <i>Building trust takes time... what if there is little time?</i> <i>What if there is a lack of trust?</i> <i>What do I do if I don't trust the other person? or even myself?</i></p>
<h2>Responsibility</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader taking responsibility for follower • Leader "ensures safety of the pair" – "Follower also looks out for 'danger' and might have to take action, but less so." • "Leading = big responsibility" • "With power comes responsibility" • "Following meant I made mistakes whereas leading didn't feel like the mistakes were mine as much." • "I don't think I made enough effort as a leader to enable my partner to follow. Focused on myself rather than them." <p><i>Possible explorations:</i> <i>Who is responsible for what?</i> <i>How do we define/negotiate the boundaries – where does one person's responsibility end and the other one's start?</i> <i>Whose 'fault' is it when things go wrong – leader's or follower's?</i> <i>How do we get things 'right' when they have gone 'wrong'?</i> <i>How do we communicate 'right' or 'wrong'?</i></p>	<h2>Flexibility & choice</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Followers 'managing up', 'taking over' then relinquishing lead/leadership. • Togetherness, sharing, collaboration. • Exchange of leading/leadership. • "it helps determine in which situation which role you want/need to play" • Rules: adhering vs breaking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking or altering the rules, e.g. follower 'takes over' • Talking to support nonverbal, to reassure • Developing/agreeing hand signals, pressure, discussing, making a plan = adding own structures to pre-given rules <p><i>Possible explorations:</i> <i>How rigid/flexible are our roles – how rigid/flexible do we perceive them to be? What choices do we have/make?</i> <i>How do we make our choices?</i> <i>What happens if one person makes a choice that doesn't suit the other?</i> <i>How do we live with the consequences of our choices?</i> <i>How do we 're-choose' with a different partner?</i></p>

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Physicality

- Touch, closeness, proximity: Physicality, corporeality
- Pleasure vs discomfort
- "When more closely tied together, it's much easier (for leader or follower) to just 'drive around' – easy to lose connection"
- "There didn't seem to be enough space to do what was required"

Possible explorations:
How do we experience/feel pleasure? How do we communicate it? What if 'pleasure levels' in a team are far apart?
Does this mean a closer physical connection can actually lead to a loss of 'connectivity'? What does it take for me to feel 'connected'?
Does close physical connection make negotiation of 'personal' space more tricky?
How do we 'manoeuvre/manage our 'own' space? How do we feel about our 'own' space – e.g. defensive? irritated? sense of 'ownership'? Do we 'fight'?

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Flow vs structure

- Fluidity, flow, listening vs structure, control, direction, plan, checking feet
- Music as external structure: can be help or hindrance.
- Gradual approach, eye contact, taking time, learning from one partnership to the next.
- "structure is important – no structure = mess"
- Developing/agreeing hand signals, pressure, discussing, making a plan = adding own structures to pre-given rules

Possible explorations:
How do we get 'into the flow'?
What does it feel like? What if it stops, gets thwarted?

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Confidence

- "People with more confidence in their own movements are easier to lead."
- "Lack of confidence in letting other people lead me"
- Developing confidence with knowledge & experience. "With each partner, there were more mistakes at the beginning."
- I don't think I made enough effort as a leader to enable my partner to follow. Focussed on myself rather than them.
- "going into a situation as a leader, not knowing the situation... If you're going into a situation that's familiar with you, you know how to handle that, because you've done it so many times before... and then that throws you out of your comfort zone... and then it's finding your feet" to get back to that place that you know that you can be at."

Possible explorations:
How much 'comfort zone' do I need to feel confident?
How do I build confidence?
What happens if my confidence level drops?

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Expectations of leader(ship) / follower(ship)

- "As follower, letting go of what I expect from a leader, just working with what I've got."
- Leading/leadership as responsibility, constant decision-making
- "with a confident leader, I'd be happy following"
- "need to be assertive"
- Leader "ensures safety of the pair" – "Follower also looks out for 'danger' and might have to take action, but less so."
- "as a follower I was worried / concerned about 'letting down' my partner"
- "Clear leadership by some people, confusing signals by others"
- I don't think I made enough effort as a leader to enable my partner to follow. Focussed on myself rather than them.

Possible explorations:
What are my own expectations of / assumptions about leaders/followers?
What are my assumptions about other people's expectations – how do I check those out?
How do our 'gut feelings' differ from or coincide with our rational deliberations?

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Teamwork

- "Twosome" has different balance from 'onesome'
- "There didn't seem to be enough space to do what was required"
- "In each team, there was co-operation and learning and teaching."
- "when it went well, it went better as a team relationship"
- "Felt good: the learning process, joint intention, collaboration."

Possible explorations:
What does it take to achieve a 'twosome' balance?
What are our assumptions about teamwork?
How do we check out our expectations / judgments?
What makes a 'good' team?

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Performance

- "Sometimes thought they [i.e. other people] were doing better than us, other times that they were also having difficulty, which was encouraging!"
- "tried to perfect & on one occasion made a plan"
- "Tried not to do same things, mixed it up a bit, which at first caused confusion"

Possible explorations:
Performance is always about judgment – how do I judge my own performance and/or that of my partner?
What happens if 'performance pressure' kicks in?

Leading with Mind, Heart and Body – Emerging Themes

Listening

- "With one very much less listening person, it was interesting to see that the skills & techniques that work with one others are relatively dysfunctional in the different context."
- "One person completely unable to feel where I was trying to go [...] just did their own thing"
- "Clear leadership by some people, confusing signals by others"
- "I could tell that one of them was trying to make it easy for me and thus for us as a couple"
- "message quite clear with some partners"
- "we haven't got the [work] culture that allows a leader to step back and not lead, because they seem to have that expectation"

Possible explorations:
How do I know that what I 'hear' is what was meant in the first place?
What do I do if feel 'unheard' or misunderstood?

Example of how the participants chose their themes for the workshops (here collated across WS2 and WS3, post-event)

A7.3 PARTICIPANTS' CHOSEN THEMES AND PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES (PETs) – OVERVIEW)

The following overview provides emerging and chosen themes from WS2 and WS3 and the reflective conversations. Bold purple text highlights recurring themes across the participants. An example of detail through which the themes were drawn out is shown in the next section, A7.5.

Partic.	Chosen for WS2	Chosen for WS3	Clustered themes / personal experiential themes (PETs) emerging from RefCons
Ali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Listening • Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading • Relationship 'engineering' • Physicality / 'body issues' • Following • Difficulties • 'Theories' • Change / barriers to change • Gender
*Elvira	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Expectations of Leader(ship) / Follower(ship) • Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Expectations of Leader(ship) / Follower(ship) • Confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty / problems / coping • Control • Choice / agency • Communication • Fluidity / flexibility • Management • Teamwork • Job satisfaction • Workshop experience
Jarik	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Flow vs structure • Teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading • Following • Relationship / connection / community • 'Body stuff' • Problems / conflict / conflict resolution • Trust
Myra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Listening • Power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Listening • Expectations of Leader(ship) / Follower(ship) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control • Agency • Connectedness • Trust • Pressure / stress / conflict / problems / Performance • Body issues • Change

Martin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust • Responsibility • Physicality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading • Relationship / connection / togetherness • Discomfort • Conflict / conflict resolution • Power • Knowledge • Reflection
Ted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of Leader(ship) / Follower(ship) • Flow vs structure • Offering / Inviting vs Imposing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of Leader(ship) / Follower(ship) • Flow vs structure • Offering / Inviting vs Imposing • Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating / connection / relationship • Physicality / 'body stuff' • Discomfort / problems / conflict • Emotion / feelings • Self-reflection • Theory
Yasmin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Power • Responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility & Choice • Power • Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading • Following • Control • Agency • (Creating / filling) Space • Knowledge • Trust / togetherness • Value (being valued) •

A7.4 PULLING OUT THEMES FROM WORKSHOPS (DETAIL)

THEMES	PARTICIPANT COMMENTS & BEHAVIOURS	POSSIBLE EXPLORATIONS	PARTICIPANT CHOICES (for WS2; for WS3)
1. Flexibility & Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Followers 'managing up', 'taking over' then relinquishing lead/leadership. Togetherness, sharing, collaboration. Exchange of leading/leadership. "it helps determine in which situation which role you want/need to play" Rules: adhering vs breaking Breaking or altering the rules, e.g. follower 'takes over' Talking to support nonverbal, to reassure Developing/agreeing hand signals, pressure, discussing, making a plan = adding own structures to pre-given rules 	<p>How rigid/flexible are our roles – how rigid/flexible do we perceive them to be? What choices do we have/make?</p> <p>How do we make our choices?</p> <p>What happens if one person makes a choice that doesn't suit the other?</p> <p>How do we live with the consequences of our choices?</p> <p>How do we 're-choose' with a different partner?</p>	<p>4: Ali Elvira Yasmin Myra</p> <p>5: Ali Elvira Yasmin Myra Jarik</p>
2. Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "With one very much less listening person, it was interesting to see that the skills & techniques that work with the others are relatively dysfunctional in the different context." "One person completely unable to feel where I was trying to go [...] just did their own thing" "Clear leadership by some people, confusing signals by others" "I could tell that one of them was trying to make it easy for me and thus for us as a couple" "message quite clear with some partners" "we haven't got the [work] culture that allows a leader to step back and <i>not</i> lead, because they seem to have that expectation" 	<p>How do I know that what I 'hear' is what was meant in the first place?</p> <p>What do I do if feel 'unheard' or misunderstood?</p>	<p>3: Ali Jarik Myra</p> <p>4: Myra Ted Martin Yasmin</p>

3. Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control / power vs trust • “increased level of contact / control caused the leader/follower dynamic to become much more pronounced” • “Following felt uncomfortable giving someone the power” • “With power comes responsibility” • “relinquishing power gives respite, but forward planning still needs to be there to be ready to take back control” • “I kept trying to lead to be in control even when I was the follower I had to be conscious to stop” 	<p>Who is ‘in control’ – and in control of what?</p> <p>How do I deal with my discomfort?</p> <p>Where and how do I ‘feel’ power? trust? powerlessness? powerfulness?</p>	<p>3: Ali Yasmin Myra</p> <p>1: Yasmin</p>
4. Expectations of Leader(ship) / Follower(ship)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “As follower, letting go of what I expect from a leader, just working with what I’ve got.” • Leading/leadership as responsibility, constant decision-making • “with a confident leader, I’d be happy following” • “need to be assertive” • Leader “ensures safety of the pair” – “Follower also looks out for ‘danger’ and might have to take action, but less so.” • “as a follower I was worried / concerned about “letting down” my partner” • “Clear leadership by some people, confusing signals by others” • I don’t think I made enough effort as a leader to enable my partner to follow. Focussed on myself rather than them. 	<p>What are my own expectations of / assumptions about leaders/followers?</p> <p>What are my assumptions about other people’s expectations – how do I check those out?</p> <p>How do our ‘gut feelings’ differ from or coincide with our rational deliberations?</p>	<p>2: Ted Elvira</p> <p>3: Ted Elvira Myra</p>
5. Flow vs Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluidity, flow, listening vs structure, control, direction, plan, checking feet. • Music as external structure: can be help or hindrance. 	<p>How do we get ‘into the flow’?</p> <p>What does it feel like?</p> <p>What if it stops, gets thwarted?</p>	<p>2: Ted Jarik</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual approach, eye contact, taking time, learning from one partnership to the next. • “structure is important – no structure = mess” • Developing/agreeing hand signals, pressure, discussing, making a plan = adding own structures to pre-given rules 		1: Ted
6. Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust: developing over years vs constant re-establishing. • Offering and accepting trust • Growing confidence and trust • “as we continued, trust slowly built up” • “There were degrees of trust which increased when clarity of intent (and sensitivity) was greater.” • “challenge myself to be more trusting” • “trust built over time” • “I assumed / believed that they [<i>i.e. different partners</i>] were competent and knew what they were doing.” 	<p>Building trust takes time... what if there is little time?</p> <p>What if there is a lack of trust?</p> <p>What do I do if I don't trust the other person? or even myself?</p>	<p>2: Elvira Martin</p> <p>1: Ali</p>
7. Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader taking responsibility for follower • Leader “ensures safety of the pair” – “Follower also looks out for ‘danger’ and might have to take action, but less so.” • “Leading = big responsibility” • “With power comes responsibility” • “Following meant I made mistakes whereas leading didn't feel like the mistakes were mine as much.” • “I don't think I made enough effort as a leader to enable my partner to follow. Focused on myself rather than them.” 	<p>Who is responsible for what?</p> <p>How do we define/negotiate the boundaries – where does one person's responsibility end and the other one's start?</p> <p>Whose ‘fault’ is it when things go wrong – leader's or follower's?</p> <p>How do we get things ‘right’ when they have gone ‘wrong’?</p> <p>How do we communicate ‘right’ or ‘wrong’?</p>	2: Yasmin Martin

8. Offering / Inviting vs Imposing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer of weight – offer of leading? • Offering & accepting: weight, trust... • Willingness, readiness, taking responsibility, tolerance • Offering vs imposing: music • “willingness to do well” • Control / power vs trust 	<p>When does an offer become pressure?</p> <p>How do I know whether an offer is accepted or rejected?</p>	<p>1: Ted</p> <p>1: Ted</p>
9. Physicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touch, closeness, proximity: Physicality, corporeality • Pleasure vs discomfort • “When more closely tied together, it’s much easier (for leader or follower) to just ‘drive around’ – easy to lose connection” • “There didn’t seem to be enough space to do what was required” 	<p>How do we experience/feel pleasure? How do we communicate it? What if ‘pleasure levels’ in a team are far apart?</p> <p>Does this mean a closer physical connection can actually lead to a loss of ‘connectivity’? What does it take for me to feel ‘connected’?</p> <p>Does close physical connection make negotiation of ‘personal’ space more tricky?</p> <p>How do we ‘manoeuvre’/manage our ‘own’ space? How do we feel about our ‘own’ space – e.g. defensive? irritated? sense of ‘ownership’? Do we ‘fight’?</p>	<p>1: Martin</p>
10. Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Twosome’ has different balance from ‘onesome’ • “There didn’t seem to be enough space to do what was required” • “In each team, there was co-operation and learning and teaching.” • “when it went well, it went better as a team relationship” • “Felt good: the learning process, joint intention, collaboration.” 	<p>What does it take to achieve a ‘twosome’ balance?</p> <p>What are our assumptions about teamwork?</p> <p>How do we check out our expectations / judgments?</p> <p>What makes a ‘good’ team?</p>	<p>1: Jarik</p>

11. Confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "People with more confidence in their own movements are easier to lead." • "Lack of confidence in letting other people lead me" • Developing confidence with knowledge & experience. "With each partner, there were more mistakes at the beginning." • I don't think I made enough effort as a leader to enable my partner to follow. Focussed on myself rather than them. • "going into a situation as a leader, not knowing the situation... If you're going into a situation that's familiar with you, you know how to handle that, because you've done it so many times before... and then that throws you out of your comfort zone... and then it's 'finding your feet' to get back to that place that you know that you can be at." 	<p>How much 'comfort zone' do I need to feel confident?</p> <p>How do I build confidence?</p> <p>What happens if my confidence level drops?</p>	1: Elvira
12. Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Sometimes thought they [i.e. other people] were doing better than us; other times that they were also having difficulty, which was encouraging!" • "tried to perfect & on one occasion made a plan" • "Tried not to do same things, mixed it up a bit, which at first caused confusion" 	<p>Performance is always about judgment – how do I judge my own performance and/or that of my partner?</p> <p>What happens if 'performance pressure' kicks in?</p>	

A7.5 PARTICIPANT'S CHOSEN THEMES & PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL THEMES (PETS) (EXAMPLE)

Myra's themes:

RefCon1 WS2 WS3 RefCon3

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
	Themes chosen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility and choice Listening Power 	Themes chosen: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility and choice Listening Expectations of leader(ship)/follower(ship) 	
TRUST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	TRUST: WS1: RefRd1: Myra speaks after Jorik has mentioned how trust was built gradually during each exercise partnership		TRUST: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trust takes time to build and is empowering. Being trusted helps Myra to feel confident, to make her own decisions, and to feel confirmed in her professional judgment and competence. Encouragement, positive feedback increases trust in herself and others (L143-5, L153-161) Feeling trusted makes Myra more relaxed, more creative, less stressed, less pressured, less worried, less anxious (L163-171), easier to dance with and to work with. "When you got anxiety in your body, you can feel it."
POWER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader has the "powerful position" (L688 & 701) Power is assumed to be with men, or with 	POWER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	POWER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very powerful resistance as 'unwilling follower'; strong boundaries → cf. {A1:42:09}... 	POWER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power, by definition, sits with the leader. Leader carries the can: has more responsibility, takes blame for things going wrong. Being a leader means one 'has the power' (L605-619), as if 'power'

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
<p>women who decide to take on leadership roles. But it goes 'against the grain' for women, so it's hard work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even though children are not in school by choice (they have to be there, unlike the teacher), they still have a choice whether to follow or not to follow. Myra mentions one particular kid who refuses to follow and gives her a hard time. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...but the power lies in resisting, refusing, denying: 'I will not' rather than 'I will'. • Not very powerful as leader. Whilst she verbally emphasises (in RefCon) that the leader 'has the power', she does not embody it. • {B1:23:38} Reflection on deliberate decision not to follow. There is an insight that leadership has its limitation in the follower's decision power. 	<p>is a countable, concrete item that cannot be split or shared.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I point to the power of the follower, her face goes blank – this concept does not mean anything to her; it seems unfamiliar. But when I point out examples, she (L651ff) picks up the idea and explains how, as a follower in dance, she has gained confidence and feels empowered to say 'No', where the leader is not up to his task. But obviously she has not thought about it as 'power'. • But power is also a burden. When Myra is tired and worn out, power is not something she might cherish – too much like hard work. (L21f) After a week's hard work of 'being in control, she wants to relax and 'just follow'. (L21-23) • Resistance is hard work (L774f)

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
GENDER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power is assumed to be with men, or with women who decide to take on leadership roles. But it goes 'against the grain' for women, so it's hard work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		GENDER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implies that leader role is a difficult one for her: "the culture I grew up in, where women are meant to be followers" (L722). Metaphors suggest that women's subordinate role is cast in stone: "ingrained", difficult "to wipe that slate clean" (L724). Ingrained not just in stone, but in woman's body "your body has such a memory" (L726) Myra is not used to criticising men – she finds that difficult, although she is now growing stronger and more confident. However, she does not criticise openly, but appeals to the leader's/man's sense of collaboration: "Why don't you just try this and see if that works?" (L839)
LEADERSHIP and FOLLOWERSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myra is 'just' a follower, she 'just' follows. There is clearly a 'recognition gap' between leader and follower: 'just following' vs 'have the power' makes it clear that leading carries higher status than following. Even though a follower needs to 	LEADERSHIP and FOLLOWERSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myra comments that leading was easier, as 'there was more structure' [than where???], "you didn't have to be creative". Leading is clearly an easier task when there are not too many unfamiliar variables to pay 	LEADERSHIP and FOLLOWERSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ex1a: It is quite striking how difficult it is to establish who leads and who follows: Myra, despite being in the role of follower (as the 'stropky kid') seems to be quite active (=actively resisting), with Elvira trying to find out what is going on and attempting various tactics to get Myra to connect and react, rather than trying to 'lead' her. Ex1b: Myra looks very much out of control – shy and a bit lost, 	LEADERSHIP and FOLLOWERSHIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader has "the power" (L605, 609, 617). Following means "not having responsibility" (L28) Leader has responsibility (L32-36), has to 'own' mistakes – they are the leader's fault (L694-8) Although Myra is now a confident follower in Salsa, she has not thought about herself leading (L668-681): "Normally, I wouldn't lead... 'cos you don't, so you, as a woman?" Even though she concedes that "more women

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
<p>"know what you should be doing, just from the signal that you're being sent" (Myra1 L683f), she does not consider this a "powerful position".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even when a follower 'resists', Myra does not see this as powerful. Follower resistance might cause a leader headaches (and 'resistance' is 'hard work!') • In her work, Myra sees herself as leader (as teacher to a class of children) and follower (with leaders in hierarchical roles above her). • Faced with a follower who refuses to follow (a 'difficult' child), she is struggling to function as a leader – <i>is she seeking to find ways to turn the child into a follower, or to turn herself into a leader?</i> • If things do not work: as you cannot change another person, you 	<p>attention to – not too much complexity.</p>	<p>whilst Elvira's resistance exudes strength and power. Elvira is clearly 'leading' the interaction (from the follower position).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both Elvira and Myra explore similar issues: each have a problem relationship with a reluctant, disengaged follower. Both are very convincing, energetic and powerful in the <i>disengaged follower</i> role, and show little imagination as leaders, ending up in a tussle or tug-of-war, i.e. playing the follower's game – so much so that I felt it necessary to intervene and point out different ways of moving. Their 'real' solution, i.e. what changed the dynamic, was stepping out of role and laughing, which 'broke the spell'. • In the final dance round, there is a moment of surprise when Myra has a dance à trois with Elvira and Ali, leading both of them simultaneously into a twirl. Her action is elegant, competent and confident, like a 'natural leader'. It probably helps that there is no pressure to perform. • {B1:23:38} Myra reflects on a change of perspective: she has "always thought about being a 	<p>wanting to do it... which is good", leading has not figured in her personal repertoire of choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She invokes 'culture' as the main reason: "the culture I grew up in, where women are meant to be followers" (L722ff) – this is cast in stone, "ingrained", and it is very hard "trying to wipe that slate clean... your body has such a memory". Thus, even thinking about herself as a leader seems to be difficult. • For Myra, following is a "natural thing" (L802), and it requires effort not to do so.

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
have to change yourself... different interpretations, different behaviours.		follower", but now thinks about leading. This is particularly challenging, since for her this is linked to dealing with unwilling followers. Her insight is that <i>deliberately not</i> following is a decision a follower makes – and this presents a challenge for a leader "to overcome that".	
RELATIONSHIP and CONNECTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myra finds it hard to build relationships with strangers, especially when it means letting them into her 'personal space'. It takes time to get to know another person and to find out whether she feels 'comfortable' with them. (L44f) Having to make a relationship with a stranger to work with in a partnership, within a very short time, can be a 'panic moment', fraught with anxiety and worry, to the extent that she needs to 'calm' herself (calming techniques: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	RELATIONSHIP and CONNECTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When partnering up at the start of the workshop, Myra seems to be the one who moves least (and last?), i.e. she stays on the spot and waits, rather than moving towards anyone else – even as late as workshop 3, by which time she would have met, talked to and pretty much worked with everyone in the group. She seems reluctant to take the initiative – is it her choice not to make a choice? When partnering up, Myra and Elvira stand furthest apart, touching each other only at arms' length, standing side by side without eye contact – an impression of 'distance'. (see above) Both Myra and Elvira are very convincing, energetic and powerful in the <i>disengaged follower</i> role, and 	RELATIONSHIP and CONNECTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> L137-147: Myra finds it hard to build relationships with strangers. It takes time to get to know people "and during that time, that was when the trust built up". Understanding others is important and doesn't happen immediately. Myra feels better and works better when she is trusted. Myra puts a lot of her insecurity, her need for personal space and time to get to know and trust others down to her childhood experiences of a lack of social learning. Whilst she repeatedly emphasises that her reluctance to get physically close to others is 'cultural' and down to her background in "an Asian culture" (L187), she also points out that her lack of dance knowledge/practice is actually down to her parents' lack of social practices (L261-266) rather than a cultural ban on dance. (L262: "I come from a culture that <i>does</i> dance a lot").

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
<p>from counselling and meditation). She smiles at people “and when they responded, that helped” (L69)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier to work with people that one feels ‘connected to’. Myra generally connects more easily with women than men, a ‘default position’, even though she usually dances with men (Salsa) – because with women, there is no ‘sex agenda’ involved. • A male participant’s comment that he found a touching exercise ‘erotic’ makes Myra uncomfortable – the word ‘erotic’ has very negative connotations for her. It evokes memories of men wanting to dance with women for their own self-gratification. This is different from dancing “for the love of dance”: when a connection develops, that’s great. <i>Treating</i> 		<p>show little imagination as leaders, ending up in a tussle or tug-of-war, i.e. playing the follower’s game.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the ‘last dance’ round, Myra takes a long time to connect with anyone, dancing ‘inside herself’. There is a moment of surprise when she has a dance à trois with Elvira and Ali. Noticeably, both E and A reach out to Myra who then takes their hands and leads them in a twirl. So it seems to be the others’ initiative/offer to connect that gets Myra to ‘jump into action’. This would link in with her helplessness when faced with denial to connect. She also connects easily to RS who invites her to follow {B41:41}, although it is noticeable that she ‘aims to please’, i.e. puts effort into following his movements and tries to correct herself when they ‘fall out’ of sync. • {B1:23:38} In the final reflection round, Myra is the last one to speak. She mentions relationships, boundaries and trust as issues that the workshops have flagged up for her. 2 main points: a) she thinks, “well, actually, no, you <i>can</i>”: 	

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
<p><i>partner as instrumental is selfish – makes it a one-way connection, leaving one side out of the equation, as it were.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Building’ connections takes time. As Myra gets to know the other participants better and gets a ‘feel’ for them, she feels more connected, trusts them more, and it becomes easier to allow them into her personal space. In the shorter term, when partnering up, she was “waiting for that connection” (L65) to happen. Within each exercise: through ‘feeling’ the other person, experimenting with them, she gets to know their ways of moving, their actions and reactions, and can work out common understanding and movement, being “in tune with each other” 		<p>empowering herself, giving herself permission; b) “still trying to figure it out”: this is only the start of her reflection process – experiences need ‘digesting’ mentally.</p>	

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
(L207) as “signals get stronger”, i.e. clearer.			
DANCE & COMMUNICATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In dance, leader and follower are collaborators – it’s a two-way relationship. There is a subtle difference between pulling/pushing and leading, and this needs to be ‘felt out’ through practice, trial and error, connection with others, listening to them, and working with their and one’s own responses. Finding out what the other responds to, what makes them act/react, establishing a connection through smile, finding a shared way to deal with difficulties, tuning in with each other. That way, ‘signals get stronger’, i.e. clearer, more distinct, more ‘readable’ and make for better collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	DANCE & COMMUNICATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> {B1:23:38} Reflection on final dance round: “I dance Salsa, and it’s very controlled, and it’s very ‘we know what to do’”: Having the freedom to make her own choices and decisions brings challenges: “it’s having that freedom, and I just think ‘I could do anything – cool!’ And I don’t really know”. So it is both liberating and scary. The solution lies, for her, in finding a sensory, sensuous connection with another person: “you find a point where you connect with something – there’s some move or something – then you just... and I just eased into it, and it felt easier”. It is visible that Myra needs plenty of time for this to happen – probably because for her, connection is linked to trust, and trust is not instant. 	DANCE & COMMUNICATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myra enjoyed dancing with Ramen and Jarik, as she trusted them. She felt very comfortable with Ramen (L526), as his lead was very clear – so she took the familiar role of a follower – and non-invasive. Leading with a ‘pull’ rather than ‘push’ strategy, i.e. ‘inviting to follow’ rather than ‘encroaching on F’s space forcing them to move’ – a ‘come-with-me’ rather than ‘get-out-of-the-way-or-get-run-over’ approach which Myra is now herself using with her ‘difficult’ pupil.
SPACE:		SPACE / BOUNDARIES:	

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Myra works in a school where the staff room is a 5-minute walk away. She does not have much personal space – she has to ‘create’ it by keeping the children out of the classroom during breaks. • Personal space is important. Myra finds it harder to be physically close to a person that she has no personal/emotional ‘connection’ with – wants to “keep them at arm’s length”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • {A1:42:09} Myra [nods]: Yeah. And you have to, physical... I had to... <i>had</i> to resist. And ‘no, I’m <i>not</i> going to do this, I’m <i>not</i> going, I’m <i>not</i> moving, I don’t <i>want to</i> move – this is, this is my bit [draws a small square with her hands in front of herself] and I’m staying in this bit, I’m not coming out of this part’. So I went a <i>little</i> bit with you [Elvira: yeah] ...but then it was like ‘no [Elvira: aahhhh] – that’s my boundary, I’m not going, that’s it!’ • {B1:23:38} In the final reflection round, Myra mentions boundaries as an issue that the workshops have flagged up for her. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
RESPONSIBILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		RESPONSIBILITY: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for mistakes rests with the leader (L36) • Responsibility implies pressure and “an element of fear” (L37-91). It is important to do a job “completely – every bit of it” (L91), especially if there are consequences for one’s actions and decisions. • <i>BUT</i>: Taking responsibility is empowering, especially when based on professional competence and self-confidence, and when Myra can make her own decisions (and is trusted to do so) (L93-110)
			REFLECTION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflection was not an issue Myra mentioned in RefCon1, but she mentions it several times in RefCon3. • (L391-399) Myra is somewhat reluctant about her need to reflect: “I was never reflective, because it wasn’t... good for me to be reflective ‘cos of all the things that I’d gone through” (L394f) – bringing things into conscious awareness was “too painful” (L397). • Whilst she is now more comfortable reflecting on her experiences and feelings, it is still difficult in an unfamiliar environment to share things with near-strangers: she feels she is “revealing too much” (L402) and is uncertain whether that is socially appropriate (L406-428).

Reflective Conversation 1	Workshop 2 themes & actions	Workshop 3 themes & actions	Reflective Conversation 3
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflecting on her experiences puts the validity of her assumptions into question – 2 instances: a) feeling less comfortable with men – but then felt comfortable with Jarik and Ramen; b) leader has ‘the power’ – but experience with Elvira and little girl at work shows that F has power, too • She finds that the workshops have made her “very reflective about work” and her work relationships. She now also thinks about where, in her work situation, situations and constellations of leading and following happen, and she begins to question some of them (L869-882)

A8 CODED TRANSCRIPTS (EXAMPLES)

A8.1 OVERVIEW OF TRANSCRIPTS / CODING

Length of transcripts varies, depending on duration of RefCon/recording :

<u>RefCon1</u>		<u>RefCon3</u>	
Participant	Length (no. of lines)	Participant	Length (no. of lines)
Ali	1179 (max: 25 pages)	Ali	1013 (max: 24 pages)
Elvira	1107	Myra	926
Ted	955	Ted	875
Myra	817	Elvira	501
Martin	638	Yasmin	440
Yasmin	531	Jarik	417 (min: 9 pages)
Jarik	335 (min: 8 pages)		

Length of WS1 and WS3 transcripts including introduction, transcribed movements, snapshots and reflection rounds:

	Length (no. of lines)		Length (no. of lines)
<u>WS1</u>	1571 (33 pages)	<u>WS3</u>	1918 (43 pages)

A8.2 EXAMPLE CODED TRANSCRIPT: WS3 (INCL. MOVEMENT, DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS, SNAPSHOT (6 PAGES OUT OF 30))

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Transcript last saved 30 June 2024 19:04
WS3-Dance&ReflectionRounds_v9_Coding2_anon.docx

'Difficult relationships' exercise
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152 Myra and Elvira seem furthest apart, touching each other only at arms' length,
153 standing side by side, without eye contact. Ali and Ramen are also at arms'
154 length, but they face each other and have a double hand hold.
155 Fides walks away and switches music off.

Commented [FM11]: MY & EL: impression of not just physical distance

156 'Difficult relationships' exercise

10:30 10:30-10:30 17:40-18:15 18:15-20:00	6. Dancing 'the difficult relationship'	Explanation & demonstration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the topic: difficult relationships Come back to yourself for a moment – close eyes and think of a L/F situation in a work context – maybe a 'difficult' line manager, team member, or colleague. We'll invite you to 'dance' that relationship in 2 stages. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember that the task is to <i>dance</i>, i.e. to move in a smooth, coordinated, harmonious manner.
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{A17:40}

157 Fides: Working on something that's difficult: we all have difficult relationships
158 at work. I think – we all encounter difficult... difficult people, for whatever
159 reason... Okay, so that's something we... we were going to work on, 'cos it's
160 popped up... I think it's popped up during the previous workshops, but we
161 never, sort of, focused on it... And now that we know each other a bit better,
162 we could do a little bit more on that. So, if you come back to yourself for a
163 moment – just close your eyes and think of a... of a situation that involved a
164 sort of leading and following – a work situation maybe. Erm... that can be,
165 y'know, a difficult line manager or a difficult team member [Elvira grins, Fides
166 looks at her and chuckles] ...Don't try and focus on 5 difficult team members –
167 that's a bit too much! [Several giggles/laughs]
168 Elvira [grinning, hiding her face in her hands]: Oh, I won't go for all of them,
169 okay...
170 Fides: That can... that can also be a colleague, 'cos we have leading and
171 following, erm... among colleagues as well. And we'll invite you... we'll invite
172 you to dance that relationship and work on it. Remember... one thing to
173 remember is that the task of the dance is to move in a smooth, coordinated
174 and... ideally harmonious manner. And, of course, when things are difficult,
175 that doesn't always work – but that's the sort of aim we're trying to achieve.

Commented [FM12]: NB. 'difficult relationships' vs 'difficult people': I am aware of (incorrectly) conflating the two, but I'm doing it on purpose to help people 'get into' the situation

20:00-22:08		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate stage 1: R = difficult/unresponsive team member; F = team leader → dance <i>Music: Rumba: Sister Rose</i>
22:08-23:15		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short feedback: How did it feel to be 'difficult'? What did it look like? How did R feel to F (and vice versa)? How did it feel to lead a 'difficult' team member? What did F do to cope with the 'difficult-ness'? What did R do to make it 'difficult'?
23:16-24:50		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate stage 2: F = difficult team member; R = team leader → dance <i>Music: Rumba: Sister Rose</i>
24:52-		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Short feedback (to each other & from group): How did that feel/look? What do you think about the situation now that you have 'felt/seen both sides? Any insights?

{A26:21}

176 Fides: I did feel heavy – I made myself heavy, but I also found it not so easy
177 to maintain in the long run, because I would have had to do this to stop
178 completely, and that wouldn't have felt nice.
179 Martin: Your posture was very different from, erm, Ramen's. When you were
180 heavy... [pointing to Ramen], you were... sort of... rounded shoulders,
181 whereas [looking at Fides] I don't think... [shakes head, laughs]
182 Fides: I didn't manage... I didn't manage it... I didn't manage to really
183 slouch... Well, I am not his colleague, so... I can... all I can do is do my best
184 to sort of translate the stance that he's communicated to me into what I'm
185 doing. Erm... okay... [to Ramen] and how did it make you feel, Ramen?
186 Ramen: Well, erm, kind of...
187 Fides: I found it hard work.
188 Ramen: Yeah, it was hard work. I am kind of exploring the idea of... maybe
189 where he's trying to run away, trying to... follow there a bit and see where that
190 might go... when I tried... maybe steer that to something else... because, it
191 didn't... that... that seemed to be the one thing that kind of worked, that kind
192 of flowed a bit more... So... that's an idea – I'll have to explore that a bit more.
193 Fides: It's not about finding solutions – 'cos we don't have any... any ready-
194 made solutions; it's more about... getting our bodies to... to help us think –
195 work out what it feels like. Would you like to do that? So... have you got an
196 idea who starts?

Commented [FM13]: Difficult to stay in role and 'resist' R's invitation to move!

Commented [FM14]: ...and some bits always get lost in translation!

Commented [FM15]: New insight through body movement: move differently, change approach

Commented [FM16]: Principle of martial arts: use momentum/movement of other person, rather than 'combating' it.

Movement as 'embodied metaphor' of approaching others; approaching problems; understanding others

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WS3-Dance&ReflectionRounds_v9_Coding2_anon.docx

'Difficult relationships' exercise

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197 [28:17 General talking – participants discussing who starts. Clarification of the
198 exercise.]

199 Fides: {A28:34} Ok, and don't... don't explain... don't explain the person
200 upfront! Just try and... and impersonate them in a dance context... what if
201 they were dancing. [Question: And their followers?] Depends, depends, if
202 they're your line manager... You are that person. If that person is, for
203 example, your line manager, then you'll be the follower – then, sorry, then
204 you'd be the leader... and impersonate that... when you impersonate that
205 person. {A29:14}

206 Further discussion...

Dancing the 'difficult relationship' 1a

10:40 15:12:30		'Difficult' relationship 1 Decide who goes first and whether as L/F. Dance the role, stage 1 & 2 (15')
28:18-30:15		Instructions & clarification: Don't try to 'explain' the 'difficult person' verbally – communicate it through dance. Bring the L/F relationship into the dance: If that person were your line manager, then you'll be the leader.
30:25-31:29		Dancing the 'difficult person' stage 1
31:30-34:20		Feedback to partner.

207 {A30:20} Music starts (Rumba: *Sister Rose*)

208 Partnerships (L&F):

- 209 • Elvira & Myra → problem 'owner': Myra
- 210 • Ted & Yasmin → problem 'owner': Ted
- 211 • Ali & Ramen → problem 'owner': Ali
- 212 • Jarik & Martin → problem 'owner': Jarik

213 *Myra and Elvira: 'stroppy student' 1a*

214 {A30:17} They start opposite each other. Elvira picks up Myra's hands into a
215 low practice hold (hand-to-elbow), with Myra acting very passive – not actively
216 resisting, but also not responding: she does not put her hands on Elvira's
217 arms, just lets her wrists rest on them. Myra stands still, while Elvira begins to
218 move to the music, gently balancing/swaying from one leg to the other. Myra
219 seems to pull away slightly, into some backwards steps, as both she and
220 Elvira seem momentarily off-balance, but Elvira moves with her. {A30:50}
221 Eventually Myra joins in with the swaying. Elvira now begins to step forward,
222 and Myra allows her to do so, moving with her rhythm. {A31:05} Myra trying
223 vaguely to wriggle out of the hold and to turn away, but Elvira hangs on and
224 does not let her go, but moves with her. The next few steps look as if Myra is
225 taking the lead by moving backwards, while Elvira appears to be following.
226 {A31:17} Elvira now moves backwards, but only for a couple of steps; then
227 she moves forwards again.

228 *Ted and Yasmin: 'elusive colleague' 1a*

229 Ted offers a ballroom lead, Yasmin accepts. {A30:30} Ted moves forwards
230 without any 'notice', almost into Yasmin, who tries to find her feet and to
231 follow. He dances a few steps and turns with her, then at 30:39 abruptly lets
232 go, turns away from Yasmin and moves into a different direction, turning his
233 back on her. She goes after him, but he turns away, ignoring her, until at
234 {A30:46} he suddenly moves towards her and offers a hold again, which she
235 accepts. They dance until {A30:58}, when he repeats the action, letting go,
236 turning away and walking away, avoiding her, then inviting her back at
237 {A31:05}, with another, shorter repeat at {A31:20}, getting back to her at
238 {A31:24}, just before the music stops.

239 *Ali and Ramen: 'non-leading boss' 1a*

240 After getting into a practice hold at {A30:12}, before the music starts, with Ali
241 in the lead and pulling some funny faces, she lets go, drops her arms and
242 laughs {A30:17}. They then talk for a moment, until the music starts and
243 Ramen puts his arms out in an invitation (as follower!). They start moving at
244 {A30:25}, with Ramen stepping forwards, clearly leading, despite being in
245 follower role. Ali follows, moving backwards, occasionally making unexpected
246 moves, e.g. quick side steps at {A30:32}, which Ramen can hardly follow.
247 They move together until {A30:43}, when Ali suddenly pulls Ramen round and
248 rushes backwards until {A30:47}, when she stops, stands still for a moment
249 with her head cocked sideways, looking at Ramen, who then manoeuvres her
250 relatively smoothly around the room (Ramen fwd, Ali bwd). At {A31:03}, Ali
251 turns her head sideways, looks around and behind her, while moving with
252 slightly stumbling steps, then pulls Ramen around again. At {A31:14}, she lets
253 go of him and backs off, out of reach, laughing. Ramen laughs, too. Ali bends
254 over laughing, then folds her arms, and they both stand and talk until the end
255 of the music.

256 *Jarik and Martin: 'authoritarian father' 1a*

257 They get into a practice hold (hand-to-elbow) at {A30:10}, then Jarik takes
258 Martin's hand to establish a 'proper' ballroom hold, with Jarik as leader. They
259 stand thus until the music starts, then begin to move. Using the hold, but not

Commented [FM17]: EL & MY: 'stroppy student'
TE & YA: 'elusive colleagues'
AL & RS: 'non-leading boss'
JA & MA: 'authoritarian father'

Commented [FM18]: Moving with her own rhythm.

Commented [FM19]: = MY backing off?

Commented [FM20]: EL trying to copy MY's tactic?

Commented [FM21]: It is quite striking how difficult it is to establish who leads and who follows: MY, despite being in the role of follower (the 'stroppy kid') seems to be quite active, with EL trying to find out what is going on. → follower has more power than they are aware of?

Commented [FM22]: I find it striking how little attention TE pays to his follower – he seems to dance mainly his own rhythm, without much regard to whether YA can follow him or not, but this might just be his way of dancing, not necessarily done intentionally as part of the role here. → importance of attention to follower

Commented [FM23]: AL frequently resorts to verbal expression → not comfortable with nonverbal?

Commented [FM24]: AL seems quite uncomfortable with a close hold – she gets out of it before the music stops. Jarik seems a 'safer' communication option than Jarik.

260 the rhythm of the music, Jarik bends – almost contorts/distorts – Martin into all
 261 sorts of shapes, moving forwards, backwards, sideways, seemingly without
 262 consideration for either rhythm or partner. Occasionally he dances to the
 263 rhythm, slowly and even intimately, but then abruptly abandons it again,
 264 swinging Martin around, in a rushed and almost reckless manner, until the
 265 music stops.

Commented [FM25]: No consideration for partner: pushing boundaries?

Commented [FM26]: Switch between 'hot and cold': connectedness vs disregard → unpredictable; emotional rollercoaster

266 [(A31:26) Music stops. Partners start talking about what they tried to convey
 267 and what the other experienced. Fides joins Myra & Elvira, giving feedback.]
 268 [Ramen and Ali (A33:08-33:32) actually resume dancing briefly as part of their
 269 explanatory and exploratory exchange. Ramen and Ali do this again (A33:37-
 270 34:10), then Ali throws her arms up and bends over laughing, Ramen joins in,
 271 both slapping their knees.]
 272 [Ted and Yasmin take hold again at (A33:55), with Ted as leader, then
 273 relinquish it again during a brief discussion, then resume at (A34:08),
 274 continuing their dance throughout Fides's next explanation right into the next
 275 music section.]

{A34:13}

276 Fides: Okay... and... we haven't done it yet... the person... okay... the
 277 difficult... the partner is going to be the difficult person.

Dancing the 'difficult relationship' 1b

34:20-36:41 Dancing the 'difficult person' stage 2

278 [Participants talking, preparing for the swap.]

279 [(A34:25) Fides walks off to restart music.]

280 Ramen: Was that anywhere near?

281 Ali: Yeah, yeah, that's vaguely... [Ramen and Ali continue to speak for a few
 282 moments but recording not audible.]

Martin and Jarik: 'authoritarian father' 1b

284 Martin and Jarik take hold at (A34:26), Martin leading. They start
 285 moving/swaying tentatively, as if trying something out with caution. Then
 286 Martin sways more vigorously, with Jarik following somewhat reluctantly. Both
 287 in a fairly close hold, Martin makes wider steps and arm movements, then
 288 starts turning, with Jarik looking down (at Martin's or his own feet?) and
 289 attempting to follow Martin's movements. Both keep their heads bent forward
 290 and look down. It looks as if Martin is pulling, rather than pushing, Jarik.
 291 Martin also looks introspective, focusing on/moving mainly himself. When they
 292 move together, they look very intimate – more like Argentine Tango dancers,
 293 inclined towards and close to each other. At (A36:32) they finish their dance,
 294 Martin giving Jarik an underarm twirl; then they both bow ceremoniously to
 295 each other, laughing.

Commented [FM27]: Mirroring the 'disregard' from 1a.

Commented [FM28]: ...or like wrestlers???

Commented [FM29]: Twirl/bow/laugh: Signalling the end of the exercise: making light of the problem situation, creating harmony/connection and moving away from conflict and discomfort.

Ramen and Ali: 'non-leading boss' 1b

296 Ramen and Ali stay apart from (A34:10) for the duration of the music, talking,
 297 Ali laughing a lot, bending over and throwing her arms in the air. (A35:08)
 298 Ramen offers his arms in an inviting gesture, Ali accepts somewhat hesitantly,
 299 but they keep standing there, only starting to move again at (A35:22). Ali is
 300 clearly leading from a follower position, moving backwards and sideways and
 301 pulling Ramen along, who appears quite passive, not showing any clear
 302 purpose or intention, but occasionally wandering off in a different direction,
 303 with Ali in tow. Ali also moves forward, with Ramen following the lead. At
 304 (A36:30), Ali 'extricates' herself from the double hold and pulls away, laughing.
 305 Then they both start talking. Throughout their dancing, which largely ignores
 306 the music, Ali keeps her gaze firmly fixed on Ramen's face, even when he
 307 turns his head and 'wanders off'.
 308

Commented [FM30]: Doesn't like being led / being a follower?

Ted and Yasmin: 'elusive colleague' 1b

309 Yasmin and Ted starting before music resumes. Out of ballroom hold, Yasmin
 310 turns away from Ted and walks 6 or 7 steps away; Ted walks about apparently
 311 aimlessly, looking for her; Yasmin then turns round and comes back, they
 312 resume the hold and continue dancing. This happens several times.
 313 Gradually, Ted continues dancing on his own when Yasmin leaves. He also
 314 starts initiating the separations and leaving to dance on his own, to the extent
 315 that Yasmin goes after him, seeking to re-establish the connection. Each time,
 316 they reunite, Ted acknowledges Yasmin with a smile and/or a nod, and they
 317 continue dancing together.
 318

Commented [FM31]: As before, AL resorts to talking rather than moving – being in close proximity to another body seems to make her uncomfortable. She also keeps her body as far away as possible from her partner, with her arms almost straight. Moving backwards and pulling, with occasional sideways moves, seems to be the most successful strategy.

Commented [FM32]: 'Taking the lead' translates into taking the initiative, making one's own choices/decisions

Myra and Elvira: 'stropky student' 1b

320 Elvira and Myra talking until (A35:16), when Elvira visibly turns into the
 321 'difficult kid' who refuses to follow, standing motionless, head bent, looking
 322 down, seemingly ignoring Myra. (A35:27) Myra leans slightly forward and
 323 takes Elvira's left hand. Standing still, Elvira shows no reaction, then pulls her
 324 side away. When Myra moves forward and grabs both her wrists, Elvira takes
 325 a step backwards, keeping her arms stiffly by her side, very much like a
 326 stubborn or sulking child. Elvira then starts walking backwards, away from
 327 Myra, who keeps following her, trying to hold on to her wrists. Elvira's

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'Difficult relationships' exercise
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328 avoidance becomes stronger and turns into more resistance – she turns away
329 and round to escape Myra's grip. Myra ends up chasing her, trying various
330 ways to get hold of Elvira, including putting an arm round Elvira's back.
331 Eventually Myra manages to keep hold of Elvira's wrists who is now trying
332 harder to wriggle out of that grip, pulling Myra along with her. The 'resistance
333 game' is so successful that it almost turns in to a wrestling match, and at
334 {A35:47} both of them start laughing. At {A36:07} Elvira simply turns round
335 and walks away, with Myra chasing her and unsuccessfully trying to grab her
336 wrist. At one point, they stand facing each other, and Myra manages to get
337 hold of both Elvira's arms, but again Elvira turns away. At {A36:27} they both
338 move off-camera, apparently continuing the game.
339

Commented [FM33]: This looks very much like a power game. MY does not seem to vary her approach – she does 'more of the same', even though this is not working, which leaves her powerless and wasting energy on a pointless strategy.

Commented [FM34]: They seem to realise that this is a game.

Commented [FM35]: MY looks very much out of control – shy and a bit lost, whilst EL's resistance exudes strength and power. EL is clearly leading the interaction from a more powerful position. → Quite a vivid (and accurate!) demonstration of a typical teacher-pupil or parent-child power struggle, without any visible solution.

36:41-40:45	Feedback to partner.
-------------	----------------------

340 {A36:38} Music finishes. General talking – lively exchanges.
341 Fides: Be aware of your own feelings – both sides. Which bits did feel harder,
342 which bits did feel easier?

Snapshot 1

10:55 ~41:00-51:50 15' → 11'	7. Break Snapshot 1 (write) & Break (15') 41:00-51:50 Writing feedback 51:51-1:04:50 Snapshot round Break {A1:04:17}
------------------------------------	--

343 [{A40:40} Participants gradually moving into reflection round. Writing reflection
344 notes. Silence.]

{A51:05}

345 Fides [to Elvira, who is trying to remove an ink stain from her thumb]: Don't
346 eat too much of the ink!

347 Elvira: I'm still inky. Now I'm squeaky...

348 Fides: I'm not sure... not sure whether it's toxic...

349 Elvira [theatrically leaning sideways and pretending to faint]: Aaarrghhh... it's
350 toxic!!

351 [General chuckle.]

352 Ali: Ideally that would give you lots of literary ideas... swallowing ink.

353 Elvira: That would be nice, wouldn't it? I'll probably start spouting all sorts of...
354 erm... really crappy advertising slogans next...

355 Ali: Then you've bought the wrong ink, and you should take it back!

356 Elvira: Absolutely! [General chuckling.] Sheffield Pen Shop, I mean... hah...
357 [Pause.] It's not Pelikan! [More chuckles.]

{A51:53}

358 Fides: I'm looking around – I notice what struck me was that... there were
359 very, very different ... erm... strategies, and very different relationships. What
360 was it... what was it like for you?

361 [Pause]

362 Ramen: I found it quite interesting that parallels with my story with your [nods
363 towards Ali] story, because... I've got the sort of disinterested follower, and
364 you've got the disinterested leader. [Ali chuckles; several giggles.] And that I
365 found... they were... for me, quite interesting.

366 Ali: Well, it's both the same, because my disinterested leader is perfectly well
367 interested, just not in the same things – and your follower sounded the same,
368 actually.

369 Ramen: Yeah... yah.

370 Fides: I saw very different strategies... For example, some strategies were:
371 more... holding on more, and others were... well – go away... he'll come
372 back.

373 Yasmin: I s'pose in that sense there wasn't a strategy, was there – it was how
374 you experienced your colleague...?

{A53:21}

375 Ted: Well, I had a strategy then how to deal with that [Yasmin: yeah] – which
376 was to sort of go with it, really... and do... do the same things myself... which
377 was going away and then coming back [Yasmin: mhm] ... yeah. [Pause.] I
378 mean mine... I was annoyed or unhappy or whatever the word is about the
379 fact that she goes away every so often... erm... This is a colleague... and
380 er... my realisation, if you like, was: well actually, I... I shouldn't get annoyed
381 'cos she's got every right to go away... I could go away and... enjoy myself
382 without her, as well... that's putting it very simply... yeah.

383 [Pause.]

384 Fides: One other thing I noticed was that people... that some... some
385 constellations, it seemed like people were resorting to... er... I think we all do
386 that, in...in... in some situations, to sort of like a gut reaction... and that can

Commented [FM36]: Important insight: Not disinterested, but interested in something else. → change in perspective; reframing

Commented [FM37]: Different strategy: 'go with it'

Commented [FM38]: This sounds more like a jealousy / control / power issue than a leadership issue!

387 be to turn away, or that can be to grab harder... erm... and then, sometimes,
 388 it doesn't work, and then one has to do something completely different. And
 389 some of that... you... you [pointing to Martin and Jarik] were in quite a sort
 390 of... in something like... you were battling it out, weren't you? It looks like... it
 391 looked like it... mhm... And – did it work in the end?

{A55:00}

392 Jarik: Erm hm... I... well, I think so, but, erm... it's because a bit of Martin's
 393 personality... [Fides: mhm] ...you see. So, he... he sensed... erm... what I
 394 was sending, and then tried to re-establish the relationship, reconnect, with
 395 slow moves, and trust... and then send it again... so he was preparing it very
 396 well... however... then, when he was playing the role... I feel that it was
 397 because of his character he couldn't play the role harsh enough [Fides: Okay.]

{A55:26}

398 Martin: This is true... When, er... [turning towards Jarik] I'm sorry, I forget
 399 names...

400 Jarik: Jarik.

401 Martin: Jarik. When Jarik started dancing with me – to start off, I was really
 402 quite surprised... about, y'know, my back was like 'erm, I've not moved that
 403 way before! [rolls and wriggles his upper body vehemently; general laughter]
 404 ...it was like being... a gyroscope, that sort of thing... So, yeah, I wasn't able
 405 to... to recreate that bit [Jarik: [More laughter.] I tried my best, but ... [more
 406 laughter]

407 Jarik [smiles]: Yes, it's impossible! and Martin tried, and I was tipping, I was
 408 going to tip over... he was, suddenly he slowed down, and he was aware
 409 about this, so he stopped. But when I was doing this to him, I didn't. I nearly, I
 410 nearly put him on the floor. [General laughter] I was still aware, I mean, still
 411 aware between the norms, if you see what I mean.

412 Ali: He's still alive.

413 Jarik: Yes, he's still here, he didn't fall, but I felt, I felt I wasn't as gentle as
 414 him, yeah.

415 Fides: Yeah, we're doing it within a dance, within a sort of dance... er...
 416 context, we're not trying to beat each other up.

417 Jarik: No.

418 Fides explains term 'sich zusammenraufen'

{A58:11}

419 Fides: And some of what I saw, what you two did, almost looked like that
 420 wrestling it out, and something came out that looked, sort of, like a dance... I
 421 thought that was quite striking.

422 Ali: This has been quite a topic in a different community that I'm part of...
 423 recently talking about the fact that some people find working together in that
 424 kind of slightly 'fighty' way to be really productive. But if you put people who
 425 are like that with people who really don't enjoy wrestly-fighty stuff, you... you
 426 can end up with a really dysfunctional situation, and it's not fair on... y'know...
 427 and there's... there's some gender lines potentially going on there, and things
 428 related to whether minority groups who are less likely to want to participate in
 429 a knock-down-drag-out argument in the office [group laughter] ...find it really
 430 productive... erm... {A59:00}

431 Jarik: Yeah, I really... it does, er... make you aware that... it wasn't working
 432 relationship we was dancing, it was... 'cos I am self-employed, I have no
 433 manager and no boss in all the works, er, all the jobs I do... er... So it was my
 434 personal relationship with my father, parent [Fides & Ramen: mhm, okay, yeah].
 435 So I'm trying to establish this and working on it all my life nearly... y'know...
 436 [Fides: yeah] ...but immediately talk about it later... yeah... and it was
 437 interesting. And I have realised that, er... what you [points to Ramen] are
 438 doing...er, that you didn't... you know, initially, when Fides started pulling to
 439 different side, you just grabbed her back... you don't want her to go there, but
 440 then she done it again, and the second time you went with her...

441 Ramen: Yeah... yeah.

442 Jarik: ...so... and then you say you dancing – 'I was dancing with her', and
 443 then you tried to influence her in different... take it... take the whole dance to
 444 a different direction, maybe, and see what comes up. And that what Martin
 445 was doing is... er... when I was doing the sudden moves, he was coping very
 446 well. He is quite a fit person, he is a big man, so he was coping very well, he
 447 didn't resist... [Ramen: Right...] ...you see. [Ramen: yeah.] And... erm... I
 448 found out that, er... in the fighting that I've had with my parent, before... I
 449 remember when I was a child I couldn't fight 'cos I was weak – I wouldn't
 450 been having the mental capabilities to... er... to say any words. And then
 451 when I got them in a physical sense, then I was fighting back... I was fighting
 452 back, and it was mad... and it was mad – I left... you see... [Ramen: Yeah.]
 453 So when I was dancing, y'know, with Martin... and he was doing those
 454 sudden moves – even though they were much less sudden than I was – then I
 455 didn't fight back, I was just flowing with it... [Fides & Ramen: mhm] ...and
 456 there was no resistance. So, er, in my circumstance, I found out that if, er, I
 457 will face a similar scenario, even though it, er, won't be ever with my parent,
 458 'cos he's not alive any more... erm... I should perhaps not fight back – I need
 459 to stay focused and aware and follow the moves. [Fides: Mhm.] But the
 460 thing is when you are facing the aggressive situation – high populations,
 461 competition, your behaviour mind is shutting down, you can't think – fight or

Commented [FM39]: JA & MA: personal connectedness gets in the way of playing a dysfunctional relationship

Commented [FM40]: Physical limitation – JA was obviously pushing the boundaries.

Commented [FM41]: Martin did not 'copy' Jarik's 'recklessness'; consideration for the real, physically present Jarik
 → limitations to 'being in role'
 → What does this say about being 'in role' as L or F?
 → see also MA's problem with boundaries (RefCon1); boundaries between person & role (can be positive or negative)

Commented [FM42]: Father = authority

Commented [FM43]: JA dances dysfunctional relationship with authoritarian father, almost injuring MA

Commented [FM44]: JA: idea of finding a different way to influence partner, in a 'non-fighting' way.

Commented [FM45]: JA is obviously referring to the demonstration that was given as an introduction to the exercise.

Commented [FM46]: So JA is quite aware that he has been pushing the physical boundaries – was he 'testing' someone else's reactions to being pushed to the limits?

Commented [FM47]: Obviously his father

Leadership = authority /
 authoritarianism =
 aggression = violence
 ⇒ coping with leader =
 'fighting back',
 resisting, 'overcome
 with emotions'
 New meaning of:
 focused / aware /
 follow / communicate
 differently
 New meaning of
 following: parallel to
 martial arts?

[...]

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Taking the lead =
 'management judo'
 → martial arts
 But this is still **fighting**,
 albeit in a different style

462 flight...so it's difficult for me. But I believe that I should be **working on the fact**
 463 **to stay focused and try to be calm...** and just cope with it. **Don't go**
 464 **overcome with emotions, not fighting back** – just be there and follow what's
 465 **going on, try to, maybe, communicate in different ways.** [Fides: Mhmm.] So
 466 it's very interesting, yes... mhmm. {A59:00-1:01:26}

467 Ramen: Yah, that was... something that I've... I've kinda realised that, maybe,
 468 I need to stop... Well [smiles], we'll explore it a bit later, in the... in the next
 469 session, but... erm... So **that's something I want to try and explore...** **trying to**
 470 **move with it a bit, but steer it in the direction I want it to go in the end...** See if
 471 it works [chuckles].
 {A1:01:53}

472 Ali: 'Management judo'.
 473 Ramen: Management judo.
 474 [Laughter]

475 *Fides talking about Elvira & Ted in last workshop: not necessarily a*
 476 *'harmonious' partnership, but they agreed a strategy, stuck to it, and it worked,*
 477 *with good results – i.e. they played to their strengths.*

478 Fides: Right, yes... so... [Ramen points at her] ...yeah?

479 Ramen: Just wanted to add: one of the really interesting things was... I
 480 realised I had to pretend to be Ali... [Ali giggles] ...because otherwise we
 481 weren't gonna get anywhere. [Laughs, looking at Ali, who also laughs.] So I
 482 had to think 'okay, how... how is she gonna react to this situation?' [Grins; Ali
 483 chuckles.] Because, erm... her... her boss appears to not lead
 484 [Fides: yeah]...so I was 'okay, if I don't **lead** either, **then nothing's gonna**
 485 **happen...**' [General chuckling.] '...so we'll both stand here... and look at each
 486 other'. [More laughter.] And I thought **'What would Ali do with that sort of**
 487 **character? I'll lead!'** [More laughter, some crosstalking.]

488 [Throughout Ramen talking, Ted is sitting still and looking very pensive,
 489 without smiling.]

490 Ali [laughing]: What would Ali do – **you've got Ali sussed!**

491 Ramen: So... yeah... so... that was... that was a kind of 'aha moment', erm...
 492 yeah...
 {A1:04:17}

493 Fides: So... shall we... What's the time? How are we doing timewise?
 494 Ramen: Mhmm... Not bad. Not bad at all.
 495 Fides: Do we have the time to do this before... do the next part before the
 496 break?

497 Ramen: Hmm... ha hmmm, ha hmmm, ha hmmm... [looks at his watch] ...hmm,
 498 well, we could have... No, we could, er...we could have the break now, and
 499 then do the next bit. Or we can do it the other way round – it doesn't matter.

500 Fides [looking around the round]: How do you feel?
 [snip]
 [Short break follows.]

Commented [FM48]: Jarik – Insight: staying focused and calm instead of fighting, finding alternative ways to **influence** or **lead**.

Commented [FM49]: An interesting insight: when you cannot lead – because there is too much resistance – 'stay focused', i.e. with your own focus, either until you can take the lead, or try to influence from a follower position.

Commented [FM50]: Ramen – insight: stop pushing an unwilling follower harder, explore alternative ways to lead.

Commented [FM51]: Ramen talking about **leading in following manner**.

Commented [FM52]: AL sees parallel to martial arts.

Commented [FM53]: Ali's strategy: **Taking the lead** when leading is required but not given

Dancing the 'difficult relationship' 2a

11:10 15:--~13:30	8. Dancing 'the difficult relationship'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Difficult' relationship 2 • Dance the role, stage 1 & 2 (15')
1:21:40-1:22:20		Intro & reminder

{A1:21:41}

501 Fides: Be aware of where you are... be aware of the space you're in. Feel the
 502 whole person... yes, be *in* the person that you're impersonating. Erm... the
 503 people you're dealing with – try things out. It's only a dance – try things out.
 504 It's not your job! [General grins and chuckles.] Right – are we still in our
 505 partnerships?

506 General muttering: Yes... mhmm... yes...
 507 Fides: Okay.
 508 [Participants in pairs, quietly talking to each other. Some laughter.]
 509 [Ramen and Ali get into hold, Ali leading. The others are standing apart,
 510 waiting.]

511 {A1:22:31} Music starts: Rumba, *Song from a Secret Garden*.
 512 {A1:22:46} Music stops – Fides technical issues. {A1:22:59} music starts
 513 again.]

1:22:20-1:24:30		Dancing the 'difficult person' stage 1
1:24:30-1:25:11		Feedback to partner.

A8.3 EXAMPLE CODED TRANSCRIPT FROM REFCON3

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Transcript last saved 07 July 2024 11:27

RefCons 3
page 1 of 6

Post-WS 3 Reflective conversation – Jarik
Mon 10/06/2019 10:00
Meersbrook Park

[???] = don't understand
[...] = nonverbal utterances (eg laughs, giggles, chuckles) & gestures (where relevant); where appropriate, refer to video & use { }
(...) = time in audio recording – file: JP3_190609_001.mp3. Length: 29:19 (Backup file: JP3_190608_0222.mp3; not referred to in transcript)
{...} = time in video recording – file: JP3_20190610_101019.mp4. Length: 30:29

1 F: Hmm. Okay. Something seems to be working. Right.

2 Jarik: Okay.

3 F: I'll take my hat off, so I can see more. Thanks for making it.

4 Jarik: No prob, thank you. Cheers.

5 F: Yeah. Well, generally, I just wanted to ask you, sort of, what it's been like, with hindsight – what you've, sort of, in terms of your experience of leading and following... and what it means for you, in terms of leadership.

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8 Jarik: In general, yeah?

9 F: Yeah, sort of...

10 Jarik: Hmm. (0:43) (1:10) Hm, erm... I believe that, erm... [redacted] er... er... is supposed to be, sort of, facilitation only. It's not like a dictatorship model, that is one chief executive, er... saying what he or she wants. Er... even though we live in democracy... [F: hmhm] ...in... the... the business model is still a... a dictatorship, in a way. So, I believe that the democratic [redacted] supposed to be kind of facilitation based on, erm... joint effort, if that makes sense. Erm... [F: Mhm.] So, er... as we were trying, er... to do, er... one person is [redacted] and then the... the [redacted] is swapped, er, to other person, depending perhaps on the skills in professional environment and experience and importance and urgency, and when the... the situation is more relaxed, we perhaps will be working more collaboratively, collaboratera, collaboratively... gosh, what's the word?

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22 F: Collaboratively, yeah?

23 Jarik: Collaboratively, thank you. And, er... er... it may take time, and if the businesses will not be focus only for profit as it was, er, for centuries – and it's ancient, in my mind, er... – but, rather, for the wellbeing of the people, employees, and the society... erm... the other forms of life and, er, the environment, really, and which we're supposed to, as open-minded people, do... erm... erm... er, then we don't need to rush. [F: Hmhm.] We don't need to gain as much profit as we... er... or some people like to, but we rather focus on those things. Er, however, when a critical situation arise... arises, er, then, er, perhaps we won't have so much of time and the [redacted] should – perhaps will automatically or naturally move to, kind of, a more directive, er, and the situation will be directed by the most experienced people, perhaps, are still [redacted] to the feedback of others, but there... there won't be as much time to... think through things, so, yeah, er, that's how I see it. Erm... yeah.

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36 F: Yeah, so your model of – your personal model of leadership is less based on formal authority and more on... skill, experience, er, and... and collaboration?

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39 Jarik: Yes.

40 F: Yeah.

41 Jarik: Skill, experience and collaboration, yeah, mhm.

42 F: Yeah, okay. Okay. Erm... you did say something about your... You said quite a bit about your... your... your childhood and your early experience of parental power and parental authority. [Jarik: Mmm...] ...erm... and has that influenced your attitude to work and... and to work leadership?

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46 Jarik: Yes, I believe so, yeah, because I... I'm... I may be potential... erm... erm... I may be potential authoritative [redacted], if you like... [F: mhm] ...because I was experienced with, er... I was, erm... exposed to it. But, er... I didn't like it quite a bit... [F: mhm] ...and I found different ways of, er... erm... working through relationships and... and collaboration environment is authoritative thing. [F: mhm] Erm... so... erm... it could be, well, yes, that I... [F: mhm] ...my dislike was so strong that, er... it has influenced the direction of my thinking, yeah.

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54 F: Mhm. Okay. Erm... one thing I wanted to flag up, one thing you made quite a strong point about, erm... in the last session was you... you talked about externalising, materialising and expressing emotions... [Jarik: mhm] ...rather than bottling them up. [Jarik: Mhm.] Erm... how... On the other hand, that... that is, I can understand where you're coming from, and that it's important, but on the other hand, how would that work in a... in a work context... in a work environment if you suddenly blurt out and... [Jarik: mhmhm] ...and shout at people?

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62 Jarik: Mhm... er... I... I believe that, er... for you don't need to externalise your emotions or bottled feelings through shouting. Er, you can... er... externalise them through various forms – movement, through art, through conversation, er... facilitated conversation by the experienced person – so I believe it can be managed without any unnecessary aggressivity. [F: Mhm.]

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Preferred leadership =

- facilitation
- democracy
- based on joint effort
- not dictatorship

(cf. TB: stances 1&2)

Personal model of leadership:
L should be based on

- skill
- experience
- importance
- urgency
- collaborative working

and benefit

- wellbeing of people inside & outside organisations
- the environment
- not profit

Early experience of leadership as authoritarian

Expressing difficult / 'negative' emotions in constructive ways: movement, art, facilitated conversation

Commented [FM1]: leadership as facilitation / democracy, not dictatorship.

Commented [FM2]: Leadership

- as facilitation
- as flexible, not static/fixed / assigned to one person only
- based on skill / experience / urgency, not hierarchy

Commented [FM3]: Business model; not for profit, but for wellbeing (of staff, society, environment)

Commented [FM4]: 'Crisis leadership' as more 'directive' → based on experience, not hierarchy

Commented [FM5]: JP's model of leadership: based on skill, experience, collaboration

Commented [FM6]: Early experience of leadership as authoritarian → 'strong dislike' → prefers working through relationships & collaboration

Commented [FM7]: Finding ways to express difficult emotions through non-aggressive, creative, facilitated channels (e.g. art or movement)

67 Erm... and I think that if the emotions are not heavily suppressed, there
68 should be – there shouldn't be any aggressivity or shouting, you know.

69 F: Mhm. Yeah, okay. yeah, now I see where you're coming from, 'cos I was
70 thinking about, well, there's your, sort of, so-called positive emotions – things
71 like, you know, affection or so, but, of course, there... there are what people
72 consider as negative emotions... [Jarik: mhm] ...like anger and... and
73 anxiety, but also sadness. [Jarik: Mhm.] Erm... and the people you work
74 with – you can live... you can live with that, with... when they're sad, or when
75 they... when they're anxious? You don't have a...? So, you...

76 Jarik: Intimate relationships, you mean, with them?

77 F: ...you don't... you don't expect... Well, a lot of people... Okay, in... in...
78 How long have you been in this country?

79 Jarik: Erm... 10... Well, 10 in Sheffield. I dunno... [F: okay] ...maybe 12
80 years... [F: yeah, yeah] ...altogether.

81 F: Okay. So, you've probably experienced the way a lot of people use the
82 word 'professional': 'That is unprofessional.' [Jarik: Mhm, okay] F: Or,
83 erm... 'she's very professional about it'. [Jarik: Mhm.] And it often implies
84 the... the 'stiff upper lip'... [Jarik: mhm] ...that people don't show any... any
85 kind of emotion or... [Jarik: mhm... mhm...] How do you feel... how do you feel
86 about that? Is that not a way, or is that a way you... you would like to work
87 and...?

88 Jarik: Mhm, erm... yeah, I... I believe that, er... kind... kind of... intimacy's
89 supposed to be maintained with your work... work colleagues, erm... er, which
90 means that sometimes we express the emotions but not as, perhaps, er...
91 intensely as with someone you have a truly intimate relationship with. Erm...
92 er, to be, er... have a stiffen, er, lip and be so professional in an environment
93 with people you are working, for example, 30, 40 hours a week, this is not
94 really appropriate, I believe. You know, you... you... you should, kind of...
95 This is the... this is the blurring edge of the professionalism and... and... and
96 when intimacy and friendship – because we are there not to, erm... form
97 strong, long-lasting relationships, we are, er, meeting in the workplace to
98 perform specific tasks. [F: Mhm.] So, you know, erm... a good balance, but
99 good balance is different for each person, you see. For me, I would – I would
100 like to have a certain level of intimacy, as I say, but perhaps not as... as deep
101 as I have with my partner and... and close friends. [F: Mhm.] Erm... but on the
102 other, on the other hand, I perhaps would like to be working, also, with my
103 friends on specific projects, but maybe not 40 hours a week, that's true. So,
104 it... it all varies, and it's, er, difficult for me to rationalise all... [F: mhm] ...at
105 this moment.

(8:36)

106 F: That's fine, that's fine. I just wanted to gauge your... [Jarik: mhm] ...you
107 know, what your... where you are at the moment and what your attitude and
108 what your... [Jarik: mhm] ...how you think about things.

109 Jarik: Yeah, I believe that the... the... the, erm... authoritative attitude of
110 er... my upbringing, er... er... has influenced the... the way how I work, which
111 is, erm... I'm self-employed. I do three various jobs and... and each of them,
112 I'm boss to myself. [laughs] you know, even though I am craving
113 collaboration. [F: Mhm.] So now I am going to stay self-employed, but I'm...
114 I'm seeking other... er... professionals to work with in a team... [F: mhm]
115 ...which, er... I'm on a good way, er... and hopefully is going to happen soon.
116 So, yes, that's how it influenced... er... the way how I work. [F: Mhm.] I work
117 without any er, erm... supervision, if you like... hehehehe [laughs]

118 F: Mhm, mhm, mhm. And you like that?

119 Jarik: Erm... er, yeah, I like it. However, I miss, er... collaboration with the
120 people. [F: Yeah, yeah.] I don't necessarily need anyone to be telling me what
121 I should do or how I should do it, because a particular person likes it a specific
122 way... er, I can do... [F: mhm] ...judge this by myself, but I want to collaborate
123 and create something with other people. [F: Mhm.] And you can discuss those
124 things... rather discuss and... and share and collaborate, than to just take
125 commands and perform.

(9:54)

126 F: Yeah, yeah, no, I understand that. Erm... yeah, that answers the next...
127 That actually addresses... Because I was going to ask you – you mentioned
128 something about the benefit of becoming more aware of one's own behaviour,
129 erm... and that... that that would have helped to have better relationships with
130 others, but... that's... that's basically what you've said. [Jarik: Mhm.] I... I was
131 going to ask you how that works out in a work context, but you've explained
132 that quite well. Erm... ah, there's a tricky question, or a tricky thing I wanted to
133 ask you about, because you – in your... [mutters inaudibly, leafing through
134 papers] ...in here... er... I can't remember where it was... it was on...
135 question 10... [leafing through papers] ...it was on the purple one. No...
136 hhm... [mutters, paper rustling] ...oh, yes. Oh, two things, actually. There's a
137 word I can't read. What did you... [Jarik: mhm] ...what did you mean to say
138 there? [Points to paper.]

139 Jarik [smiling]: Funny.

140 F: Funny?

141 Jarik: Interesting and funny... [F: oh, okay] ...at the same time.

(11:04)

'Intimate' work relationships –
blurring boundaries between
professionalism and friendship

'Balancing' closeness and
distance between colleagues

Rejection of authoritarianism vs
'craving collaboration'

Commented [FM8]: Relationships with colleagues vs
relationships with friends: different degrees of intimacy

Commented [FM9]: Closeness with colleagues – but not 40
hours a week!

Commented [FM10]: Mixed feelings: authoritarian upbringing
⇒ self-employed, 'own boss' → but craving collaboration

Commented [FM11]: Missing collaboration

142 F: That's fine, yeah, okay.

143 Jarik: Mhm.

144 F: And you said here, "When I was dancing with a person who I found more
145 attractive than others" and... [Jarik: mhm] ...and I thought, "Ooh, this is a
146 tricky thing"... [Jarik: mhm] ...because when, at work, okay, when we form a
147 team, when we're self-employed and form a team, and we work with people
148 we get on with... [Jarik: mhm] ...then we have a choice – so... so you would
149 have a choice. But sometimes we also have to work... Even if you do that,
150 you might still have to have customers or... or... or clients, or so, that you
151 don't find particularly attractive... [Jarik: mhm] ...erm... and, basically, I was
152 going to ask you: so how does that... how... how do you work that one out?
153 because, yes, in relationships, if we work with somebody who we gel with
154 or... [Jarik: mhm] ...we're friends with or... [Jarik: mhm] ...or where we have
155 what they call a wavelength... [Jarik: mhm] ...that's great. [Jarik: Mhm.] But
156 then often we have to work with people where that's not the case.

(12:08)

Work dilemma: rejection of
authoritarianism vs 'craving
collaboration'

157 Jarik: Erm... I will try to understand the person. I will, I will... You know, it's
158 better to work with people you, er, are attracted to because, you know, the
159 flow is better and, you... you... you enjoy it more, and so on, rather than be
160 miserable, but if this is the scenario, I'm trying to understand. I say when the
161 client is, erm... behaving strangely or just, kind of, shooting me with the
162 questions which I find quite inappropriate, I just think, "Okay, I'm trying to
163 answer the... the... the questions in my way to the point," but I'm trying to
164 think what is causing the person to behave like this? Is it, like, bad day, is it
165 bad week, it was, like, bad year, a bad relationship, bad up-bringing?
166 Something must be there that I don't understand. So, I'm trying to avoid the
167 judgement. I am trying to understand it... erm... And, erm... if I need to be
168 with the person over and over again, which doesn't really happen because my
169 work character is different now, erm... er, I'm talking to people openly, but
170 it's... it's not easy to have such open conversations with some [F: mhm]
171 ...because there are people who are scared of it. [They... they... you un-...
172 unreveal their past traumas or things which they are not really comfortable
173 with and they didn't talk with anyone about it. That's why... [F: mhm] ...they,
174 perhaps, show this specific behaviour, which causes the friction. [F: Mhm.]
175 So, it's... it's tricky. It depends from person to person, but first I try to
176 understand it and... er... see... tell to myself that I don't know the story of the
177 person... [F: mhm] ...so I cannot be... er, judgemental. [F: Mhm.] And I try to
178 find ways. And if there is a lot of friction, really, I talk to the people. I say,
179 "Oh... er... I'd like to talk to you this afternoon," and I... I prefer to walk 'cos
180 it's better. You're not in small place, you know, you don't drink coffee, and
181 caffeine makes you more anxious sometimes, some people, so I say, "Why
182 don't we just talk?" You see, we don't even have to have eye contact, we can
183 just talk about things and sometime have a glance and it was better. It doesn't
184 happen often, but when I go, I took my half-sister like this to my cousin 'cos
185 those are, kind of, family relationships and we sort it out. It was getting
186 emotional, but then, you know, since the conversation, it works much better.

(14:14) (14:32)

187 F: Ah, okay.

188 Jarik: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Laughs.]

189 F: Right, yeah. So, did that actually happen in the... during the workshops?
190 Did you, at some point, end up in a partnership with somebody that you didn't
191 get on terribly well with?

192 Jarik: Erm... er... That wasn't the time, er... for it, er... but... er, you know,
193 erm... yeah, there was enough time for it. I mean, erm... er, when you... and
194 you... I can tell that I find this person more attractive or this person less
195 attractive, but it doesn't mean that I really want to have a relationship with this
196 person, I will want to be in their presence all the time or I really dislike this
197 person because of something. No, you just say, "Look at it – it is like this", but
198 you don't really bother about it too much.

(14:59) (15:17)

199 F: That I understand, that I under... I meant some... some people... some
200 people, for example, ended up in a... Well, these were very temporary
201 partnerships, obviously. [Jarik: Mhmm, okay.] It was just for the sake of going
202 through an exercise and... and, erm... and working through something. Erm...
203 but some people ended up in, in occasional partnerships where they felt,
204 "Oops, somehow we're not very well-matched," or they had a sense, oh, the
205 other person was irritating, or the way, the way that other person behaved
206 was – oo ooh! didn't feel, they didn't feel comfortable with. [Jarik: Hm.] And
207 there were several of those moments... [Jarik: mhm] ...and I was just
208 wondering whether you had moments like that? [Jarik: erm... hmm...]
209 ...whether you can remember?

(14:04) (16:08)

WS1: Lack of connection: with
AW: "jerky", 'power struggle'
cf. AW1: very different view!
WS3: more enjoyable (see 'free
dance' – Tango), as AW "was
more open"

210 Jarik: I can't recall any of those moments... Or, but... what comes to my mind
211 is that, er... with, er... Ali, oh, the initial dance, the first time we danced
212 together, it was very jerky and, kind of... [F: mhm] ...it was very power-like,
213 er... struggle. I think. [F: Mhm.] Er... but then the [chuckles] last one, it was
214 very good, it was very fun. Like, we were just, you know, whirling around
215 the... the... the room, and... [F: mhm] ...we enjoyed ourselves. It was really
216 nice, yeah. Erm... so I found it how it, er... changed... at least in my mind.

Commented [FM12]: echoes NK11!

Commented [FM13]: Dealing with people who are 'scared of
difficult' open' conversations

Commented [FM14]: Finding ways to connect with people
when there is no 'wavelength' – walking together helps

Commented [FM15]: Walking side by side as a position to
talk about 'difficult things' – no opposition
→ Conversation of intellect + body

Commented [FM16]: WS1: Lack of connection: with AW:
'jerky', 'power struggle'
cf. AW1: very different view!

217 And perhaps because I get her know more, she got me know more, so, you
 218 know, she was more open, in a way. This is how I interpreted the thing. [
 (16:27) {16:45}]

219 F: Mhm.

220 Jarik: Er, but, yeah... erm... no, no-no-no, I can't remember.

221 F: Okay. No, that's fine. Erm... Then, basically... I'll just see... [leafing
 222 through papers] Oh, you also said something really interesting... That was in
 223 the first snapshot. Yeah, this bit... [rustling papers] where you said... Come
 224 and have a look at it. You were following... "Without touch, I was aware that I
 225 can influence the leader by gentle, subtle gestures. However, when a physical
 226 touch was introduced, I was concerned about a possibility that my subtle
 227 influences could be uncovered [??] which could cause a disturbance in
 228 relationship and disagreement." [Jarik: Mhm.] So, that almost sounds... that
 229 almost sounds as if you were, sort of, secretly, sort of... [chuckles]
 230 manipulating the person you were with – and you didn't want them to notice.
 231 {18:09} (17:52)

232 Jarik: Hmm... [smiles and nods]

233 F: Is that what it meant or...?

234 Jarik: Oh, you can interpret it like this. Er...

235 F: No, no, I'm just asking, 'cos it... I was puzzled... [Jarik: hmm] ...and I
 236 thought you might've meant some... you might've meant that, but you
 237 might've meant something completely different. That's why I wanted to ask
 238 you about it.

239 Jarik: Erm... er, yeah, I just found it out by coincidence and I realised that this
 240 is – it was like this, this is a possibility, erm... but, er, yeah, so, I think when I
 241 was dancing with Ali...

242 F: What did you do? What happened there?

243 Jarik: Er, when I was dancing with Ali, er, it was, erm... erm... if you
 244 remember, she, er... described when we were swapping the leadership and
 245 followership, er... it was... she said, er... "With Ja – Jarik, it was like, [makes
 246 rapid hand movements] tic-tic-tic-tic-tic-tic-tic – like this. With the old
 247 lady, who, er... I think, er... what is her name? Erm... African lady, curly hair.

248 F: Oh, erm... Yasmin.
 (19:04) (18:46)

249 Jarik: Yasmin, thank you. It was we were like, er... [makes hand gestures]
 250 leadership-followership... and er... leadership-followership... "and with Jarik,
 251 er... Jarik, it was like 'tic-tic-tic-tic-tic-tic-tic' which I have perceived like a
 252 fluent thing. [F: Ahh...] Like, mine... my mind... [F: yeah?] ...my mind have
 253 created an illusion of... er... of that I'm continuously [?] and [?] at
 254 the same time, which was happening because... [F: okay] ...when you are
 255 [?], you have to still be open, your awareness has to be open, because
 256 when other person's going to pick it up, you need to be [F: yeah] aware about
 257 it. [F, nodding: Yes.] So you are [?] and [?] at the same time...
 258 [F: yeah] ...that's how I was interpreting it. [F: Yeah.] I believe that's... that's
 259 how... how... how it was for me, at least. So that was a continuous movement
 260 of thing... [F: mhm] ...and I – she was trying to influence, and she was
 261 [?] this hand, but I was doing this hand, and she was [?] this
 262 hand, and then I was holding her hand with the other one. And it was very
 263 interesting. It was just a continuous fluid feeling that was... [F: mhm] my...
 264 erm... erm... interpretation. And then when we, er... er, separated, er, and we
 265 were in... without touch, and then, er... one person's supposed – she's
 266 supposed to be [?] only... me, and I was [?] her, but after that
 267 experience, after that previous experience, I just, kind of, made the different
 268 movement with the hand than... er... she was doing, and I think that she
 269 changed her direction of her hand towards the movement I made. I said, "all
 270 right then" 'cos I was quite aware it was going on. [F: Oh, okay.] And then I
 271 was... I was holding her before and I just subtly just flicked, like this with...
 272 with... with my finger... [F: mhm] ...and she went to this direction. I said, "Oh,"
 273 and it worked. But when we were in touch, and then she's supposed to only
 274 [?] and I say, "if I'm going to do the movement, she'll feel that I'm going a
 275 different direction". With the friction, the direct friction, she won't be... she will
 276 be aware about it... [F: yeah, yeah] ...much more than about the subtle
 277 gestures I made, you see. [F: Oh, okay.] So, I see... er, and then, er, 'cos,
 278 okay, so that will be, kind of, a breach of the agreement 'cos we agreed that
 279 she's going to [?]. [F: oh] ...and then she will find out that I'm... I'm
 280 pushing to different direction, she won't be happy, you see. [Laughs.]
 (21:05)

281 F: Oh, I see, okay. So...

282 Jarik: So, that's how I saw it.

283 F: So, does that mean...? I'm trying to understand... [Jarik: Mhm.] Does that
 284 mean you were trying to... You were... when you were a follower, you were
 285 still trying to lead?

286 Jarik: Er, well, no...

287 F: Or was it...

288 Jarik: It was short time, so, for me, it was fun.

289 F: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Commented [FM17]: WS3: more enjoyable (see 'free dance' –
 Tango)

Awareness of different
 views/perceptions from partners.

"leading and following at the same
 time" → "listening leader"

What worked:

- "continuous movement",
 "continuous fluid feeling"
- leading with one hand,
 following with the other
- After separating (physically),
 the previous connection still
 'echoes' on
- 'Clandestine' leading when not
 in touch

Commented [FM18]: Aware of different views/perceptions
 from partners. Not entirely clear whose perception is which.

Commented [FM19]: "leading and following at the same time"
 → "listening leader"

Commented [FM20]: "continuous movement"

Commented [FM21]: leading with one hand, following with the
 other

Commented [FM22]: "continuous fluid feeling"

Commented [FM23]: After separating (physically), the
 previous connection still 'echoes' on.

Commented [FM24]: Leading a particular direction 'in touch'
 would be more noticeable (by partner) than without touch.
 'Clandestine' leading.

(Playful) experimenting (as follower) with 'clandestine' leading when not in touch, "secretly influencing the leader"

(Playful) experimenting: different environment / settings / people / activities ⇒ different take on things

Good experiences: "different taste of good":

- Tom: nice & warm, grandfatherly
- AW: funny at times
- YR: flirtatious
- MN: mate-to-mate

Comfortable vs uncomfortable feelings: subtle
 → sometimes with the same person

290 Jarik: Yeah, I was just trying – "whoa" – how it worked. My intention wasn't to
 291 [F: yeah, yeah] ...even though the [F: yeah, yeah] ...s always
 292 [F: yeah, yeah] by the people around... [F: of course] ...even if the [F: yeah, yeah] wants or
 293 not [F: yeah, yeah] But I... I... it was very playful for me. [F: It was.] I was
 294 just, "Whoa, this is cool!" you see. And it was short time, so... [F: mhm] I... I
 295 didn't make a plan and intentions, and I believe that, er... my personality is
 296 not greedy and manipulative, so... [F: no, no] ...if I am in context of this for a
 297 long time, you know, I... I... I will... I will this, er... do so, like, secretly
 298 [F: yeah, yeah] - I will become the [F: yeah, yeah] myself. I believe, you know,
 299 but, hopefully, in collaboration with... with... with others, yeah.

300 F: Yeah. No, yeah, no, no, I thought you... I didn't... Let's say, I didn't
 301 experience you as a manipulative person at all...

302 Jarik: No, that's fine.

303 F: ...and that's why I was puzzled about what it said... [Jarik: mhm] and that's
 304 why I wanted to ask you.

305 Jarik: Yeah, sure.

306 F: So, it was, like, more experimenting...? Was it more like experimenting
 307 what... what kind of thing has what kind of impact?

308 Jarik: I... I... I wasn't creating, erm... an... an in-depth research 'cos of the
 309 time... [F: mhm] ...and what I can do, what I can't... a methodology – no, I
 310 was just playing, it was fun.

311 F: Experimenting?

312 Jarik: Experimenting, yes.

313 F: Yeah.

314 Jarik: Yeah. Yeah, it was very nice, it's very... [laughing] the whole thing, you
 315 know, it makes you think from a different perspective... [F: yeah] ...because
 316 you are in a different environment, in different settings, with different things,
 317 with different people, so you have a different take on it. Hehehehehe [laughs].

318 F: Mhm. Who did you... who did you get on best with in terms of the... the...
 319 the lead-and-follow – across the, sort of, three workshops? Or do you, did you
 320 have a feel that something... that, sort of, maybe one particular partner you
 321 worked particularly well with?

322 Jarik: I will say that, erm... erm... I worked with... I had a good experience,
 323 er... with er... quite a few people... [F: mhm] ...but the experience was a... a
 324 different, erm... how to say it... different taste of good... [F: okay, yeah]
 325 ...interaction [F: yeah] ...if you know what I mean, [F: Mhm.] So, the quality –
 326 the quality of the good interaction was... was different, in the sense of...
 327 erm... erm... I'm not sure if this is clear, but, er... you have a, let's say, a
 328 rainbow – you have various colours in a rainbow... [F: mhm] But let's... let's,
 329 er, assume that all the rainbow is good. [F: Mhm.] So, I had with different
 330 person different good experience, and perhaps the specific person, like, for
 331 example, erm... Ted, he was really warm and... and... and nice, he was like
 332 grandpa, thing to remember. It was really nice. It was... And then, er... with,
 333 er... er... at specific moments with Ali, it was very funny. Then, er... er... with,
 334 er, erm... er, oh, would just say...

(23:51)

335 F: Martin?

336 Jarik: Yasmin.

337 F: Oh, Yasmin.

338 Jarik: Yeah. It was, er... well, kind of... er, attraction thing, a little bit, you
 339 know, kind of... er... er... I felt maybe slightly flattered, as well, er, or how
 340 shall I put it? A little bit, not much. And then...

341 F: Flirtatious?

342 Jarik: Pardon?

343 F: Flirtatious?

344 Jarik: Flirtatious, yes, thank you. Yeah, yeah, maybe so, but very gently, you
 345 know, we could just see this inclination, then it goes, and then, erm... with,
 346 er... with Martin, we had, like, kind of... er... er... mate-to-mate sort of
 347 discussion, you know... the interaction was also. And if I should say negative,
 348 erm... I can't really... No, it was okay for me, yeah. Erm...

[Much background noise – interruption from a dog and its owner.
 Break in conversation (24:27-24:43) {24:47-25:04}]

349 F: Okay, well, negative in the sense of maybe... maybe, I mean, an encounter
 350 of where you felt uncomfortable or where you felt... [Jarik: mhm] ...I'd rather,
 351 sort of, stay away a bit," or... [Jarik: mhm] ...and that doesn't have to be...
 352 yeah... [Jarik: ...erm...] I just mean negative in the sense of 'uncomfortable'
 353 or 'not at ease'.

354 Jarik: Yeah. Yeah, so maybe the... they're subtle, those flirtatious feelings,
 355 and they're subtle, those uncomfortable feeling... feelings. Yeah. It... it... it
 356 varies. It even happens with the same person sometimes, you see.

357 F: Yeah. Ah, yeah, yeah.

358 Jarik: Yeah. Yes, it was sometimes positive, sometimes it was, it was less...
 359 [F: mhm] ...or it was going into this spec... negative spectrum where I feel
 360 uncomfortable... er... spectrum, if you like. Erm... yeah, I... I found out that,

Commented [FM25]: Playful 'manipulation' – experimenting with clandestine leadership.

Commented [FM26]: In more serious situations, he would not lead 'furtively', but openly.

Commented [FM27]: playful experimenting

Commented [FM28]: Encounters:
 TB – warm and nice
 AW – very funny; flirtatious

Commented [FM29]: Encounters:
 MN – mate-to-mate

Commented [FM30]: Encounters:
 Comfortable vs uncomfortable – sometimes with the same person!

PhD Project

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RefCons 3

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361 er... erm... when we did the final dance, I kind of, er... enjoyed it, er... with...
 362 er... with, er... Ram... Ramson... [F: Ramen] ...Ramen, thank you, Ramen.
 363 It was... it was very funny [starts laughing]. He really wanted me to grab my
 364 hands and dance, as this is his comfortable zone, and I wanted to just dance,
 365 but no, without the hands... [F laughs] it was... it was funny 'cos he wanted...
 366 always offering his hand. I say, "No, no way we dance like that" [holding arms
 367 as if cradling a baby, swinging from side to side, laughing] ...hehehehe...
 368 and... so, it was funny, you see. [F: Okay.] And, er, hmm... yeah, with him, I
 369 did have those, er... going... erm... negative spectrum of emotions. [F: Mhm.]
 370 But then I found out, even with, er... hmm, er... Yasmin. I found that, erm...
 371 er, sometimes I felt uncomfortable, perhaps maybe, er... because I... I...
 372 found... found it as a threat I was thinking about it, most likely... 'cos with
 373 Martin, it... it was sometimes like, really like suddenly macho-and-macho
 374 thing, a little bit, and also it wasn't, like, unpleasant to dance with him without
 375 touching. We were touching each other, doing this, it was fun, yeah?
 376 [F: Hmmhmm?] But dancing opposite ourselves, it was, kind of, different,
 377 yeah? So, I say, "Okay, so this may be a kind of threat". I can understand this
 378 because there is a man-and-man thing going on deeply in our mind, but what
 379 about Yasmin – why I felt uncomfortable with her? I said perhaps it was a
 380 threat for me, as well as it was Martin from the male/male perspective – she
 381 was a threat to me because it was a threat to my ego that if she... I wanted to
 382 perform so she will like me, and if she will dislike me, this is a threat. So,
 383 that's why, what was creating the uncomfortable feelings, I was thinking. But it
 384 was very subtle, ever so subtle. It wasn't like full on.
 385 F: It sounds like a performance kind of pressure.
 386 Jank: Yes, yeah, maybe – exactly! [F: Yeah.] So, I didn't have performance
 387 pressure with... with Ramen, I didn't have performance pressure with,
 388 erm... er, Ted. [F: Ted.] Yeah. Er... and so on. It was very fun, like. And with
 389 Ali, [laughs] as well, like, er... er, erm... but then, yeah, with Martin, I felt this
 390 – something is going into the uncomfortable... It wasn't uncomfortable, but it
 391 was going there, and with, er... Yasmin as well, and I was having... Then
 392 when I was comparing those two people, how it is with... I felt the same
 393 feeling even though, er... er... Yasmin was, er... kind of attractive to me and,
 394 er... erm... Martin, you know, he's just a man – perhaps it was 'manly thing' –
 395 and then I realised that my ego was threatened, that I will perform and I will
 396 be... how do you say, not denied, but, er...?
 397 F: Rejected.
 398 Jank: Rejected, yes, that's what I was thinking, that... [F: mhm] ...that's
 399 perhaps what creates the... [F: mhm] ...uncomfortable feeling: threat.
 400 F: Threat.
 401 Jank: So, it doesn't matter which kind is threat. It's, you know, alternative
 402 threat, it can be... er... er, ego thing going on, er... neglecton... yeah.
 403 F: Hmmhmm, hmmhmm, mhm... Gaw, thank you! That's a lot of really, really
 404 interesting stuff. Erm... is there anything you want to ask me?
 405 Jank: Hmm, I just, er, er... Hopefully, it is that you will create a good tool.
 406 I believe you are on a good way, and it will give the good tool to the right
 407 people. So, you know, many great tools are misused. Erm... so I hope that, er,
 408 your tool will be used by people to create a more equal and collaborative
 409 society, rather than perform and... erm... acquire or gain more profit as much
 410 as is possible... [F: mhm] ...because we know that profit is not what we need
 411 for our life. It's the community and the relationship. Of course, we need some
 412 money, but... [F: mhm] ...yeah, so that's all I, perhaps, would like to just tell
 413 you. But I'll leave it, er, with you all.
 414 F: Okay. Okay, thank you.
 415 Jank: Yeah, thank you.
 416 F: Well, I'll take... Erm... I'm taking that away with me – very happily.
 417 Jank: It's great – glad to be in this. Thank you.
 418 F: Okay, right. I'll just have to find the button now. It's that one.

Discomfort = threat

- MN: 'manly' stuff, threat to ego
- YR: threat of rejection

⇒ performance pressure

Values:

- equality, collaboration, community, relationship, rather than profit
- great tools can be misused

Commented [FM31]: Encounters:
RS – uncomfortable (because of touch)

Commented [FM32]: Encounters:
'uncomfortable', 'threat':
RS – touch
MN – 'macho'
YR – performance pressure, risk of 'dislike'

Commented [FM33]: Perceived 'threat' of rejection
→ performance pressure

Commented [FM34]: Values:
• equality, collaboration, community, relationship rather than profit
• great tools can be misused

A9 PARTICIPANT 'STORY' AND THEMES (DETAILED EXAMPLE – 4 PAGES OUT OF 10)

MYRA'S STORY

Colour coding etc:

[??] = **unintelligible**

[...] = **nonverbal** utterances (eg laughs, giggles, chuckles, coughs) & gestures (where relevant!); where appropriate, refer to video & use { }

(...) = time in **audio** recording

{...} = time in **video** recording

{X...} = time in **extra video** recording (where there is more than one)

Pink text = notes for myself, 'more needed here'

Teal text = personal experience / impression / autoethnographic bits

Blue text = Ramen's experience / impression / autoethnographic bits

WS = workshop

RC = reflective conversation (one-to-one)

TOI = WS

transcript/observations/impressions

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2. INTRODUCING MYRA³⁴

Myra is a quiet person in her 30s, of Asian or part-Asian heritage (she says), who works as a supply teacher in primary schools and dances Salsa. She seems shy, almost withdrawn – she admits that she does not find it easy to make contact with strangers, feeling insecure in social situations, and more at ease in the company of women than men. In the earlier reflection rounds she only speaks up when directly invited to do so, but gradually she opens up more.

However, her confidence increases gradually, and there is a marked change in her attitude between the start and the end of the workshop series.

³⁴ NB. Short introduction, giving the reader a 'mini portrait' of each participant – partly my observations & impressions, partly what each person says about themselves. I'll say something about that in the section leading up to the 'stories'.

3. WORKSHOP 1 (WS1)

Towards the beginning of the first session, during ‘partnering up’, personalities (or perhaps custom and rehearsed behaviours?) begin to emerge: whilst some participants ‘storm off’ towards their chosen partner (e.g. Jarik), others hesitate, looking around. Making contact with a stranger in an unfamiliar situation is an emotional hurdle for many, especially when they are unsure what to expect. Myra and Elvira are the last ones to move, making contact when, strictly speaking, there are no other choices left, because everybody else has already partnered up.

Remarkably, Myra and Elvira partner up repeatedly with each other – at least once in each of the 3 workshops (this is more than anyone else). Has that first encounter left a connective bond between them? Do they feel more comfortable with each other? Or is it the kind of habit that makes people sit in the same seat throughout a conference? Their activity also looks more ‘adventurous’, even in the first ‘weight-giving’ exercise – Myra steps back twice to allow for more ‘leaning in’, i.e. giving and receiving more weight, whilst other pairs stand almost upright, apparently not trusting themselves or each other enough to lean beyond the range of their own individual balance. All this strongly suggests a bond of trust between those two.

Later in this workshop, Myra makes it explicit how important eye contact is to her, and how it facilitates and shapes encounters with another person, especially someone ‘new’:

{54:44}

Myra: “I think I found... the first exercise, when we were looking at each other, making the eye contact – for me, that made a difference, because the person I made eye contact with... [..] I moved with them differently to the other people I moved with then, afterwards... ‘cos that eye contact had... it’s like... we built a little bit... not a relationship, but you’d... you’d had some connection there.” [...]

Elvira: “It’s interesting... because of... The type of dancing I do, we have very formalised... a few formalised dances where we ‘partner share’ – so we... we all move forward one partner... or one where we move forward five partners, which creates quite a little chain... giving hands to the next person, you count to five, and then with the fifth partner, you do your ‘acknowledgement’, and then you do your little dancing. {55:55} And then you move on again. So I’m quite... quite familiar with the concept of moving on to somebody else, and then doing something with somebody else – dancing with somebody else. And... I don’t know whether that made any difference to how I perceive the exercise, but... erm... there was... because of the things said about the eye contact... because I’m so used to moving on and dancing with somebody else that I never even noticed.” (WS1:148ff, Snapshot 1)

Clearly the initial eye contact established ‘some connection’. Whilst Myra does not explain what precisely the difference is, it seems that trusting and touching becomes easier if this initial connection is there. Later in the same round, she relates this to what she has heard about Argentine Tango (where often people dance with others whom they do not know), where the initial contact with a partner, and even the invitation to dance, happens via eye contact – even though she does not dance Argentine Tango, nor does she know anything else about it (admitting this causes some amusement in the group). Obviously this particular piece of information resonates with her. Elvira, on the other hand, appears to transfer her ‘usual’ dance habits to this – unusual and different – situation, apparently oblivious to the possibility that her experience might be unique within this group. Here are two very different attitudes in play. Is it important in this context that both women firmly place themselves in the ‘follower’ role?

Also interesting are two further observations:

- Her comments on **connecting** with others are the only verbal contributions within the group that Myra makes in the first workshop. During the break {1:32:28} she talks to Elvira, who has been sitting next to her ever since the first exercise, but during the final reflection round she remains silent.
- Myra and Yasmin are the only participants who, during the first lead-follow exercise (walking together at arms' length, with 3 different partners), **start each new partnership as leaders** – all others this is more varied. This is remarkable, as both of them later reflect (differently) on their role as followers (in both dance and work contexts).

-

4. REFLECTIVE CONVERSATION 1 (RC1)

During RC1, it becomes clear that Myra's **stance on leadership and followership is quite ingrained: for her it is clear that in a (dance) leader-follower relationship the leader has 'the power'** – the follower is 'just following':

"It's the leader who's actually leading the dance, and you're... you just follow – that's, that's what I mean by powerful position. You're just... you're *following*. [...] Everything's about the leader. And as a follower, you need to be... everything needs to be in the right position, so the leader can then put you in... sort of, you can then follow." (RC1:686ff)

She concedes that **good followership requires knowledge and skill, which she does see as empowering**: as she has gained more experience as a dancer, she does make her own decisions not to follow a badly led move, or she even suggests (verbally) trying a different figure when dancing with an inexperienced or insensitive leader:

"[...] sometimes people who aren't as experienced, they will try and get you... and you're spinning on the wrong time, and you *know* it's the wrong time, and you know you're gonna come out of it at the wrong time. So now, I just don't do it. I just let go and just think 'No, I'm *not*...!' So that's what I'm saying: there *are* bits that you *can* do. So I just now step out and just think 'No'." (RC1:733)

Nevertheless, she does not recognise this as her own agency. She does not see the follower as having choice or agency or making decisions – in her eyes all these rest with the leader: she speaks of 'just following' (RC1:686ff), emphasises that "everything's about the leader" (RC1:693) and states that "the leader has a more powerful position" (RC1:700f).

Another 'big issue' is **connection**, a complex theme for Myra. At the start of the first workshop, she finds partnering up with a stranger not just difficult, but it even causes her worry and anxiety:

"I find it difficult to completely relax in that group. I mean, everyone's lovely, it's nothing to do with that – that's just me..." (RC1:46f)

"[...] for me, it was... I think it was a panic moment 'cos 'who do I get? ' and then I calmed myself 'cos I do a lot of calming" (RC1:76f)

What helps her out of this anxious moment is making connections:

"we had to choose somebody, didn't you, and it was quite hard to sort of think 'ooh, who shall I...?' and it was sort of... almost like I was waiting for that connection, in a way, just something... that would then sort of 'I can feel comfortable now, coming to ask you'. [...] I smiled at people, and when they responded to me, that helped." (RC1:63ff)

Obviously Elvira is one of the people that Myra connects with from the start:

F: "Can you remember who you felt particularly comfortable with?"

Myra: "Erm... I think it was probably the person that I danced with first."

F: "That was Elvira. [...] And the second one was Martin."

Myra: "Okay."

F: "And the third one was Yasmin." (28:26) {A29:46}

Myra: "I think it was the two, both ladies, I think, I was very comfortable with."
(RC1:486ff)

Myra and Elvira are the only participants who partner up three times, once in each workshop. Maybe it helps that dance is a thing they have in common (albeit very different dance styles: whilst Myra dances Salsa, Elvira is a very experienced Old Time dancer³⁵); but they are also both female, and both of them experience problems and stress in their (very different) workplaces. (Yasmin, too, is a Salsa dancer.)

It is this sense of 'connectedness' that makes it easier for Myra to cope with situations that feel risky to her:

"I think that's really interesting as well – it's like... with that personal space, it was... Because of that connection, with some people it didn't matter if they were closer, whereas with people where there wasn't that connection, it was like... [...] it was – sort of almost keeping them at arms' length, as well, I think... [...] If you haven't got that connection, it's harder then to let them in, closer." (RC1:471ff)

There are two main meanings of closeness at play here: physical and metaphorical, with emotional 'connectedness' as a condition/prerequisite/premiss for physical connectedness. If physical and metaphorical connections diverge, i.e. are unequal, there is a sense of contradiction, unease, discomfort. Without delving further into research on proxemics, it is obvious that space is an important mental-emotional issue for Myra.

Need to mention: Space issues → lots of different themes: connectedness; physicality/body issues, boundaries, touch, discomfort: gender issues – suspicious of men who use dance – and also use women – in an instrumental way for self-gratification (erotic = negative connotations for Myra). Use of self-talk to relax/combat anxiety. Claiming one's space is also about asserting/defending one's boundaries, hence linked to agency and control (→ no staff room in school, leaving her with the need to claim classroom space, which she does)

→ **Should I mention this here, or somewhere else, i.e. in the analysis?**

Since Myra has just started a new teaching job (which she finds very demanding and stressful), she is quite preoccupied with her work context and looks into using her workshop experience as an analogy to her teaching situation: she sees herself in a leader role towards the children, but also sees herself as a 'follower' as a (temporary) member of staff. A particular concern is a child who refuses to 'follow' – and thus, in effect, is demonstrating 'follower power':

I'm finding it's... pushing me to my limits having to deal with somebody who doesn't just follow, somebody who's actually making a stand and saying 'No – not doing it!'. [...] So it's just really interesting to think [...] how do I have to change my behaviour? Because I can't make her change her behaviour, so I have to change to accommodate her.
(RC1:119ff)

Need to mention: Limitations to 'leading' becoming clear where followers refuse
→ leadership requires followers giving leader 'permission to lead'. So does attributing

³⁵ For explanations of Old Time dancing, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequence_dance, <http://www.englishnationaloldtimedancesociety.com/home.html>, <https://www.istd.org/dance/dance-genre-content-pages/sequence/history-of-sequence/>. The website of the Old Time Dance Society (<https://oldtimedance.co.uk/>) actually has a photo of Elvira and her partner on its home page.

power to leader become a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy??? i.e. attribution of power becomes power?

[...]