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**How to cite this thesis**

UNDERSTANDING THE EMOTIONAL REFLEXIVITY PROCESS OF LEADERS

by

Patricia Myrna Ramsey

201333507

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

at the

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY OF JOHANNESBURG

Supervisor: Professor Willem J. Schurink

2017
DECLARATION

I certify that the dissertation/thesis submitted by me for the degree PhD – Personal and Professional Leadership (Human Resource Management) at the University of Johannesburg is my independent work and has not been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

Patricia Myrna Ramsey
I dedicate this thesis to
my husband, my soul mate, my love (1958–2014),
our children, Stacey, Kerwin, Tatum and Jaryd,
our grandchildren,
Brooklyn, Leo, Tyler, Knox, Summer and Lex
and to my parents,

JHB, SA: Personal album.
Heavenly Father
    My compass,
    My comforter,
    My companion,
    In Jesus name,
    I thank you!

To my storyteller: Thank you for your participation in and contribution to the study. You are an inspiration. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and dedication to the process. Thank you for sharing your life and for revealing your innermost emotions in the interests of academic exploration and for contributing to existing research. During the most difficult parts of the study you persevered and endured long gruelling interviews. You taught me about focus. At the very beginning, after agreeing to participate, you scheduled all the interviews and did not miss one. You taught me about integrity. Your word was your honour. You revealed your most private thoughts and feelings and discussed difficult issues with an authenticity that both awed and humbled me. I appreciate and I thoroughly enjoyed this journey and your story.

Thank you to my storyteller’s wife. You have tenderness about you that is heartfelt and difficult to ignore. Your story as a couple and as a family captivated and inspired me. Thank you for sharing your home with me and for your support during my study. I appreciate your thoughtfulness and especially your contribution to the research.

Thank you, Professor Schurink, my barometer, guide, editor and now, dear friend. Thank you for your spirit. I have grown in ways I never imagined. I feel different and I
know that this new feeling is relevant to our interlinked journey throughout this amazing research experience. You gifted me with a deep appreciation for context not only in this study but in life. I loved and appreciated the way in which every conversation between us never excluded the social context of what was happening in our lives and within the study. Not only did you guide me in our conversations but you also demonstrated deep appreciation for the research process. Above all, thank you for your remarkable dedication, brilliance and wisdom in this meaningful, sometimes torturous, yet extremely fulfilling voyage of discovery.

Also, thank you to Mrs Evanthe Schurink, for making your home available for supervision meetings and for your hospitality. I appreciate this experience with you and I feel that I know you. Prof expanded my heart with his consistent references to you and his family in all our discussions. Thank you and God speed.

To Alexa and Gerry Barnby: Editing a thesis is stressful but in this case it was a pleasant experience and one that I learned a great deal from. Thank you both for your commitment to finishing before the deadline.

To my extended family: You increase my capacity to feel the intensity of God’s love. I am so thankful for each one of you. Thank you, Melvin, for your help with the IT issues that threatened to derail me and thank you all, for grounding me in your love and acceptance. I love you all!

To my precious daughters, Stacey and Tatum, my life is richly meaningful because you are in it. You fill me with joy, with tenderness and the deepest pride in the women you are, as daughters, mothers, wives, friends, sisters, professionals in your
respective fields and so much more. Your beauty is so deep it makes me ache with gratitude to God. You are my greatest friends and confidantes, my yardsticks, my inspiration in everything. You teach me about a depth in love that is indescribable.

To your husbands, my sons, Kerwin and Jaryd, I realise more every day why God put you in our lives. I have the joy and blessing of being the mother of sensitive, emotionally expressive sons. I think your sensitivity is the greatest gift you have and you give. Thank you for your support, your strength, the way in which you love our family and, especially, the way in which you love your wives and children.

Brooklyn, Leo, Tyler, Knox, Summer and Lex, my grandchildren, you are my most tangible connection to God. You fill me emotionally and spiritually. You challenge me physically but I never tire of you. You give deep, unending meaning to my life and joy beyond measure. I aspire to be like you, so free and accepting, so honest and expectant of wonder and so filled with happiness. Never lose your love for learning, your joy and the sunshine in your laughter.

Mom and Dad, although you are not physically here, you remain present in my life. Thank you for all your sacrifices, your love and, for all that you taught me. You moulded, nurtured, cared for me and taught me how to love and be a parent. I owe my strength to you. Without you, I would not be here. Thank you! I will always hold you close to my heart.

Finally, to Mark, my husband and best friend ever, I have no breath to fully describe what I feel for you and about us. Just thinking about you is an attack on my being. I am not able to think of you without feeling both a surge of happiness and of pain.
You fill every cell in my body with what it means to be human. I feel you in my soul in a way that I cannot comprehend. Thank you, my soul mate! This thesis would not have happened without your endless encouragement and irritating nagging. You remain my inspiration. I treasure our memories and hold them forever deep in my heart. I owe all this to you! I love you infinitely!
ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to engage in the joys, the challenges, the successes and all the significant moments in the life and leadership of a loved, admired and respected South African leader. This doctoral journey involved delving into undiscovered and fiercely protected ambiguities involving this leader’s emotional experience of his life and leadership career.

I explored his childhood passions, fears and anxieties and his desires for his future. I questioned his actions and motives and uncovered his deepest feelings about the people, experiences, challenges and situations that had touched or impacted him and contributed to the leader and the man he became. Using an interdisciplinary, life story framework that incorporated leadership development, psychology and sociology, I strove to unearth, interpret and understand this leader’s emotional reflexivity process.

Conducting eight, three to four-hour, in-depth semi-structured interviews, I unravelled and explored how his thoughts and emotions had connected with and influenced his life and leadership decisions and actions. One of these interviews included his wife as a means of verifying our interpretations of his emotional meaning making and behaviours. In addition, I travelled to his birth place and interviewed his sister in order to triangulate and add to the data. Applying Straussarian grounded theory methodology throughout the data analysis, I engaged in rigorous comparative (thematic) analysis in order to identify themes, develop and allow categories to
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emerge in order to build a substantive theory about the subjective, emotional reflexivity process of this leader.

I employed a life story approach to facilitate extraction, understanding and interpretation of the influence and impact of social construction and psychosocial antecedents on the leader’s established belief system. We reflexively and in the context of his life story interrogated the emotional origins of his worldview and subconscious blueprint in order to understand how his moral compass developed and established his leader identity. In excavating his emotional experiences we uncovered and came to understand the interrelated collaboration of numerous internal processes with reciprocal links to his emotion as we co-constructed his narrative throughout the study. By highlighting the central role played by emotion in reflexivity, it was possible to both describe and illustrate that a leader’s emotional reflexivity encompasses multiple processes that are relational, cognitive/emotional, dialectical, embodied and conversational.

In developing the substantive theory, contributions include: theoretical contributions namely, addressing the gap in the literature; providing understanding of the emotional reflexivity processes of a leader; a shift in the perceptions of emotion in reflexivity and a theoretical model for leader emotional reflexivity. Methodological contributions include: how to engage consciousness in reflexivity when developing and designing a qualitative study and the application of Straussarian grounded theory during data analysis. Practical contributions include: an understanding of leader emotional reflexivity reflected and represented as a cyclical, three-dimensional function of its processes namely, feeling, questioning and resolution; labelling of leader emotional reflexivity and; underscoring the potential for
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development of an integrated constructivist leadership development model to develop leader identity through leader emotional reflexivity.

Finally, in retelling this leader’s story, I adopted a reflective, academic, emotional writing style to highlight the study’s contribution and its potential in developing leader identity.

**Keywords:** Leader emotional reflexivity, leader identity development, co-construction, feeling, emotion, questioning, resolution, agency, structure, habitus psychosocial, internal dialogue, leadership life story, narrative, social construction, leadership antecedents, leader meaning making, leadership decision making, leader actions, leader behaviours, leadership subconscious beliefs, leader self-awareness, leader self-understanding, leader emotional aptitude, leader cultural acumen, Straussarian grounded theory.
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<th>Construct</th>
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<td>Reflection</td>
<td>The circular act of introspection or contemplation involves a solitary act focusing on looking back and thinking about what has already occurred in one’s life to derive meaning and learning for future actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity in sociology</td>
<td>The conscious experience of critically evaluating and questioning one’s personal beliefs, values, ethics, understandings, interpretations etc., in relation to others, through an internal conversation. The purpose is twofold, (i) to develop self-awareness and (ii) to challenge, change and transform one’s subconscious belief system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflexivity</td>
<td>The act of conscious, philosophical questioning of what lies beneath the surface of a person’s beliefs, values, culture etc., as the source of an individual’s subconscious belief system with the goal of changing and transforming such belief system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader emotional reflexivity</td>
<td>All of the above with a focus on the source of emotion and its link to a leader’s emotional commitment to their subconscious belief system; the feelings that drive leaders to possess and act on their beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heartfelt epiphany</td>
<td>Significant moments in the life of an individual that grabs at the heart and disrupts the person’s routine emotional functioning and life. Intense disruption motivates radical review and redefinition of the person’s self and life purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological, emotional reflexivity</td>
<td>The researcher’s awareness of the emotional experiences that impact the research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epistemic reflexivity</td>
<td>The act of unravelling and challenging one’s preconceptions about the research and the implications thereof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social construction</td>
<td>The joint construction of beliefs, customs, traditions, cultures etc., within a particular society which become the generally accepted way of being and established norms and values in that particular society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional construction</td>
<td>Organisational norms and values are constructed and accepted by the leadership and in turn establishes the accepted organisational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interrelation</td>
<td>The interconnectedness, interdependence or interrelationships between concepts or between people or between both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitus</td>
<td>Deeply embedded habits that include skills, dispositions or ways of being relevant to life experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>A person’s ability to act as an individual in making decisions outside of social constructions for example religion, gender, ethnicity culture etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-identity</strong></td>
<td>An individual’s perception and awareness of self in relation to the world. (Personality, skills, academic qualities, sexuality, racial identity, occupation, profession, beliefs, culture etc.).</td>
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<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leader-identity</strong></td>
<td>A part of the self-identity that involves how a leader perceives him/herself in the role of leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychosocial antecedent</strong></td>
<td>A stimulator of learned behaviours developed in experiences from childhood onwards through accepted and adopted forms of social construction.</td>
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PART A – PREPARING THE READER FOR THE JOURNEY

Part A contains the first chapter and is briefly contextualised on this transition page. Each part of the thesis hereafter contains such a transition page.

CHAPTER 1: SCHOLARLY DIRECTION AND DISCOVERING THE WRITING STYLE AND FORMAT

Here, I take an unusual approach and discuss how I discovered the writing style and arrangement of the thesis with the aim of preparing the reader for the journey. I begin with advice from scholars and proceed with my experience engaging in researcher reflexivity and how this experience guided me in the construction and writing of the dissertation.

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In qualitative research, the study comes to life in the writing of the story and the researcher becomes one of the characters involved in creating the context of that story (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Glesne, 1999; Vickers, 2002). Given that my study involved a life story approach about the emotional reflexivity processes of a leader, I noted in particular, Bloomberg and Volpe’s (2008, 2015) suggestion that one begins the research story by presenting the background that sets the stage for the research problem. While this was certainly good advice, my inclination, instead, was to begin my research story in an unorthodox manner. My intention for this preference will become clearer as the reader engages with the story.

One of the most interesting discoveries I made in consulting the literature on qualitative inquiry was that this type of research is impressively dynamic and vast in its application and that there is no established recipe for such writing (Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Glesne, 1999; Henning, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Schurink, 2009). This dynamism in applying qualitative methods is what intrigued and motivated me to engage the ideas that emerged within the context of my study and to reflect the essence of the research in the writing.
I begin this life history by providing a very brief academic background to qualitative writing. My intention is to present the scholarly viewpoints as a rational authority guiding the reader in engaging with the story. More specifically, my goal is to encourage the reader to apply his/her own context to engage in the reading experience and participate in the journey.

My point of departure is the variety of writing styles, skills and qualitative writing options that are available to researchers. This is followed by discussing the various paths that inspired my creativity in writing the story. In this creative context, I expand on Glesne’s (1999) metaphorical roles when writing because understanding and applying them was instrumental to the writing style I employed. Thereafter, I briefly argue the responsibility which qualitative writers have when producing a quality doctoral thesis. I follow with a conversation of the importance of balance in telling the story while noting subjectivity. Thereafter, I provide information about the choices regarding style and format and the importance of reflexivity in representing the data.

1.2. **POINT OF DEPARTURE**

The preceding introduction set the scene for how, as qualitative researchers, our contexts come to life in the stories we tell. Ethnographers create meaning by immersing themselves in the context surrounding the topic under study. Similarly, qualitative researchers are convinced that the first order experiences and theoretical resources required to conduct a qualitative investigation constitute the research setting and are therefore collectively interwoven within the particular research context (Tracy, 2013, p. 3). Thus, given the nature of my study, I believed that in order to involve
the reader from the outset, I needed to explain this interwoven context and how I had arrived at my particular style and structure in providing a descriptive account of the research (Wolcott, 2009). In this unusual manner, I believed I could also highlight the research problem in the writing.

Presenting the findings of qualitative research typically takes the form of a written, textual document (Glesne, 1999; Merriam 1998; Neuman, 2003; Plummer, 2001) or, as is the case in this study, a narrative presentation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As research writers, our aim is “rich, thick description” (Merriam, 1998, p. 151) and our desire is a reader intrigued with and engaged in the story (Albertini, 2012; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Glesne, 1999). I cannot ignore the fact that my life experiences have revealed that we live in a vibrant world. Amid this rapid rhythm of life, I have often found my equilibrium in being human. For me, being human reflects the varieties in our likeness, the individuality in our interrelatedness and the constancy in our chaos as we search for meaning. Therefore, there is no question that as humans, we are extremely dynamic. Consequently, when it comes to writing, our skills and creativity are as varied as we are. Thus, an array of interesting styles of writing that resonate with the various research approaches and strategies are available to researchers for utilisation in the presentation of their research findings (Glesne, 1999).

In choosing a suitable writing style the researcher may be said to be the ‘bricoleur’ or quilt maker who practises or constructs, the craft of research or ‘bricolage’ (Denny, 1978; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Henning, 2004; Merriam, 1998) by using the various tools and techniques available in contemporary qualitative inquiry (Eriksson &
Kovalainen, 2008). For example, Wolcott (2009) suggests a systematic, one-step-at-a-time approach, allowing the previous step to guide the next one.

Given the dynamic assortment of qualitative approaches available (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011), scholars warn that researchers may encounter obstacles like comprehensibility, clarity and relevance in the practical application of their findings (Funk, Tornquist, & Champagne, 1995). In overcoming these hurdles qualitative writing must persuade the reader that there is procedural rigour within the study. This rigour then accentuates the relevance and contribution of the study in question (Henning, 2004; Neuman, 2003; Wolcott, 1990). Rigour implies adherence to academic convention, which, in turn, assumes a rational application in research writing. In addition, the writer must provide the reader with a sensible, plausible ‘gestalt’ through inclusion of particulars such as relevant interview quotes, historical agency excerpts, field notes, reflective journal notes, descriptions, photographs, pictures and charts, among others (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Firestone, 1987; Neuman, 2003).

While researchers employ various strategies to ensure the authenticity of their research (Firestone, 1987), as already noted there is no uniform storytelling approach which is applicable to all qualitative inquiry (Glesne, 1999; Henning, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Plummer, 2001; Roberts, 2002). Thus, qualitative writing may commence from a visionary perspective similar to an architect’s plan (Glesne, 1999). Alternately, it may commence from a creative perspective similar to that of a painter depicting a vision through personal experience and drawing on intuition, emotion and logic (Caulley, 2008; Glesne, 1999). It may even be “oral, pictorial or dramatic”
(Merriam, 1998, p. 221). Mostly, however, constructing a qualitative thesis involves a combination of a plan, intuition and creativity (Glesne, 1999; Merriam, 1998). This combination was the approach I favoured in representing the data in my study.

1.3. **MULTIPLE PATHS TO A DESTINATION – WRITING CREATIVELY**

Contrary to claims that qualitative writing is tedious (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005) and bearing in mind the need for a plausible gestalt, qualitative research does entail a creative process (Caulley, 2008; Davies et al., 2004; Glesne, 1999). Creativity in telling the story ensures that the reader wants more. Engaging the creative process enhances the data through interpretation as opposed to traditional, rigid writing formats and styles (Glesne, 1999; Tomkins & Eatough, 2010).

An exciting technique is the use of creative nonfiction (Caulley, 2008) using a ‘methodological novel’ approach (Ellis, 2004) to facilitate the telling of the story. Caulley (2008) points out that creativity does not suggest a lack of facts but, rather, a deep focus on truth using different techniques. In this way, the storytelling transports the reader into the world of the participant through evocative, stimulating dramatisations of the underlying issues for greater depth in the interpretations of the perceived truths (Caulley, 2008).

At this point the literature revealed to me, the metaphor as a powerful tool with which to convey a story. I found Glesne’s (1999) metaphorical roles appealing. She explains that observing these roles when representing qualitative research findings stimulates artistry and relaxes rigidity in writing. Since these insights were invaluable
to me in discovering and applying the appropriate writing style for my dissertation. I want to share more about these roles namely, “the artist, the translator/interpreter and the transformer” (p. 156). I begin with the role of the artist.

1.3.1. Glesne’s (1999) - Engaging the role of the artist

As a creative artist, the qualitative writer uses procedural technologies to derive meaning from data although he/she also makes use of strategies and procedures in order to design the story. In other words, writers employ a combination of discipline and creative flair in the format and style of their written text. They may also venture into a creative space: a space of fantasy and imagination. This creative space facilitates application of imagination in the connections between people and actions. In this “imaginative” space, the qualitative writer may then proceed with creative renderings of the connections and artistic interpretations of such renderings (Glesne, 1999, pp. 156–158). Immersing one’s self in the role of the artist is a valuable tool for researchers to allow them to address the issues of clarity, understanding and relevance regarding their research findings – as mentioned earlier. Next, I discuss the translating or interpreting role.

1.3.2. Glesne’s (1999) - Engaging the role of translator/interpreter

As a translator of social norms, values and traditions, striving for an understanding of the world of another encompasses decoding the script of real-life experiences into a meaningful story. In view of the fact that culture is not static but ever changing, ethnographic reality requires an interpretive process involving extrapolations and
speculation. Inferences about relationships between things are drawn after the careful gathering and analysis of trustworthy data. As an ethnographer, the qualitative researcher draws on personal life experiences, contexts, data collected and his/her epistemological and ontological assumptions as he/she re-presents the findings in an interesting, intriguing story.

Thus, the foundation of an interpretive story lies in the intersection between researcher, setting and participant. In other words, interpretation involves both the understanding and meaning making of the intersection between the lives of the researcher and the participant within the setting. There are various influences allied with this intersection. For example, the researcher’s political and theoretical perspectives and existing structures of meaning play a role while his/her academic discipline influences the narrative and creates the lens through which interpretation occurs.

The development of a consistent awareness of all these influences is essential. In addition, the logical concepts and ideas of the participant(s), the data, the effects of social construction and the ‘crisis of representation’ that contours interpretations and depictions also play an important role (Clifford, 1986; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Glesne, 1999). This takes us to the role of the transformer.

1.3.3. Glesne’s (1999) - Engaging the role of the transformer

In this transformer role, the researcher aspires to becoming a catalyst of learning by engaging the readers in a reflective journey through their turning inward to gain new
understandings and viewpoints. While bearing in mind the wisdom of assuming metaphorical roles to facilitate the writing of the story, I was mindful of issues of balance and of how much reflection would be either too much or too little. Let us examine this in greater detail.

1.4. **EQUILIBRIUM IN RETELLING THE STORY**

The balance between description, analysis and interpretation is critical when applying the roles described above (Lofland & Lofland, 1995; Wolcott, 1994). Description denotes the truths as uncovered by both the researcher and the participant through a process of discovery and interpretation. Analysis denotes the breakdown of the data and its reconstitution into categories or themes (Charmaz, 2002; Neuman, 2003). Interpretation refers to the new meanings derived from the process (Sandelowski, 1997). In this vein, Glesne (1999) highlights the importance of remembering that our humanness lends itself to subjectivity when it comes to interpretation. Subjectivity therefore, is as significant as the political questions regarding the ethnographic licence of researcher reflexivity. Subjectivity occurs in both the depictions of the story and the focus on the ‘I’ in reporting the findings. Initially, I struggled with the first person focus on ‘I’ and discussed this with my promoter. The questions on which I reflected included the following: “How does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel, affect the data collection and data analysis” (Pillow, 2003, p. 176). In learning about and discovering qualitative inquiry, I came to understand my role as an instrument in the research involving active participation (Teo, 2014). However, the notion of active participation gave rise to my consideration of Pillow’s, (2003) questions regarding representation, namely:
“Are we able to truly represent another? Should this even be a goal in research? Whose story is it – the researcher’s or the researched? How do I achieve representation while knowing that I will never quite get it right” (Pillow, 2003, p. 176)?

I could not answer the questions but they remained active in my subconscious until I read Patai’s (1994, p. 69) question namely, “Does all this self-reflexivity produce better research?” Contemplating her question, I concluded that although extreme, in my opinion Patai’s question denotes the goal for researchers to aspire towards in representing qualitative findings. With this conclusion in mind, let’s turn to what scholars are saying about the journey towards establishing the style and format of the writing to enliven the research.

1.5. CHARTING THE COURSE - STYLE AND FORMAT

In addition to the story, it is necessary to pay attention to both style and format when writing a thesis (Meloy, 2001; Woods, 2006) to facilitate the reading experience. In keeping with the focus on the reading experience, the type of tale used in the writing is important since it usually guides and influences the voice and writing style (Glesne, 1999; Sparkes, 2002). Writing styles may include a combination of scientific tales, confessional tales, realist tales and auto-ethnographic tales, or perhaps simply one or two of the former (Sparkes, 2002).

1.6. NAVIGATING THE ADVENTURE – REFLEXIVITY IN THE WRITE-UP

Reflexivity is an integral component of qualitative research (Alvesson, Hardy & Harley, 2008; Berger, 2015; Daley, 2010; Finlay & Gough, 2003; Holland, 1999;
Johnson & Duberley, 2003; Lynch, 2000, Mauthner & Doucet, 2003). It is therefore not surprising that scholars have attempted to define the application of reflexivity in qualitative research while also trying to explain how the researcher and the various subjective components intersect to influence and alter research (Finlay & Gough, 2008). For this reason, it is necessary to discuss a few of the perspectives on reflexivity and their relevance to qualitative writing.

Because reflexivity is dialectical, it encompasses logical discussion of concepts and perspectives. As such, multiple elements in the research process are involved (Holland, 1999). As emphasised by Johnson and Duberley (2003), these elements include the internal questioning of the researcher’s ideas and meta-theoretical assumptions. These scholars assert that, in order to ensure quality research, researchers must examine their assumptions and ascertain from where such assumptions emanate. Scholars have described the dialectical nature of reflexivity as involving the ideas of the participant(s), the data, as well as beliefs involving the social construction relevant to the study in question (Anderson, 1989; Foucault and Faubion, 2000).

In her work, Williams (1990) describes reflexivity as an analysis of her personal experiences during fieldwork. Through an interactive process of questioning her reactions to fieldwork situations, she acquires an understanding of her subject’s world. In this way therefore, confessional tales are intended to elevate the write-up may be included in the write up. Such confessional tales may be relevant to the researcher’s self, to the participants, to the data, and/or to the field of study (Foucault & Faubion, 2000; Sparkes, 2002; Van Maanen, 1989).
On the other hand, Ropers-Huilman (1999, p. 22) uses “witnessing” as a metaphor as she navigates the interpretation of the lives of her subjects. Using her own personal language and paradigms, she represents the story of her research experiences from the perspective of a witness. Pillow (2003), in her work on the controversy surrounding reflexivity, emphasises the need for reflexivity to “legitimise, validate and question research practices and representations” (p. 175). In particular, she notes Geertz’s (1973) assertion that the greater part of ethnography is confession mixed with a measure of philosophy. She also notes Fine’s (1994) argument that qualitative research reporting requires more evidence of reflexivity. Contemplating these claims highlights the need for researchers to ponder the issue of researcher self-indulgence as it relates to reflexivity. In so doing, the researcher demonstrates competence as an agent and skill as a conscious critic of researcher reflexivity (Davies et al., 2004; Patai, 1994).

Based on the aforesaid, it is clear that an ongoing debate exists about the issue of reflexivity in writing up qualitative research including the issue of validity of qualitative representations (Pillow, 2003). The debate touches on who benefits from the qualitative accounts. Other issues include the importance of the representations and who may or may not research a particular topic. These matters are all mainly political in nature (Lather, 1993, 1995; Rosaldo, 1989) and refer to the creation of what Britzman (1995) refers to as “ethnographic authority” (p. 229). It would, therefore, appear that there is no distinctive formula for avoiding the dilemma of reflexivity as it relates to research representation. However, the objective lies in writing the story in
PART A – CHAPTER 1
SCHOLARLY DIRECTION AND WRITING STYLE

such a way that self-reflective tales engage the reader rather than elevate the writer to legitimise the researcher/participant relationship (Pillow, 2003).

1.7. THE WRITING STYLE - A REFLEXIVE DISCOVERY

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, 2015) repeatedly point to the necessity of being reflexive when undertaking a qualitative study. With respect to my research, this emphasis on researcher reflexivity was critical because the study involved the reflexive experience of a leader’s emotional reflexivity. As such, the research focused on my participant’s experiences with leadership, family, educators, friends, neighbours, strangers and society in general. We journeyed together as this leader as the storyteller reflexively recalled, re-experienced and re-examined his internal emotional experiences during particularly crucial life and leadership events. In this journey our lives, beliefs, cultures, experiences and contexts traversed either echoing commonalities or stirring interest in new ways of being and seeing the world.

In writing this chapter, my intention was to illuminate and share the privilege of me as the researcher, being there with my participant (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Geertz, 1973) and to illustrate and describe how immersing my consciousness in reflexivity facilitated both discoveries and insights about the best way to approach the writing of this thesis.

In this complex, intertwining researcher/participant experience examining my participant’s emotional reflexivity while being reflexive in the study, I grappled with ways to retell his story that would illustrate this complexity in a simple, yet accurate,
engaging, manner, while meeting all the requirements for qualitative, doctoral research writing. Repeatedly, I reflected on what the literature says about reflexivity in writing as discussed in Chapter 1. I considered the need for more reflexivity in research (Fine, 1994) on the one hand and researcher self-indulgence on the other (Patai, 1994), while struggling with the idea of validating my research through reflexivity (Pillow, 2003).

At the same time, I considered that because my research involved reflexivity, I had to find a way to reflect this dual experience in the writing. Therefore, being reflexive in the study meant I had to have an awareness of my meta-theoretical assumptions through consciousness in my questioning and understanding of the origins of these assumptions and how they impacted the study (Johnson & Duberley, 2003). Awareness also meant that I needed to understand the various types of researcher reflexivity in order to recognise my experience of them throughout the study and most critically, to find a way of writing the thesis to demonstrate this understanding.

In view of the controversial emphasis on reflexivity in qualitative research (Pillow, 2003) and the focus of my study being emotional reflexivity, I continued my search for guidance from the literature. When reading Plummer (2001), I was struck by the importance of recognising the intimate world of conducting research through a life story. In addition, I was struck by the “personal, interactional, emotional, embodied work that can have implications for the self of the researcher as well as the researched” of life story research (p. 213).
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Significantly, my life circumstances during the writing phase of my study deeply reflected and embraced what my study involved and I could not separate myself as the researcher from my circumstances at the time (Bloor & Wood, 2006; Finlay, 1998; Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang 2010). I found that I was in an ongoing state of emotional reflexivity captivated by the power inherent in thoughts and emotions. In retrospect, it was extremely fortuitous that the circumstances in my life at the time mirrored the essence of my research because the intersection between my study and my life provided a depth and insight into the research and especially the writing that would in all probability, not otherwise have been present.

1.7.1. Reflexivity as a compass guiding the direction for representing the data

In this section, a glimpse of the writing style begins to emerge as I explain and describe how my reflexivity as a researcher directed the writing of the thesis. Immersed in the complexities of my study and at the time, my life, I struggled with my old and established writing habits. Justifying my first draft with the mistaken belief that I needed to write from a place of comfort to reflect the essence of ‘me’ as the researcher, I dejectedly realised that this strategy was a failure. Thus, finding the most resonant and accurate way to reflect the research journey in the writing stretched laboriously over the entire 2015.

I had been stirred by the characteristic power of thoughts and emotion both in the study and in my life. In particular, I struggled with how I could use language to accurately express the thoughts and feelings of another and at the same time understand and acknowledge the thoughts and feelings that as the researcher had
been raging in my mind, my heart and my whole being at the time. I discovered that although risky, as qualitative authors we write within our own cryptic contexts that are deeply rooted in our life experiences and circumstances (Vickers, 2002). Writing therefore reflects the intricate tapestries of our unique histories in the place that we may find ourselves at a particular time and, hopefully stimulates curiosity about our contexts.

Immersed in constant reflexivity about the numerous constructs in the study and stimulated by the never-ending barrage of emotions and ruminations about understanding and interpreting these constructs relevant to my philosophical beliefs, I wrote this reflexive poem as well as my contemplations about the research. Writing the poem had been an emotional expression of questioning the circumstances I found myself in, both in writing up the research and in my life:

How powerful this mind,  
Ruthless in its quest;  
Rampant in its course;  
Graphic in its vision;  
Glorious in its grind!

How humble this heart,  
Colossal in capacity;  
Combustive in complexity;  
Expansive in essence;  
Enlivening in energy!  
Mercurial, menacing, meaningful,  
Yet, only in sharing!

Working through the data and constructing the story I have so many questions and considerations. For example, how do I present a story of the storyteller’s emotional reflexivity? How do I write in a manner that accurately captures the storyteller’s thoughts, reflections, questions, conflicts and emotions about life? How do I address the inner conflicts and preconceptions I had about differences between our beliefs and contexts? How do I achieve this representation of the data in a manner that illuminates the answer to the research question, honours my research participant
and engages the reader? How do I write about emotion; reflect emotion and, at the same time, honour academic conventions? I am so distracted: finding it difficult to focus on anything but my study.


Staring at the words of the poem, I silently hoped that they would speak to me. I hoped that they would guide me as to how I could truthfully retell the story. I wanted the writing to capture the richness of the research experience which was embedded in my memory and recorded in the field notes, memos, reflective and reflexive notes and notes on discussions with my supervisor. I realised that I had to find a way to incorporate the various notes in a way that would illustrate the research problem and the dual experience of reflexivity in the writing.

Recalling Ellis’s (2004) suggestion of a methodological novel, I felt intrigued. Mulling over this approach, I thought that in using it I could incorporate nonfiction techniques (Caulley, 2008). My reasoning was that a novel approach, using characters and including me as the researcher as a character would add to the plot and would also engage the interest of readers. Guided by the literature, I considered my envisaged audience (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). In addition to my examiners as a critical audience, I kept in mind other readers and the respective contexts of for example, training and development managers, aspiring leaders and other researchers as I assimilated the numerous writing options available.

During my ponderings, I reflected on all the elements contained within the research including my work experiences of the research problem. Mostly, I wrestled with the
fact that I was conducting a study about a leader's emotional reflexivity that involved my experience of the various types of researcher reflexivity as a critical element of qualitative inquiry. At the time, although I didn’t know how, I knew that I needed to integrate all these elements to write an accurate and meaningful account of the study.

I found that in writing the poem above, I was discovering the writing style for the thesis. My struggle within the research process, the questions, frustrations and the places I went to deep inside me to find the expression I needed to write the dissertation was in fact my researcher, epistemic and methodological emotional reflexivity. As the researcher, I was experiencing the essence of the research question. To answer the research question, quite naturally and within the research process, I was actively engaging emotional reflexivity. I was tapping into me as the researcher, into my storyteller’s emotional reflexivity and also into me as an individual with my own context, in an ever-evolving manner within the research setting.

Melloy (2003) describes the concurrent and multidimensional processes of qualitative research as conscious and unconscious “learning-thinking-researching-feeling-interpreting-knowing-writing” (p.xiii). For me her description echoes my experience of reflexivity in all its various forms in this writing phase. However, I realised that while writing represents a scheme of contextual symbols expressing our knowledge, it also acts as an instrument in taking us to our knowledge as humans (Colyar, 2009). I realised also that I would not be able to incorporate the full extent of my researcher reflexivity in the writing. There simply was too much information.
Consequently, I concluded after sifting through the notes and selecting some basic examples from the endless notes I took, I would incorporate them in the writing. Thus, my desire was that the writing itself adds to the existing body of knowledge (Wolcott, 2009) in answering the research question. The words in my poem and the advice from the literature resonated with me after a particularly valuable meeting with my supervisor:

I met with Professor Schurink today. We met for lunch at a restaurant close to the university campus. This was the first meeting after embarking on the writing up of my research. After enjoying a light lunch, he asked if the thesis would be text only and, if not, what else I would include. As he asked I felt as if a basketball had struck my head. “Dof”, as we say in Afrikaans, came to mind. Appropriately translated into English, “dof” means “intellectually challenged” while, colloquially translated, it means “thick.” Feeling “thick” tends to take the mind and the heart on a perilous journey. I replied: “I don’t know yet. I think that when the right metaphor comes to me, I will know”. In considering Prof’s question, I thought, I’m in the dark here … I have no clue. I recall thinking, if my heart continued to heave the way it had been, I could have a heart attack. It felt like dense, smelly smog had enveloping my senses and my brain. The questions would not stop. I wondered: How do I construct a metaphor? I have a mental block or maybe an emotional block, or both.

Prof interrupted my brief rumination. He was very gentle as he spoke. He asked what I loved to do. I remember smiling, thinking, oh good, this is easy, before answering: I like socialising with family and friends but I also like solitude; I like adrenalin and quiet contemplation. I love reading, writing and painting. I enjoy restoring old furniture, renovating and decorating. I love nature and travelling, learning about other cultures and countries. I love laughing and having fun.

He listened attentively and remarked: “Perhaps you can express some of your thoughts in a painting?” My initial reaction was: Interesting … but maybe not. I don’t paint well enough. Where would I begin? However, he had definitely piqued my curiosity and stimulated my creativity. He quietly observed me and then said: “As a start, just write from memory, exactly how you experienced the research process.” Oh, joy! I thought. I felt my heart swell. Instantly, my brain lit up. I thought, yes, thank you, Prof, I can do that.

Note 1.2: Ramsey (2015, August, 3). Researcher supervision reflection: Supervision notes.
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Considering Prof’s suggestion, my mind was a labyrinth with thoughts rushing back and forth. I drove home listening to jazz and arrived there keen to start writing. Morning came and the front balcony, one of my favourite places to write, beckoned me. Pregnant with anticipation, I picked up my computer and headed out into the fresh air. Sitting at the table, high above street level, a mug of steaming, homemade ginger and honey tea next to my computer, I started writing from memory. I began with the research story. Rubbing my pollen tickled nose, I intermittently and meditatively gazed at the hills rising upward to the bluest African sky amid the flora and rocky outcrops so typical in Kloofendal, a suburb in the greater Johannesburg area where I reside.

![Photograph of a balcony with a view of hills and a mug of tea](image)


Thinking deeply as my heartbeat vacillated, I wrote as the data I had collected spoke to me and amazingly, the metaphor emerged. In writing from memory, I had assimilated all the critical events, experiences, circumstances, interactions and interrelations from the moment I had first contemplated my study. With my thoughts racing and my emotions heightened, feeling every question, frustration, confusion
and insight gained throughout my body, my reflexivity had been my surest guide in this process of discovery. I saw my storyteller’s inner compass which had developed from childhood and had directed his life and his leadership path. The compass as a metaphor reflected a point of intersection which joined together all the events, experiences, thoughts and feelings in relation to both his life and his leadership journey. While I knew that the use of a metaphor would provide the golden thread in the writing, I had to ensure that I explained how I experienced my reflexivity and, inter alia, how I managed my feelings. In short, it was incumbent on me to be reflective and reflexive in retelling the story of my participant’s journey.

In using a compass, I also considered, “What then, is my true north in representing the data?” I recalled from the literature that I had to “elevate the data through interpretation and meaningful description” (Merriam, 1998, p. 151), while always keeping my audience in mind (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). My questioning and considerations led to the following conclusions:

Ok, this process revolves around the research question. Also, it’s about figuring things out within the contexts of the study; challenging preconceptions about culture, political affiliations, beliefs about leadership etc. How then did our contexts come together in the research? It’s all about meaning making and interpretation! My true north in the writing has to be meaning making which will guide me towards meaningful description. But then, the only way to achieve true north in the story is to write in a reflective tone. I must mirror reflexivity, mine and the participant’s and also remember the setting of the study and the potential readers…Ok, since the research problem involves an absence of emotion in leader reflexivity, I also must convey emotion in the writing. Since I am writing a doctoral thesis at a higher education institution, I must satisfy the requirements of academic writing. I will have to apply a reflective/emotional/academic writing style in order to retell the leader’s story.

Reflecting on the writing, I recalled Mouton’s (2001) suggestion of intelligibility, clarity and persuasiveness in logical arguments demonstrating that the data is in clear support of the research findings. This meant that in using a reflective, emotional academic style, I had to follow the guidelines of scientific evidence in representing the data. As I wrote, I visualised the leaders and managers with whom I worked and wondered what they would connect with in reading the story. I recalled Eriksson and Kovalainen’s (2008) suggestion that business practitioners appreciate a focus on the practical implications of a story. For this reason, I needed to include practical examples. In doing so, I needed to provide the context of any real-life experiences included in the story - in the writing.

The painstaking and ultimate discovery of the writing style I would use in the dissertation was a cathartic experience. I felt wonderful. I was relieved, excited and eager to proceed. My mind was like an open freeway laying bare the exciting lure of the kilometres ahead of me in this research journey.

1.8. APPLYING DIRECTION FROM SCHOLARS

In retelling the story, I bore in mind the scholarly advice as discussed above realising in particular, the critical functions of intersection, subjectivity and interpretation. Given the nature of the study, I decided to use a combination of realist tales, confessional tales and reflective auto-ethnography. In portraying the story, I used Caulley’s (2008) nonfiction storytelling techniques while applying Glesne’s (1999) roles of artist, translator and transformer. Finding this direction was exhausting but also extremely gratifying as evidenced in my notes:
Ok, what is my signature writing style? From where does my inspiration come and how do I begin? I feel quite inadequate ... It reminds me of the time when I was unable to sculpt a frog from soap in the fourth grade. Most of my classmates had elaborate soap sculptures which had probably been moulded and sculpted by one of their family members. Just thinking about this now drains energy from my body. “Breathe, Patty!” Perhaps I’m being too hard on myself, AND I’m not in the fourth grade anymore! This process of questioning is how I will figure out how to write my thesis. Just keep going Patty... I need a break.

Reading Caulley’s (2008) suggestions for a nonfiction writing style calmed the churning in my stomach. Up until now, I struggled to conceptualise my writing style. I had so many questions and conflicts. It felt as if there was a dust storm swirling in my head.


In my discovery process, I decided to try out Glesne’s (1999) metaphorical roles and using the idea of being a novelist, I practised writing and reflected:

This really works. I didn’t know I could do this. I love it! Being a creative artist delving into my creative brain and fantasising in my writing is captivating. It’s energising and extremely enjoyable! I am wielding a feather duster in my right hand as I trawl through the cobwebs in my brain.

Clearing these webs releases scorpions of imagination and infuses my writing experience with fun while arousing a volcano of imagery. I can’t help but giggle with pleasure as I write this. I need to use this energy metaphorically in writing the dissertation.

Note 1.5: Ramsey (2016, April, 12). Researcher methodological emotional reflexivity: Reflexive notes.

Combining these creative techniques with a formal academic and confessional style, I also used diagrams (figures) and photographs in combination with rich, narrative descriptions (Geertz, 1973). I used realist tales to amplify the research problem and to illustrate the twofold reflexivity inherent in this particular qualitative research. Through inclusion of small segments of my notes as illustrated above I used a
reflective/reflexive tone throughout the thesis. Using quotations from the interviews, I amplified the voice of the storyteller. Since context is critical to reflexivity, I described my analysis and interpretations of the storyteller’s struggles, pleasures concerns, desires and dreams. I hoped that sharing this context would resonate with readers and that they would learn about themselves through the emotional reflexivity experiences of my participant. I included an additional segment describing my personal, emotional, reflexive story in an auto-ethnographic vignette in Chapter 8.

In view of the multidisciplinary nature of the study, I focused on providing sufficient, rich data to offer the opportunity for comprehensive, persuasive and intricate portrayals of the storyteller’s social-emotional world (Sparkes, 2002). In this way, I explained the relevant settings and created a deeper understanding of his world.

Regarding methodological emotional reflexivity, Burman (2006), Finlay (1998) and Munkejord (2009) all eloquently describe the details surrounding the emotional experience of qualitative writing. Some of the emotions that researchers experience include anxiety, the desire to escape, procrastination, pain and suffering (Glesne, 1999). The notion of pain and suffering during the research process may sound somewhat intense and dangerous. Initially, when I read about this physical discomfort in the literature, I paid little attention, but not for long as it became clearer the more the study progressed: experiencing emotion has been central throughout my the research voyage as demonstrated in my notes:

Conducting the research and jointly experiencing and making sense of my storyteller’s emotion while dealing with the emotional toll of the research has been challenging. At this moment, I feel intense pain in my shoulders and back, probably because
of a poor posture while writing. Indeed, I am experiencing the pain and suffering inherent in research. The kids are probably tired of massaging my shoulders even with the ridiculous fee I am tricked into paying them. I am also suffering with mental pain and anxiety, no doubt self-imposed; about deadlines and outstanding tasks or editing which has been severely sabotaged by circumstances in my life. Procrastination is my best friend at times, urging me to watch a movie - critical to feeling restored. Somehow, acknowledging this struggle adds a dimension of acceptance and anticipation of the result. However, I also experience amazing euphoria, happiness, excitement and sometimes, jubilation when I make progress in the research. In this moment, I feel amazing and grateful. I feel a surge of adrenalin from my stomach to my throat. I’m smiling!


Next, I focus on how I represented the transcribed data in the writing to facilitate an easy reading experience.

1.9. REPRESENTING THE TRANSCRIPTIONS FOR EASY READING

In line with nonfiction techniques, I viewed my storyteller as the main character in the story. Throughout the study, I had developed a relationship with this character and paid attention to patterns in his mannerisms and body language. For example, some gestures and words he had displayed included smiling when he spoke about his children, raising his arms above his head when he became emotional, shifting in his seat when he was uncomfortable and pausing with an “er” or clearing his throat when reflecting on difficult questions. I had taken notes throughout the interviews reflecting his behaviours and had developed a behaviour profile specific to his emotion (see Annexure 3). Instead of directly quoting the “er” in the thesis, I described his gestures and mannerisms in the story also as a means of adding
drama to the narrative. In addition, I italicised the storyteller’s words in a dark blue font and his wife’s in red.

As noted earlier, I included my reflections and reflexivity as the researcher and “insider” (Vickers, 2002, p. 609) throughout the text, highlighted in light blue with single line spacing. In the captions for my reflective notes, I distinguished between the different types of reflexivity that I had experienced. I wanted to give the reader a glimpse into the constant questioning and meaning making that amounts to reflexivity. In addition, I wished to demonstrate that my experience of reflexivity was an integrated and interrelated one. I had experienced the cycles of the different types of reflexivity concurrently and as opposed to separate linear stages or phases.

Some of the captions for the notes I included indicate ‘reflections’. In these instances, I had experienced no new insights or epiphanies. Other captions are marked as ‘reflexivity’. Here I wanted to illustrate how I had experienced the relevant shift in my meaning making and understanding. In the light blue blocks that signify my reflective and reflexive notes, I italicised my words. Where applicable and to denote my supervisor’s voice, I used inverted commas. As suggested by Stacy (2013), I tidied up my notes and revised most of the colloquialisms to ensure clarity and coherence but left a few to reflect a bit of myself as a character in the story.

1.10. SUMMARY

In Chapter 1, I provided scholarly advice for qualitative writing and discussed the various creative options, tools and techniques available to choose from in
representing the data. In particular, I paid attention to the roles one may assume in applying creativity in the writing. I explained how my experience of researcher reflexivity guided the discovery of my writing style and the structure of the thesis to reflect the dual element of reflexivity throughout the research. In addition, I described how I applied scholarly wisdom and relevant personal and work experiences in determining the writing style and format of the dissertation. Thereafter, I elucidated my inclusion of reflections and reflexivity in light blue highlighted text. Finally, I concluded the chapter with how I represented the data to ensure an easy reading experience that mirrored the research problem.
Part B comprises the following three chapters:

CHAPTER 2: SCHOLARLY BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

The scholarly background involves an academic context for the research problem and my motivation for the study.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUALISING THE STUDY.

This chapter involves how I conceptualised the study.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGNING THE RESEARCH

In this chapter, I share the research design.

Human behaviour flows from three main sources, desire, emotion and knowledge (Plato).

2.1. INTRODUCTION

I begin this chapter by presenting a very brief, scholarly background to create context for the research problem, namely that emotion is not valued in reflexivity theory and therefore in leader reflexivity.

My starting point involves describing what scholars are saying about the relevance of the research problem in leadership as the setting for the study and particularly in developing leader identity as a global leadership competence. I briefly expand the need for studies focussing on leadership development models that incorporate leader emotional meaning making. Thereafter, I describe my education training and work experience and how these relate to my experience of the research problem in my work within the field of organisational development (OD). In this OD context, I follow with a brief discussion about the challenging events and interactions with employees throughout the organisation I worked for, that fuelled my interest in further study within the leadership field. Finally, I explain the global pervasiveness of organisational challenges that businesses across the world have been experiencing and the importance of emotional reflexivity addressing the research problem in leadership development.
2.2. CONTEXT FOR THE STUDY

Leader emotional competencies as they relate to reflexivity play a significant role in developing leaders, in particular, leader identity (Tuleja, 2014). Nevertheless, emotion is undervalued in reflexivity theory and therefore in leader reflexivity. Although reflexivity has been widely researched, the issue of emotional reflexivity in social sciences research has been limited to methodological emotional reflexivity (Alvesson, Hardy, & Harley, 2008; Cunliffe, 2004; Hibbert, Coupland, & Maclntosh, 2010; Sutherland, 2013; Zembylas, 2010).

In view of the fact that leadership involves intense emotion (Beatty, 2007b; Beatty & Brew, 2004), leadership researchers must take note of leader reflexivity, especially in view of the global economy. Globalisation encompasses the continuous evolution of the way in which nations, organisations and leaders interact (Appadura, 1996; Beck, 2000; Kiss, 2010). Particularly in South Africa as an emerging economy (Lenger & Schumacher, 2015), the current leadership challenges involve an intergenerational, intercultural work landscape which, in turn, fuels a more task oriented, productivity focussed and multi-task type of leadership (Haeger & Lingham 2013; Tuleja, 2014) as opposed to leaders engaging what Goleman’s (1995) ‘emotional intelligence’.

Leadership development aimed at the consistent confrontation of limiting internal, emotional meaning making tends to neglect the need to first understand the origin and role of emotion in reflexivity (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005; Tuleja, 2014).
Considering the aforementioned, leader identity arises from a leader’s internal process of emotional meaning making as he/she follows a path while negotiating leadership challenges (Tuleja, 2014). As a result, it may be said that success in leadership is less about knowledge and experience and more about possessing a valid and effective leader identity as a means of addressing the daily complexities involved in leading (Herman & Zaccaro, 2014; Johnson, 2008). As opposed to the more rational elements explored in organisational management research, there is a need for a greater focus on the subjective, emotional, inner workings within the broad, organisational context (Warren, 2008).

2.3. MOTIVATION FOR STUDY

While several studies on mental models and logics have been conducted, the emphasis in these studies has been on cognitive processes and traits (Boiral, Cayer & Baron, 2009; Chrispeels, Burke, Johnson, & Daly, 2008; Johnson, 2008; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 2004). Despite the significant emphasis on leadership in Goleman’s (1995) emotional and cultural intelligence, I found no studies either local or international, specific to the subjective feelings that leaders experience in their leadership. Interestingly, existing research reveals the need for further study into the emotional experiences of leaders and specifically into the impact of such emotional processes on the practice of leadership (Turner & Mavin, 2008). This need for further study in this area highlights the relevance of developing leader identity. For this reason and as a means of developing leader identity, the study is important in filling the gap in the literature about leader emotional reflexivity.
My inspiration for the study occurred in my work with both local and international organisations, within a large, corporate company with international business interests. Within this organisational context, I had often mused about the leader interaction, decisions and behaviours I observed in my work arena. Some of the nagging questions I had included: Why do individual leaders act and react in the manner that they do in their respective roles and in different situations? What do they understand about the source of their beliefs and values? How do they understand the emotional connections to their beliefs and values? How do their beliefs and values shape, influence and manifest in their decisions, actions and interactions? How aware are leaders of the impact of their worldviews on their leadership and how well do they understand and appreciate other worldviews as they address leadership challenges? These reflections are the product of my role as an organisational development (OD) consultant. My work is a source of immense inspiration to me because it takes me through all the various levels within an organisation. As such, my work offers me the opportunity to work with that part of an individual that makes him/her uniquely human – the inner workings and mysteries of thoughts, feelings and actions, through learning.

I have found that accessing and appealing to the feeling, sensing and experiential centres of individuals makes the achievement of the rational, logical, bottom line, organisational objectives more possible. In addition, my experience had been that focusing on the individual as opposed to the role the person fulfils, allows me to con-
nect with leaders, managers and employees as unique individuals. Connecting with individuals in this way enables me to influence their feelings about their roles and functions in either meeting and/or exceeding organisational goals and objectives. In accomplishing this connection, my education and training significantly influences my approach to OD.

I often jokingly describe my education and work experience as ‘schizophrenic.’ Having studied at the University of South Africa, I obtained a bachelor’s degree in education and biblical studies. In addition, I acquired an honours degree in higher education at the same university. My master’s degree in counselling psychology and counsellor education, I received from the University of Colorado, USA in 1997.

My work experience has been quite varied including various levels up to management and later leadership including the banking industry, business ownership, teaching, counselling in the USA and most notably, OD, management, leadership and consulting.

After completing my studies in the USA, I worked as a family therapist in a residential treatment facility for adolescents and their families. In this role, I worked with people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds from various countries and learnt a great deal about the American culture. This experience made me appreciate that, irrespective of where we find ourselves, we are human before we are different! We have the same survival needs, aspirations, desires, dreams and weaknesses. We simply interpret them in different ways. Thus, as you see, the picture of my education, training and work experience could be described as ‘all over the place.’ Nevertheless, my
varied educational background resonates with my work and provides me with a dynamic set of facilitation tools and skills that are critical for a holistic understanding of an organisation’s challenges. By applying experiential learning techniques, I combine theory from education, biblical studies, business and psychology with theory from other relevant disciplines in understanding, developing and implementing organizational development solutions for my clients. In other words, I integrate scholarly concepts from different disciplines with real life, organisational situations, strategies and behaviours when working with various teams and/or individuals within a particular organisation.

In implementing OD initiatives and interventions, using the skills and tools I have acquired, I begin with the individual context (typically the leader’s or manager’s perspective) within the broader organisational context. Then, I work with individual context within the group with the aim of establishing a team perspective while highlighting the global, organisational context. In this way, I am able to create alignment of goals and objectives across the organisation, towards achieving the organisational strategy. In particular, I use these skills and tools to recognise and highlight leadership, management and employee patterns of behaviour relevant to both the individual cultural contexts of employees and the existing organisational culture. My goal is to extract and highlight a particular organisation’s current context in the interests of improving its organisational performance; in my execution of OD initiatives and interventions.
Engaging with leaders and managers, in turn, means I have the privilege of observing and sharing in strategic and organisational meaning making. I have often been struck by the emotion that surrounds the diverse perceptions leaders and managers hold about life, leadership, politics and culture. At times, I have struggled with what I have experienced as an emotional misnomer between individual, nonverbal signals and actions and, the articulation of personal perspectives in meeting organisational performance expectations. In other words, I have noticed individuals saying one thing, but behaving in a contradictory manner. These misnomers sparked my curiosity and interest in how well leaders and managers knew and appreciated their internal, emotional mechanics. I was curious about their personal insight into how their decisions and actions were embedded in their life stories. This interest and curiosity inspired my decision to embark on this research journey. This is how it began.

In 2006, I was immersed in a corporate work environment as the group consultant: organisational development which involved fourteen business units, both national and international. The challenges we were facing at that time involved restructuring as well as ownership and leadership changes. My primary role was to establish and maintain a culture of growth and performance. I had the responsibility of developing and implementing an organisational strategy for a culture of high-performance. Implementation meant that I had to develop and execute numerous OD initiatives and interventions including strategy alignment, strategy development and planning, soft skills training and development, team development, change management, diversity appreciation, conflict management and mediation as well as leadership and management coaching. The one common denominator in all these various initiatives
and interventions was behaviour. This was where my education served me well. I relished my work because it gave me access to the soul of the company - the people. At the time, the organisation was a hub of activity, nervous energy and anticipation because of the restructuring. The hearts and minds of employees and leaders were clouded by uncertainty. It was a time when leadership was critical to the sustainability of the organisation.

Having the responsibility of facilitating the change management initiative during this difficult time meant that I interacted with employees across the organisation’s hierarchy. These interactions had been noteworthy catalysts for my inner stirrings towards further study. One particular, brief encounter with the CEO of the company had stimulated and cemented my interest in leadership as my area of study. In a matter of minutes this particular leader had made an impression on me. It happened during a persuasive presentation involving an intervention for the executive leadership team. Firstly, he remembered my name. Secondly, although I had presented the pitch with my manager, the CEO engaged with me in a way that made me feel his acknowledgement of my competence as a person rather than as a lower level employee. Thirdly, he had listened attentively, participating with genuine interest and concern for his team as well as for our effort. He had, nevertheless, declined the pitch with effortless assertiveness in a rational, logical way but, at the same time, he had exuded genuine care and consideration. I remember feeling more inspired by his reasons and decision to decline the pitch than disappointed.
Seven years later, in 2013, I had moved into business consulting. After having completed his PhD my husband had nagged and cajoled me into enrolling for mine. Expectantly, in November 2012, I initiated the application process which was exciting, stimulating, anxiety provoking all at the same time. I applied to the Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management (IPPM) at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), for acceptance into their ‘Personal and professional leadership,' doctoral programme. To my absolute delight the department accepted my application in February 2014. I was thrilled that my work aligned with my doctoral studies and to the broader context of leadership.

Like the company I had worked for, businesses all over the world today are in a state of constant change (Cameron & Green, 2015; Nadler, Shaw, & Walton, 1995). Increasingly, leaders represent our compasses, indicating a direction toward our intrinsic desire for a good life. Full of expectation, we direct our urgent need for prosperity, growth and the highly-valued feelings of safety, security and financial autonomy toward our leaders. It is, thus, no surprise that business leaders are facing the task of overcoming the multiple challenges that characterise our global, organisational reality. These challenges include streamlining, outsourcing, de-stratification and downsizing (Keupers, 2011). The social nature of leadership requires an emotional connection between leader and followers as leaders strive to meet expectations and inspire feelings of hope, belief and security in their followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). For this reason, I was interested in exploring leadership.
2.4. SUMMARY

Beginning with a brief review of relevant literature, I provided context for the research problem. Focusing on leadership development, I began by describing the challenges which South Africa faces in developing global leaders. The brief literature review was followed by my inspiration and motivation to pursue this doctoral research.
3.1. INTRODUCTION

In Part B, I discuss how I conceptualised the study and developed my research proposal. I begin with the key focus of the study. Thereafter, I describe my experience in formulating the research question and clarifying the rationale aims and objectives of the study. Here, I include explanations and excerpts from my reflective/reflexive notes of how researcher reflexivity enabled the process. Thereafter, my anticipated contributions of the research follow. Finally, I describe my epistemological circularity wrestling with various complex concepts in developing the proposal and the value of this circular phase in relation to the study.

3.2. FINDING THE KEY FOCUS OF THE STUDY

The primary focus of my study was to unravel, understand and describe a prominent leader’s subjective, emotional, reflexivity process. The essence of the study had involved his internal, subjective, emotional experiences and interpretations and their context within his self-reflexivity. These experiences were unearthed relative to both his life story and his career. We explored his inner feelings as he reflexively recalled significant events in his life and throughout his leadership journey. In developing an understanding of the key focus of the study, I had incorporated existing leadership development literature, reflexivity theory in sociology as well as agency and emotion in the theory of psychology, while using a qualitative approach. Next, I discuss how I formulated the research question.
3.3. FORMULATING THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Contemplating the research question, I found Eriksson and Kovalainen’s (2008) detailed guidance invaluable and I absorbed every word. In studying these guidelines, I actively engaged in an intellectual, self-discussion, mulling over the study, the research question, possible theoretical frameworks, my workplace, how long it may take to complete the research, to name a few considerations (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). During this one moment at a time process, I tried but failed to curb the steady surge of interrogations and feelings as I took myself back into my experiences facilitating and engaging managers and leaders in my work setting. Returning in my mind to the boardrooms with them, my heart seemed to respond automatically. I recalled a need, a feeling, deep within me to glimpse the inner workings of both their minds and their hearts. I recalled that during these experiences I would wonder how well they knew, understood and appreciated their underlying belief systems and how these beliefs impacted on their decisions and actions.

Reflecting on my work, I considered the research problem. I relived and reviewed my observations of leader and manager reactions that including amongst others, restraint, disengagement, argumentative exchanges and emotional outbursts. In particular, I remembered how frustrated and concerned I had felt when interactions and sometimes, decisions appeared to be arbitrary. My frustrations and concerns revolved around subsequent encounters with managers and leaders when we discussed implementation of their strategic goals and objectives. This execution
space was where those apparent arbitrary decisions and actions reflected and where my concerns manifested in unmet objectives and misalignment between strategic goals and execution. I tried to make meaning of my thoughts:

What is the research problem as I encounter it in my work environment? Ok, what do I typically wonder about during some of my interventions? I wonder what emotions leaders’ experience that could possibly contribute to their interactions and behaviour. How aware are they of the historical context of their reactions and interactions? What is the significance of this for leadership? Perhaps my perceptions of disengagement have nothing to do with their emotions. Perhaps when I perceived paradoxes in their words and actions it was more about my preconceptions. I need some time to figure this out. However, I think that the research problem involves more than only leadership.


Thinking about my work and reflecting on the literature about reflexivity, I realised that the research problem entailed the following: ‘Emotion is undervalued in reflexivity theory and, hence, in leader reflexivity’. Having formulated the research problem my angst abated for as I figured out the focus of the study:

My research is about leader emotional introspection – about them thinking back about their lives and their leadership journeys. Ok … this means my research is about reflection. Actually, it’s about the emotional process leaders experience during their reflection. I need more information about reflection before I go ahead and develop the research question. The literature review revealed reflexivity in relation to reflection. So, is my research about reflection or is it about reflexivity? These concepts are pretty intertwined. During tough strategy sessions, leaders probably struggle with emotion. I can see it when I work with them - or is it my emotion? Nevertheless, I want to unravel the intricacies of leader emotional reflection or reflexivity and understand its role as leaders encounter and engage in critical leadership and life activities and challenges. I want to illuminate the relevance of personal and environmental contexts to the leader’s actions and reactions as he/she recalls important experiences.

After I had consulted the literature and had learned about the difference between reflection and reflexivity, I realised I was interested in the internal, emotional reflexivity process leaders engage in. My brain was tired but the head and shoulder victory dance helped to restore my excitement to proceed. I had settled for the advice offered by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008). They suggest that one should formulate an overarching or guiding question. It is interesting to note that this had, in fact, occurred to me when I had integrated the literature on research methods with my incessant internal discussions. Accordingly, I decided to start off with a broad perspective and then narrowed it down to a specific research question.

The guiding question that emerged was as follows: “What are the emotions and reflections of leaders as they experience leadership?” Through a process of focused integrating and synthesising as suggested by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), three key areas in the study had emerged from my musings. These areas included leadership, emotion and reflexivity. Based on these areas, I had defined the following, more specific research question: “What is the emotional reflexivity process of leaders as they reflect on their daily leadership role?”

I had initially intended using this question in order to interview several leaders. However, once I had met with my participant (as will become clearer later), I adjusted the question as follows to guide me during our life story interviews: “What is the emotional reflexivity process of a leader, as he reflects on his daily leadership role?”
I felt like I had just conquered Mt. Kilimanjaro, exhausted but on an emotional high. With clarity about the research question, I had proceeded with working out the rationale, aims and objectives of the study.

### 3.4. CLARIFYING THE RATIONALE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Having consulted the relevant literature, I had envisioned a clear idea of my rationale for the study and so I continued and formulated the objectives for my research in a more confident way than before. I wanted to cultivate recognition, understanding and appreciation of emotion as a central element of leader reflexivity. In addition, I wanted to highlight the psychosocial roots of emotion in the life story of a leader. Since the lives of leaders reflect several dimensions and contexts as mentioned earlier, I had felt that exploring only leadership might have been insufficient in answering the research question. In contemplating my new insight and allowing my reflexivity to steer me, I had struggled with and considered many questions as reflected in my notes:

How would I do this? How would I take into account all the possibilities that affect a leader’s actions? My choice of qualitative research means I am involved in the research. My subjective experiences influence my interpretations of the data. So, what does this mean? In my world, everything is interconnected. I believe we are able to discern the patterns of behaviour and personal emotional contexts that show why we behave in the ways in which we do. Surely, this is how we become smart about actions and decisions. Since interconnection is important to me I need to conduct a multidisciplinary study because my topic involves more than just leadership. Therefore, in this qualitative study, I need to look at leadership, psychology and sociology. The psychosocial component should be about looking at the leader’s life story to determine how he became the man and the leader he is. In addition, I want to unravel and understand how he makes connections between his life story, his emotions, and his decisions and actions. For example, this happened to me, this is what my part-
ents, community, experiences taught me, this is what I took from it, this is how I felt about it during critical incidents as a leader, and this is why I acted the way I did. This is how I feel now. I believe this is how leaders expand their internal repertoire to ensure a strong leader identity and emotionally intelligent leadership.


During my contemplations, I had realised that investigating these inner emotional workings would require in-depth exploration. I had concluded that the aim of the research would be to unravel, recognise, describe and understand the subjective, emotional experiences during the leader’s reflexive moments both during and about critical leadership and life situations. Thus, I needed to begin with the leader’s life story. I had determined that the purpose of relating the life story would be to understand the possible origins of the leader’s emotional experiences in his leadership journey. In addition, I had realised that the aim of this life story would be to integrate the origins of his emotional experiences with important scholarly constructs in order to develop a substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity. With this in mind, I formulated and reformulated the objectives of the study and had finally arrived at the following:

- develop an appropriate qualitative research approach with the aim of unravelling and capturing the emotional, reflexivity process of a leader;
- integrate the leader's life story with reflections on concrete thoughts, emotions and views about critical leadership incidents or first order constructs with abstract or second order constructs of scholars;
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- study the work of prominent scholars in the relevant study fields;
- develop a substantive theory and model of leader emotional reflexivity;
- explore the interrelatedness between life story, leader emotional reflexivity and leader decisions and actions.

3.5. ANTICIPATED CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

After careful thought, I had envisioned that the study might make the following contributions:

3.5.1. Theoretical contribution

In considering the research question, I had anticipated that the study would address the theoretical gap in the leadership development field. In addition, I had imagined a contribution to the field of study on emotion and reflexivity in leadership development. More specifically, I had envisioned the theoretical contributions:

- an understanding of the emotional reflexive processes of a prominent, organisational leader;
- an understanding and description of the meaning making of emotion in leader reflexivity from a leader’s personal perspective and context, as well as in his lived world, and
- the development of substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity relevant to leader identity development.
3.5.2. Practical contribution

I had envisaged that understanding leader emotional reflexivity in a practical context might involve an appreciation of its value in developing leader identity. Along these lines, I envisaged that the study might provide insight into how leader personal emotional commitment to their own belief systems reflected in their leadership decisions and behaviours. Thus, I had envisioned that providing understanding of leader emotional reflexivity as a multilevel construct would be the first practical contribution. This understanding, I thought, would in all probability incorporate the relationship between emotion and reflexivity in developing leader identity. The second practical contribution I had expected was that understanding this leader's emotional reflexivity process would provide a new way of developing leader identity and, hence, emotional and cultural competence. A third practical contribution I had envisaged was that the study would initiate a paradigm shift in terms of the value of emotion in reflexivity.

I must note that conceptualising the research involved an intense experience of epistemological circularity and emotion. Given the nature of the research, it is important to describe this experience so as to illustrate how understanding the research topic deepened the more I engaged in the study.

3.6. REFLECTIONS ON MY EPISTEMOLOGICAL CIRCULARITY

In qualitative inquiry, epistemological circularity within the research phases is one of the most distinctive features (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I experienced this first hand
and very intensely during the proposal development and writing up phases of my research journey. The proposal development phase had been critical in providing the foundation of the study which involved a joint reflexivity experience with my participant, supervisor and the literature. The experience had been one of non-stop questioning, learning, understanding, integrating, interpreting and application. For this reason, I believe sharing how I experienced this phase with you is critical to understanding how the study evolved. Since I already provided some detail about how I conceptualised the study, what I share next is an overview of the experience to shed light on how the circular movements between the research phases naturally occurred.

As described by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), qualitative research entails five circular phases, namely: Phase 1 (The researcher as a multicultural subject); Phase 2 (Theoretical paradigms and perspectives); Phase 3 (Research strategies); Phase 4 (Methods of collecting data); and Phase 5 (The art, practices and politics of Interpretation and evaluation). In order to capture the duality of the research topic, I begin with my reflections on how researcher reflexivity influenced the entire research process.

Developing my research proposal was a journey in itself. In sharing this reflection, I want to engage a vicarious experience with the reader of the bombardment of constructs, emotions, questioning and internal conflict that constitutes reflexivity in the research phases. In other words, I want to illustrate how I grappled with the
intersection of my meta-theoretical world with what the literature has to say about research (Etherington, 2007).

In many ways, this research experience resembled a marriage between the literature, my meta-theoretical assumptions, my storyteller’s beliefs and preconceptions, the research question and the setting of the research. As might happen in real life, this marriage involved misunderstandings, anxieties, questions and agreements culminating in celebrations which were laced with moments of intrusive confusion and liberating clarity. The journey was an emotional, reflexive explosion on several levels.

Writing the leader’s story was the most challenging aspect because of my personal situation at the time. However, developing the research proposal resembled my personal situation during the writing phase in that it was as much unchartered territory as well as a critical element of the research process. Navigating the dizzying circles involved in rediscovering who I was and what I believed about knowledge and reality relevant to the study (Mouton & Marais, 1996), I felt like a puppy chasing its tail. The literature became my constant companion. At the first light of day and with the first sounds of the birds chirping noisily in my garden, the voices of scholars echoed in my mind: Eriksson and Kovalainen, Merriam, Glesne, Mouton, Schurink, Huberman, Neuman, Denzin, Guba and Lincoln, Ramsey to name but a few. These voices both tormented and stimulated me as my body mechanically responded to the rising and setting of the sun.
Each morning, despite the call from the dwindling whispers of my dream state, I dragged my sleepy body from my warm cocoon to the adjoining bathroom. Drunkenly, I staggered to the bathroom vanity, trying and failing to dismiss the relentless words racing around, swirling in my mind, stirring up my heart. Splashing warm water on my face only increased the ceaseless musing about the literature and my views and beliefs, questioning, formulating and searching for understanding. The voices followed me throughout the day. They were present in a continuous, self-discussion (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Stronach, Garratt, Pearce & Piper, 2007). Sometimes they filled my body with frenzied frustration or delicious euphoria as I made connections and figured out answers. I became addicted to these moments of euphoria, wanting them, needing them to propel me onward and forward to my destination and the completion of my thesis.

Reading and re-reading the literature, I found that deciding on the appropriate research approach, design and strategy eluded me. I recalled Eriksson and Kovalainen's (2008) descriptions of the various methods pertaining to different theories in qualitative research. I also remembered their discussions of the link between the data and specific types of qualitative research. Again, I read and re-read what these scholars say – the words colliding and creating a storm inside my head; a literal brain storm.

Pushing and plodding my way up this information mountain, I disentangled the various qualitative approaches and concepts, learning and understanding more and more. While these moments were difficult, they tended to propel me forward rather
than creating ambivalence within me. Organically, in a hermeneutic waltz with both the literature and my meta-theoretical assumptions, I moved two steps forward and three steps back (Schurink, 2009). I discovered I was alternating between Phase 1 (The researcher as a multicultural subject) and Phase 2 (Theoretical paradigms and perspectives) of the research process during my contemplation of which research approach I would use.

Part of my meaning making to understand reflexivity involved creating a graphic or visual display to concretise my experiences of epistemological circularity. I populated and repopulated the inner circles I experienced until I arrived at (Figure 3.1). Developing this diagrammatic representation of my hermeneutic experience of reflexivity not only ignited my creativity but also encouraged me because it helped me appreciate the interrelated complexity of reflexivity. Although challenging, epistemic, methodological reflexivity and emotional reflexivity unfolded in an incredibly engaging way during the proposal formulation phase and during writing phases. Initially, the rings of unending rumination overwhelmed me. However, during my reflexive process, I started to vividly experience their interconnection and intersection within the research process and also around the research question. In short, working out how to integrate my ontology and epistemology into the study was extremely valuable.

My reflexivity was not just about awareness; it was specifically linked to the consistent circularity in challenging my own beliefs (epistemic reflexivity) about among other things culture, politics, leadership and social construction. I delved into
my philosophical speculations about how I perceived myself as leader in my particular work area. I questioned who I thought I was as a person, a student, an individual in my family, community, country and in the world. The questioning occurred in relation to my study and my storyteller as explained in (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). During this process, I was exploring my ‘self’ critically, analysing and scrutinising my reflections and the various research concepts. I pondered how these constructs intertwined in the study (D’Cruz, Gillingham, & Melendez, 2007; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gergen & Gergen, 1991). In the process, quite naturally, I realised I was moving back and forth between Phase 2 (Theoretical paradigms and perspectives) and Phase 3 (Research strategies).

Figure 3.1: Ramsey (2013, September, 12). My understanding of my personal hermeneutic cycle of reflexivity which I represented as interlinked rings of reflexivity around the research question.
Throughout these phases, I also experienced my body on a completely new level. I consciously felt my stomach twist in an alien way as I strove to meet deadlines while reminding myself to breathe. Simultaneously, I experienced inexplicable conflicting emotions like exhaustion and excitement (Burkitt, 2012; Burman, 2006; Glesne, 1999; Munkejord, 2009). The more I researched the meaning and essence of reflexivity, especially emotion within reflexivity and the research process, the more I found myself testing the validity of these scholarly concepts. The research phases melted in and out of one another. Feeling light-headed at times and desperately finding my footing and holding on, I continued my climb up the research mountain. In an interpretive dance, the study harmoniously blended in a reflexive way with my own life context, history and background as the researcher (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

My reflections included thinking about my role as qualitative researcher and how my training in counselling psychology would impact my study. In particular, I thought about the benefits of having this background in terms of applying research techniques like interviewing and integrating information. Appreciating these skills, I became more conscious about not allowing the counselling background to interfere with the research methodology (Berger, 2015).

I considered my values and beliefs about leadership and leadership development and how these linked with the conceptualisation of the study. In formulating my research design/strategy and in particular, in considering life history interviews as a data collection method, I anticipated the interviews with cognisance of the purpose of
the interviews (Bryman & Cassel, 2006). I considered the respective cultures, gender and racial heritage between me as the researcher, my storyteller and my supervisor. As a person of colour, having lived in the USA had afforded me the remarkable experience of living in racially integrated residential neighbourhoods and socialising with various cultures. Consequently, my contemplations were less about how I envisaged our interaction in the study and more about applying the relevant qualitative research techniques in a manner that acknowledged differences and also engaged conversation around them in the context of the study. At this point, I realised that Phase 4 (Methods of collecting data) had joined the preceding phases in my hermeneutic, epistemological waltz.

Consciously practising awareness of my thinking and feeling, reflecting on my reflections, I explored, clarified, understood and explained my revelations in the notes. Indeed, my active participation in reflexivity created a fluidity that allowed me to use it as a tool (Etherington, 2007) to facilitate the research process.

The definitive essence of my reflexivity resonated with Gabriel’s (2015) assertions about engaging consciousness (Huberman & Miles, 2002). Gabriel (2015) argues that reflexivity in research involves engaging in an activity. During this activity, the verbal exchange, or what Archer (2003) terms the internal conversation, results in reciprocal subject-object creation. Thus, the exchange represents altering one’s position in relation to one’s mirror reflection of self. Gabriel (2015) suggests that this verbal exchange activity involves a metaphorical construction of a protagonist in a ‘self-story’. In this self-story, the protagonist develops historical sense making for life
in the present, while his/her narrative moves on. It is in this way that ‘I’ as the storyteller, as well as the central character in the story, co-produces each the other respectively – much as it happens during an inner dialogue. As is the case with narratives, for example, cognitions, relationships, interactions and the study produce a constant churning of reflexivity that is, in fact, subjectivity. Thus, reflexivity involves consciousness but also occurs unconsciously as a human capacity (Gabriel, 2015).

Methodological emotional reflexivity, which increases awareness of the role of emotion in the research process (Burman, 2006; Munkejord, 2009; Pillow, 2003), was significant. Given the research question, as I reflected on conflicts and questions, I also focused on my emotions, for example, when driving to meet with my supervisor. In preparation for our supervision meetings, I had paid attention to my body – the feeling of tightening in my stomach area, changes in my breathing and a rapid or shallow heart rate. I had considered concepts from the literature that I had not fully grasped or comments that I had made and actions I had taken that may have been either unsuitable or amazing. At times, deeply immersed in thinking about consciously experiencing the feelings, my body had warned me to stop. Sometimes I noticed that I had stopped breathing for a few seconds. Deep breaths, Patty, I would tell myself in these moments. These instances had been where I used journaling, memo writing and discussions with my supervisor as part of the hermeneutic dance related to the research question (Munkejord, 2009; Schurink, 2009; Schwandt, 2007). The waltz had continued as I considered the relevant disciplines that may provide answers to the research question. Although leadership was the setting for my study the research question was such that focusing on leadership only as a
theoretical framework would not have enabled me to resolve the research problem effectively. Gradually and naturally, I had discovered the interdisciplinary theoretical perspective of the study.

After having finalised the proposal, I had emailed the first draft to my supervisor for feedback:

*Prof said the draft was good but that some sections require reshuffling. He said this would weave a good discussion style into the document. There was no need for the anguish, fear, self-doubt and second-guessing. It amounted to a construction in my own mind.*

*Now, I feel calm and ready to take on the next challenge, namely, revising the areas that need fixing. I feel some anxiety about the panel presentation but also confidence. I am still questioning my understanding of some of the concepts in my study. I'm not sure that I fully understand reflexivity.*

Note 3.4: Ramsey (2013, September, 3). Researcher reflection: Reflective notes.

In this uplifting and yet maddening way, I had developed clarity about my study. Like a global positioning system (GPS) this clarity had guided me in discovering the approach and design most suited to the purposes of my study. In retrospect, developing my proposal was fundamental to how I executed the study even with the change to a single life story approach. The proposal development had given me the necessary insight into and understanding of the phases in the research process. In particular developing the proposal had given me insight into techniques for conducting the interviews, what to expect and how to ensure ethical standards as well as quality research. This cyclical epistemological process created a
consciousness of reflexivity as the essence of the study. This realisation in itself was researcher reflexivity. I was excited about the panel presentation.

Prof and I had prepared for the panel presentation and finally, the day had arrived. I presented my research proposal to the panel after which Dr Magda Hewitt, the chairperson, asked me to wait outside while they deliberated. Waiting anxiously, I had reflected on what I had done and how I could have done better, berating myself for my performance. Then the door opened and I entered tentatively. They had accepted my proposal and I was ecstatic! I felt a smile ignite my body deep inside my stomach and even into my knees. My heartbeat did flip flops in my chest. I thanked God and the panel and I stepped out of the room – into my husband’s arms. He had surprised me. I had not expected to find him waiting outside. I thought, “Wow! I did it! Amazing! This day could not get any better!” I had invited him in and had introduced him to the panel. Afterwards, he had taken some photographs to document the experience (see Photograph 3.1 below). Excitedly, we bid the panel goodbye and set off to celebrate. We could not stop smiling!

During the writing phase many questions, some random and some purposeful, had entered my consciousness. Questioning the benefit and personal value of conducting research at that particular time, I reflected on the impact on my family, my work and my purpose as I had understood it before and, its current relevance. Reflecting on the experience I had developed a new appreciation for the concept of meaning making, its variability and context.
3.7. SUMMARY

I began Chapter 3 by describing how I had conceptualised the research. Subsequently, I provided details of my conscious experience and engagement with the different types of reflexivity. In this way, I explained how reflexivity guided and directed my path towards establishing the key focus, research question, rationale aims and objectives and the envisaged contributions of the study.

Finally, I concluded the chapter with my experience of epistemological circularity through the key phases. My intent was to illustrate the interrelatedness between reflexivity, the research topic and the research process; in the development of my research proposal which formed a foundation for the execution of the study.
4.1. **INTRODUCTION**

The design of the study encompasses the first leg of my doctoral journey. Firstly, I deliver a brief review of the literature on qualitative research. Secondly, I outline my research philosophy and, in particular, my ontology and epistemology as these pertain to the study. Thirdly, the chapter describes the research approach I used. I discuss the decision to use a life history approach and Straussarian grounded theory techniques in the data analysis. Fourthly, the chapter explains the use of the literature and of my reasoning in converting the research findings into theory. Fifthly, the chapter presents my approach to research ethics and provides the key decisions taken throughout the research. Finally, I discuss the necessary strategies for ensuring quality research.

4.2. **BRIEF SCHOLARLY REVIEW OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

The literature on qualitative inquiry clearly indicates that no universally accepted definition of qualitative research exists (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eriksson & Kovaleinen, 2008; Glesne, 1999). In fact, qualitative research as an overarching concept embraces numerous varieties of inquiry using uncontrolled variables, embracing various philosophies and focusing on understanding and explaining the natural occurrence of social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Glesne, 1999; Henning, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Schurink, 2009).
Historically, considerations of qualitative research are presented as a metaphor for the colonial desire for knowledge, truth and power (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). However, as a leading authority on the history of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) developmental, historical moment typology presents a valuable perspective. In their typology, there are eight definitive moments or phases in the history of qualitative research. Reflexively and repeatedly questioning my ontology and epistemology and which of the moments resonated with these assumptions, I had expressed my frustration about this epistemological foxtrot:

I find myself grappling with where I fit in the various moments in the history of qualitative research. I am able to see a connection with my ontological assumptions, in the ‘blurred genres’ moment and constructionism. However, I haven’t yet pieced all the overlapping elements together in my research montage to fully grasp the big picture. I need to see how all the elements connect to my ontology and epistemology. I find myself going back and forth between ontology and epistemology. These two constructs are so abstract. Just as I think, I understand them ... I don’t.


After much internal deliberation, I had realised that the third moment or ‘blurred genres’ (1970–1986) was the most relevant to my theoretical framework. This moment comprises numerous paradigms, methods and strategies that resonated well with my personal constructionist worldview and includes theories such as constructivism, symbolic interactionism, positivism, naturalistic inquiry, post-positivism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology and critical theory (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). With this moment in mind, I had recalled the numerous methods in qualitative research that linked to interpretive and cultural studies and
also to several perspectives. In particular, I had remembered the true-to-life viewpoint and appreciation of human experience in qualitative inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eriksson & Kovaleinen, 2008; Neuman, 2003). Contemplating and researching this naturalistic perspective had revealed its use of historical narrative, life histories, introspection, interviews, biographical and autobiographical materials, and ethnographic prose, among others (Henning, 2004; Merriam, 1998). The purpose of these qualitative approaches is to improve our understanding of the subject under study (Neuman, 2003; Schwandt, 2001). For these reasons, I had decided that a qualitative approach was the most appropriate for the purposes of this study.

The literature revealed various strategies such as case studies, grounded theory and ethnographic action methods as well as several data collection techniques including qualitative interviewing, personal experience, visual and observational methods as well as documentary methods (Creswell, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Huberman & Miles, 2002). Realising yet again, the vast multidisciplinary field of qualitative inquiry, I had discovered that, as described in Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), reflexivity may be said to be the glue that holds the research process together.

4.3. EXPLORING MY RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The ultimate aim of reflexivity in research design is to enhance the integrity or quality of one’s research. This aim is achieved through both reflection and a consideration of the appropriateness of the methods used and the researcher’s actions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gergen & Gergen, 1991). Through a process of critical reflection
examining, analysing and interrogating my ontology and epistemology in relation to research and my beliefs, I had clarified my research paradigm (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; D’Cruz et al., 2007; Gergen & Gergen, 1991; Pillow, 2003; Stronach et al. (2007).

My ontological assumptions

In view of the fact that ontology and epistemology are significant philosophical characteristics that underpin both research design and research methodology, I had decided that an explanation of the way in which these meta-theoretical beliefs intersected in the research process relevant to my study is essential (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gergen & Gergen, 1991). Ontological assumptions refer to one’s worldview or basic beliefs about the form and nature of reality (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). Pondering my views about reality, I had engaged in an ongoing internal discussion (Bradbury-Jones, 2007; Pillow, 2003; Stronach, Garratt, Pearce, & Piper, 2007) about my perspectives on life. In an attempt to make sense of it all, I had discussed my reflections with my husband. Testing my beliefs in our discussions and comparing them with his beliefs about reality, I had arrived at a place of understanding. More specifically, I had developed a deeper awareness of the differences in how we think about and experience our lives as human beings. I contemplated the influence of my realisations on my study (Berger, 2015).

Initially, I had considered my ontology in respect of the following two realities, namely, realism and idealism. Realism focuses on an external reality which exists independent of human beliefs while idealism, on the other hand, focuses on reality
as the product of social constructions in the human mind (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In view of the fact that I acknowledge the existence of an external physical reality, I tended to resonate with realism, but also with idealism which involves the social construction of reality. This ambiguity presented a paradox because my worldview reflects a constructivist paradigm. However, further study of the literature had revealed that the contradiction stemmed from a shift within constructivism from ontological realism to ontological relativism. This shift was particularly relevant in relation to a social science perspective (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

A constructionist perspective when applied to leadership emotional reflexivity would imply that leaders construct their own realities. Their construction would therefore occur relative to their own contexts, worldviews, experiences and circumstances and in their interactions with others and the world. I felt excited because constructivism made sense to me. In my work, based on discussions with clients, especially during OD initiatives, I had often experienced what I had perceived as various constructed realities.

In facilitating my OD interventions, I had regularly participated in group discussions on leader and manager reactions to various issues. One such issue had involved the diverse cultures in South Africa. Several instances occurred where individuals, guided by their belief systems, had misinterpreted situations and, subsequently, expressed an interest in exploring their misperceptions during these group discussions. Cultural issues had often presented interesting debates because as South Africans, we do not have a shared, integrated history on which to draw. Thus,
in my work experiences, many constructed realities merged and emerged. Reflecting on the organisational culture interventions I had developed and implemented and on how I perceive the world and people as constantly evolving in their social interactions had helped me to reconnect with my ontological assumptions.

My graduate studies had also played a significant role in the formulation of my ontological assumptions relevant to the research. During my studies in the USA, Kierkegaard’s psychology of introspection had influenced my perspective. His psychology involves personal examination through introspection and interaction with others as opposed to a collection of facts to formulate precise and disengaged rules (Sharpless, 2012). Kierkegaard’s incorporation of involvement of others in the process of introspection was particularly relevant to my ontological assumptions and in how I had conceived of the design of the study. In my interaction with and interpretations during the research process, these collective meta-theoretical assumptions had intersected and this was how I realised the need for consciousness as researcher in experiencing the study. In addition to my ontological assumptions, I had also considered my epistemology as it related to the design of the study.

My epistemological assumptions

Epistemology refers to one’s assumptions about knowledge and its origin (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). I believe the way in which we arrange ourselves socially is important. Social arrangement occurs in our families, within our communities and businesses, within broader societies and, today, globally. This social arrangement occurs within the context of established and accepted subjective contracts or philosophies, based
on the norms, values, beliefs, traditions and needs that connect and guide us. In this way, I believe the subjective experiences of leaders evolve as leaders make meaning of their social, meta-theoretical and emotional participation in a world in which realities and epistemologies are consistently evolving (Schurink, 2009).

Again, Kierkegaard’s postulation, that the emergence of knowledge and truth for an individual is the result of participation and action, had resonated with my constructivist ontology. This active engagement occurs through will that is derived from passion as opposed to rational consideration. Kierkegaard’s psychology of active engagement had influenced my epistemological assumptions. He concedes that while rational consideration is valuable, when wholly embraced, it results in stagnation in the search for knowledge (in Sharpless, 2012). For me, the value of knowledge resides in the value which we and, in this instance, leaders, assign to it both in action and in participation with their beliefs and ontological assumptions within the social world.

Having clarified my research paradigm, next, I discuss the research approach I chose for the study.

4.4. LIFE STORY AS MY PREFERRED RESEARCH APPROACH

As previously indicated, my research question had guided me towards the selection of a qualitative research approach. In view of my constructivist paradigm, I had adopted a biographical, life-story, research approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). I believed that this was the most suitable approach to study the inner, emotional
meaning making of a leader while recognising the perspective that people construct their own realities and that several realities exist within the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kegan, 1982; Lincoln & Guba, 1994; Schurink, 2007).

In terms of the setting for the study, qualitative research is suited to the issue of leadership as a situated, lived activity (Avolio, 1999). My ontological and epistemological assumptions had resonated well with the ‘blurred genres’ moment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), which reflected in my interdisciplinary stance while also aligning with the research question (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Merriam, 1998). In addition, the qualitative approach had enabled me to participate in the life story and, in particular, in the subjective, social-emotional world of my participant (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Neuman, 2003). To appreciate my storyteller’s inner world, a deeper look into life story research is necessary.

Life story research derives from various sources including memoirs, history of a person’s life, web-based sources, private letters, interview discussions and photographic and filmed records, etc. These derivations may be lengthy or short accounts, time bound, general or detailed, vague or precise, superficial or deep and basic or profound (Plummer, 2001). A life story may also be historical, a story about the self, a life document/narrative, or an oral history, to name a few. This brief summary underscores how profuse and multifaceted a field life story is. In demonstrating the relevance of my choice, I focus on the work of Plummer (2001), whose discussion of life stories and, in particular, his description of three types is highly regarded.
Plummer’s (2001) types of life story

Plummer’s (2001) broad and interconnected life story types include naturalistic, researched and reflexive-recursive life stories. Naturalistic life stories focus on the real, natural occurrences in the retelling of the story, without preconceptions and true to the voice of the teller (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). These stories happen 'in situ' with no reconstruction or analysis, for example, grandparents reminiscing, parent-child telephone conversations, criminal confessions or personal letters. Researched life stories, on the other hand, are not natural occurrences. They typically relate to a social science objective. These stories must be enticed, cajoled and interrogated from participants in particular settings with the help of tools such as voice recorders or video tapings, or in psychiatric settings. Thus, the researcher contours and builds the story.

Reflexive and recursive life stories are typical of both feminist social research and postmodern inquiry (Dickens & Fontana, 1994; Stanley, 1992). These stories involve a conscious awareness about their development and writing and involve a self-conscious and reflective reproduction of the story in either an oral speech or in a written text. The writer conveys the story in the form of fiction, thus making it easier to read. In addition, the writer is included in the writing and, thus, the reference to the reflexive reproduction as the postmodern turn (Marcus & Fisher, 1986). Given the postmodern turn in social science writing, it is important, in addition to the types of life stories discussed above, also to consider Plummer’s (2001) perspectives on life stories.
Plummer’s (2001) perspectives on life stories

A life story or biography may assume the viewpoint of a resource. In this instance, the focus is on understanding, for example, a group of people in a foreign environment, culture, or life cycle. The resource perspective avoids the postmodern turn or crisis of representation and engages realist tales. Alternately, there is the topic perspective. Here the focus is on understanding the interpretive, meaning making processes that assemble and craft the life in question. This perspective occurs within a social context and involves a constructed comprehension around the insight into the “constructed inhabitant’s, constructed” perspective (Crapanzano, 1986, p. 74).

Life stories are not independent because they rely on others, for example, the teller or composer and the listener or hearer. They are also in the narrative form. A narrative text involves the principles and observations of narrative writing about experiences as opposed to actual life (Huber, Caine, Huber, & Steeves, 2013). The narrative is essential in order to link human behaviours and occasions within a culture, thus making the story an understandable whole (Huber et al., 2013; Polkinghorne, 1988). Therefore, life story research focuses on understanding and results in the topic examined, as the story (Edwards, 1997).

These stories usually convey a perspective from a specific position, for example a reader, biographer or antagonist, who is perceived as a unit of conversation directed by linguistic rules (Linde, 1993).
My choice of the type and life story perspective

I had decided on a reflexive, biographical, life story approach, from a topic perspective for the study. For more clarity, I want to briefly elaborate on the biography. Biographies involve universal constructions as a means of defining present events in the context of the past and with reference to a future desire (Bertaux & Kholi, 1984). In this context, choosing a biographical style facilitated the reflexive retelling of significant life and leadership events from the leader’s past and, his current cognitive/emotional experience of these events as they related to his future aspirations - as suggested by Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2005). The biographical context enabled me to reflect on the array of life and leadership experiences in his diverse, often concurrent, social roles. In this way, the life story approach had facilitated the development of constructs about this leader’s inner, emotional understandings (Harraway, 1991).

4.5. DETERMINING THE RESEARCH STRATEGY

The literature presents a wide variety of possible research strategies. As noted by Creswell (1998), these include “biography, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study”, all representing different disciplines with comprehensive procedures (Delport, Fouché, & Schurink, 2011, p. 312). I had originally planned to conduct interviews with a small group of leaders. However, after having interviewed the first research participant, I had revisited my decision together with my promoter, Professor Schurink, and had considered the suggestions of Bogdan and Taylor (1975). These scholars warn that not everyone with a story to tell is necessarily a
good research partner. A good research storyteller needs certain qualities such as commitment to the time required and genuine participation.

The nature of my research had also meant that my subject had to be willing to share intimate details of his leadership, life experiences and emotions in a meaningful way. Bogdan and Taylor (1975) suggest that first meeting and talking to possible participants assists in choosing the right subject. From the advice above, I felt confident and excited that my subject had not only had an excellent story to tell but also that he possessed an outstanding ability to explain his experiences and perceptions.

4.5.1. Key considerations in choosing a biographical life story approach

Biographical research allows for the integration of social phenomena and individual experience in order to create meaning and understanding (Ackroyd, 2000). This integration may be accomplished through recalling, retelling, re-feeling and reflexively re-evaluating the life story in order to derive lessons and learn from these lessons (Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Life stories also provide an opportunity for sharing how perspectives and experiences grounded in the past, manifesting in the present with reference to the future, evolve as individuals make meaning of their lives (Merrill & West, 2009). While co-construction of ideas and reality was a foundation of my research approach, I had also focused on understanding and interpreting my storyteller’s views. This process of meaning making had encompassed his perspectives of both the reflexive experiences and his personal/socio-cultural and
political context (Avolio, 1999; Lecompte, 1994; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006; Merriam, 1998).

With reference to personal context and leadership, in their study into the value of senior leader narratives, Turner and Mavin (2008) argue that life story and precipitating life events are fundamental to leadership development and performance. In particular, the study revealed that, for leaders, retelling their life stories facilitates a reflective reconsideration of their belief systems. Reconsideration therefore, highlights the foundational principles on which to build leader identity and leadership style within the current global leadership arena.

Given the global, cultural trajectory, a post-modern era implies an increase in the worldwide, intergenerational and multicultural, culture. Therefore, a focus on the reflexive self and reflexive experience, as contained in a life story, presents an avenue for self-definition through confronting and reworking old and dominant ways of doing things (Merrill & West, 2009). In view of the above, I was confident that the approach I had selected would facilitate answering the research question. However, since I had chosen a single, biographical life story, I believed it was necessary to consider parallels with case study and my considerations of the implications involved.

**Questions about validity in using a single life story approach**

A single life story resembles a case study in that it involves asking ‘what and why’ questions (Yin, 2003). Accordingly, it was important to consider the implications of
the biographical life story regarding the validity of research, using the case study as a yardstick. According to the literature, the earlier or conventional views of single case studies suggest a lack of reliability and generalisability hence, the assertions that their usefulness is limited to providing hypotheses for studies involving several cases (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984). There is the perspective that validity is possible only in the presence of general hypotheses while all else is nothing more than methodological garbage (Campbell & Stanley, 1966), or uncontrollable and futile (Diamond, 1996; Dogan & Pelassy, 1990). However, not all scholars support these views.

Flyvbjerg (2006) disputes the conventional view and describes the two-fold role of case studies, using this in examining five misunderstandings of the case study. The first role involves knowledge that is reliant on context and is essential to researcher development. Context is relevant here because novice researchers are guided by rules. They begin as novices and move towards becoming experts. For researchers, the resemblance of case study to real life, with its richness, satisfies the need for developing variations in the meaning of reality. In this way, understanding the multifaceted nature of human behaviour as opposed to theoretical, rule-governed actions relevant in the initial levels of learning occurs. Consequently, from a researcher development perspective, Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that the ‘context-dependent’ situations which reflect a reciprocal experience close to the reality investigated, augments the learning experience for novice researchers. This augmentation promotes the testing of efficacy and enhances the value of the research.
The second role of the case study, as it relates to learning, is argued by Flyvbjerg (2006, p. 221) in terms of the negation of “epistemic knowledge”. The implication is that predictive theory – the generation of general “context-independent theory” – is non-existent in social science (p. 221). Here Flyvbjerg asserts that social science can only offer “concrete, context-dependent knowledge” (p. 221). Therefore, the value of case study is precisely that it presents an opportunity for “epistemic theoretical construction” (p. 221). This does not imply discarding the value of rule-based knowledge but, rather, suggests the use of both approaches as opposed to elevating rule-based knowledge as the ultimate yardstick for excellence in learning.

In his examination, Flyvbjerg (2006) offers his revised perceptions of each of the five misunderstandings. Firstly, he states that, in studying human issues, greater value is obtained through context-dependent knowledge as opposed to the unobtainable pursuit of predictive and universal theories. Secondly, generalising on the basis of a single case is possible where the case study is fundamental to the development of theory, particularly as a substitute for other methods. The overemphasis on formal generalisation in the development of theory minimises the value of the practical example. Thirdly, the case study has wide application in addition to the development and testing of hypotheses. Fourthly, bias regarding researcher assumptions in the case study, as opposed to other research methods, is incorrect. Finally, while summarising case studies may be challenging as opposed to other approaches, their outcomes are not negatively affected by the use of case study. Negative impact rather, is as a result of difficulties in the reality being studied. Flyvbjerg (2006)
emphasises the usefulness of a general case study in contributing to progressive knowledge development.

It is worth noting that, while Campbell (1975) initially rejected the value of the case study, he later reversed on his opinion of its ambiguity and proceeded to promote the use of the case study in research. He argues that quantitative knowledge does not replace qualitative knowledge and that natural, subjective, biased and common-sense observation is synonymous with our humanness. This subjective, noisy and imperfect human path is our one true direction to gaining knowledge (Campbell, 1975). Other scholars have joined with Campbell in advocating for case studies, including Yin (2013) who proposes learning from and illuminating the niche of single cases as opposed to proving something. This scholarly support emphasises the value of the case study in social science (Ragin & Becker, 1992). Hence, it is plausible to surmise the same about a single life story as about the case study but with added attention to the issues of trustworthiness and authenticity.

In view of the above, I was cognisant of Huberman and Miles’s (2002, p. 206) criteria for trustworthy and authentic research involving “resonance, rhetoric, empowerment and applicability” for case studies. With respect to the issue of resonance (Huberman & Miles, 2002), the match between the aim of the study and my constructivist ontology had facilitated my interpretation of the array of ideas present in the life story. In re-telling the leader’s story, I had depicted our reconstructed elucidations of the many influences, for example, social construction and agency, in a non-fiction writing style. I retold the leader’s story using a metaphor to engage the reader’s
interest and participation in the narrative. In addition, I organised his story in such a way so as to illustrate the meaning of reflexivity and emotion by consistently persevering with the central metaphor throughout the storyline. Incorporating my own reflections into the text, I included my personal story in a confessional section in Chapter 8.

4.5.2. Choosing Straussian grounded theory for data analysis

The purpose of the study, the nature of the research question and the skills and resources at my disposal all played a role in my decision of a qualitative research strategy (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2002). In view of the nature of the study, I had initially veered toward phenomenology. However, after a discussion with my supervisor, I had reconsidered this idea and had decided on grounded theory particularly for the data analysis because of its appropriateness for exploratory research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

The pragmatist notion (Wuest, 2012) of human involvement in the creation of reality in grounded theory (Shalin, 1991) resonated with me while the theory that understanding arrives through the psychology of knowledge, action and practical application (Dewey, 1929) fit in with my constructionist point of view. I felt that grounded theory for the data analysis had suited the purpose of the study; to explore, understand and describe the leader’s views (Schurink, 2009) of his emotional reflexivity process.
Since I had already decided on my research topic, Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) and Corbin and Strauss’s (2008) evolved grounded theory methodology captured my attention. The freedom offered, laced with structure in the application of analysis particularly in Straussarian grounded theory excited me (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & McMullen, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tweed & Charmaz, 2012). Techniques within this methodology had suited co-constructing the data with a single leader. My active engagement in terms of my storyteller’s reflections, interpretations, observation and participation was critical in answering the research question (Gioia, 2003; McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007) and involved inductive reasoning and discovery of theory from the bottom up. Thus, I had developed the story around the overall characteristics of the research topic while at the same time, using the data in order to ground the storyteller’s narrative (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006, Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

At the same time, I was consciously aware of my personal assumptions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The iterative, reflexive process (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) had allowed me to gather and co-construct the thesis to reflect the psychosocial foundations of the storyteller’s internal emotional experiences and interpretations. Moreover, the iterative and comparative emphasis in Straussarian grounded theory had facilitated abductive reasoning (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). This meant I was able to relate the storyteller’s subjective reactions and responses to significant incidents involving his life and leadership with relevant scholarly concepts.
Thus, in line with the above, in our interpretations, the storyteller and I had moved back and forth between the data collected, his life experiences, previous interviews, leadership incidents and previous understandings. I had focused on his emotions, how they had originated, how they linked to his value system and inner compass and how they had influenced his leadership decisions and behaviour. In addition, I had focused on what the participant was consistently learning as he/we interrogated his understanding in our interpretations using the foundational interdisciplinary conceptual framework to guide the data collection and interpretation. In this manner, Straussarian grounded theory in the data analysis had allowed us to repeatedly collect and compare data that illustrated how his life experiences and lessons learned were contributing to the subjective, emotional narrative we had co-constructed (Lecompte, 1994; Lietz et al., 2006; Merriam 1998). The storyteller’s mind, self, action, interaction and interpretation as collaborative elements in deriving meaning (Blumer, 1981) and, in particular, his emotion had facilitated a hermeneutic process. In this hermeneutic process, we had unravelled how and why these various interwoven elements were interrelated. In this way, these elements had added to a multilevel theory grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2003; Silverman, 2011).

4.6. APPLYING THE LITERATURE

Shank (2006) delineates relevant considerations regarding the use of the literature in qualitative research. These considerations involve contemplation of both the need for and the role of the literature review and also the need to review the literature in order
to formulate and refine the anticipated research. In addition, Shank (2006) prompts reflection on whether a literature review is actually necessary to develop the research approach or whether the literature review should be avoided in favour of a more natural experience.

In addressing these questions Shank (2006) distinguishes two schools of thought with regard to the use of literature in qualitative research, namely: (i) the ‘ignorance is bliss’ school and (ii) the school of thought which maintains that it is important to read, review and obtain an understanding of the literature related to the research topic before starting with the fieldwork. Researchers who prefer the ‘ignorance is bliss’ school believe that the data in qualitative research should be treated on its own terms. In other words, setting aside personal predispositions, preconceptions and biases and allowing the data to speak for itself is one way in which to ensure the relevance of the field data. However, this may be challenging and may also be regarded as unnecessarily complicated and, therefore, adherents of this school of thought suggest dividing the literature review into two stages – firstly, a brief preliminary literature review to establish the need for a fresh perspective on the existing literature and, secondly, to ascertain the existence of a gap in the existing knowledge (Shank, 2006).

The second school proposes a different approach to the use of literature with the proponents of this school maintaining that greater knowledge of the research topic ensures better research planning. As opposed to the “ignorance is bliss” school, the second school uses the literature review to demonstrate that the research topic or
research question addresses a gap in the existing body of knowledge and also enables the development of an understanding of the topic to be studied (Shank, 2006). Thus, the literature review becomes akin to the testimony provided by expert witnesses in a court case (Metcalfe, 2003).

The use of Straussarian grounded theory techniques within the contextually focussed epistemology allows a brief review of the existing literature. Therefore, before developing the research proposal, I had consulted the literature to gain an introductory understanding of my topic (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This was how the development of a conceptual framework evolved to create a path for data collection and analysis.

In addition, the literature review had schooled me in the application of qualitative research given that it was new to me. I had embraced elements from both schools as described above. This experience had happened naturally as I applied the research design throughout the various phases of the research process.

Once I had moved to an understanding of the storyteller’s experiences and viewpoints, I consulted the literature again as a professional onlooker (Metcalfe, 2003). I had organically reverted to the preliminary literature review which underscored the underpinning theoretical framework and extended it in support of particular relevant findings and/or constructs.
4.7. CONVERTING FINDINGS TO THEORY

Linking research and theory is not a straightforward matter as several issues are at stake (Bryman & Bell, 2003). In this context, the models or logic used to develop knowledge are particularly important. Deduction and induction are well-known reasoning strategies (Schurink, 2005) or, in the words of Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) may be said to be the ‘two logics of reasoning’.

Deduction refers to a strategy where, based on what is theoretically known about a phenomenon, the researcher deduces hypotheses which are then subjected to empirical research (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). However, an alternate logic occurs when researchers approach the relationship between theory and empirical research inductively; that is, they move from the empirical results to the theory (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Both these logics occur in qualitative research (Creswell, 1998) and, thus, researchers often use a combination of the two.

Many researchers use both induction and deduction in different phases of their study, thus moving iteratively between these two during the research process. Some research methods books suggest abduction as a way in which to combine deduction and induction in one research project. Abduction refers to the process of moving from the everyday description and meanings given by people to categories and concepts that create the basis of an understanding or an explanation of the phenomenon described (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 23).
Applying an abductive reasoning approach, I had moved intermittently from everyday or concrete experiences, for example, critical incidents, views and feelings as experienced by the participant leader to abstract constructs found in the literature. In particular, I had applied Mouton and Marais’s (1996) analytical tools typology to develop a substantive theory of engaging leadership emotional reflexivity.

The research strategy I had engaged in order to develop a theoretical construct permits the use of one or more case studies from the empirical evidence (Baxter and Jack, 2008). Like case studies, single life stories are rich descriptions of specific situations pertaining to a particular phenomenon (Yin, 2009). As such, life story cases form the foundation for inductive theory building by identifying relationship patterns between constructs and their fundamental logical viewpoints.

Mouton and Marais’s (1996) central constructs in the research process had provided me with the building blocks required to develop a construct for leader emotional reflexivity. These ‘analytical tools’ and especially the conceptual frameworks, included typologies, models and theories and are found in any research study. Briefly, a typology is a theoretical outline or framework for the classification of phenomena relative to commonalities these phenomena share with other phenomena (Mouton & Marais 1996). On the other hand, a model is a methodical depiction of a phenomenon that points out designs and inconsistencies between variables. As a reproduction, mock-up or likeness of the original, a model involves descriptions of social phenomena but without elucidation or prediction (Bailey, 1994). Mouton (2002) suggests that the most significant characteristic of a model is its
heuristic purpose, namely, to direct, reveal or discover while also acknowledging a degree of similarity with the phenomenon (Mouton & Marais 1996). For this reason, models are useful in proposing new research ideas based on their dynamic representations of the phenomenon under study (Strydom, 2002).

A theory, on the other hand, may be said to be a combination of unified concepts/constructs, explanations and proposition. Thus, a theory presents a methodical view of phenomena and has an explanatory purpose (Mouton, 2002). This purpose involves the explication and prediction of phenomena by identifying relationships between the variables (Kerlinger, cited in Mouton, 2002). Thus, a theory incorporates that which constitutes a typology, namely, the set of concepts/constructs as well as that which constitutes a model, namely, indicating relationships between variables.

Theories have heuristic, classifying, explanatory and predicting functions in relation to the phenomena being studied (Mouton, 2002). While the focus of a model is to simplify in an abstract way, a theory focuses on the actual interrelation between phenomena and variables and is also empirically testable (De Vos & Strydom, 2002). From the above, empiricism is a universal approach which involves the necessity of assembling facts to develop theory while thorough testing facilitates the classification of such facts as knowledge (Bryman, 2004).

In view of the discussion above and with reference to generating theory, Plummer (2001) argues that a life story offers a measure of theory. As opposed to grand theory this degree of theory occurs through provocation, suggestion and anticipation.
with a future orientation. Life stories are useful in verifying existing theories – a view unsupported by Glaser and Strauss (1999). Glaser and Strauss (1965) argue that furthering theory requires the development of substantive theory first, in order to juxtapose such theory with applicable formal theories. Thus, substantive theory contributes to developing and reformulating formal theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1965).

The general anthropological view is that case studies, in this instance, a life story or biography, involving interviews, is useful in developing substantive theory in the field of sociology (Glaser & Strauss, 1965). This is the view I adopted. Through comparative (thematic) analysis, comparing data with data, I had identified themes and arranged these themes into categories (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967) within a psychosocial framework in order to develop a substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity.

4.8. RESEARCH ETHICS

Ethics refers to a set of generally accepted moral principles that provides guidelines and behavioural expectations regarding appropriate conduct towards key players in the research process. These key players include sponsors, employers, respondents, researchers, students and assistants (Strydom, 2011). While, as the researcher I had not anticipated all the many, varied research actions, decisions, considerations etc., reflexively immersing myself in them guided me to a natural appreciation for research ethics, including both administrative and participant relationship ethics (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).
In view of the interpretive, constructionist nature of the study, the interaction between the storyteller and me was aimed at gaining an understanding of the storyteller’s social-emotional world. Thus, we were always bound to encounter ethical issues and we discussed them as we had proceeded. We had taken into account new developments in technology, particularly in view of his status as a prominent leader and the development of web based sharing of information as noted by Miller, Birch, Mauthner, and Jessop, (2012) and had carefully considered how to approach the issue of confidentiality in the story.

In addition, the storyteller had contended with two new roles as identified by Lincoln, and Guba, (1990), firstly, “agency, self-determination and participation” with respect to the analysis and reconstruction of his social-emotional world and, secondly, he was a co-constructor in both the research process and in the meaning making process (p. 290).

Having studied psychology, I was consciously aware of my relationship with the storyteller. The requirement of researcher reflexivity and, in particular, adhering to grounded theory, had helped me to navigate the ethical issues. One such issue arose from the fact that, since answering the research question had involved emotion, it was incumbent on me to ensure the emotional safety of my participant throughout the research process. Therefore, I had focused on consistent awareness of the above which had not been difficult given the nature of the study requiring constant reflexivity. Constant reflexivity within the research process had therefore, assisted me in adhering to the IPPM’s ethical guidelines namely:
achieve objectivity and maintain integrity;
record and disclose own data;
follow ethical publishing practices;
be accountable to society;
be sensitive to and respect the right to privacy of the subjects;
be sensitive to and respect the right to anonymity and confidentiality;
be sensitive to and respect the right to full disclosure about the research;
protect subjects from harm (physical, psychological, emotional);
protect the integrity of the environment (p. 15).

In addition, I had adopted the three-step ethics protocol for conducting research of the Faculty of Management at the University of Johannesburg namely, (i) orientation to ethics in research; (ii) a declaration of intent to incorporate research ethics in all research activities and (iii) a declaration of adherence to indicate compliance with the principles of research ethics during the research process (pp. 34–35) which had highlighted my responsibilities as the researcher.

4.8.1. My roles and responsibilities as researcher

In dealing with the ethical considerations I had adhered to Plummer’s (2001) principles pertaining to life story research, namely: (i) respect, recognition and tolerance for persons and their differences; (ii) promoting the caring of others; (iii) expanding the qualities fairness and justice and (iv) minimise harm.
Throughout the research journey, I had consciously and thoughtfully demonstrated these principles in both my attitude and my behaviour. As is evidenced in the reflections I included throughout the thesis I had considered my decisions carefully before making them. My being comfortable and grounded in myself as a person, recognising and acknowledging that I am fallible while, at the same time, upholding my own ethical code meant that my behaviours were an extension of the person whom I continuously aspire to be. Therefore, I had actively considered my storyteller by being present as I listened to his story. I had focussed on being aware of boundaries in his home, showing appreciation for his time, acknowledging his wife and his views always ensuring that our relationship remained professional.

Having discussed my use of the literature, linking the findings to theory and how I had addressed the issue of research ethics, next, I outline the key decision-making steps during the research process.

4.9. KEY DECISIONS DURING THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Tapping into the fullness of the perceptions people attach to their social worlds as they make sense of these worlds requires both unstructured methods and a flexible process. Accordingly, I did not attempt to set out a standard format when designing my qualitative study. While I adhered to certain key ideas and suggestions from the qualitative inquiry literature and created a framework for my research design as noted in Maxwell (2012), the decisions I took were not linear and neatly arranged into well-planned, consecutive phases. Instead, as clarified earlier, I had experienced a cyclical process during which my sets of decisions had overlapped.
The key decisions I had taken included the following: choosing a research strategy; selecting research participant(s); choosing data collection and data analysis techniques; using strategies to capture and store the data safely; deciding how to integrate the various constructs within the thesis while applying strategies to ensure quality work (Mouton, 2011; Neuman, 2003).

4.9.1. Setting, entrée and deciding on the storyteller

The setting is referred to by Tracy (2013, p. 8) as the “spaces and places in which the phenomenon may be found and explored”. Tracy (2013) advises researchers to distinguish between the focus of the study, in this instance, the leader’s internal emotional experience, the field of study, which was leadership and the location of the study, in this case, the leader’s home office and briefly, his place of birth. Since the majority of the interviews were conducted in the leader’s home, I had consistently acknowledged my appreciation of the space not only as the leader’s home, but also as the family home. Tracy (2013) notes the importance of permission in using spaces for research purposes. Accordingly, I ensured that the leader and his wife had supported the use of their home for the study.

Research locations may comprise numerous sites and spaces (Tracy, 2013). Within these places and spaces, qualitative research involves interaction with real life situations involving people within these situations (Yin, 2011). I had visited the leader’s place of birth and had interviewed his sister on the farm which is still owned by the family. Although I do not describe the farm in this section, I have provided detailed descriptions in Chapter 6 involving the leader’s life and leadership story.
In view of the fact that the study involved this leader’s personal emotional, recollections, executing the study required a space where he would be relaxed and comfortable throughout the interview process. For this reason, his home had provided the perfect space. Using his home as the physical setting had also ensured a safe place in which the leader could reflect on his emotions about experiences throughout his life. The leadership incidents on which the study had focused included two of his most recent leadership roles as managing director and CEO respectively in large, corporate, South African organisations listed on the Johannesburg stock exchange.

As indicated earlier, I had initially planned to contact leaders who were previous clients or with whom I had previously worked with while applying the snowballing technique to find additional participants. Using non-probability sampling, I had obtained confirmation from two leaders who had agreed to participate, one from the private sector and one from the public sector in Johannesburg, South Africa. I had intended to conduct the interviews at the home offices of the participants to ensure no interruptions or disruptions.

The possibility of changes in the work status of these gatekeepers, for example, retirement, was insignificant because the study had involved looking back at their lives and leadership experiences. In particular, the research had required reflection on the emotion experienced during the leadership journey and, thus, their work status at the time would have had no impact on finding answers to the research question. Initially, I had intended interviewing as many leaders as necessary until
saturation of the data. However, as will become clear, subsequently a number of events led to a change in the number of participants.

Since selection of the participants had depended on the appropriateness of participants who would best have informed the study, I was interested in their ability to provide rich descriptions in respect of the research question rather than having chosen a sample that was representative of a given population as described in (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson 2002; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Merriam, 1998). The initial criteria for participation in the present study had included executive level status; responsibility for organisational strategy and a leadership position at the same company for a minimum of five years.

Excited to begin, I had contacted the first leader. Our interaction had always revolved around OD initiatives. He had demonstrated attention to detail, structure, focus on facts and numbers and practicality but was also a strong people oriented person. He had made an impression on the people with whom he interacted and had exuded a genuine interest in those around him. He had represented what I admired in leadership and I believed he would be an ideal research participant (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Goodson & Sikes, 2001). I was slightly nervous about contacting him. However, knowing that he was easy to talk to, I had proceeded. When he had answered my telephone call, I thought, **assure him that this call is not about needing business as a consultant.** I did exactly this. After we had exchanged pleasantries, I asked him if he would be willing to meet with me to discuss his possible participation in my doctoral research. He had agreed and I was both relieved and excited at
knowing that I had managed to cross the first research hurdle. We had agreed to meet on 9 April 2014 at his home. Anticipating the meeting, I had reflected on what would be required during this initial meeting:

*I am bursting with energy. I have a meeting with my first participant on 9 April. During my last supervision meeting, Prof asked me, “What is your strategy for your first participant meeting?”*

*Based on (Neuman, 2003), this was what I shared with Prof:*

1. Begin with a brief introduction and mention the referral if relevant.
2. Engage in small talk to create a relaxed atmosphere.
3. Start by introducing myself to the prospective participant. Clarify my purpose with the meeting.
4. Sell the research concept:
   (a) Short description of the study
   (b) Motivation for the research
   (c) Need for the study – why it is necessary
   (d) Definition of the essence of the study
   (e) Objectives of the study
   (f) Research design
   (g) Value of the research
5. Researcher role and responsibilities
6. Participant role and responsibilities
7. Ethical considerations – confidentiality – negotiated guidelines
8. Informed consent
9. Written permission
10. Anticipated time frame
11. Questions and answers

Note 4.2: Ramsey (2014, April, 5). Researcher supervision reflection: Reflective notes.

The day had arrived – 9 April, 2013. My prospective research participant was standing in his front garden as he welcomed me into his home. The impressive house loomed large amid the neighbouring houses, bordered at the back by a small forest teeming with birds and small animals. He showed me around, remarking how
much he loved the forest and the animals, especially the birds. I noticed a well-structured, resplendent vegetable garden at the side of the home. The small garden was elevated in wooden boxes and the vegetables, spinach, carrots, lettuce, to name a few, exploded over the sides in glorious abundance. While following him through the house I thought, *this home is remarkable. It's an impressive realisation of superior architectural design. It has easy warmth and I feel a sense of caring and peacefulness not to mention success and comfort. He is so proud of it and so open to showing me his home. This is a great start!*

He had then led me through the large, beautifully decorated family room furnished with a comfortable lounge suite and a big screen television in the far corner to the left of the room as we approached the kitchen. As we made our way through the family room, the kitchen was to the right and the television room to the left. Straight ahead was as entertainment space, with a bar just inside the doorway to the right. The bar area was well stocked and the walls were adorned with certificates, awards and recognitions for leadership, gifts from colleagues, plaques and sculptures – all honouring his leadership success.

This entertainment space or family room was bright with natural light and decorated in soft neutral colours with soft floral accents. I was impressed and felt inspired but also anxious about the meeting. We sat down in the seating area arranged in the middle of the room. He sat on an arm chair to my left. I sat facing the glass doors, with the forest in the background. Understandably, initially we were both uneasy. We talked briefly about current events, laughing while catching up. I commented on his
beautiful home and enquired about his wife. He said she was out with her mother. I thanked him for meeting with me and asked if I could tell him about the reason for the meeting. He agreed with a smile.

I explained the aim of the study, the research approach and the key steps in executing the study as I had shared with Prof although not in the exact same order. I allowed the conversation to flow naturally (Plummer, 2001), paying attention to his non-verbal cues as I described my theoretical perspective and my rationale for the study. My host listened attentively as I continued with details of my researcher role and the anticipated role of the research participants.

Finally, I asked if he would be willing to participate in the study. Smiling shyly, he said: Well, Patty, I am flattered. I don’t know if I am the right person for your research, but, yes, I would be happy to participate. As indicated in 2.8 – Editing the transcriptions for easy reading above – I used dark blue italicised text to denote the leader’s voice in the thesis.

I recall thinking, Wow, he is so down to earth. At the same time, my heart was beating wildly and I recall taking a deep breath to maintain a professional demeanour. I wanted to jump up and down and celebrate. Instead, I thanked him. I proceeded, discussing the issue of confidentiality and I then asked whether he had any questions. He asked how valuable the research would be with one participant only. I thought in that moment, Great question! I clarified that he was the first participant and explained the snowballing technique (Glesne, 1999; Neuman, 2003). He nodded, indicating that he understood.
In conclusion, I explained the requirement for obtaining written permission (Bogdan and Biklen (2006) and Marshall and Rossman (2007) from him as the gatekeeper. He consented verbally and signed the consent form in the first interview (see Annexure 1). We spoke about time constraints and agreed to consult our diaries. He suggested emailing some possible dates for the first interview and we concluded the meeting. He walked out with me. I maintained a very professional demeanor although I actually wanted to dance all the way to my car.

Throughout the drive home, my stomach was like a bottle of bubbling champagne ready to erupt like a volcano with the first opportunity of sharing my joy. The delicious bubbles of excitement filled my being. The first person I had telephoned was my husband and we exclaimed our excitement, laughing and cheering with delight at the success of this first, real step into the research process. Next, I had contacted Prof who was thrilled that I had already concluded the first meeting with a potential participant.

During the interviews that followed in this first participant’s home, I had proceeded with theoretical sampling (Neuman, 2003). Using my notebook during the interviews had allowed me to collect, record, pre-analyse and code the emerging data. In short, I had intended to apply reciprocal, iterative data collection, sampling and analysis throughout the study (Neuman, 2003).

After the second four-hour interview with this prominent, successful leader, the trust relationship that had developed between us as evident in my supervision reflections impressed Prof very much. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) assert that possible life history
subjects may be selected based on conversations with them and characteristics that they demonstrate. These characteristics include the potential subject’s nature, ability to articulate information, memory, types of experiences, aptitude in respect of the research topic and time available. In view of this participant’s status as a recognised, successful leader in partial retirement and our conversations thus far, Prof and I had discussed the merits of using him in a single life history and not the small group as initially planned. Satisfied that employing a biographical approach with this remarkable leader would realise the study’s aim, I had excitedly decided on a single life story.

4.9.2. Data collection and analysis

The leader was keen to participate and emailed several possible dates for our first interview. I was bubbling over with anticipation. We had agreed to meet once a week for the next few weeks. In line with life history, I had proceeded to conduct an initial, face-to-face, semi-structured interview (Charmaz, 2014). Eight open-ended, semi-structured interviews (in terms of the chronology of life story events) followed. The aim was to explore the storyteller’s social life. This perspective had included his childhood, adolescence, young adult experiences, education, work history and leadership, his loves, challenges, philosophies, successes, dreams, and anxieties, all within his cultural context (Gibbs, 2014; Henning, 2004) in order to uncover his emotions. The inclusion of his wife and sister in the interviews was aimed at augmenting the data. In addition, answering research question from the interdisciplinary perspective guided the line of questioning, probing and clarifying.
During the interviews, I had taken notes, paying attention to his body language and
mannerisms (Charmaz, 1999). I had kept track of the research process with the aid of memos during the supervisory meetings and had written reflective notes after these meetings. I had made entries in my personal journal about my doctoral journey and had written reflective notes after every interview in preparation for the comparative analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). In addition, the storyteller had completed exercises after one of the interviews and provided his reflections via email.

During the first interview, I had followed Neuman’s (2003) advice and focused on developing rapport, creating a relaxed and safe atmosphere to facilitate the storyteller sharing his subjective experiences and emotions. Employing a conversational tone created a non-judgemental atmosphere of respect and mutual disclosure so as to promote his comfort in disclosing his thoughts and feelings (Douglas, 1985). Initially and during the first few interviews, I had purposefully kept the conversation light, thereby allowing the trust to develop, rather than rushing headlong into deep, emotional issues.

**Subsequent interviews**

As my storyteller and I had come know each other, an ease developed in our relationship that allowed us to challenge one another in seeking understanding. The first five interviews were less about emotional reflexivity and more about events and experiences in his life. However, from the sixth interview onwards, he had become more and more comfortable talking about emotion in his recollections of critical
events in his life and leadership journey. Using open-ended, impartial questioning Brinkmann (2014) had served to facilitate discussion as my storyteller considered his thoughts, emotions and behaviours during his significant leadership incidents.

Probing had proven useful in broaching the more difficult questions (Nestor-Baker & Hoy, 2001). Applying probing questions had also enabled clarification of his meaning making. I had employed thematic analysis and had allowed the categories to materialise as described by (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In other words, as the storyteller disclosed information, I had recorded it, created themes and later had organised these themes into the emerged categories; refining the process throughout the study. Colour coding had helped with organising the data within the foundational conceptual framework for easy analysis of quotable information. I had labelled the interviews chronologically as they occurred. This was how I applied reciprocal data collection and analysis in co-constructing the leader’s narrative within the multidisciplinary theoretical framework.

In many instances, the leader and I had reflected back on previous observations, discussions and his emotions as he reflected back. This was how I had applied comparative (thematic) analysis (Charmaz, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). We consistently reviewed the link between his behaviours and feelings to our interpretations and social contexts. We had juxtaposed these interpretations with his experiences during his leadership journey as well as with disclosures from his sister and wife. This process occurred repetitively as suggested by Neuman (2003) and provided the storyteller with the opportunity to further expand on issues and
emotions which we had discussed previously or to change and add to his recollections as he gained more insight.

Flanagan’s (1954) critical incident technique (CTI) had proven invaluable in allowing the participant to contemplate his emotional and cognitive process reflexively as he recounted the stories of the critical leadership events he had experienced. CTI is a process used for gathering information about observed human behaviours in a manner that ensures such information may be used to address challenges of a practical nature and to formulate psychological beliefs. A critical incident is an incident that involves specific human actions from which inferences and predictions about the individual/s arise. As such a situation is considered critical if such situation has a clear intention to the onlooker with zero uncertainty, about the impact of its consequences (Flanagan, 1954).

In reflecting on critical incidents, the iterative process meant the storyteller had to engage in looking back to his childhood to consider the source of his values, belief system, ethics, lessons he had learned and the emotion attached to the experiences involved. In this way, we discovered and gained insights into the psychological and sociological links to his actions.

The nature of the leader’s accounts had determined the particular probing techniques used as well as the questions posed, thereby adhering to the principles of Strausssarian grounded theory in the discovery of a substantive theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I had repeated this process until I was satisfied that the emerging categories and themes were saturated (Schurink, 2009).
4.9.3. Data recording and storing

At the time of the first interview I had explained the need to record the interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The leader had agreed without hesitation. As indicated earlier, in addition to the voice recordings I had used a notebook and pen to record any disclosures I thought were essential to answering my research question. This is a technique I had used and still use in facilitating OD interventions. While facilitating I had often utilised a flip chart as I listened and integrated information. Applying this skill in the study had assisted me in recognising, clarifying and coding themes as the narrative unfolded bearing in mind the theoretical perspective of the study. The notepad had also enabled me to make notes about my storyteller’s body language, gestures and behavioural patterns and to link these to his character profile, as his character in the story unfolded (see Annexure 3).

I had recorded all the interviews on an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder (Henning, 2004) and had transferred them to my computer immediately upon my arrival back home. Downloading my interview notes to my computer, I had saved them as master files. The written notes I had taken, I filed in a folder clearly marked interview notes and I had stored them in a cabinet in my home office. My iPad was invaluable in recording the reflexive notes, supervision notes, reflexive journaling and field notes in the Notepad application which automatically created headings and dates, thus ensuring that the information was readily accessible.

Methodological notes had served as useful reminders, instructions or personal observations of my experiences and of the research process (Schatzman & Strauss,
1973). I had recorded these memos as ‘notes to self’ in the Notepad application on my iPad.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest care in capturing the verbatim transcripts. I had captured pertinent sections of the taped interviews using the OneNote computer application. Using a consecutive numbering system for the written notes, I had started each page with line 1 and used colour coding for quotable data as indicated earlier. I had labelled the interviews chronologically and backed up this data as suggested by Neuman, (2003) to OneNote on my computer as well as on a USB flash drive.

OneNote on my computer was especially effective for the data analysis. It had allowed the comprehensive storing and developing of the data in a single programme. In addition, I had also saved my proposal, interview recordings, notes, diagrams and pictures in the OneNote programme in a structured and easily accessible manner (Schurink, 2004). As a backup, I had emailed all new versions of the thesis to my Google and iCloud email addresses and constantly saved my work on a USB flash drive. I had integrated the field notes, journal entries, supervision notes and memos during the continuous comparative analysis and synthesised my observation notes of the storyteller’s non-verbal, emotional gestures and behaviours in constructing the leader’s narrative as noted by (Charmaz, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 2009; Munkejord, 2009). These observations were critical in developing the substantive theory (Schurink, 2004) given that the study had involved emotion.
4.9.4. Strategies employed to ensure quality research

It is clear from the literature on qualitative inquiry that assessing qualitative research remains a contentious issue (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2003; Schurink, 2009; Tracy, 2010). The diversity of methods, methodologies and techniques imply that developing universal criteria for assessment is a challenging task (Stige, Melterud, & Midtgarden, 2009).

During the 1980s, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Guba and Lincoln (1989) substituted the traditional wording for rigour in qualitative research, namely, reliability, validity, and generalisability, with dependability, credibility, and transferability. In this way, they ensured that the trustworthiness of qualitative research would be achieved. Qualitative research is both emic and idiographic meaning that research may focus on using either one or a few subjects as opposed to the use of large samples using a standardised methodology (Morrow & Smith, 2000). For constructivist, interpretive research, additional strategies to ensure the rigour become necessary (Morrow, 2005). These include confirmability and reflexivity (Guba, 1981.) Morrow (2005) warns that there is overlap in applying these strategies. For example, a study must have authenticity in order for it to have credibility.

Striving for replicability, the equivalent of reliability, I had applied continuous methodological reflexivity, tracking the research process, my decisions and my actions with the various types of notes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I included excerpts from my notes to illustrate my reflexivity throughout the study. In representing the data, I included sufficient data to demonstrate the research process
and elucidated my reasons and thought process throughout my analysis. I also took steps to ensure the credibility of the study.

**Credibility**

Strategies to ensure credibility include, inter alia, lengthy engagement, peer debriefing, member checks, consistent observation and triangulation (Morse, 2015). To ensure credibility or rigour in the research process Lincoln and Guba (1985), I had focused on thoroughness, especially regarding the interviews (Glesne, 1999). Engaging my storyteller in eight, in-depth, interviews that lasted three to four hours each, I had included his wife in one of them. In addition, I conducted an interview with the leader’s sister (see Figure 4.4). The interviews were open-ended but semi-structured. They had occurred in chronological order and involved my storyteller’s life history from his childhood up to and including his leadership and current situation. The questions I had asked during the interviews were based on his disclosures and their relevance to the research question. In other words, his accounts guided the questions I had posed. In addition, he had agreed to complete exercises and compile notes relevant to the research question.

As with credibility above, in order to ensure triangulation in the verification and validation of the participant’s descriptions, explanations and disclosures, I had conducted interviews with his wife and sister (see Figure 4.4) which provided additional sources of data (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Holloway, 1997; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). These additional interviews had also assisted in ensuring that the data were saturated, that is, that, no new information was
emerging. I had devoted sufficient time to the elements that were the most relevant to the study. I had checked my process and our interpretations with my supervisor on a regular basis comparing the interpretations with the various notes I had taken.

Throughout the research and particularly during the interviews, I had reflected back on previous understandings and disclosures. In so doing, I had compared, questioned and re-categorised themes relevant to the theoretical framework for the study to ensure accurate interpretations as we co-constructed the leader’s narrative.

Representing the data in a reflective, emotional, academic writing style meant that my own reflexivity was critical, especially given the nature of the study. In re-telling the story, I provided thick descriptions of the context, the rationale behind my actions, my reflexivity and the storyteller’s context (Geertz, 1973). In this way, I ensured an accurate matching between his perceptions and our co-constructed interpretations, with my depictions of these in the thesis (Neuman, 2003). In addition, I provided detailed description of my subject’s internal, emotional experiences as well as their context, thus highlighting their psychosocial and cultural origin in the representation of his story (Geertz, 1973).

Emailing the story to the leader had enabled member validation (see Annexure 2). Member validation had ensured that my depictions of the leader’s emotional experiences into themes, then categories and, ultimately, the substantive theory, accurately reflected his social world (Glesne, 1999; McGhee et al., 2007). In addition, I had applied auto-critique throughout the interviews and during our discussions about the interpretations. I had also submitted the thesis for peer review.
to Dr Hewitt from IPPM. However, Prof Schurink was my constant partner, advisor, editor and supporter throughout the study (Neuman, 2003) (see Photograph 4.1). In her work, Morrow (2005) argues that the rigour, or what Morrow and Smith (2000) term the ‘goodness’ of qualitative inquiry should be assessed in terms of generally accepted standards as well as the underlying theoretical framework and ideals of the discipline under study (see Figure 4.1). To achieve this ‘goodness’, I had engaged in conscious, researcher reflexivity throughout the phases of the research process.

Questioning and reviewing my conclusions and interpretations had consistently served to ground the study in my constructivist, and interpretive research paradigm. Through detailed thematic analysis, looking at each sentence in the transcribed interviews and back and forth between the various notes beginning with the highlighted quotable data, I had created open codes for the themes that had emerged (Strauss et al. 1998).
In this iterative process of data collection, coding and analysis, as our interpretations deepened and the leader derived more insights from previous discoveries, I used selective coding for the categories. Three levels in the data emerged namely: Levels A, B and C and Categories 1, 2, and 3 respectively. It made sense to begin by reworking and comparing the data to develop category one, the leader’s life story first. Thereafter, I integrated the data and compared information in order to develop category two, the critical incidents. This process was followed by working on developing level three, going back and forth between the data during the interviews, in order to deepen our interpretations of the leader’s emotional reflexivity process.

Using the levels had helped with building theory to answer the research question. The emergent categories had then added structure for populating the three levels as the themes developed (see Figure 4.2). I had used axial coding for the extended themes adding depth to the interpretations and analysis (see Annexure 4).

**Dependability/Authenticity**

Dependability or authenticity is ensured by achieving credibility as highlighted above under the heading *Credibility*. Authenticity criteria are essential for trustworthiness in a constructivist, interpretive research framework (Morrow, 2005) (see Figure 4.1). Given the nature of the study, a multidisciplinary approach had emerged as the most appropriate with which to address the multiple constructions involved in answering the research question.
Having developed rapport with my storyteller as well as mutual respect, our co-constructed interpretations had involved consistent and continuous ontological reflexivity. In unravelling, questioning, comparing and expanding our meaning making and understanding, we had strengthened our interpretations of such meaning making which had in turn, ensured consciousness about bias (McGhee et al., 2007).
This strengthening of the story had occurred through the repetitive process of comparing and gaining new insight assisted by the structure within the analysis using Straussarian grounded theory techniques (Charmaz, 2006; Charmaz & McMullen, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Tweed & Charmaz, 2012). In this way, the iterative process was facilitated by both mine and the storyteller’s reflexivity through which ongoing learning and reviewing had occurred, in the intersection between our respective contexts (McGhee et al., 2007). Accordingly, I described in rich detail how I had experienced epistemological circularity in formulating my research design and how, in systematically adhering to this design, I had taken key decisions throughout the study.
Thus, I described, by including raw data in the form of interview excerpts, how this leader had learned and understood his emotional reflexivity process through his experience of emotional reflexivity. In addition, I provided detailed descriptions of my emotional and methodological reflexivity and how my own socio/cultural/political life circumstances, influenced my retelling of the leader’s story with help from the literature (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; McGhee et al., 2007).

I also included practical examples of my experiences in facilitating OD interventions with leaders. In addition, I integrated current leadership, socio/cultural/political events and practical examples from popular culture with the wisdom of scholars. I had used the voices of scholars as authorities in their field (Metcalfe, 2003) and had adhered to a middle of the road approach with respect to the use of the literature. Applying triangulation, I had integrated into the leader’s story his perspectives, my thoughts, actions, rationale and context, as well as the views of two of his close family members as already noted. In addition, I integrated the reflective, personal journal, supervision, field and memo notes in the thesis in order to retell the leader’s story accurately and contextually (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4). With heightened consciousness about ethics in research as described in Haverkamp (2005), I had ensured appropriate boundaries throughout the interview process.

Engaging in rigorous comparative (thematic) analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 2009), I had developed diagrammatic figures to illustrate the interpretive process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) (see Figure 4.3). Together my storyteller and I had interrogated his life and his leadership experiences. Our investigations had been relevant to his percep-
tions of the emotions involved in his reality. I had taken notes during the interviews (see Figure 4.4) already engaging in analysis and marking quotable data in colour while linking relationships and patterns in the data as they emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The study had involved intimate, subjective feelings about events and situations in the life of this prominent leader. My storyteller and I had developed a relationship where we talked openly about preconceptions (see § 6.7.2). In this way, I had ensured the validity of the interpretations and accounts of what had been explored (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

![Figure 4.3](Ramsey_2017_January_7.png) The comparative thematic analysis cycle: My interpretation of how I applied Straussarian grounded theory and experienced the iterative cycle.

Finally, the entire journey was emotional; both my storyteller and his wife had cried during their joint interview. Drawing on the code of ethics, I had taken steps and had ensured that they endured no harm whatsoever which will become evident in Chap-
ter 6. Their emotion had been about memories, which was in line with the aim of the study. I would suggest that a study about emotional reflexivity with no evidence of emotion may be questionable with respect to its authenticity.

**Confirmability**

In addressing the issue of confirmability, my study presented a unique corresponding experience of the emotional reflexivity of the leader juxtaposed with researcher reflexivity. However, I must point out that this did not mean that my corresponding experience of reflexivity represented absolute true knowledge but, rather, an added perspective on the situation I had studied. As the research instrument, it was impossible for me to completely separate my research activities from my life circumstances (Brinkmann, 2014; Ngunjiri et al., 2010). While some may regard such researcher subjectivity as reflecting a weakness in the study, I had addressed this concern by focusing on answering the research question and not on my own beliefs and biases (Gasson, 2004).

Throughout the dissertation, I described my reflexivity and context while honouring the requirements of scholarly writing. The narrative provided confirmability in so far as my reflexivity as the researcher related to and intersected with the situation I was studying. I return to this concern in Chapter 8. As with authenticity of the study and also relevant to confirmability, I explained above under the heading Dependability/Authenticity how I had integrated the data through data analysis to accurately retell the leader’s story (Morrow, 2002). In addition, I explained how I employed data triangulation above, under the headings Credibility and Dependability/Authenticity, in
order to ensure confirmability. Finally, reflective notes and journaling (Schurink, 2004) had not only helped me in keeping track of the decisions I had taken, but also between the interpretations and recommendations as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

**Reflexivity**

The dissertation contains numerous descriptions and reflections as well as the details of my incessant epistemological circularity throughout the research phases (Geertz, 1973). Continuously reflecting on my own subjectivity and personal biases, I had supplemented these with regular debriefings sessions with my supervisor. In the dissertation, I interlaced some of my reflective and reflexive as well as supervisor notes from these debriefings as researcher reflections/reflexivity. In applying Straussarian grounded theory, I had developed interpretive diagrams/figures and I included these throughout the thesis (see Figures 3.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2; 7.1, 7.3; 7.4 and 7.5) illustrating how I had developed the substantive theory grounded in the data (Charmaz, 2003).

As mentioned in the overlapping discussion above, I had paid close attention to the boundaries between counselling and research with acute awareness of my assumptions or what Johnson and Duberley (2003) refer to as “taken for granted beliefs” (p.1294).
Figure 4.4: Ramsey (2017, January, 7). Thematic analysis: Field and reflective notes.
To this end, I constantly considered and questioned my motives, decisions and actions and expressed these in the notes I had taken. Again, some of these are incorporated in the retelling of the leader’s story. Addressing the issue of the leader’s emotional reflexivity had meant that the interview process needed to reach a depth at which the storyteller would be able to access and articulate his emotion. At the same time, as noted earlier, I had to ensure his emotional safety. In this context, epistemic reflexivity was my continuous cohort in considering my actions and rationale for asking questions and exploring themes while questioning my preconceptions, during the interviews. I conducted an ongoing conversation with myself. Reflecting on the leader’s responses, I considered both his context and my own as a leader in my field while paying careful attention to his emotional safety - all in relation to answering the research question. I would think about my question before asking it, pause to reflect at times and, then I would review my thought process to ensure my focus remained on the research question within the boundaries of the theoretical perspective.

In addressing the issue of emotion in research, Markussen (2006) argues that attention to feelings is critical as a means of putting a stop to the continuous presence of reflexivity as part of human life. Thus, given the two corresponding streams of reflexivity, I had paid close attention to my emotions and, at the same time, to my perceptions of my storyteller’s emotions. In this context, I had observed his behaviours and gestures and had also directly asked him about his emotions. This engagement between us had enabled me to match his perceptions and feelings with my own interpretations as he related his recollections of experiences of events.
in his life and in his career as a leader. I would like to believe that my writing style and the format I used reflected my continuous methodological, epistemic and emotional reflexivity throughout the research process.

In addition, I had also paid attention to elements that may have eluded me during the study, consistently conducting revisits through email, with the storyteller if I deemed it necessary (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Glesne, 1999). Finally, I had made several notes during all the interviews and also after each one as explained numerous times above. In line with Straussarian grounded theory, my reflective and reflexive journal writing had enabled an ongoing comparison between the various notes and the transcribed interview recordings.

Throughout the research process, I had consistently maintained my professionalism. I had upheld research ethics (Neuman, 2003; Plummer, 2001) and I had demonstrated respect for my storyteller. Initially, in ensuring ethical boundaries, I had enjoyed my lunch in the garden as a way of establishing and developing a relationship of trust. At the time, I wanted the storyteller to feel at ease as opposed to feeling responsible for entertaining me, especially since the interviews often lasted for more than three hours. As our relationship deepened in the research context, we had established good boundaries and then started sharing our lunch and including his wife as well.
Transferability

Transferability is the most challenging criterion that must be met. It involves generalisability (Gasson, 2004) and requires sufficient information about the researcher as an instrument in the research study. In addition, transferability requires contextual information about the subject/s and the relationships between the subject/s and the researcher. Armed with this information, the reader is able to decide how transferable the findings are (Morrow, 2005).

In order to ensure transferability, I employed a reflective, emotional, academic writing style throughout the thesis. The use of the emotional and reflective style meant that I described my thoughts, reflections, context, process, actions and emotions, beginning with how I had discovered and decided on the writing style and format of the dissertation. Throughout the leader’s story, I described what had motivated my decisions and how I had implementing strategies to ensure ethical research, while at the same time, how I had taken into account the leader, his wife, their space, their context and their emotional safety. I wanted the reader to experience my internal process throughout the study and, in particular, I wanted the reader to share in why and how I had arrived at my decisions.

Accordingly, I described the situations I had experienced during the formulation of the research proposal and how the literature, my supervisor, my emotions and epistemological reflexivity had steered my path through the research phases. These descriptions involved how, with consistent help from the literature, I had implemented the research approach and research methodology. In addition, I described how I had
selected the storyteller and developed a trust relationship with him that had facilitated his openness about his feelings relevant to the research question. I had collected data, analysed the leader’s accounts and applied situations from my own work and interactions with leaders and their organisations in order to create a context for the leadership setting. Finally, I retold this leader’s life story also using an academic style to ensure a scholarly thesis.

In developing a substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity, I am convinced that I provided sufficient data to elucidate how I had arrived at my storyteller’s emotional reflexivity processes. My descriptions, reflections, references to work experiences, diagrams, pictures and photographs all provide evidence of our co-constructed interpretations of his life story within an interdisciplinary paradigm. Also, I regularly provided references for the parameters of my theoretical framework in order to demonstrate the process of data collection and data analysis to the reader (Bowen, 2005).

Although I do not claim the generalisability of my research findings across all disciplines, I believe that the conceptual framework, as well as the life story research approach, may be used by other researchers wishing to answer similar research questions. In addition, accomplished organisational leaders who engage in continuous self-development, aspiring business leaders, students in leadership development programmes, leadership development institutions, specialists and leaders in general may find my research findings and research approach useful.
4.10. SUMMARY

I commenced with a brief scholarly review of the existing literature on qualitative inquiry. With regard to exploring my ontology and epistemology and referring to experiences in my work and my studies, I described how I had rediscovered my constructivist perspective on reality and how it had tied in with a, interpretive research design. In order to explain my decision to adopt a biographical, life story approach for the study, I discussed the life story in relation to case study to demonstrate my rationale in this regard. I outlined my considerations about generalisability when employing a single, life story approach. Thereafter, I discussed the research strategy I had used and elucidated my choice of Straussarian grounded theory for data analysis as well as the techniques I employed for data collection. In addition, I discussed my use of the literature, how I intended converting the research findings into theory and how I had applied research ethics in the study. I then expanded on my roles and responsibilities as a researcher, the key decision steps in the research process and, finally, my strategies to ensure quality research.
Part C comprises the literature review.

CHAPTER 5: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review delineates academic insights about leadership, reflexivity and emotions - as these constructs relate to the research problem. My intention is to integrate these constructs with leader identity development. I wish to create a meaningful context for my quest to unravel, describe and understand the emotional reflexivity process of the leader, with the aim of contributing to the existing body of knowledge and understanding in the field of leadership, specifically leadership development.

Curving back on ourselves is as natural to us as it is to cosmic space or a wave of the sea. It does not entail jumping out of our own skin. Without such self-monitoring, we would not have survived as a species (Terry Eagleton).

5.1. INTRODUCTION

Before we journey into the life of this local leader it is necessary that we first travel into the minds of scholars for direction in our quest to understand the emotional reflexivity process of the leader in question. As with any research project, extracting scholarly concepts from the literature is required in qualitative research. These abstract concepts are then used together with research participants’ everyday conceptions, in this case the storyteller’s reflexive recollections of concrete experiences and perceptions, in order to further academic knowledge by, in the case of this study, constructing a substantive theory.

In this overview, I incorporate the disciplines I considered most relevant to answering the research question. Emotional reflexivity and leadership are dynamic constructs (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Burkitt, 2012; Holland, 1999) that require an interdisciplinary exposition in order to answer the research question. Therefore, I discuss leadership, sociology and psychology as applicable, interrelated disciplines (see Figure 5.1).
Given the multidisciplinary nature of the study, it was necessary to clearly conceptualise the study within the field of leadership development. However, in researching the emotional reflexivity processes of this leader, it was important to understand leaders, leadership, emotion and reflexivity as independent, but intertwined, constructs. The role of this understanding had been one of sensitizing the reader with respect to the significance of the interrelatedness of each of these constructs since leadership development and leadership involves leaders.

Leadership is an extensive discipline. Consequently, I focus specifically on leader identity development, given that meaning making is indivisibly linked to a leader’s self-concept/identity (Brockman & Dirkx, 2006). I illuminate reflexivity and explore where and how it originated and what it involves.

Since reflexivity is an abstract, multifaceted construct with application across various disciplines (Holland, 1999). I want to simplify its complexity and provide an understanding of what the relevant literature has to say about this construct. I
elucidate emotion, a widely researched construct in and of itself and proceed to integrate all the disciplines included in the study. My aim is to illuminate the interrelationship and interdependence of these dynamic psychosocial contexts. In addition, I explain the relevance of a leader’s psychosocial context to his/her emotional reflexivity. I then explain the role of these contexts in the development of leader identity. I discuss the value of understanding the role of leader emotional reflexivity in developing leader identity within a global world as a precursor to building emotional and cultural acuity.

5.2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Although emotion is not recognised as fundamental to reflexivity, it is considered critical in recreating the self, relevant to the wider society (Holmes, 2010). Unlike emotional reflexivity, reflexivity in qualitative inquiry has received substantial attention from scholars (Arber, 2006; Barge & Fairhurst, 2008; Berger, 2015; Cunliffe, 2003; Daley, 2010; Davies et al., 2004; Giddens, 1991; Holland, 1999; Maclean, Harvey, & Chia, 2012). Consequently, more research into leader emotional reflexivity is needed.

Several scholars highlight the power of emotion in leadership, including Ashkanasy and Tse (2000), Dasborough and Ashkanasy (2002), Hansen, Ropo, and Sauer (2007), Huxtable-Thomas, Hannon, and Thomas (2016), Li, Gupta, Loon, and Casimir (2016), Rubin, Munz, and Bommer (2005) and Sadri, Weber, and Gentry (2011). Holmes (2010) underscores the significance of emotion as a human capacity. She points out that it is not possible for a person to acquire all the
information and understanding required for absolute, rational decisions. In order to establish a direction in their reflexive experiences, individuals tend to trust their feelings. The same could be said for leaders as individuals applied for example, to their confidence in making leadership decisions.

Thus, emotions may be regarded as a shared experience that involves both leadership as well as the broader socio-cultural context (Zembylas, 2007). Barratt and Korac-Kakabadse (2002) assert that reflexive leaders who consider and question their thoughts and actions and their impact on stakeholders in the execution of well-informed, organisational decisions are necessary. They argue further that it is essential that these decisions merge social and environmental needs with global requirements. Thus, emotion as a shared experience (Zembylas, 2007) must feature in reflexive global leadership.

South Africa exists in a vibrant, global economy which is characterised by constantly evolving challenges and opportunities (Havenga, Mehana, & Visagie, 2011). As a developing economy, local leadership challenges include the implications of a young democracy wrestling with the socio-political ills of the past as well as the demands of a volatile global and local economy (Denton & Vloebberghs, 2003; Massamba, Kariuki, & Ndegwa, 2004). South Africa’s intercultural and emotional competence is critical as leaders navigate the challenges of international leadership (Matthews, 2012; Seekings, 2008; Steyn & Foster, 2008). The vast yet interconnected world constitutes the playing field of today’s global executive. Thus, understanding the complexities of leadership remains a central, anomalous factor in leadership development research (Hedlund, Forsythe, Horvath, Williams, & Snook, 2003).
As part of the rapidly increasing global community, South Africa is a multi-layered, continuously evolving landscape of multiculturalism. The last two decades have certainly seen significant changes with respect to democracy and the influence of the global phenomenon on the country (Giamporcaro & Viviers, 2014). However, although the dismantling of the apartheid system has been in progress since the democratic elections in 1994, structures which support social inequalities still remain now, more than two decades later (Das-Munshi et al., 2016).

In this dynamic environment and with the aim of unifying and assimilating divisions (Coertze, 2001), local leaders advocate ubuntu (nation building) (p. 118). Ubuntu is directed at breaking down the divisions that still exist given that the vast majority of our nation was not raised with a sense of understanding and appreciation of democratic values. Consequently, the apartheid legacy of separateness and inequality still lingers (Gibson, 2003) and is evident in the boardrooms in which I work. In addition, concerns exist about the intersection between these lingering racial disparities and economic discrepancies. These incongruities include wealth distribution among the wealthy (Leibbrandt, Finn, & Woolard 2012; Leibbrandt, Woolard, Finn, & Argent. 2010).

Socio-political influences, in turn, shape an organisation's culture which is driven by leadership. Organisational culture reflects the shared values and actions and is reflected in the organisational functioning and performance (Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2007).

How, then is the above relevant to leader emotional reflexivity?
From a leader emotional reflexivity perspective, it is vital to acknowledge that individuals learn based on their personal frame of reference (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). Leadership encompasses daily challenges and involves complex processes of making and acting on decisions (Ledwith & Springett, 2010). However, a leader’s personal and leadership perceptions, attitudes and actions are shaped and influenced by the antecedents of their subconscious architecture. These antecedents include the cumulative social experiences, beliefs, values and self-perceptions of the leader. Thus, a leader’s value and belief system reflects the leader’s feelings through his/her views, attitudes, actions and interpretations (Baltes & Carstensen, 1991; Beyleveld, 2008; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Tett, 2006). In addition, from an organisational perspective, one must also consider that institutional logics, combined with agency highlight numerous social entities that influence and mould the perceptions and actions of a leader (Delbridge & Edwards, 2013; Thornton, Ocasio, & Lounsbury, 2012).

Considering these antecedents within the local organisational context suggests that achieving ubuntu is a complex undertaking which raises questions about structure, agency and habitus. Also, one wonders how a nation that is struggling to establish a national identity around ubuntu (Coertze, 2001, p. 118) should address the challenges of an increasingly intercultural, global world. In addition, there is the question, to what extent has South African leaders embraced, epitomised and emotionally internalised ubuntu? Pertinent in this context is Goleman’s (1995, 1999) cultural and emotional intelligence perspective which derives from interpersonal and emotional acumen and incorporates leader intelligence regarding the norms, values and beliefs of other cultures (Goleman, 1995, 1999).
In my work, I am consistently exposed to the challenges that local leaders grapple with regarding inherited antecedents (norms, values and belief systems) from a previously segregated or apartheid society. These antecedents are embedded in the self-identity of local leaders. My work experiences highlight that for leaders, knowing their self-identity, who they are, as described by Archer (2003) and why they think, feel and act in the ways in which they do are critical to them developing a leader identity in order to deal with global leadership challenges.

One of the challenges I encounter in facilitating leadership teams is what reflects as a clash of perceptions. The boardrooms in which I work include leaders from various races, cultures, ages, education and levels of experience with vastly different backgrounds. Although this may sound like the boardrooms in any country (Bolden, 2009), my interactional experience of local boardrooms graphically reflects the apartheid era. The boardrooms of today reveal a picture of black South African leaders whose families often still live in impoverished, rural conditions. Black leaders find themselves working alongside previously privileged, white South African leaders and vice versa. In addition, these boardrooms include leaders of mixed race as well as from other minority race groups. In this leadership arena, my experience is that the various groups are still separated by their ‘apartheid’ internal contexts.

Some of the discussions during the diversity appreciation interventions which I facilitate often centre on African traditions versus Western business expectations. The traditions include punctuality, often referred to as ‘African time’ because a 10 a.m. appointment may only start at 11 a.m.; respect for elders and the different contexts of forefathers or ancestors. The traditions often stimulate vibrant discussion.
on how individuals create their own perceptions around cultural differences and how culture-specific practices influence global business functioning. While these issues are openly discussed during OD interventions, my experience from interacting, discussing and debating these issues reveals that while they facilitate awareness, they do not develop the type of internal, cognitive, emotional shift that I believe is a prerequisite for global leader emotional and cultural perspicacity.

Leadership is synonymous with expectancy and therefore leaders must consistently satisfy a multitude of internal and external stakeholders, meeting and exceeding their expectations (Earley & Ang, 2003). Accordingly, a leader’s capacity for complex decision-making and effectiveness worldwide is a basic requirement of successful leadership (McKenzie, Woolf, Van Winkelen, & Morgan, 2009). Sustaining a global, competitive edge involves putting into practice efficient, effective and internationally relevant business practices (Jönsson, Muhonen, Denti, & Chen, 2015). Studies reveal that key influences in this regard include leadership, the climate of an organisation and organisational development (Dong & Liu, 2010; Vivas-López, Peris-Ortiz & Rueda-Armengot, 2011). Consequently, successful leadership involves meaning making about the cognitive and emotional intricacies of a leader’s personal worldview in relation to the worldviews of others as opposed to training programmes and traditional leadership development (Johnson, 2008; Tuleja, 2014).

In view of the above it is interesting to note that definitions and classifications of leadership describe it as a destination to reach (Turner & Mavin, 2008). In addition, leadership development constructs emphasise mainly cognitive components and attitudes (Lord, & Brown, 2003). Thus, the emphasis in the literature on the various
dimensions of leadership is prescriptive and clinical (Turner & Mavin, 2008). These challenges suggest the need to recognise that global leadership performance involves more than just acquiring knowledge, skill and an understanding of external organisational influences. Leadership is dynamic and manifests within a diverse human performance area. Accordingly, leaders require a well-developed and defined response landscape upon which to draw when addressing business challenges (Hedlund et al., 2003; Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1992). In addition, leaders require mental and emotional agility to enable them to respond to the interpersonal, organisational, social and global leadership demands they face on a daily basis (Hedlund et al., 2003).

In his work, Goleman (1995) argues that 80 to 90% of the competencies identified for leadership excellence are encompassed in the concept of emotional intelligence. These competencies include aptitude for self and other awareness, awareness of self-emotion and the emotion of others, an aptitude for emotion control, action and self-regulation during high-pressure situations as well as an aptitude for delaying gratification in the interests of achieving long-term goals. In addition, leaders must possess the ability to demonstrate both empathy and an aptitude for social skills in order to communicate empathy. Emotional intelligence theory and emotion work (Goleman, 1996; Hochschild, 1983) emphasise mainly cognitive development with a focus on controlling and regulating emotion (Goleman, 1996) as opposed to drawing on an understanding of one’s emotion as noted in Burkitt (2012) and Holmes (2015) in order to positively influence actions and decisions.
Given the significant emphasis on emotional intelligence, traditional leadership perspectives have come under fire from constructivist, developmental scholars, for example, Harris and Kuhnert (2008), who disagree with the core assumptions of traditional leadership. These scholars argue that epistemological sense making of the underlying issues of behaviour or leadership style play a pivotal role in leadership (Brown, 2012). This implies that human behaviour does not occur in a vacuum and thus leadership theories are moving away from a one-dimensional understanding of behaviour. In other words, what appears on the surface (a leader’s actions or beliefs) is less important than the origins from which these arise (how a leader knows is as significant, if not more so, as opposed to what a leader knows) (Eigel, 1998).

As opposed to constructive, developmental perspectives, rational leadership mental models promote ‘thinking and doing’ in the interests of improving inadequate leadership paradigms (Flumerfelt & Banachowski, 2011). For example, in relation to Goleman’s (1998) emotional intelligence (trait and ability) construct, it would appear that there is a missing element, namely, the internal, emotional process that leaders go through as they strive for leadership self-development in cultivating a leader identity. The focus on thinking, doing, traits and abilities excludes the value of these emotional experiences in leader reflexivity in developing leader identity. In his explanation of self-observation and self-awareness, Goleman (1996) suggests stepping back from oneself and allowing a shift in mental activity. This implies that leaders must mentally dismiss emotion in order to gain control. Mentally dismissing emotion implies that the leader should pay no attention to a capacity that is intrinsic to human interrelation (Burkitt, 2012).
However, it would appear that global giants and industrial groups are progressively realising the significance of emotion in augmenting leadership and organisational performance and as acknowledged through his work on emotional intelligence Goleman (1998). A study as far back as 2002 involving executives and Harvard graduates from fifteen global organisations, including Volvo, IBM and Pepsi, reveals that emotional competencies constituted two thirds of the essential competencies required for leader success (Dattner, 2002).

Looking back, reflecting on and constructing a leader’s narrative provides a foundation for the development of leader identity while revisiting and retelling the story creates an understanding of “self-knowledge, self-concept, clarity and the internalisation of the leader’s role into the self-concept” (Shamir & Eilam, 2005, p. 15). I would add that this looking back surely, has to involve the active experience of emotion in the reflexivity which involves, questioning, reviewing, re-evaluating and changing limiting and preconceived notions.

It is essential that leaders understand the source of their self-emotion and how their emotions impact and influence their decisions and actions, much like understanding themselves before they are able to understand emotion within the organisations they guide and direct (James & Arroba, 2005). Leader identity involves emotional and cultural competence (Tuleja, 2014) and, thus, access to emotional reflexivity is critical to the development of such identity.

In their definition of what it means to be a leader, Oyserman, Kemmelmeier, Fryberg, Brosh, and Hart-Johnson (2003) highlight that leader identity is reflective of a
leader’s character, social roles, relationships, group affiliations and essence (Zheng & Muir, 2015). Therefore, emotional reflexivity constitutes an entry point to an indefinable, personal, internal area of discernment in developing leader identity. With respect to this internal area, Archer (2003) argues that reflexivity as a personal quality is often neglected. People presume a capacity for self-knowledge and for being present in this self-knowledge. She argues that individuals often do not take into account the prerequisite of knowing themselves in order to be who they are. It seems only natural then that leadership development begins with leaders understanding the source of their emotion in their reflexivity since it is a shared experience (Zembylas, 2007).

Tuleja (2014) describes mindfulness as “the ability to use reflection as a connection between knowledge and action” (p. 5). In an ever-changing, global economy that stirs up emotion in leadership, leaders must first understand the foundations of their emotional constitutions. Only then will they begin to develop emotional intelligence.

The next discussion involves reflexivity.

5.3. REFLEXIVITY

In qualitative research, numerous scholars have discussed the importance and the role of methodological and emotional reflexivity, including Haynes (2011, 2006), Holland (1999), Johnson and Duberley (2003), Koning and Ooi (2013), Mauthner and Doucet (2003), Munkejord (2009), Orr and Bennett (2009), Pillow (2003), Tomkins and Eatough (2010) and Walsh (2003). In other words, reflexivity is a well-researched construct in qualitative research.

In researching personal emotional reflexivity, I found that Burkitt (2012), Holmes (2010, 2015) and Archer (2003, 2007, 2012) expound on the link between this construct and other related concepts such as structure, agency and habitus. As a result, I referred to the works of these scholars to create a leadership context of emotional reflexivity on the basis of which a substantive theory could be constructed.

At this point, I believe it is important to bear in mind two parallel streams of reflexivity, namely, (i) my storyteller and his personal, emotional reflexivity processes, and (ii) my methodological reflexivity and methodological emotional reflexivity in the execution of the study. However, first, I provide a historical perspective on self-examination and how self-examination ties in with reflexivity.

Self-examination in search of genuine self-awareness/knowledge is entrenched in philosophy, sociology and western popular culture and is commonly referred to as self-reflexivity, self-examination or self-mastery. In other words, self-examination is less about the reflection in the mirror and more about philosophically questioning what lies beneath the surface (Gasché, 1986). For leaders, the courage to scrutinise the self may facilitate increased self-knowledge and self-awareness, both of which
are advantageous for the organisation and the leader. However, delving into the inner realms of the self requires significant courage particularly as regards acknowledging accountability for the resulting revelations. Thus, leader self-exca- vation requires resilience, moral fibre and nerve (Baldoni, 2015). To this end, Seneca’s words ring true for leadership:

Our duty … will be, first to examine our own selves, then the business we shall undertake, and lastly those for whom or with whom we are undertaking it. Above all, it is necessary for a man to gauge himself accurately because we tend to think that we are able to do more than we really can (De tranqu. 6.1–2, in Edwards, 1997, p. 27).

In examining the participating leader’s emotional self-examination, engaging my internal process as researcher meant that self-evaluation was part of researcher methodological reflexivity (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Holland, 1999; Johnson & Duberley, 2003; Pillow, 2003; Seale, 1999). In addition, methodological, emotional reflexivity encompassed my awareness as the researcher of the emotional experiences within the research (Blackman, 2007; Burman, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Finlay, 1998; Munkejord, 2009).

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008), explain the importance of transparency in revealing the relationship between the “knower and the subject of interest” (p. 12). Based on the above, the study had involved three interdependent constructs, namely: (i) reflexivity within the two streams, (ii) emotion (iii) leadership. The intersection of the
two streams of reflexivity and emotional reflexivity with the context of the storyteller's life and leadership had played a significant role in the research.

Consequently, it was important to ensure a thorough understanding and appreciation of both reflexivity and emotional reflexivity. As a starting point in the understanding of leader emotional reflexivity, I begin with a historical perspective of reflexivity and what scholars are saying about reflection as foundational to reflexivity.

The term ‘reflection’ derives from Latin origins, namely, ‘re-reflectere’ with ‘re-’ meaning ‘back’ and ‘flectere’ meaning ‘to bend’. Initially, the term referred to the ‘bending back’ of light reflecting from a surface (Stedmon & Dallos, 2009). The first application of reflection to thought processes occurred early in the seventeenth century and literally meant to “turn one’s thoughts (back)” (Stedmon & Dallos, 2009, p. 1).

Historical definitions of reflection are so numerous as to arouse exasperation. One way in which to derive meaning from the superfluity of definitions is perhaps a focus on the perspectives shared by scholars. Several scholars share the perspective that reflection involves cognition and active presence (Dewey, 1933; Langer, 1989; Loughran, 1996; Schön, 1983; Seibert & Daudelin, 1999). While Dewey (1933) defined reflection as dynamic, continuous and meticulous contemplation involving subconscious beliefs, he later expanded on this description from 1933. Dewey (1938) asserts that reflection is about casting the eye backwards to review what has already occurred. In such looking back, meaning is unravelled to create intelligence
for future actions. Thus, Dewey (1938) argues that reflection forms the basis of cognitive organisation and discipline in thinking.

Alternately, Loughran (1996) defines reflection as a thoughtful, purpose-driven act. Seibert and Daudelin (1999) describe reflection using verbs or doing words, namely, to screen, to investigate and to rationalise. In their attempts to understand reflection scholars also make use of various methods such as Fogarty’s (1994) metacognitive reflection, Dewey’s (1933) reflective thinking, Langer’s (1989, 1997) mindfulness and Boyd and Fales’s (1983) reflective learning. Researchers often use different descriptive words synonymously in order to describe reflection. These include introspection or contemplation, self-reflection and meditation (Holland, 1999; Rogers, 2001; Seibert, 1996).

Pillow (2003) asserts that the human ability to reflect on the past and into the future originated from the enlightenment belief which stems from the human being’s ability to reason logically about his or her fate or destiny. In so doing, humans ascend beyond the present to affect their perceived future. Although relevant to creative writing, I found Cowan and Stroud’s (2016) definition of reflexivity, quite interesting. They suggest richly reworking, sieving and exploration of experiences, likened to the composting of soil, almost like separating the weeds from the rest of the material, which they call “composting reflection” in order to enhance continuous future creativity. (p. 28). I believe this view of reflection is valuable in understanding leader reflexivity.
Differentiating between reflection and reflexivity

In describing reflection, Schön (1983) distinguishes between reflection occurring during an activity and reflexivity occurring after an activity. Action in the midst of an activity involves reshaping a person’s existing frame of reference to test the new understanding. Action after an activity is retrospective reflection or reflexive practice – thinking back about the significance of reflection and reflexively learning from the process. In other words, reflection is about thinking and learning. Reflection during the action becomes the object of subsequent processing while reflexivity about the action is a two-stage process (Schön, 1983).

Contrary to Schön’s view, there is the view that reflection encompasses self-confrontation, knowledge and logical actions (Beck, 1992). On the other hand, Holland (1999) describes reflexivity as “[a]pplied to that which turns back upon or takes account of itself or a person’s self, especially methods that take into consideration the effect of the personality or presence of the researcher on the investigation” (p. 464). This implies that the researcher must take account of him/herself as an individual with a personal worldview and its impact on the participant/researcher relationship (Alvesson et al., 2008; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008; Gilmore & Kenny, 2014).

Contemporary notions of reflexivity involve self-scrutiny, or the questioning of one’s personal assumptions in relation to others. In such an instance, the goal is liberating one’s thinking in order to gain self-awareness (Fulop, 2002; Hibbert, 2013) in the interests of change and transformation (Habermas, 1974; Mezirow, 2000; Moon,
2004). This self-challenge may be forced by social processes such as modernisation and individualisation and encompasses both agency and interrelation (Archer, 2003; Holmes, 2010; Stevens, 1996). Reflexivity, therefore, is about revisiting interpretations that inform judgements so as to renovate or reconstruct inner meaning making (Taylor, 2010). Chiseri-Strater (1996) asserts that reflection is a solitary act focussing on self-examination while reflexivity involves the self-examination that engages the impacts of interrelation with the self and others

Holland’s (1999) well-established transdisciplinary reflexivity provides a foundation for understanding interrelation in reflexivity – the topic of the next section.

**Holland’s (1999) transdisciplinary or pathway to reflexivity**

Holland’s (1999, p. 472) pathway to reflexivity or transdisciplinary reflexivity acknowledges psychosocial dynamics as an essential component of reflexivity. In his opinion, reflexivity is fundamentally a cognitive capacity. This view is also found in social cognitive theory (Lieberman, 2007; Pfeifer, Lieberman, & Dapretto, 2007). This pathway to reflexivity is especially relevant to the present study because it illuminates the multileveled, multidisciplinary complexity of reflexivity. In addition, Holland (1999) provides clarity about the rational underpinnings of reflexivity as a research strategy. Although Holland’s transdisciplinary reflexivity concerns research methodology, it provides an important foundational context for understanding leader emotional reflexivity.

Using a paradigmatic metaphor approach, transdisciplinary reflexivity, or the pathway to reflexivity, encompasses four levels of reflexivity. Each paradigm utilises
reflexivity in a distinct manner. Holland argues that, in qualitative research, reflexivity is absolute and that human ability is coloured and contoured by metaphors as well as various restrictive influences and disciplinary areas. The various levels and types of reflexivity may be seen as circular movements within paradigms, traversing and expanding beyond these paradigms.

I wished to highlight the multidisciplinary approach by creating a context for understanding the dynamic, multidimensional nature of reflexivity and, in this way, to illustrate the relevance of psychosocial factors, subjectivity, human agency and habitus to reflexivity. An explanation of the various styles inherent in transdisciplinary reflexivity provides a basis for understanding how I should approach the emotional reflexivity processes of the leader in this study in order to develop a substantive theory of these processes. Holland’s starting point is Reflexivity 1 – the first level of reflexivity.

Reflexivity 1

Mead’s (1934, p. 465) self-contained, non-radical description of reflexivity as striving to find the self in the experience of reflexivity applies to this baseline for the subsequent levels. This description reflects reflexivity as a collaborative and figurative process. Included in the first level is Kelly’s (1955) psychological explanation advising psychologists of the influence of their own subjective realities in appraising others. This advice goes hand in hand with Lafitte’s (1957) warning that subjectivity may give rise to misinterpretation and distortion for both the researcher and the participant/s. Thus, level one refers to a reflexivity that does not give rise to
the questioning of belief systems as opposed to the reflexivity in an intense experience such as the death of a loved one, where there is questioning.

**Reflexivity 2(a)**

This level involves a clash between paradigms, for example, between sociology and psychology. In this context Gouldner’s (1970) drive toward a “Reflexive Sociology”, which transcends existing sociology and which attacks functionalism, strongly suggests the psychological concept that sociologists habitually consider and apply in the analysis of their own sociological beliefs as they consider the beliefs of others. It was this drastic step by turning the disciplines of psychology and sociology back and upon each another that established the transdisciplinary nature of reflexivity.

**Reflexivity 2(b)**

Here reflexivity encompasses the various techniques presented by different paradigms, for example, metaphors in organisational appraisals. Morgan (1986) describes what he terms “imaginization” as a technique for appraising organisations (p. 86). The use of metaphors enhances critical thinking and thus promotes and encourages the realisation of multiple meanings in various situations. For example, the machine metaphor involves methods involving mechanics, the organismic metaphor involves organising in the interests of overcoming environmental challenges, the brain metaphor involves organising around learning and innovation and the culture metaphor involves navigating perception. This, thus, is the way in which metaphors create understanding and suggest suitable organisational action (Morgan, 1986).
**Reflexivity 3**

This level involves the movement of cognitive, personal or group upheaval and places individual processes within the context of psychological and societal conditions. In this way, reflexivity moves from the individual to the group.

**Reflexivity 4**

This fourth level offers a space for recognising the social construction of paradigms, embracing the collective personal and cultural essentials of, for example, the research participant. At this level, the issue is not beliefs but rather an understanding of their origin, signifying a moving away from archetypes into the topmost level of reflexive examination – transdisciplinary reflexivity (Holland, 1999, p. 476). This radical reflexivity transcends paradigms and/or disciplines, providing an opportunity for individuals to challenge, in their own interest, those boundaries or systems of knowledge which are imposed by others in power.

Radical reflexivity, therefore, invites revision of and intervention into the knowledge and sectional complexities of being human relevant to leadership. This, in turn, happens from a place of ‘knowing’ which is based on the prevailing moral code. Holland (1999) argues that cumulative reflexivity improves what is our most critical human capacity and is an essential measure of studying the science of humanness or standards derived as a result. Socially constructed boundaries involving “disciplines, class, structures, gendered groups, etc.” precipitate critical consideration because they constitute obstructions to reflexivity (Holland, 1999, p. 477). They are loaded with philosophical beliefs that limit possibilities in language expression.
Holland asserts further that language is the foundation of reflexivity and is deceptively used in relation to others and ourselves thereby requiring inclusion of psychosocial factors. This psychosocial approach was especially relevant to my study because it highlights a critical human function namely, reflexive analysis. Holland asserts that the function of reflective analysis is to open up and confront internal beliefs which derive from internalising worldviews, theories and numerous philosophies, thinking modes and cosmologies or archetypes when conducting research into a world of interrelation.

Given the social context of leadership (Ferraro and Brody, 2015), transdisciplinary reflexivity is valuable in understanding this leader’s emotional reflexivity. Next, I discuss interrelation and its relevance to reflexivity.

**Reflexivity and interrelation**

Holland’s (1999) pathway to reflexivity provides a contextual foundation for understanding the interrelatedness of reflexivity. Researchers agree that reflexivity is a human competence. They also agree that reflexivity occurs at various levels and in various forms of the reflexive process with different directional consequences across various paradigms and disciplines. In addition, they agree that reflexivity subjectively engages numerous reflexive processes such as our thinking about our thoughts. This thinking process involves critical thinking or internal deliberation in the quest for self-knowledge or self-awareness (Archer, 2003; Bourdieu, 2004; Carson & Fisher, 2006; Cunliffe, 2004, 2009; Holland, 1999; Raelin, 2008; Stedmon & Dallos, 2009).
In addition to Holland's (1999) description of radical/transdisciplinary reflexivity, Pollner's (1991) definition of the concept and his allusion to its physicality and emotionality are perhaps the most appropriate to understanding reflexivity. He describes his radical reflexivity as "an ‘unsettling,’ i.e., an insecurity regarding the basic assumptions, discourse and practices used in describing reality" (p. 370). The implication is that reflexivity involves an unsettling ‘feeling’ of insecurity.

This unsettling feeling involves the individual critically questioning and re-examining beliefs, values, experiences or ways of doing things socially in the internal conversation as described by Archer (2003). One may not, therefore, assume that external reality is irrelevant to reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2003). Archer (2003) argues human beings, each with their own personal knowledge, engage in an internal conversation and are exposed to and influenced by society. She asserts that, unless we believe society is a separate entity that is not part of our internal world, we must acknowledge social influence. Accordingly, social influence on the self are not immune to internal questioning and, thus, humans possess internal worlds of conversation that involve an interpretive space which is not available externally.

She argues further that this interpretive space involves self-criticism which is related to self-reflexive questioning. In this private space within a person's consciousness desires and beliefs come under review. It is during this internal review that personal identities are defined based on what a person ultimately deems to be the most important in the world (Archer, 2003; Bourdieu, 2004; Carson & Fisher, 2006; Davies et al., 2004; Raelin, 2008; Stedmon & Dallos, 2009).
In explaining reflexivity, Davies et al. (2004) use a metaphor which represents the reflective process as a gallery of mirrors. Multiple reflections appear in the mirrors. As one looks at one’s reflection in one mirror, reflections appear in other mirrors, thus resulting in a never-ending creation of reflections. This simulates how opposing internal boundaries facilitates the looking back of reflexivity. These scholars argue that, while new reflections (thoughts and ideas) present themselves in the mirrors, this happens only as a result of gazing at the existing self (old thoughts and ideas) in the first mirror. Moreover, looking back may be a new process altogether, implying that reflexivity is a circular process, going back and forth. The processes of looking back and creating new thoughts are, therefore, concurrent or simultaneous.

Reflexivity occurs when the circular movement through the reflexive gaze and the act of listening reflexively create a change in the thought being experienced. It is clear that reflexivity is an intangible, disruptive and draining process (Davies et al., 2004; Stedmon & Dallos, 2009).

Having illuminated the multidimensional nature of reflexivity, emotion follows.

5.4. EMOTION

Emotion and interrelation are synonymous terms and involve human physiology, cognitions, communication and behaviour. Therefore, it may be that feeling defines the embodied social self. However, parameters of social space and time define the self that lives (Holmes, 2010). Scholarly views on the complexities of emotion are essential to understanding emotional reflexivity in genera and the participant leader’s
emotional reflexivity process in particular. I explore the views presented in the relevant literature.

**Emotion as innately human**

It is clear from the disciplines that cover the phenomenon of emotion that there is no common consensual definition of emotion; in fact, there is considerable debate (Gross & Barrett, 2011; Mulligan & Scherer, 2012). I begin with Denzin’s (1984, 2009) description of emotion because when I first read this definition, each word elicited feeling within me. Rather than paraphrasing Denzin’s description, I quote him verbatim to allow you to experience his words for yourself:

> Emotion is a lived, believed-in, situated, temporally embodied experience that radiates through a person’s stream of consciousness, is felt in and runs through his body, and, in the process of being lived, plunges the person and his associates into a wholly new and transformed reality – the reality of a world that is being constituted by the emotional experience (p. 66).

My personal response to Denzin’s definition was that I identified with the content. I experienced emotion as I read, associated and understood his words. Although I am not able to explain it academically, there was more at play in my reaction than only emotion. I also experienced thoughts and associations with other experiences that I have had. Of course, another person may have a very different experience. Thus, it comes as no surprise that scholars describe emotion as a multifaceted experience of
a person’s mind. Kunnanatt (2012) argues that, as opposed to other mammals, human emotions are widespread and include feeling annoyed, jealous, sad, happy, afraid, amazed, keen, repulsed or delighted, etc. Triggers from our environment elicit numerous varieties of feelings and reflections of emotions at every moment. In addition, the influence of social groups and affective situations in which social interactions occur implies that emotions are transient, they combine, they are vague and they are often contrasting, frequently causing internal conflict and confusion.

Scherer (2005) defines emotion as an incident involving changes in the person as an organism, reacting to the personal scrutiny of an environmental event that matters to him/her. As opposed to Scherer (2005), Lawler and Thye’s (1999) definition, although more technical, reflects the general theme in Denzin’s definition namely, that emotion involves fairly short, optimistic or undesirable states of critical analysis, accompanied by bodily, nervous system and intellectual components. Similarly, Brody (1999) asserts that emotions are socially motivated, stimulatory schemes that occur in the body. These schemes affect our sense of wellness and are composed of behaviour, experience and intellect and have either a positive or a negative impact of varied intensities.

Despite the plethora of definitions in the literature, several scholars agree that emotion involves an assortment of psychological states. These states comprise an individual’s subjective or personal experience, his/her expressive behaviour and physiological or bodily reactions. Scholars also postulate that behaviours and emotions manifest through the body, face, verbally and also through heart rate and

Scholars agree further that emotion is basic to any psychological model involving the human mind (Gross & Barrett, 2011). Accordingly, some scholars embrace the interrelation of emotions and thoughts as involving a consciousness of affective reactions (DeSteno, Petty, Rucker, Wegener, & Braverman, 2004; Robinson & Clore, 2002a; Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001). On the other hand, some scholars underscore automatic or unconscious emotional responses (Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980; Monahan, Murphy, & Zajonc, 2000; Winkielman & Berridge, 2004). Finally, numerous scholars attempt to explain and delineate emotions using categories, for example, basic emotion, primary, secondary and tertiary emotion as outlined in Gross and Barrett’s (2011) review.

In their review, Gross and Barrett (2011) highlight the different views of emotion and its propensity for creating confusion. Various paradigms are delineated along a continuum with four zones. The first zone represents basic emotion and the proponents are listed as: “MacDougall (1908, 1921); Buck (1999); Davis (1992); LeDoux (2000); Izard (1993); and Damasio (1999)” (p. 10).

The second zone entails appraisal and the proponents are listed as: “Clore and Ortony, (2008); Lazarus, (1991); Roseman (1991); Scherer (1984); Smith and Ellsworth, (1985)” (p. 10). The third zone entails psychological constructs with the following proponents listed: “Barrett, (2009); James, (1884); Mandler, (1975); Russell, (2003), and Wundt, (1997, 1998)” (p. 10). The fourth zone is social
construction and the following proponents are listed: “Averill (1980); Harre (1986); Mesquita (2010) and Solomon (2003)” (p. 10). These categories contain so many scholars that it is difficult to keep track of the different perspectives on emotion.

Contrary to scholars who advocate categorising emotions, Smith and Schneider (2009) criticise the grouping of emotions and, instead propose the Clore et al. (1987) proposition for understanding emotion using affective words. Applying the seven primary emotions identified by Ekman (1971) and Ekman and Rozenberg (1997), namely, rage, joy, amazement, sorrow, revulsion, scorn and anxiety, Smith and Schneider found universality in the physiological expressions of these emotions across five cultures. A significant finding was that the individuals experiencing these primary emotions had no control over them.

In view of the leadership setting of the study, it was important to consider certain of the various affective theories and their relevance to workplace behaviours. This is the subject of discussion in the next section.

**Theories of emotion in the workplace**

The positivist paradigm presents emotions as being counterproductive in the workplace (Hartel, Ashkanasy, & Zerbe, 2012). My work experience in organisational development supports this paradigm. The sentiments I have experienced during developmental interventions included the belief that there is no room for emotion in business. Discussions in my work reveal a common workplace stereotype of inappropriate female emotional displays in the workplace, on the one hand, and male dismissal of emotion on the other.
Numerous studies have shed light on the role of emotion in organisational sense-making (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; George, 2000; Rouleau, 2005). Studies have also revealed a link between emotion and deviations in key social processes as well as in thought processes and interpretations of events (Scherer, 1984; Schwarz & Clore, 2007; Weick, 1995; Zajonc, 1980). Consequently, it is useful, if not important, to consider affective theories in the workplace.

Weis and Cropanzano’s (1996) affective events theory (AET) asserts that employee attitudes and behaviours result from the affective reactions or feelings precipitated by the employees’ responses to distinct affective events in workplace situations. This claim triggered research on various related topics, for example, Goleman’s (1998) emotional intelligence theory (focusing on traits and abilities) and Hochschild’s (1983) emotional labour theory. Contrary to Weis and Cropanzano’s (1996) affective events theory (AET), Heise’s (2007) affect control theory (ACT) as well as appraisal theories of emotion share a common hypothesis; that subjective interpretation gives rise to emotion as opposed to environmental stimuli (Rogers, Schröder, & Von Scheve, 2014). In this vein, ACT underscores the entrenchment of culture in interpretation, with language as the vehicle for meaning making (Heise, 2007).

In addition, ACT maintains that affect control processes are linked to the view that emotions arise from norms created in societies and processes involving identity, participation in activities and emotional schemes (Smith & Schneider, 2009). The theory asserts that, in social settings, people endeavour to be in culturally consistent situations where they enjoy shared affective views and are able to avoid contrary affective sentiments (Heise, 2007).
Studies about the influence of the mind on unrelated behaviour reveal that there is increasing evidence of culture inherent in human interpretation. For example, a study involving the subconscious priming of university students with stereotypes about older people influenced the students’ behaviour in such a way that their walking came to resemble the slower walking typical of the elderly (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996). Another study involving the priming of a negative African-American stereotype influenced increased levels of hostile behaviour in the participants (Bargh et al., 1996). In a study where a business versus religion stereotype was activated in the minds of the participants, the findings revealed uncooperative behaviour during business predicament games (Smeesters, Yzerbyt, Corneille, & Warlop, 2009). Stereotypes arise from both a fundamental, universal, human need for group identity and the pervasive presence of status in society (Nelson, 2002).

The stereotype content model proposes three central, stable principles of stereotyping (Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2008). This model illuminates the relationship between group emotion and behaviour that remains constant irrespective of changes in the judgement in any particular group (Nelson, 2002). The three central propositions of the model include the following: group prejudice relies on group and context; evaluation of others’ intent and ability to perform judgements correlates with group cognitive judgements; emotion influences the way in which stereotypes impact on actions (Cuddy et al., 2008). Cuddy et al. (2008) argue that stereotypical thoughts and ideas about social groups trigger expectations about emotional prejudice and behaviour across groups. In view of the fact that emotions are central in transforming stereotypes into action (Cuddy et al., 2008), it is important to understand how emotions impact attention, perception and actions.
Several studies have revealed that human emotions play a significant role in attention, perception, making decisions and behaviour (Damasio, 1994; Dolan, 2002; Pekrun, 1992; Thagard, 2006). In their work, LeDoux (2000) and Damasio (1994) assert that emotion is closely linked to the generation and realisation of action. Thus, in the leadership context, emotional reasoning directs and guides cognitive consideration. In other words, emotions stimulate and direct our thoughts and actions (Burkitt, 2012).

Next, I consider how emotions arise.

Smith and Schneider (2009) reveal that while evolving human physiology restricts the expression of specific emotions, the majority of social and cultural influences are significant in the way in which emotion arises internally. In line with ACT, Heise’s (2007) distinctions, for example between basic, complex and primary emotions are insignificant even when considered neurologically. Given the categories in emotion theory as noted above, Heise’s (2007) finding is significant and means that no single emotion has central or semantic preference over another. It is for this reason that I used the word feeling/s and emotion/s interchangeably in the study. Emotions tend to vary more across various cultures than within a particular culture. For the purposes of this study it is, therefore important to note that the way in which one’s emotion may arise and differ from other cultures links to one’s culture of origin.

The findings discussed in the preceding paragraph highlight the psychosocial interplay between thoughts, emotion and culture. Within the context of leadership
development, an awareness of this interrelation is critical in understanding the relevance and importance of emotional reflexivity.

Having discussed the three interrelated constructs, namely, reflexivity, emotion and leadership, emotional reflexivity follows.

5.5. CREATING A LEADERSHIP CONTEXT FOR EMOTIONAL REFLEXIVITY

Burkitt (2012) asserts that theories of reflexivity are individualistic implying that they do not incorporate interrelation. Typically, these theories are rational with no emphasis on emotion (Holland, 1999). Although emotion is suggested in theories of reflexivity, this is in direct conflict with rational foundations of reflexivity (Holland, 1999). Holmes (2010) advocates for ‘emotionalising’ reflexivity. She argues that mere theoretical exchanges about emotion in reflexivity are insufficient and that they must extend to whether emotion stimulates an individual’s self-evaluation. While emotional intelligence, feelings and emotional learning are increasingly acknowledged in leadership and leader development literature (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Blackmore, 2010; Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000; Goleman, 1995, 1998, 1999; Hargreaves, 2001; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2008; Normore, Brooks, & Silva, 2016; Schmidt, 2010), these constructs are not specifically linked to leader emotional reflexivity.

According to the academic argument on emotional reflexivity, self-knowledge implies knowledge of inhabiting the body and significantly, knowing the body (Archer, 2003; Burkitt, 2012). Some of this knowledge, however, is known only to the self (Archer, 2003). This private knowledge involves the self as a reflexive being with intelligence
and the ability to question. Thus, the self is able to reflect on the world. This reflection generates internal questioning or the deliberation of external reality (Archer, 2003; Cunliffe, 2003).

Burkitt (2012) agrees that emotional reflexivity involves reflection. He also agrees that the internal dialogue promotes reflexively changing one’s life because of circumstantial feelings and interpretations about the self and others. However, he disputes Archer’s (2003) belief that reflexivity occurs in a private, internal space. Burkitt argues that, although humans may keep their thoughts personal, they are social beings by nature. Therefore, as social beings, interrelation as the source or cause of reflexivity and the internal conversation, negates the privacy theory.

Holmes (2010) argues that the relevance of emotional reflexivity in constructing the self in relation to others is on the increase. Therefore, the value of ‘emotionalising’ reflexivity is that this places an emphasis on the presence of emotion in interpreting personal feelings relevant to the emotion of others (Holmes, 2010, p. 149). Thus, confronting emotions about the existing structures of meaning making as noted by Ford et al., (2008), relevant to the perceived emotion of others, is critical if leaders are to acquire global leadership aptitudes.

Subsequent to Goleman’s (1995, 1998, 1999) emotional intelligence theory, there is increasing focus on learning about emotion in leadership because of the connection between developing human resources and addressing organisational change (Ashkanasy & Dasborough, 2003; Fineman, 2003). Global organisations are demanding that leaders possess a well-developed cognitive and functional capacity
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(Cascio & Aguinis, 2008; Powell & Snellman, 2004). In addition, global leaders require an appreciation of their underlying assumptions (Ford et al., 2008), as well as an understanding that emotion provides meaning to how individuals perceive others, the world and themselves (Burkitt, 2012). For example, being appreciated as intellectual, brilliant and successful in leadership, as described in Turnley and Bolino (2001), requires a demonstration of competency that incites significant effort and results in experiencing emotion. These feelings involve anxieties which are related to a fear of ineffectiveness or being perceived as incompetent (Haber, Fitzgerald, Brouer, & Paul, 2012; Tomkiewicz, Bass, & Vaicys, 2005) and often lead to negative feelings about the self as elucidated by Jamison (2004).

Strongly emphasising the significant value of emotion in reflexivity Burkitt (2012) argues that emotion stimulates and motivates reflexivity, adding to it and penetrating its essence. Thus, contrary to Goleman’s (1995) assertion, emotion is not merely an element that needs to be monitored and controlled simply through the development of awareness. Burkitt, (2012) argues that it is not possible to disengage in order to reflect on emotion because emotion is inherent in the foundations of being human and involves interrelation. The voices and imagery of others echo in reflexive discourse (Burkitt, 2012). Contrary to Archer’s (2003) assumption that people deliberate in an internal conversation and monitor their actions, Giddons (1990) and Burkitt (2012) argue individuals are emotionally engaged because the views of others are significantly meaningful to them. In addition, highly contextual feelings motivate and stimulate reflexivity because emotions, bodily sensations, cognitions and behaviours occur simultaneously and, at times, instantly. Therefore, self-feeling about the social world and others create and shape the knowledge that derives from
our emotional relationship with the world (Burkitt, 2012). Reflexivity, therefore, is
dialogical, cognitive, relational (Archer, 2003; Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004;
Holmes, 2010), interpretive and fundamentally emotional (Burkitt, 2012).

In confirming his belief about emotion in reflexivity, Burkitt (2012) notes Mayrhofer’s
(2011) findings that include significant psychosocial experiences as the causal
factors of negative self-feeling. Burkitt (2012) suggests that these findings support
the fact that, in the midst of a person’s perspective or imaginings of what others
conceive of him/her, are the resulting self-feelings. This inter-relational interpretation
illuminates Burkitt’s postulation of the central presence of emotion in reflexivity.
Applying Burkitt’s (2012) theory to leadership implies that as an individual, a leader’s
reflexivity occurs at the intersection of self-reflection, feeling and interpretation of
social experiences and not from the monitoring actions suggested by Giddons
(1990). Next, I discuss social interrelation and interaction.

5.6. ORGANISATIONAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF
LEADER, EMOTIONAL REFLEXIVITY

Leadership and organisations are reciprocally responsible for the culture of an
organisation. Therefore, sharing of information to stimulate innovation should be part
of the culture of an organisation (Ramsey, 2009, p. 210). However, in as much as
leadership develops the culture, the culture of an organisation may influence leader
identity (Bass, 1985). Culture in turn, impacts an organisation’s performance (Bass &
Avolio, 1993; Berson, Oreg, & Dvir, 2008; Schein, 2010; Uhl-Bien, Marion, &
McKelvey, 2007) relevant to established organisational norms and values.
In societies, social norms influence and control behavioural patterns which are, in turn, determined by the particular society in which people find themselves and also their culture of origin (Laufer & Robertson, 1997; Robertson, 1981). In other words, social norms are parameters, guidelines or communal rules delineating appropriate situational behaviours relevant to particular societies. Norms fulfil a prescriptive purpose as individuals in society define how people ‘ought’ to behave in specific social situations and societies.

Behavioural prescriptions become so internally entrenched that people often barely notice them, except when they are being disobeyed (Gibbs, 1965; Meyer, 2002; Robertson, 1981). Values are significant because they are the embodiment of norms while norms manifest in specific, acceptable actions, behaviours and ways of being in the social world (Meyer, 2002; Robertson, 1981). The social world encompasses leadership with leaders functioning and existing in various, ever-evolving realities where consistently reproduced meaning and identity are socially entrenched phenomena or structures (Giddens, 1979, 1984; Kenny, Willmott, & Whittle, 2011; Lord & Mahar, 1991; Marcionis, 1995). While these structures may appear material, they are, in fact, intersubjective creations and are constantly evolving (Gioia, 2003.) Consequently, as social being’s leaders fulfil multiple roles (Day & Harrison, 2007) and they interact with and relate to others with their personal viewpoints, relative to their own life experiences and social worlds (Nye & Simonetta, 1996).

Leader actions which manifest in recruitment strategies, assigning resources, being a role model, acknowledgement and their response to crises cultivate and establish accepted norms, values and beliefs which determine the organisational culture
(Burns, Nieminen, Kotrba, & Denison, 2014). Achieving strategic goals means that organisations pressurise employees thereby cementing the organisational norms (Lee & Allen, 2002) in respect of high performance (Brown, Jones, & Leigh, 2005) all of which occur through interrelation.

Human nature is essentially flexible. Thus, leader behaviours represent the product of an interaction between fundamental genetic heritages and learning experiences within the leadership context as well as the broader culture and society (Laufer & Robertson, 1997). An appropriate, practical example is the current uncertain global, sociocultural and political situation which has arisen as a result of the election of Donald Trump as the American president. Mr Trump’s election provides an interesting, fitting and relevant picture of leadership norms and values in action, in our global world. At this point, I wish to pause for a moment and consider the American campaign and election as an illustration of social construction and norms and values in practice.

The ongoing discussion and protests about Donald Trump’s decisions and actions presents a picture of the reaction to his decisions and actions which as discussed earlier, reflect his personal values and beliefs. Widely watched, the American election was an example of global norms and values in conflict, made accessible to the world and influenced by consistent advances in communication technologies (Carraro & Tessarolo, 2010; Gheorghită & Pădirețu, 2014). How then, did the election events put this leader into a global spotlight and provide a glimpse into his values and beliefs as they clashed with norms and values across the globe?
Donald J. Trump, chairman and president of The Trump Organization, is a successful graduate in finance and a wealthy businessman. He is also an accomplished author of fifteen bestselling books as well as a television producer and star of *The Apprentice* and *The Celebrity Apprentice*, two popular reality, television series. On 8 November 2016, as a Republican party nominee, he won the electoral vote and hence the American presidency (Biography.com Editors, 2016, November 19) amid a controversial campaign, an immediate decline in global markets and an ambivalent reaction from world leaders and the population in the USA (Reuters AP, 2016b, November 09).

The worldwide sociocultural, political and moral conflict was evident in the overwhelming reaction of numerous political leaders and presidents around the world. Some reactions demonstrated uncertainty and fear because of President Trump’s controversial views and utterances both throughout and after his election. His utterances involved numerous socio-economic-cultural and political issues and created uncertainty about the future of America and the world (Sarah Parnass, 2016, January 22, *The Washington Post*). Other reactions involved anticipation about his global leadership in the future (Reuters AP. 2016c, November 09). Besides the global reaction, Americans themselves protested against Donald Trump’s election as their new president (Reuters AP 2016a, November 09).

In an interview with the *Huffington Post*, the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, expressed her concerns about the conflicting socio-cultural and political norms and values which had been reflected in the then president-elect’s campaign messages. Speaking about her relationship with America and the president-elect she said she
hoped he would uphold “the dignity of man, independent of origin”. She expanded saying, “Germany and America are connected by values of democracy, freedom and respect for the law and the dignity of man, independent of origin, skin colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political views” (Allegretti, 2016, November, 09).

It would appear that President Trump is emotionally committed to his personal belief system, evident in his defensive global messages using the Twitter medium, without consideration of his position as a global leader. One may argue that, on the one hand, the reactions and media coverage of the election reflected a narrow, one-sided focus on his stance in relation to existing norms and values. On the other hand, one could reason from a sociological perspective that Donald Trump’s position on global socio-economic, cultural and political issues reflects a conflict perspective.

A conflict sociological perspective suggests that the struggle between social classes in society and/or, political and social mayhem, create motivation for change (Robertson, 1981). The view is that, although conflict may be destructive at times, it also stimulates competing forces vying for personal interests, thereby creating advantageous change (Macionis, 1995; Robertson, 1981). This may be the case for America. We will have to wait and see how Donald Trump’s presidency unfolds and influences the global economy in the future.

President Trump’s election stirred up and illuminated the dichotomy between social construction and populist influence on existing global norms and values. The continuing 2016 global outcry of uncertainty is an example of the dire need to develop emotionally reflexive leaders who are orientated towards future norms and
values that encompass and appreciate multiculturalism and new ways of building a
global economy.

Globalisation highlights the need for leaders to develop a leader identity that
encompasses an appreciation and understanding of the role of emotional
competence in socio-economic, cultural and political interrelations between nations
presidential election has offered valuable insights into the need to develop
emotionally reflexive leaders for the future.

Anderson (2011) argues that leadership encompasses more than managing what is
“done to you” (p. 189). In addition, leadership involves leading the self in a reciprocal
relationship of team involvement. Accordingly, leader involvement is about the leader
demonstrating self-leadership through a team effort and, consequently, a good
leader empowers others through imparting confidence to achieve joint visionary
goals (Anderson, 2011; Haslam & Reicher, 2016). Therefore, global leadership
requires leaders who are adaptable, culturally open and emotionally intelligent
(Earley & Ang, 2003; Goleman, 1995, 1999; Ng, Van Dyne, & Ang, 2009).

Considering the above, leaders could surpass normalised, ‘dominant’ sociocultural
views by engaging reflective learning perspectives in their daily leadership
interactions (Ylimaki, Fetman, Matyjasik, Brunderman, & Uljens, 2016). Here and
from a leadership development perspective, leader emotional reflexivity offers the
transformational approach suggested by Ylimaki et al. (2016).
A transformational approach to leader identity development inspires and provokes the anticipation of improved norms, values and principles for future leadership as opposed to replicating existing sociocultural norms and values (Ylimaki et al., 2016). A recognition of the intricacies of global leadership development necessitates a shift in the dominant research focus on leadership skills (Mendenhall, 2006; Mendenhall, Osland, Bird, Oddou, Maznevski, Stevens, & Stahl, 2013) towards an examination of the subjective processes of global leader perception and self/leader-identity (Herman & Zaccaro, 2014).

It follows, therefore, that global, multicultural impacts on leadership require a transformational approach that spans the career of a leader (Zaccaro, Wood & Herman, 2006) and involves his/her life story. Understanding leader emotional, reflexivity provides a starting point to what Herman and Zaccaro (2014) describe as assimilating the field of global leadership research through examination of the intricacies involved in the relationship between self and leader-identity and effective leader decisions and actions.

Subjectivity and the role of leader emotional reflexivity in developing leadership self-awareness and leader identity is the next topic of discussion.

5.7. SELF-AWARENESS, SUBJECTIVITY AND LEADER IDENTITY

In considering leader emotional reflexivity from a leader identity perspective (Lord & Hall, 2005; Priest & Middleton, 2016) it appears that leaders must embody the leadership role as an integral aspect of their self-concept/identity. A strong integration of the leader and his/her self-identity promotes the propensity for
integrated leadership self-improvement. With such integration and through cultural and emotional intelligence, leadership capacity may be sustained and developed (Goleman, 1995, 1999; Santee & Jackson, 1979; Tuleja, 2014).

Consistent leader identity development requires a conscious self-awareness that involves a focus on the processes of leader cognition, emotions and actions (Leary & Tangney, 2003). The 2016 American presidential election exemplified the context surrounding the production of intergroup processes involving social construction.

From a sociological perspective, deep self-understanding and awareness develop critical leadership attributes such as knowledge of personal values and strengths. Thus, leaders learn about and appreciate their self, how others see them and how their contexts colour their views and beliefs (Day & Lance, 2004; Hall, 2004).

In developing leader identity, Priest and Middleton (2016) suggest critical reflection techniques to uncover self-truths in relation to the external environment and using creative methods. These methods include reflection through music, poetry or painting; learning albums; journal writing or stories; leadership networks and coaching or mentors. In using these and other methods to uncover personal truths, scholars warn that developing and sustaining self-awareness may involve work on the self that is uncomfortable, disruptive and unpleasant. The disruption occurs because numerous internal and emotional processes are involved in developing knowledge towards meaning (Archer, 2003; Hall, 2004; Silvia & Duval, 2001).

It is clear from the above that, in sociology, there are different perspectives available from which a particular issue may be approached and resolved. This, in turn, implies
that what exists in the world does not determine one’s perception. Thus, leaders and their followers, as individuals, interpret particular events or actions in terms of their own perspectives, experiences and beliefs (Robertson, 1981). Moreover, past experiences as well as conscious and unconscious desires all shape what one sees (Rimé, 2009). Thus, perceptions and beliefs about the world do not exist in a vacuum but, instead resemble social constructions which are dependent on the context of their inter-group production (Marcionis, 1995; Robertson, 1981). In line with social identity theory social psychologists explore relationships between inter-group and social reasoning processes (Hogg & Abrams, 1999, Moreland, Hogg, & Hains, 1994), including leadership as an interactive, group process (Hogg, 2001).

As concluded in a study about the effect of ethical and empowering leadership conducted by Yukl, Mahsud, Hassan, and Prussia (2013), leader interaction as a group process, transpires in relation to followers, stakeholders and the self. The study involved leader-follower interrelations, emotional commitment and leadership efficacy. Notably, the findings revealed a relationship between leader/follower actions, results and the depth and meaning of their social interaction. In particular, the findings indicated that quality interrelation between the ethical leader and follower determines and influences both leader efficacy and outcomes (Yukl et al., 2013). This finding confirms the social, relational and subjective as opposed to the business nature of the leader/follower relationship (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Hogg, 2001).

When interpreting human behaviour, objectivity and subjectivity are separated only by degree (Cunliffe, 2003; Robertson, 1981). In particular, the interpretation of
human behaviour requires conscious acknowledgement of personal biases. This means that while complete and absolute objectivity is not possible, a self-conscious attempt at objectivity may render a less biased result (Cunliffe, 2003; Robertson, 1981). Thus, leader emotional commitment to existing beliefs and values requires a paradigm shift. It is essential that this shift in established beliefs must transcend the social prescriptions based on current norms and values. In addition, the shift must take into account the perceptions of imminent norms and values in developing the leader identity.

**Developing leader identity**

It is clear from the discussion above that leader self-identity exists alongside several interconnecting identities which are developed and navigated socially (Jones & McEwen, 2000). Through the multi-layered, dynamic self-identity/concept, incorporating self-awareness and assessment (Priest & Middleton, 2016), leaders attach meaning to whom they are in relation to others and, how others conceive of them (Kenny et al., 2011). Leaders who acquire such self-knowledge are self-aware, open to reflective listening and observant of and understand the implications of cultural differences in others (Goleman, 1995, 1999; Tuleja, 2014). Nevertheless, there is little evidence of such self-knowledge being acquired through conscious reflexivity. Archer (2003) argues that the embodiment, intelligence and societal influences of reflexivity as human qualities are regarded as background assumptions (Archer, 2003; Hibbert, 2013). Her argument underscores the need to highlight inquiry into emotion in reflexivity and the interrelation between reflexivity and social construction.
Leaders require a parallel emphasis on the development of a leader’s self-identity and leader identity (Lord & Hall, 2005). The self/leader identity development should therefore include the internal, concealed self-knowledge reflected in observable behaviour (Day, Harrison, & Halpin, 2005). Scholars agree that leaders require both conscious self-awareness and an understanding of their capacity for empathy in their interpersonal relations with their followers. In addition, leaders need emotional and cultural aptitude to recognise differences in others. The purpose of emotional and cultural aptitude in leaders is to enable them to develop an internal inclination and desire to respond appropriately and effectively to differences in, for example, values, beliefs and attitudes (Alon & Higgins, 2005; Goleman, 1995; Rockstuhl, Seiler, Ang, Van Dyne, & Annen, 2011).

Within the context of leader development, emotional reflexivity is critical to leader identity development. Developing leader identity involves an interrelated process of learning and meaning making (Brockman & Dirkx, 2006). This means that acquiring insights into a leader’s life story and how he/she constructs his/her self-concept/identity requires an exploration of his or her subjective, emotional meaning making. Exploring the leader’s meaning making is important because it informs his or her self-understanding, self-awareness, self-assessment, self-improvement and, ultimately, leader identity.

These abilities are particularly important in South Africa, a previously segregated society in transition. Effectively meeting the changing organisational demands requires local leaders to develop a highly composite leader/self-identity (Burke, 2006; Woolfolk, Gara, Allen, & Beaver, 2004). Particularly in view of the impact of
‘apartheid’, it is incumbent on local leaders to contextually and situationally challenge their subconscious biases in their daily, multicultural interactions and interrelations (Amit, Popper, Gal, Mamane-Levy, & Lisak, 2009; Earley, 2002; Earley & Ang, 2003). As explained by Beyleveld (2008), leaders who challenge their biases facilitate the transfer of their interpretations into emotionally intelligent leadership decisions and actions (Goleman, 1999) in their continuous learning.

In his study into adult learning, Dirkx (2006) found that interpersonal relationships and experiences significantly stimulate the emotional responses typical in transformative learning. In line with this finding, adult development is moving in the direction of innovative methods, involving affect and emotion in collaboration with reflection, toward transformative knowledge acquisition (Dirkx, 2006).

The transformative development of a leader’s self-construct must, therefore, encompass flexibility, knowledge, skill and adaptability; given the various social roles leaders fulfil (Mumford, Campion, & Morgeson, 2007). In addition, it is important that the transformative development of leader identity includes the subjective, appraisal and organisation of the structures contained in their subconscious schemes (Hannah, Woolfolk, & Lord, 2009) which are fuelled and made meaningful by emotion (Burkitt, 2012; Holmes, 2010).

In essence, developing leader identity creates a desire for self-improvement and follower empowerment and necessitates the development of the internal processes through which leaders develop both leader and follower self-identity (Hannah et al.,
2009). I believe it is at this point that an understanding of leader emotional reflexivity processes is very pertinent.

From a development perspective understanding leader emotional reflexivity enables the leader to confront any underlying leader belief system which hinders the strengthening of leader identity. However, it is not possible to emphasise the importance of leader emotional reflexivity without considering the cultural implications of developing leader identity. This issue is discussed next.

Cultural implications for leader identity development

In the past, organisational research has narrowly focused attention on issues concerning diversity and relevant to demographic variations, namely, age, race, and gender, as opposed to a more inclusive focus involving a broader diversity that includes socioeconomic and sociocultural differences (Azevedo, Von Glinow, & Paul, 2001). This, in turn, implies the need for development programmes to keep abreast of worldwide development demands in leadership (DeGeest & Brown, 2011).

Referring to the intergenerational workforce, Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) argue that employees have diverse ideas. More specifically, multi-age employees have varied values and beliefs as well as new methods of working, interacting and communicating. These employees and groups represent a new demographic in economic markets (Dychtwald, Erickson, & Morison, 2004). Cutting edge organisations which are managing multigenerational diversity as described in Knouse (2011) recognise the need for a social responsibility approach to leadership development. Such organisations address stereotypes and disparity using tools that
facilitate interaction. They focus on cooperative, integrated interrelation (McCarty, Hukai, & McCarty, 2005) in their management of diversity.

A literature review conducted by Bezrukova, Jehn, and Spell (2012) reveals the need for development to integrate diversity awareness and behavioural training. The review highlighted that integration, as part of diversity initiatives, should involve strategic and human resource objectives and outcomes. These outcomes should be ensured through the long-term assessment of positive shifts in mindset and behaviours. In support of this finding, Svyantek and Bott (2004) suggest that diversity appreciation may be an important individual strategic objective towards social inclusiveness. In addition, they suggest that diversity awareness may be a vital intermediate variable in terms of integrating the culture and strategy of the organisation in promoting an appreciation of diversity.

With increasing global, organisational interconnectedness, the need to understand the worldwide, cultural complexity surrounding leadership and business functioning is becoming more urgent (Alon et al., 2011; 2004; House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004). The challenges of globalisation include increasing multicultural workforces and partnerships (Dong & Liu, 2010). Consequently, maintaining global business relevance requires an international business ethic (Jönsson et al., 2015). In global organisations, leaders have to navigate complex, ever-changing, culturally contextual challenges (Cohen, 2010; House & Javidan, 2004).
Escalating complexity and expectations in the leadership context perpetuate uncertainty about the self and identity (Hermans & Kempen, 1998). Self-identity is a complex phenomenon directed through social interaction with a significant impact on a person. Impacts include how a person presents him/herself, changes in affect, situational perceptions and decisions about social setting (Markus & Wurf, 1987). On the other hand, identity encompasses the qualities, features, societal relationships and affiliations that make up the self (Oyserman et al., 2003).

Numerous identities constitute the self-concept which regulates actions (Jones & McEwen, 2000; Neisser, 1993; Stets & Burke, 2003). Thus, identity formation involves an internal process of restoring, solidifying and sustaining new perceptions and meaning making through a continuous review of existing assumptions produced by group identity, for example, within a particular culture (Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003).

Furthermore, limited exposure to other cultures may give rise to ethnocentrism or stereotypical judgements of other cultures (Edgell, Gerteis, & Hartmann, 2006; Hermans & Kempen, 1998). For leaders developing a strong self/leadership-concept necessitates accessing depths within the self that may be challenging, unclear, unfamiliar and often painful because of inner conflict and shifting. Conscious emotional reflexivity allows questioning about internal conflict. However, it is precisely the inner conflict and shifts that facilitate growth (Fusco, O’Riordan, & Palmer, 2016). Several scholars have studied leadership clarity and self-identity (Campbell et al., 1996; Nezlek & Plesko, 2001; Usborne & Taylor, 2010) with many agreeing on the positive correlation between self-identity, self-regulating systems
and self-image (De Dreu & Van Knippenberg, 2005; Smith, Wethington & Zhan, 1996). Scholars also describe leadership as intellectually, relationally and socially rich (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002).

A discussion of leader socialisation and emotional reflexivity follows.

**Leader socialisation and the internal landscape of leader emotional reflexivity**

According to scholars, the socialisation in leadership is ongoing and occurs through the process of social interaction (Bass, 1990b; Lord & Maher, 1991; Nye & Simonetta, 1996; Zaccaro, & Klimoski, 2002). It makes sense, therefore, that global leader development requires development methods, programmes and techniques that encompass the entire leadership career of a leader (Zaccaro et al., 2006).

In the South African context, April and April (2007) are of the opinion that the previous apartheid system was a socially contrived method of marginalising and discriminating against people of colour prohibiting interaction between ethnic groups and the white race. April and April (2007) argue further that the separation of race groups embedded a conflicted self-identity within ethnic groups about self-worth, self-image and value in society. In addition, they assert that, while the truth and reconciliation (TRC) hearings during the 1990s provided a safe environment in which to start the process of healing, this intervention was limited to the political arena and not to the business world which is characterised by significant multicultural interaction. Throughout the apartheid era educational institutions prepared and groomed white students for leadership roles in society and, in the process, developed educational materials to meet the needs of these students. Accordingly,
the learning materials and, hence, leader development provided no insights into the needs of black, minority students in the new democratic society until 2001 when the process of developing context relevant curricula began (April & April, 2007).

The increasing emphasis on and awareness of sociocultural and environmental context requires leadership that appreciates and understands that societal structures, standards or norms and business practices evolve organically over time (Taylor & Lynham, 2013). An evolutionary perspective that expects change and uncertainty requires a new communication medium or language to facilitate the creative leadership necessary to address the broader issues in respect of the global dilemma (Dervitsiotis, 2005).

In light of the preceding discussion, it is clear that a consciousness of the interrelationship between society and personal experience (Hogg, 2001) reflected in the ‘sociological imagination’ described in Mills (1959), frees us from the bondage of personal views. In simple terms, openness about preconceived ideas and beliefs enables individuals to appreciate the value of interrelatedness on an intellectual level. Contextual openness allows one to track the complex link between the individual biographical quilts that reflect our history, patterns and life events and the broader societal quilt. It is in this way that leaders may acknowledge and challenge Marcionis’s (1995) assertion that all that we are is relevant to where we come from.

The notion of value orientation and social order is captured by Parsons (2013). He illuminates the interrelation between the function of a culture of shared values and the establishment of norms to guide individual actions. His view is that a social
system of action which integrates social, cultural and personality elements derives from the structure of the social actions. These actions form the basis of and motivate value alignments and cultural designs. Behaviours stemming from social actions comprise perceptions, emotions (embedded in expression and symbolism) and assessment (embedded in moral duty) while those actions aligned with a value orientation involve the perceptions, appreciation and morality which give rise to cultural designs.

Various cultural designs enforced by the dominant culture and institutions are organised relative to belief systems, thereby underscoring knowledge and perceptions (Parsons 2013). A cultural system is strengthened by behaviours that adapt and yield to a dominant culture and it is in this way that individuals create their realities. Their personalities are gratified through conforming, thereby ensuring the maintenance of social order.

In making sense of the way in which people creatively develop their realities, I devised a diagram reflecting what I see as circular psychosocial interrelation. My understanding is that the way in which we interact and relate to one another socially is formed by our culture, values, beliefs, traditions, ethics and morals and also our perceived social expectations which, in turn, create our perceptions. Perspectives influence our attitudes and our attitudes influence our behaviour. This, in turn, contributes to our habits and shapes our characters. Our characters fuel our experiences in society with these experiences either corresponding with the beliefs in our sub-conscious design or challenging them. The intense emotion triggered by significant events such as death or trauma stimulates an evaluation of our values,
beliefs or subjective landscape in what I understand as ‘the cycle of social interrelation’ (see Figure 5.2). A discussion of one of the components in the cycle of social interrelation, namely, habit/habitus, follows next.

There is ongoing debate about both habitus/habit (Bourdieu, 1990; Dewey, 1983; Mauss, 1973) and reflexivity as these two constructs relate to both structure and agency (Akram & Hogan, 2015; Archer, 2003, 2009; Decoteau, 2015). Drawing on Aristotle, both Dewey (1983) and Mauss (1973) argue that habitus/habit is foundational to one's character and central to the human self. Within a person's character there are habitual temperaments, dispositions or propagative schemes which involve thought, discernment and assessment (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

These dispositions produce specific responses in certain instances. Although a person may be aware of non-reflexive or unintentional responses, he/she may not necessarily know their source. Habitus, therefore, surpasses the issue of objectivity and subjectivity because it has the capacity to be the product and the producer of social structures through action (Bourdieu, 1977, 1990).

While Bourdieu's (1977, 1990) habitus theory is extremely popular in social science research, criticisms of the theory include deterministic undertones (Hilgers, 2009) and also the failure to adequately acknowledge agency – an individual's freedom to decide on a particular action (Crossley, 2001; King, 2000). These criticisms, in turn, support the notion of interplay between social evolution and reflexivity and, Archer's (2009) dismissal of the relevance of habitus. Archer (2009) argues that theorists are on a path toward fusing habit and reflexivity with pragmatists supporting creativity in
actions through reflexivity and realists promoting habit/habitus. She asserts that the fusion of these two constructs results from the constraint of habitus imposed by challenging situations. To this end, social change represents a challenging situation.

Social change as a result of globalisation challenges habitus through reflexivity (the internal conversation) (Archer, 2009). Consequently, habitual responses are being replaced by reflexivity involving reciprocal, contextual contemplation of the self in relation to others (Archer, 2012).

In response to Archer (2012), Akram and Hogan (2015) agree that there is a relationship between reflexivity and social change. However, they disagree with Archer’s rejection of habitus and everyday social routine in favour of agency. Citing

Figure 5.2: Ramsey (2016, March, 10). Cycle of social interrelation and interaction: My diagrammatic interpretation of how we create our own realities as discussed in Marcionis, (1995).
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LITERATURE REVIEW

Wegner and Bargh (1998), Akram and Hogan (2015) argue in favour of automatic responses. They assert a need for automatic responses as behavioural guides for routine actions in carrying out the much needed, yet often dismissed routines in daily life.

On the other hand, Sweetman’s (2003) suggests that there is a danger of habitual reflexivity, for example, where leaders who display a reflexivity habit compromise on being themselves. While I agree with Akram and Hogan (2015) that routine actions are necessary for everyday life, I also support the notion that globalisation impacts on habitus and that leaders need to equip themselves with a response repertoire that meets the demands of global leadership. Insofar as Sweetman’s (2003) danger of habitual reflexivity is concerned, I believe that reflexivity is developmental and that it should therefore consistently involve adapting to social change. When a person or, in the case of the present study, a leader, is not being him/herself, this raises a question about whether the person has truly engaged reflexivity and experienced a paradigm shift (Habermas, 1974; Mezirow, 2000; Moon, 2004), or merely practised awareness (Archer, 2003; Holmes, 2010; Stevens, 1996; Taylor, 2010).

By way of a practical illustration, I want to pause and consider the 2004 Academy award-winning film, Crash. In the film, the director, Paul Haggis, skilfully directs the cast and graphically illustrates the uncensored collisions of our inner worlds in multicultural USA. The film demonstrates the continuous cycle of interrelation (see Figure 5.2). The characters in the movie enact the dramatic influences of social construction in their daily interactions in the world. This film generously and explicitly captures the everyday lives of the characters where socio-cultural and socio-political
misunderstanding and ignorance translates into ethnocentric perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. Viewers observe the interplay between these ethnocentric subconscious influences and how they give rise to stereotypes, racism, classism, phobias, and so forth. The film illustrates interactions and interrelations of a sensitive nature and requires the viewers to exercise their personal discretion when making the choice as to whether or not to see the film relevant to reading the present thesis.

You may wonder about the relevance of this film to the internal experiences that involve leader emotional reflexivity. Well, the film dramatically illuminates how our subconscious designs or internal worlds are the engines which navigate our journeys in life. Some of the themes illustrated in the film are no different to the themes that play out in a work and leadership environment. I often use example from this film to stimulate thought and dialogue about issues that are difficult to address in a corporate environment during the diversity appreciation interventions I facilitate.

My experience facilitating these interventions has met with positive feedback, probably because the interventions provide a safe platform to openly discuss and consider the inner world and its impact on organisational interaction. By no means, however, as noted earlier, do the participants in these interventions leave with a reconstructed subconscious belief system but they do depart with a greater awareness of their own biases.

My work experience suggests that leaders in a global, multicultural world require insight into their subconscious designs. In addition, leaders need exposure to different realities to test their openness to the many challenges of leading in a
worldwide arena. Leaders need to confer with their humanness; the seat of which I believe is emotion, to develop their leader identity. In this way, they become open to finding the space in which they might welcome all experiences in the workplace (Jönsson et al., 2015) in life and in global business situations as learning (Cohen, 2010; House & Javidan, 2004), stirring them into mindful action (Tuleja, 2014).

Next, I discuss the psycho-social implications of leader emotional reflexivity.

5.8. PSYCHO-SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Since 1960, psychology has grappled with the issues of nature versus nurture. Questions about whether humans are more affected by “internal or external influence, traits versus external situational demands, personality as genetically or experientially derived, abound” (Meyers, 1991, p. 6). Social is defined as “a discipline devoted to the systematic study of human interaction and its psychological basis” (Gergen & Gergen, 1981, p. 5). The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary offers the following definition of social psychology: “The study of the manner in which the personality, attitudes, motivations and behaviour of the individual influence and are influenced by social groups” (Social psychology, Merriam-Webster Online, 2015, November). On the other hand, the Collins Online Dictionary defines social psychology as: “The area of psychology concerned with the interaction between individuals and groups and the effect of society on behaviour” (Social psychology, Collins Online, 2015, November). These definitions indicate that social interaction, the psyche and behaviour are intertwined.
In considering the link between psychological internalisation and social interaction, one must consider the intrapsychic and intersubjective styles of experience. In relational psychology, these styles derive from the principle of their complementary role in the mutual and spiralling impact of relational life events on the development of the psyche (Lewis, 2000). Reciprocally, in this development, the internal, unconscious blueprint impacts on social dealings between people and vice versa (Lewis, 2000). The importance of the psychology of leadership is evident in numerous studies on leader self-efficacy and self-esteem (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Byrne, 1996; Davis-Zinner, 1990; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Ng, Ang, & Chan, 2008; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993).

This study involves the internal, subjective, emotional meaning making of a leader and, therefore, it is important to consider the psychosocial influences on this mysterious component of a leader’s perception and psyche. Referring to the shift in perception in leadership development research, in a study involving group membership and leadership, Lord, Brown, Harvey, and Hall (2001) found that understanding leadership requires more than merely observing leader actions or leader types. The study revealed that insight into leadership requires a paradigm shift which recognises the interdependence of leaders and followers within a specific social system.

Although emotion was not included in the Lord et al. (2001) study, they claimed that basic, social-cognitive processes may be determinants for aspiring leaders to hold their leadership positions and/or be effective. They explained that the reason for this is that self-grouping and depersonalisation affect social identity processes. The
processes, in turn, give rise to in-group self-categorisation or identification, as well as cognitive, behavioural assimilation with the in-groups (Lord et al., 2001). In-group self-categorisation and cognitive, behavioural assimilation refer to the perceptions, attitudes and actions rooted in stereotypes. These stereotypes inform the feelings and behaviours related to in-group homogenisation or depersonalisation (Hogg, 2001) and are, therefore, relevant in international, intercultural, leader-follower organisational functioning.

The social nature of organisational functioning (Bass, 1990b; Chemers, 2001; Day & Harrison, 2007; Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995; Nye & Simonetta, 1996) traverses more than just rational reasoning (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2002). In particular, in leadership, for example, the social incidents stored as memories (Blagov & Singer, 2004; McAdams, 1995), have a psychological impact on meaning making (Thorne, McClean, & Lawrence, 2004).

In the storing of memories, humans possess an aptitude for recognising patterns in the memory stories which facilitate insights into the various structures involved in developing one’s personality (Blagov & Singer, 2004). The literature indicates that personality and life events are inextricably linked to self-defining incidents in a person’s life. Stored as memories, these self-defining events influence self-identity (Blagov & Singer, 2004; McAdams, 1995; Moffitt & Singer, 1994; Thorne et al., 2004) and, hence, leader identity and values. For this reason, reflecting on leader values which are integral to the psyche is important.
In a multilevel study on the influence of chief executive officer (CEO) behaviours and values on organisational climate, Liden, Fu, Liu, and Song (2016) reveal that CEO actions infuse the organisational climate and influence employee attitudes and actions across all levels. In addition, CEO values influence the relationships between the leader’s actions and manager-employee interaction and performance. The results also revealed that role specific actions are progressively favourable when leaders/CEOs demonstrate values that surpass self-centredness and focus on others (Liden et al., 2016). Therefore, moral leadership in global business requires the unification of diverse values and cultures. Unification occurs in how leaders make decisions that reflect the moral duty to uphold organisational ethics as key organisational cornerstones (Schneble, 2000). Strongly linked to these findings is leader temperament or affect (Watson, 2000).

It is extremely challenging to alter leader temperament or affect through the medium of leadership training programmes (Michel, Pichler, & Newness, 2014). Consequently, academic interest in leader emotion and affect in organisations is on the rise (Brief & Weiss, 2002; George, 2000). Interest in leader affect is especially pervasive in studies involving charismatic leadership as is evidenced in the work of Bass (1985), Conger and Komungo (1998), Kempster and Parry (2013), Michel, Wallace, and Rawlings (2013), and Parry and Kempster (2013). Research involving studies into leader charisma underscore the reciprocal impacts of affect and emotional insight on leaders and followers respectively (Tee, Ng, & Paulsen, 2014), thereby highlighting leader emotional reflexivity as a critical element in leadership development.
In conclusion, it is not only reasonable but also important to integrate the various disciplinary insights as discussed above, into a leader emotional reflexivity perspective of leader self-determination. In the next sub-section, I focus on human agency and, in particular, on Bandura’s (1986) theory in order to highlight leaders as contributors to their own success and sustainability.

**Human agency**

Both social-cognitive, development theory and agentic theory provide an effective framework for understanding the role of self-directed action (Bandura, 1986, 2001, 2006) and leadership. As already discussed at length, reflexivity facilitates the questioning of an agent’s personal concerns in determining the most appropriate or best-suited action. However, one must remember that there are various ways in which humans express and engage their lived reality. Bandura argues against the notion of an absolute agency and, instead, he points out that human actions stem from the interrelatedness of internal meaning making, behaviour and influences from the environment (Bandura, 1986, 2001, 2006).

In other words, agency works in collaboration with reflection, habitus, reactivity, decision making (Akram & Hogan, 2015) and emotion (Burkitt, 2012). Bandura (1986) further argues that interrelatedness is not static but, instead, it is mutual and incorporates self-influence as a contributor to the outcome. An additional dimension to agency is, therefore, structure when, in thinking about a situation, one aligns the situation with personal desires or wants (Archer, 2003). Through an inner conversation, individuals engage with their social environment and ascribe cognitive
and emotional meaning to that environment. Thus, meaning making creates a modest but consistent flow of processing between persons and their social surroundings (Archer, 2003; Burkitt, 2012).

Despite the interplay between social change and reflexivity, as asserted by Archer (2009), agency and identity remain firmly entrenched in an agent (Akram & Hogan, 2015). Accordingly, a leader’s desire, initiative and ambition to act as an agent in response to a strategic objective guides the establishment of goals and increases his/her impetus to develop leadership ability (Priest & Middleton, 2016).

Developing leadership is an ever-changing, lifelong process aimed at improving organisational performance. During this lifelong process, continuous learning facilitates the socio-cognitive development required to enhance shared, inter-relational, goal driven adaptation and capacity within an organisation (Olivares, 2008). My work experiences lead me to believe that continuous learning requires an understanding of the emotion involved. Developing leader identity involves narrowing the divide between the existing self and the self that one wants or thinks one should be. Thus, reflexive engagement stimulates either intentionality or avoidance of self-awareness when addressing the internal conflict (Silvia & Duval, 2001) that involves emotion.

With regard to narrowing of the self-divide, the agency implication for leadership is that leaders experience the world not only through the interrelatedness which occurs through socialisation, but also with their internal meaning making or self-influence as agents. Bandura (2006) distinguishes four core capacities of human agency which
include: (i) intentionality; (ii) forethought; (iii) self-reactiveness; (iv) self-reflectiveness. These core capacities originate from self-worth (a belief in the personal authority to act toward a desired outcome) and the basis of human agency (Bandura, 2006). Next, I expand on Bandura’s (2006) agency theory.

(i) Intentionality

Bandura argues that the core capacity of intentionality refers to human intention and involves plans of action aimed at achieving an intention or goal either tacitly, for example, habitually, or purposefully. Whereas individuals accommodate their own needs in order to achieve collaboration this is different in a dynamic organisational environment. From a leadership perspective, the realisation of a collective intention requires leaders to engage interdependent operational plans, joint commitment and management (Bratman, 1999). Thus, from this perspective, organisational performance occurs with a common intent (Bandura, 2006; Bennis, 2007).

(ii) Forethought

This principle is essentially about cognitive time orientation regarding the realisation of plans. We apply reflexivity to bring future desires into the present as parameters and stimuli in respect of an anticipated future goal. This visionary point of view in realising valuable goals over the long term establishes a meaningful path toward a goal. In this way, self-efficacy facilitates the achievement of organisational goals (Kleinbeck, 1990), thus enhancing performance (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002).
(iii) Self-reactiveness

This capability refers to self-regulation toward executing plans in order to achieve future goals. In essence, intention, strategy and operational planning require reflexive motivation and regulation when implemented. The absence or lack of motivation and regulation results in an “explanatory gap”, with a space between the initiation of an action and its completion (Searle, 2003, p. 15).

Agency, therefore, relates to a wide-ranging, reflexive self-directedness in respect of considered choices and plans of action, skill in developing direction, motivating and regulating implementation. Self-directedness manifests through the self-regulatory processes which occur reflexively in the explanatory gap, linking action to both thought and structure (Archer, 2003).

(iv) Self-reflectiveness

This capacity involves both achieving goals and critical self-examination through the self-awareness of personal effectiveness. In this context and with respect to leadership, reflection involves a critical evaluation of effectiveness with the aim of gaining awareness so as to make the necessary corrective adjustments. In other words, reflection is an essential core principle of agency. The critical reflective space involves reciprocal intrapersonal, behavioural and environmental interchanges as opposed to merely responding to situational stimuli. An individual’s or a leader’s level of internal resources as an agent and the various actions and situations determine the extent of the role played by self-influence during interchange.
PART C – CHAPTER 5
LITERATURE REVIEW

In considering Bandura’s principles of agency, social cognitive theory holds that social systems are reciprocal with human function in that they organise the source of their creation, namely, human activity (Bandura, 2006). In other words, constant organisational change means that leaders face extraordinary leadership challenges in their quest to adapt, not only locally, but internationally. This adaptation, in turn, means that leadership abilities and aptitudes are insufficient to address organisational challenges and that leader psychological maturity, as it relates to leader identity, is required (Avolio, Crossley, & Luthans, 2009; Hooijberg, Hunt, & Dodge, 1997; Lord & Hall, 2005).

As noted consistently across the various discussions above, leaders operate in socially situated settings (Day & Harrison, 2007; Delbridge & Edwards, 2013; Nye & Simonetta, 1996; Thornton et al. 2012). Constructs involving psychology, namely, reflexivity, internal conversation, emotion, agency and habitus are socially entrenched. As a result, these constructs encompass the influence of diverse interpretations, acceptance, execution and avoidance of as well as resistance to social construction (Burns & Diets, 1992).

In other words, in leadership individual agency is important, with multiple action logics involving social conditioning, context, past and present experiences, personal tendencies, calculated decisions (contained in the subconscious framework) and institutional influences all working together reflexively in determining an action (Delbridge & Edwards, 2008; Leca & Naccache, 2006; Tracey, Phillips, & Jarvis, 2011). This never-ending cycle of socio-cognitive interrelation described in the cycle of social interrelation (Figure 5.2) underscores the way in which action is randomly
subjected to various contributions in the constant conversation between the people involved. Again, this involves self-influence (Bandura, 2006).

Self-influence determines the execution of personal free will in the attainment of the desired outcome (Bandura, 2006). Hence, from a leader self-development perspective, leaders may be authors, directors and producers of as well actors in the motion picture of their leadership, incorporating their past, present and desired futures as opposed to expecting the organisation to develop their careers (Boyce, Zaccaro, & Wisecarver, 2010).

The development and refinement of the human agency capacity concretises and enhances the internal dialogues on free will and determinism. For leaders, highly developed agentic resources, such as skills, self-regulation and an empowering belief system, provide the opportunity to expand their free will as regards successful actions in the realisation of future outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Schunk & Zimmerman, 1994). Within the global context these agentic resources involve Goleman’s (1995, 1999) emotional, intercultural intelligence through emotional reflexivity.

5.9. SUMMARY

I offered perceptions from the literature from each of the disciplines included in the research namely, emotion, reflexivity and leadership to answering the research question. I outlined Holland’s (1999) transdisciplinary reflexivity with its rational underpinnings as a foundation for understanding leader emotional reflexivity. Within a leadership development framework, I underscored the value of leader emotional reflexivity in developing leader identity. Using practical examples to illustrate the
importance of the research problem, I described the circumstances of the 2016 American, presidential election and the movie *Crash* to illustrate the impact of social construction. In this context, I explained the need for global leader identity development and the value of leader emotional reflexivity in this regard. Finally, I integrated the literature review with an outline of Bandura’s (2006) theory of agency, as critical in developing leaders to determine their own belief systems outside of social construction.
Part D encompasses the following chapter:

**CHAPTER 6: THE POWER OF A LEADER’S INNER COMPASS**

The power of a leader’s inner compass expounds the life story of the leader who participated in this study. The story begins with the last interview in order to create context about this leader as the main character in the story. The chapter then proceeds to relate his story from birth to leadership and incorporates critical life and leadership incidents relevant to answering the research question.
6.1. INTRODUCTION

Here begins the exciting voyage into the life of an esteemed leader. His passion for life, adventure, learning, family, people and his country of birth, South Africa, reflects in the man he consistently aspires to be. Together we walked a path into the deepest reaches of his mind and, as much as he could allow, into his heart. On this journey, he reviewed and questioned five decades of the mysteries in his life story. Reflexively he recalled memories, some affirming, some difficult, some painful and others beautiful. Stretching himself and completely committed we dug, sifted, sorted and unearthed his recollections of leadership and life events, experiences, situations, loved ones, friends, family and other significant influences.

During this emotional, challenging but extremely uplifting and fulfilling adventure we excavated, untangled, integrated, analysed and interpreted his life and his leadership story. Together, we created his narrative to discover significant events during this remarkable journey in order to understand his emotional reflexivity process.

I want to begin with a story of how I developed a pseudonym for this remarkable leader in the dissertation. Including this story now creates context for how, in using Straussarian grounded theory techniques for data analysis, the story informed my
decisions and actions. I believe that had I discussed this event as part of the ethical considerations earlier in the thesis, some of the mystery in writing the story creatively would have been compromised.

6.2. THE STORY ABOUT THE PSEUDONYM

After concluding our last interview, we walked towards my car which was parked in the storyteller's brick-paved driveway. Curious about his answer I asked “What should I call you in this life story?” Smiling shyly, while rubbing his hands together, he replied I don't know … you choose something (Interview 8, p. 12, lines 28–29). Taken aback for a moment by this unexpected reply, I smiled and thought, “Oh, ok”. Shrugging my shoulders and raising my hands in acceptance, I nodded in agreement and got into my car. It was a sunny afternoon and I was thrilled. I had just completed the final interview. The analysis continued and writing the dissertation awaited me.

Devising a pseudonym occupied my thoughts and stirred my creativity over the next two weeks. After much contemplation and little success, I went back to the data and allowed it to reveal a suitable pseudonym. Surprisingly and to my delight, it did. Here is how it happened.

During the first interview, I had sketched a genogram in order to obtain an overview of the storyteller's family history. Expectantly, I scanned the family tree. As I focused on the names, I noticed a consistent, repetition of the letters C, J and A across the generations and in varying order. They appeared in the initials of his parents whom he loved and respected greatly. They also appeared in the initials of his grandfather, wife, children and grandchildren. This magical intersection metaphorically
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represented the birth and realisation of a deep, historically perpetuated desire in this leader to become. Immediately, the letters CJA as a pseudonym occurred to me. Intrigued, I thought about how my storyteller would receive this idea. Remembering his renewed interest in discovering more about his family history, I felt confident that he would appreciate this gesture. I played around with the letters and the people they represented in his life.

I wondered whether I should use Mr CJA, Dr CJA or perhaps develop a word from the letters. However, none of these fit with my experience of the essence of this leader as a person. During our interviews, I had experienced him as strong and assertive but gentle, urgent but patient; an authoritative but approachable man.

Finally, I settled on what the data had revealed, simply CJA. I did this because of his unassuming approachability and his caring nature. I wanted to honour him as a person and a leader in how I referred to him in the story. I wanted to reveal the strength of his inner compass and I believed that the letters spoke for themselves, reflecting the source of his value and belief systems.

6.3. THE INNER COMPASS

While constructing the leader’s life story, it became evident that his success as a leader was strongly connected to a dynamic, inner compass. His moral code had developed over his life, from his experiences, choices, interactions and interrelationships and was deeply etched into his subconscious. Significant events and experiences during his life had contributed to his high ethical standards. He had unwittingly developed an unconscious consciousness about life and leadership.
His true north was reflected in the values, beliefs, traditions, culture, religion and norms which were deeply rooted in his upbringing and life experiences. His emotional and spiritual experiences of these life events and influences had played a role in his evolution into a successful leader, a committed husband, father and family man and a good, kind and sincere person.

CJA’s desire to become successful started as an innocent, sheltered boy with a poignant childhood and was influenced by his subliminal but vigorous moral compass. He placed his family’s well-being and the well-being of others at the centre of his purpose in his philosophy of life and leadership. Thus, not only did I use ‘CJA’ as a pseudonym to protect my storyteller’s identity, but it also served as my tribute to him. I felt an urge to recognise the essence and strength of his moral compass reflected in how he had navigated the unrelenting miles on his journey towards becoming a successful, highly respected leader.

6.4. SETTING THE STAGE FOR OUR JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY

The morning of 9 April 2014 was sunny with a slight chill in the air, a sweet reminder that it was the middle of autumn in South Africa. My first research interview with CJA was about to start and I felt anxious but also excited. We had agreed at our initial meeting that his home would be the physical setting for the interviews. His house was fifty minutes north of Johannesburg, mostly on the freeway. I drove my metallic, light blue, 2005 Chrysler Crossfire to his home, enjoying the engine’s power. Effortlessly, the car glided up the hills and down the valleys of the freeway, emitting a deep throaty sound as I accelerated.
While driving, I anxiously reviewed the research process, reflecting on what I had learned about grounded theory interviewing and Dervin and Dewdney’s (1986) open-ended question approach. I felt confident and excited. Turning up the volume on my radio, I listened to the sound of Classic FM playing softly in the background. I thought; *begin by creating a relaxed atmosphere. Catch up with news, comment on observations that draw your attention. Follow his lead, relax and enjoy.*

This was my initial goal in the interview and was to be followed by the formalities about confidentiality and research issues. I breathed deeply, relaxed into my car seat and turned the volume up on the radio, allowing the music to wash over me as I drove to CJA’s home.

Excited, with a churning in my stomach, I arrived at his impressive home that stood proudly in a picturesque enclave of the estate in which he lived. CJA stood in the driveway with a welcoming smile as he directed me where to park my vehicle. I stepped out of the car and we greeted each other with a firm handshake. I had not seen him for several years except for our initial meeting and I noticed that he was of average height and weight, with broad shoulders, dark, kind eyes and greying hair, balding in the front. Casually dressed and very pleasant, he led the way toward the dark, wood, double entrance doors.

At the time, he was re-landscaping the front garden and I greeted the two landscapers as we walked to the front door. I followed him through the beautifully appointed living area, past the grand fitted kitchen on our right as we walked towards the bright family room. This was where we had initially met to discuss his possible
participation in the study. As we walked I thought, *I'm glad we met in this space before. I feel a comforting sense of familiarity. I feel relaxed, excited and ready to get started.*

We sat down at right angles to one another. I always seek out seats that face a window because I enjoy seeing the view. I sat facing the wide, patio doors overlooking a forest, immediately behind the garden. A coffee table stood in front of me with CJA to my left. We engaged in some pleasantries. He offered me some tea and I accepted. As he left to go to the kitchen, I asked him where Mrs CJA was and he said she was out with her mother. Immediately I thought; *I must be mindful of acknowledging her presence here during the interviews. I must maintain boundaries without alienating her from our process. It’s important that she knows I respect her territory and that I feel grateful for her hospitality. I must demystify my research journey involving her husband. Also, I need to demonstrate my appreciation that she is part of his story.*

CJA interrupted my thoughts and brought in tea for two on a tray. I turned on my recording device and thanked him again for agreeing to participate in the study. My aim during this first interview was to learn more about him and his family history. In the moment, I thought; *I should use a genogram to obtain his family history. It will be a quick and easy way to organise a lot of information in an easy to read structure during our conversation.* A genogram resembles a diagrammatical, family tree structure but with more information. I reminded him that our interaction would remain confidential. In addition, I informed him that any photographs that I may take would only serve as proof that I had conducted the research and that they would not be
incorporated the thesis. Thus, my journey with CJA, discovering his innermost emotional experiences throughout his life, began. This is his story.

6.5. SKETCHING CJA

CJA, an esteemed, successful, leader, was born in 1947 in a breathtakingly beautiful and mountainous part of South Africa. Rolling trees stretch expectantly to the heavens as a testimony to God’s splendour in this sublimely magical place.

With CJA’s consent, after the interviews with him and his wife, I had visited his sister and her husband on the family farm. I wanted to feel and see what he had described and experienced while growing up. His sister and her husband were welcoming and hospitable and enjoyed reflecting on their life on the farm. Middle-aged, beautiful, shy and well groomed, his sister laughed animatedly as she described herself as an introvert who would never speak in front of crowds, except while teaching. Our conversations revealed a warm and charming individual, passionate about nature and the farm.

Surrounding the farm, the mountains dominate the northern view from the modest farmhouse. As the weather warms and cools they peak majestically in and out amid the clouds and mist. Pine trees cover the foothills and the roofs of buildings occasionally protrude above the dense forests. In the valley below, two beautiful lakes reflect the idyllic forested foothills. Rainy mornings in this breath-taking place are misty with intermittent drizzle and showers. On one such morning during my visit, I stood by the window overlooking the lakes and reflected. The air was crisp and fresh, filled with a heady pine fragrance.
I enjoyed reflecting here; observing the forests dipping and rising, while travelling back in time. I reimagined his story in his home, the place where he had spent his formative years. His sister had explained some of the changes which had taken place in the area since she and CJA were little on the farm, notably the main road and a school in the valley below. This place had crept into CJA’s heart and stealthily established his profound love of, keen interest in and deep appreciation of nature, particularly birds. I found it interesting that his current home borders a forest teeming with small animals, birds and life. Like a mirror, his new family home reflects a time in his life, passed but certainly not forgotten.

Back to his story – it is June 2014, the 66th year of his fascinating life and the 41st year of marriage to his soul mate. She is vibrant, engaging and beautiful. She has slightly greying, blond hair, is of average height and has smiling eyes. They have three gorgeous daughters, two of whom are married, and two grandchildren, a lively little boy and his pretty younger sister. With the exception of the youngest daughter, the family enjoys living close to each other, in bordering residential estates. For a glimpse of his accomplishments as a leader, his CV was a fitting next step.

CJA’s CV reads like a documentary on accomplishment. His academic and leadership achievements are sufficient to warrant being placed on a pedestal like an Oscar Academy Award winner, admired and appreciated. In the interests of confidentiality, I did not include in the dissertation, his areas of study and the specific details of his awards, fellowships and directorships.
Academic qualifications

D.Sc. (Honoris causa) 2004  (A university in South Africa)


Strategic leadership program 2003 Templeton Coll. Oxford Univ.

D.Eng. 1981  (A university in South Africa)

MBA (Cum laude) 1976  A University in the USA

MSc (Cum laude) 1972  (A university in South Africa)

BSc Hons (Cum laude) 1969  (A university in South Africa)

BSc (Cum laude) 1968  (A university in South Africa)

In addition, between 1972 and 1974, he had obtained four professional qualifications relevant to his occupation at the time. He is a fellow of three professional associations and has received several awards, including:

- Honorary fellowship for lifetime service to his industry
- A memorial award for lifetime outstanding service to his industry
- Honorary professor at a university in South Africa – 2007 to date
- South African Boss of the Year (year not disclosed for reasons of confidentiality)
- Honorary doctorate (A university in South Africa) – 2004
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- Laureate award for exceptional achievement and promotion of the university’s interests – University Alumni Association – 1999
- Silver medal – South African Institute (in his industry) for a published paper
- SA (his industry) Managers’ Association annual prize – three published papers over three consecutive years
- Student prize – for his dissertation

Significant accomplishments

The contribution of his doctoral thesis on a technical process that remains relevant today, led to a request for his assistance from the State of Utah, USA, in the 1980s. In addition, his thesis paved the way for him to assist seven South African companies, between 1983 and 1994, in a consultant capacity.

Conference papers and directorships

CJA wrote and presented thirty-seven conference papers throughout his career. In addition, he co-authored and edited the fourth edition in a series relevant to his industry. He was on the boards of four international companies, including one non-profit company (pro bono). In addition, he acted in various capacities from chairperson to director and non-executive director.

Semi-retired at the time of this study, he was a trustee for an organisation involved in nature projects in South Africa and also on the board of a large, international company. He had worked his way up from the bottom in his chosen industry and
retired as the CEO of a large international company in August 2007. He remained active as a leader on various boards, as well as an honorary professor at a university in South Africa, and a fellow at a prominent business science institution in South Africa. In addition, he was a member of several industry committees and councils.

**Hobbies and interests**

An avid bird enthusiast, CJA enjoys self-guided safaris into Southern Africa. He documents his adventures using another of his interests, photography, and customised photograph albums. For him, golfing is a form of exercise, socialising and recreation. He is a devoted family man who speaks with tremendous pride and tenderness about his wife and family.

Based on my interactions with and observations of CJA, I would describe him as extremely intelligent, focused, organised, disciplined, structured, goal-oriented and driven. He is also decisive, reliable, dependable, trustworthy and genuine. Honesty and integrity are important to him. He is assertive yet engaging and speaks in a very matter of fact, authoritative manner. However, he commands attention in a very personable way. He has an ability or gift of acknowledging people in a way that makes him come across as accessible and others feel special. While an accomplished, respected and highly skilled speaker, CJA is quite shy and touches the hearts of people with his bashfulness, sincerity and genuine caring attitude. People and their needs are important to him. He has strong opinions about what is right, just and fair. As a leader, he empowered his people through trust and strong, involved, compassionate leadership.
Although CJA displays great skill in controlling his emotions, the depth of his emotion is visible in his empathy and sincerity when touched by a situation or a person. He lives by the guiding principles and ethics inspired by his parents, teachers, community and life experiences. He believes in a just, committed, caring society. Describing his purpose in life, he said,

*Each of us has a purpose to live a life where you are honest, hardworking and doing the right thing. In addition, a life where you ask yourself, ‘What am I doing for other people?’ The faith that I belong to teaches me that whatever I do to other people, I am doing to God. It is that sort of underlying principle. It is relevant, irrespective of your religion* (Interview 4(a), p. 11, lines 3–5).

As part of his life philosophy, he emphasised his purpose in life as a moving target relevant to his circumstances as they evolved. CJA’s subconscious blueprint developed and established itself over time. In his reflective and reflexive moments during our journey together, the patterns of his blueprint emerged clearly.

Throughout the discussion about his philosophy and purpose, he spoke with passion and conviction, rarely chuckling or smiling but, instead, deeply immersed in what he was saying. He spoke in a softer voice tone at times, expressing himself contemplatively, delving into his memories and experiences and increasingly allowing himself to experience emotion. In our second last interview, I asked him to write down what he believed were his strengths and weaknesses as a leader. This was what he wrote:
Strengths:

- The value system I hold dear in my personal and professional life, which guides much of what I do. Other strengths below often relate to this fundamental strength in one way or another:
- Optimism, my glass is mostly half full
- Respect for other people, the views of others, no matter their standing in life:
- The ability to see the good, and strengths, in others
- A willingness to put my trust in other people to get on with their jobs without my interference and to trust them to do the right things at the right time (as per Jack Welch), to point people in the right direction and then to get out of their way
- An ability to articulate, in a reasonable and understandable way, the vision I have for the company and its future.

Weaknesses/development areas:

- I often cannot say no if someone asks me for help, leading to unnecessary overload at times.
- Not spotting bad performance or potential weaknesses in colleagues early enough in order to take remedial action.
- Not always listening as well as I could/should.
- During my career, my family did not always get equal time and attention compared to my job. I preached work/home life balance to my colleagues but did not always fully practise what I preached (Interview 3: Exercise 2, (Strengths and Weaknesses)).
This is CJA, the leader, as he is today. I now present his historical journey. The experiences and circumstances during this journey contextualise how his inner compass developed.

6.6. HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Having died before he was born, CJA’s grandparents remain a mystery to him except for photographs and the recollections from family members. He was proud to carry his grandfather’s name and nickname which to his knowledge, stretched back two generations before him. In 1888, his grandfather, a visionary forester, had a dream. He bought the farm described earlier and moved his family from Knysna to their new home.

CJA described the family farm as one of the most beautiful places in South Africa – absolutely, stunning country (Interview 1, p. 12, line 4). His grandfather’s dream was realised. He had planted trees and established an inheritance for generations to come. Sadly, he died ... fighting the English in the Anglo-Boer War in 1900 (Interview 1 p. 1, line 9). After some horrifying times living in tents in a British concentration camp, his grandmother, father and aunts went back to the farm. His father had inherited the farm, a legacy that remained in the land his grandfather had acquired for his family. Sadly, and with tenderness in his voice, CJA recalled his memories of conversations about the concentration camps during the memorial days celebrated at the school he attended saying he remembered the teachers discussing that the conditions were atrocious. I think my dad was about twelve or thirteen years old when the farm was put in his name and he worked it (Interview 4, p. 1, lines 32–34).
Developing a moral compass – Father’s role

Sadly, CJA also knew little about his father because he had died in 1956. His parents had been married for only 13 years when his father died at the age of 66. Interestingly, this was also CJA’s age at the time of the study. His father’s death was the result of a thrombosis (Interview 1, p. 4, line 12). CJA was just eight and a half years old at the time and in the fourth grade at school. The little, but valuable, time he had spent with his father on the farm revealed to him a strong man. CJA described him as good, honest, hardworking, generous, and helpful (Interview 1, p. 2, lines 11–12). CJA recalled that his father had been strict and, although undemonstrative in showing his love and affection, he had nevertheless demonstrated enormous love in his commitment to caring for his family.

A young, impressionable yet highly motivated little boy, CJA attended boarding school and had only been seeing his family over weekends at the time of his father’s death. This sad event shaped his life and instilled and cemented a deep appreciation for community and learning within him. The deepest memory etched in CJA’s mind was his father’s encouragement regarding education. His father’s words still resonated deep within him: Mannetjie jy moet leer (Little man/boy you must learn), because education is your future (Interview 1, p. 2, line 5). As he had been so young at the time, he recalled feeling less emotion and also less opportunity for grieving than his sister who, he recalled, cried a lot (Interview 1, p. 4, line 9). Contemplatively, with a sad smile, he said, it would have been great to have had a dad (Interview 1, p. 4, line 35).
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His father had lovingly bequeathed portions of the family farm to each of his children. CJA still owned his portion at the time of the study.

Cementing the moral compass – Mother’s role

With intense admiration reflected in his eyes and a permanent smile, he recounted his mother’s significant influence in his life, although in a matter-of-fact manner, he said Mom raised us on the farm (Interview 1, p. 12, line 3). She was a tough lady, a provider alone on a farm, raising two kids. He described her strong work ethic and her belief that if you want to get ahead you must work (Interview 1, p. 2, lines 21–23). Still smiling he recounted that his mother had made all their clothes herself. Guided by her Christian faith she had read to them from the Bible every night. When I visited the farm, his sister tearfully reflected on the financial difficulties the family had experienced when their father died. She said “Our mother raised us alone, making some money selling wood and working at the post office” (Interview 9, p. 2–3, lines 30–31).

His grandfather on his mother’s side had died when his mother was in the tenth grade. She had had no choice but to leave school and work in order to care for her mother. He recalled that like most people of that time, my parents did not have an education (Interview 1, p. 11, lines 22–23). After his father died, CJA’s mother worked as the local postmistress, earning R90 p/m (Interview 1, p. 12, line 1) and travelling a 12-kilometre round trip to and from work every day to provide for her family.
CJA respectfully reflected that she was not overly protective (Interview 1, p. 4, line 26). Smilingly, with a chuckle, he remembered that she had not shown too much sympathy at the sight of blood on his leg due to a teacher’s punishment (Interview 1, p. 4, line 27). He recalled that, as a model student, he had felt more embarrassed about the punishment than concern about her sympathy (Interview 1, p. 4, line 30). This was how he had learned not to complain and to be obedient and always do what he was told, although he felt that this had been slightly unfair at the time (Interview 1, p. 4, line 32; p. 5, line 2). He did his chores diligently and helped her on the farm as much as he could.

When I visited the farm, his sister had explained the challenges of forestry at that time and I had imagined CJA’s childhood as his mother struggled to provide for her family and keep the farm. Sitting on the porch of the guest cottage, the midday sun brilliantly illuminating the clear, blue skies, I reflected on our interviews in Johannesburg. In my mind’s eye, I compared his descriptions of the farm and his experiences with his parents, sister and neighbours with my experience being there. The beauty and splendour filled my senses as I inhaled deeply, expanding my heart literally and figuratively. As I observed the vast expanses of forests surrounding the farmhouse, I wrote in my journal:

So, this is where it all began for CJA. This place is mystical. I am smiling, consciously listening to the surrounding sounds. I hear intermittent silence, birds singing, a whispering wind caressing the leaves and the drone of engines as motor vehicles pass on the road in the valley below. Without this road separating the farm from the two glistening lakes, there would be only the sounds of nature. That’s probably how it was before. Wow, I feel calm. My soul feels restored and Johannesburg feels far, far away. This place has a spiritual splendour. The mountains, the mist on rainy morn-
ings, the trees stretching toward the heavens makes me realise how tiny a part of God’s universe I am.

This makes me think about CJA’S descriptions of his childhood. It’s interesting how personal backgrounds create different meanings in our perceptions. For me, this seems like an amazing place to live. Nevertheless, I see how living here could be lonely and sheltered for a child. To me it seems so abundant. My experience here today is probably vastly different to how it was when CJA lived here. He was so little when he went off to boarding school. It must have been difficult seeing his family only on weekends. I can’t imagine dealing with that kind of isolation and loneliness. From that perspective, my large family is amazing.

His description of the beauty here was accurate. This place is huge too. I can imagine how overwhelming that must have been without a father. I understand his respect for his mother. I appreciate how a woman, alone, struggling to make a living here, could be overwhelmed. She must have been extremely lonely and probably frightened about the future. Her inner isolation was probably profound. As a mother, I feel her fear and concern, her self-sacrificing determination and her deep desire to give her children as much as she could to secure their future. For me however, there also seems to be a paradox in terms of my perception about owning this much land and being perceived in the community as being poor and experiencing financial struggle. But, these are my perceptions based on my own context. Again, it’s all about context.

Reflecting on CJA’s childhood reminds me of mine. As a curious child, growing up sheltered by my parents, in a large, blended family with limited resources, I feel CJA’s trepidation in that authoritarian era. I understand his disdain for social disparities and his finding escape and inspiration in learning. I did the same. As a person of colour, I had preconceptions about the fact that CJA and I are from different cultures, different genders with different socio-political and leadership beliefs. It’s interesting how sociocultural experience defines and influences personal context.


During our fourth interview CJA remarked that the road we have taken has transported me to a place of gratitude towards my parents … to saying thank you very much. I am going to try to live up to what you have given me. You know … that
awareness to which I have not given much thought to – it’s a great awareness to know and say; yes, that’s what brought this or that on (Interview 4, p. 1, lines 7–10).

CJA was visibly emotional when reflecting on his mother’s sacrifices. His voice softened. He characteristically raised his arms over his head, resting his hands behind his head. He did this every time he became emotional about his reactions to events that had happened involving his loved ones. Recalling his mother’s strength when his father died, he said he had heard her crying but, when he checked on her, she had sent him away. He never heard her cry again.

He said, she put flowers on his grave and there were no discussions about his death. We just got on with it (Interview 1, p. 4, lines 16–18). This ‘get on with it’ maxim reflected in his life. When making a decision to do something he just did it. Emotion pushed him to do the same. He reflected on their struggle as a family. Life was not easy for my mum, he said sternly. He recalled her encouragement to him to learn and remembered her words: You kids must study. I will work and make sure we have money (Interview 1, p. 4, line 20).

In a depressed tone, he expressed his deep regret about not taking his children to visit his mother on the farm more often. He also said he wished he had had more time with her to say thank you. With clouded eyes and in a softer voice, he said thoughtfully, I could have done more and I feel sadness about the lost time. If I could do it over, I would spend more time at the farm (Interview 2, p. 1, lines 20–24).

Reflexively, CJA described a deep unconscious awareness of needing and wanting to be successful. By today’s standards, we were quite poor people, you know. This
awareness of what my parents did developed a desire to try in many ways in what I did, not to let them down. Work as hard as I could, to be successful because that’s what they wished for me. And, I guess at the same time, given the circumstances, I grew up with this need to succeed (Interview 4, p. 1, lines 7-11). During my visit to the farm, CJA’s sister was openly expressive and became emotional, with tears welling up in her eyes, as she reflected on their childhood and the challenges of growing up without a father. She said CJA had been very young at the time and had not fully grasped his father’s death.

CJA described the rural area in which he grew up as one where the neighbours helped one another, with empathy and compassion. He credits the environment in which he grew up for his commitment to helping others. He reflected on an exercise I had conducted with him where I had asked him to consider his grandson’s environment at the time of the study and compare it to his environment at the tender age of five.

Thoughtfully, but in his matter of fact manner, he explained. Where I grew up there was almost an ‘underload’. There was not much stimulation except your imagination. I had limited contact with my parents and friends. My self-worth, who I was and what I could do, was often expressed as doing something for somebody else, helping my mum, helping friends, helping other people. Whereas today, kids don’t have to think about that too much because they can just escape and haul out an iPad and play games on it, or watch a movie (Interview 4(b), p. 9, lines 16–25).
He reflected in a softer reverent voice, *Mom and Dad were people of integrity* (Interview 1, p. 8, line 1). He described them as honest, kind and hardworking. Integrity and all the behaviours that stem from integrity such as honesty, hard work, caring, fairness and justice had become his primary values. Later, during his leadership career and his interactions with those around him, this value of integrity resonated in both his decisions and his actions.

In addition to his parents, the community and teachers contributed to his development and the strength of his internal compass. He recounted with admiration that *coming from a very small school, the teachers were out of this world. Even in high school, we had some first-class teachers. I think somewhere along the line my parent’s influence worked its way through and then I had teachers who built on that process. I am persuaded that some of those teachers had a huge influence on me* (Interview 4(b), p. 6, lines 2–6).

**Navigating his environment – Siblings’ role**

The only son of five children, CJA’s father had been married previously. His first wife had died on giving birth to their youngest daughter who was later adopted by CJA’s aunt. Happily, his father had found love again when he met CJA’s mother, one of ten children. They married in 1943. She was thirty-six and he was fifty-three years old. Together, they cared for his three children until they left home emancipation and had two children of their own, CJA and his older sister. His sister lovingly reflected on how they “played with toy cars by the dam” south of the house. She recalled that they “left the cars there and played with them when we returned to the dam,
sometimes the next day” (Interview 10, p. 1, lines 11–14). The ‘spruit’ (brook/river), north of the farmhouse, had also been a favourite place to play.

I imagined CJA as a little boy playing with his sister during the weekends when she was home from boarding school and sensed his loneliness. When he and his sister were little, their half-siblings were already grown up. As children, they had lost contact with them although they had reconnected occasionally as adults, something he regrets.

As he reflected on the complexities of the relationships between his mother and his half-siblings, CJA concluded, with some melancholy: *It’s time to let go of the past and make more time to see the family. Living by Christian principles means forgiving. Do… and don’t just preach* (Interview 2, p. 1, lines 22–27). He said that reflecting on his past had *stirred up emotion about old prejudices* (Interview 2, p. 3, line 15) but also that *emotion stirs up opportunity and stirs me into action* (Interview 2, p. 1, lines 29–30).

**Strengthening his internal compass – Becoming a leader**

Because CJA’s parents were strict and unaffectionate, he had learnt about emotional self-reliance early in his life, as a little boy of five and a half. He was *eager to go to school and learn* (Interview 1, p. 3, line 15) and had begged his parents to send him. This had meant that he would join his sister at boarding school during the week.

Young, emotionally immature and yet brave in his quest, he went to boarding school. In this foreign, strict environment with no emotional support from anyone, he con-
soled himself. It was a matter of adapt or die, he recalled with a tentative smile. *Sleeping on my own was my first experience of anxiety. I dreaded going to bed* (Interview 3, p. 1, lines 21–22). He recalled his thoughts, ‘*Ek verlang na Ma’ (I miss Mom)* (Interview 3, p. 1, line 15). Intellectually, CJA knew his mother was there for him but, emotionally, he struggled without her physical presence. This marked the beginning of his journey of self-leadership, an ability to guide himself through tough times.

At school, he was afraid of the teachers. Generally, during that era, children learned to respect their elders and also authority. He described his childhood experiences with adults who appeared to be commanding as typical of that time. ‘*Kinders word gesien en nie gehoor nie’ (Children should be seen not heard)* (Interview 2, p. 2, line 9). While CJA had experienced and enjoyed both the majesty of the mountains and forests that surrounded their modest farmhouse and riding donkeys with his best friend, he recalled feeling isolated and alone during his early childhood. None of the neighbours was within walking distance from his home. He remembered playing by himself or with two black friends on the farm (Interview 1, p. 4, line 23).

At an impressionable age, as a child, CJA had experienced the harshness of discrimination. Being of Afrikaans descent and living in an area where most of his friends were English and affluent had sensitised him to the disparities between rich and poor and also the complexities of being different. *We were not rich. We had a hard existence at the time. My mum lived alone on the farm and went to work in a town 6 km away to support the family* (Interview 1, p. 12, lines 8–10).
As he grew up, the sporadic interaction between him and some of his friends’ parents heightened the distinction between his modest home and the large affluent homes where some of his friends lived. In his matter of fact, controlled tone he explained, we were not allowed in some people’s homes (Interview 1, p. 3, line 14). This exposure to discrimination had made a distinct mark on CJA’s self-concept and his sense of right and wrong. The social discrepancies had also intensified his aspirations to succeed in the future and to live a life of integrity, fairness and ethics, just as his parents had.

He reflected with determination in his eyes and in his voice, that, while this experience was hurtful at the time, it had shaped his life and his dreams. He stated, it did not make me miserable, it inspired me. I said to myself: One day I will have what these people have (Interview 1, p. 3, lines 3–4). With excitement in his voice and a twinkle in his eye, CJA described the time his father had bought a brand-new Opel Kapitan (Interview 1, p. 3, line 18). With delight, he said, I felt like a million dollars … we finally arrived … at long last something has changed (Interview 1, p. 3, lines 20–22).

When his father died, work became critical to his family’s survival. He was living in a single parent home and earned an allowance of a ‘tiekie’ (three cents) a week, although his friends earned double that. Again, his father’s words rang in his ears, ‘Mannetjie, jy moet leer’. These words would guide and motivate his excellence at school (Interview 1, p. 2, line 5). For additional income, he and a friend chopped down wattle trees and sold the wood. He had no father; he was alone with very few role models. School became his sanctuary.
Starting school at five and a half meant that he was always the youngest in his class. He said he felt as if he was playing ‘catch up’ throughout his schooling. *All the kids seemed to know more,* he said (Interview 2, p. 2, line 15). *I was small and young and had to find ways to show that I can hold my own* (Interview 2, p. 2, line 16). With a chuckle, he said, *there was perhaps a slight inferiority complex… needing to prove myself and assure myself that I’m ok – trying to get ahead and beat the rugby captain academically* (Interview 2, p. 2, line 17–18).

‘I’m ok’ would dominate his internal, self-evaluative conversation throughout his life and career. This personal affirmation was always juxtaposed with his humble beginnings and internal compass (values, beliefs and social mores).

While CJA used his intellectual intelligence as a defence mechanism to boost his self-confidence, he had had an intense desire to *go to the army to physically measure up to the other kids* (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 19–21). He laughed as he recalled that the army had rejected his application. With a shy giggle, CJA described his adolescent and young adult self as *gangly, socially uncertain, skinny as a rake with brown hair; a borderline introvert and intellectually fine. I was not athletic but I did play a bit of tennis* (Interview 1, p. 7, lines 2–3).

CJA developed the deep aspiration to overcome his perceived limitations. He described his *fear of not making it* and that he had known about how life worked. He had felt at a disadvantage because *my worldview was extremely small because of my sheltered life. I wanted to make my mark somewhere. I enjoyed studying. I was grateful for that* (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 23–27). *For me, school was a way of adding*
more to my life. It was not a punishment (Interview 3, p. 4, lines 18–19). Having a teacher teaching me to write … this was like ‘wow’ … it opened a new world to me. It was just magic. School was magic (Interview 3, p. 4, lines 24–27). School was like gold dust. This is where my love of learning came from. I didn’t know this until now (Interview 3, p. 4, lines, 29–30; p. 5, line 4). He finished the 12th grade with four distinctions.

As he reflected on his childhood, with twinkling eyes, CJA said he had been an avid reader of comics. I loved the Disney comics (Interview 2, p. 2, line 30). He had enjoyed mystery, intrigue and adventure and his favourite books had been Jock of the Bushveld, the Famous Five and Brer Rabbit. Donald Duck and his nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie had also been particular favourites as he had enjoyed their penchant for mischief, adventure and exploration. They were curious, intelligent, resourceful and fearless and they had fun. Significantly, he agreed, their lives and antics reflected what he missed in his own childhood, something he would consciously change in his adult life.

Interestingly, I discovered some parallels between the vibrant Huey, Dewey, and Louie cartoon characters, as described by Disney Wiki, Huey, Dewey and Louie, (2015), and CJA. I decided to include this in his story to illuminate more of the essence of this prominent leader.

Huey, as the oldest and bravest, never afraid of a challenge and never one to ‘back down’ rings very true for CJA. As a child, he persevered and conquered his fears. He
was very aware of his emotions and acknowledged them rationally but then “got on with it” (Interview 1, p. 4, lines 16–18). He continues to display this trait in his life.

Dewey, as the ‘brains of the trio’, is very intelligent, organised and fun. With strong leadership skills, he enjoys developing new ideas and displays a proclivity for new inventions. Similarly, CJA recognised his own intelligence and love of learning at an early age. Self-leadership, self-reliance, perseverance and determination were characteristics that developed from childhood as he carved and steered his own path. As an adult, as noted earlier, his PhD totally revolutionised a particular process in his industry. Acutely aware of and grateful for his intellectual gifts, he persevered and strategically, albeit by trial and error at times, he realised his dream of success.

Louie, as the ‘nicest of the trio’, is kind, observant and creative. Certainly, in CJA’s leadership, these traits presented themselves consistently as he wrestled with and conquered challenges. Empowering and believing in the skills of his employees and just remembering their names are attributes he continues to display. Never one to project an air of superiority, he commanded the respect of those around him. Nonetheless, in his leadership, he was astute, assertive, organised and thorough. His creativity is evident in his carefully designed photo albums and projects around his home, which are a means of expressing himself outside of his responsibilities.

**Discovering and navigating his true north**

University was a fight for survival. I moved from a farm school to a big city school (Interview 3, p. 6, lines 1–2). The competition at university presented a new challenge. CJA found himself confronted with kids who had eight distinctions, scored more on
tests and played rugby. The first rugby match was huge (Interview 3, p. 6, lines 5–7). The competition was such that you paddled as hard as you could to stay afloat (Interview 3, p. 6, lines 8–9). Smilingly, he reflected that he obtained the worst marks in the first year of my four-year degree but adapted and improved every year. I said to myself … I can make it … I just have to work hard. His mother’s words rang in his ears: If you want to get ahead, you have to work (Interview 1, p. 2, lines 28–29).

CJA’s mother paid for his first year’s tuition and he was determined that he would not disappoint her. He had formed a strong set of values which were entrenched in his psyche and etched deep in his heart. They originated in parents’ Christian teachings. His exposure to harsh social realities at a tender age also created a subconscious awareness of the need to live according to a code of ethics. The harsh realities he faced included his experiences at boarding school with authoritarian teachers, learning from friends, no family support at school and no significant guidance. However, in navigating these challenges he had become his own greatest guide and had taught himself how to approach his adult life.

The all-encompassing self-sufficiency and self-leadership that CJA had developed helped him during the next three years of his university journey. In his second year, he was responsible for financing his own studies as his mother could not afford to pay for his education. Nevertheless, she had established a strong foundation in her son and, although he was fearful, he set about planning his strategy to complete his university degree.
With no guidance, he considered his options, namely, banking, bursaries and the army. He knew instinctively that he loved the sciences. *I wanted to be a scientist and registered for a BSc* (Interview 1, p. 7, line 15). Technology fascinated him and he recalled visiting a technology site, saying, *from a technical perspective, I was tickled by it. Technology ‘wowed’ me* (Interview 2, p. 6, lines 23–24).

A visit to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and a talk with the guidance counsellor about the available bursaries led him to register for a degree in Engineering. He also knew he needed to find a job. *Thoughts about being a laboratory technician for the rest of my life* plagued him (Interview 2, p. 6, lines 28–30). Expectations, fear, uncertainty and the need to survive propelled him into extremely focused action. He obtained a bursary. At the end of the three years, CJA obtained his first degree and graduated cum laude.

His parents’ encouragement to learn increasingly drove his desire to overcome challenges and to excel in life, giving birth to a great leader. Life’s challenges inspired and propelled CJA. Proving his own ability to himself created a deep sense of pride and self-worth and signified that *I’m ok* (Interview 2, p. 7, lines, 9–10).

**Navigating multiple directions**

After completing his first degree, CJA enjoyed a one-month break and then started working in January 1969. This was where he met the love of his life, his soon to be wife. He described their meeting in his typical matter of fact style. Her father worked at the same company and she had just finished Grade 12. She was in an administrative position and worked in the office. He recalled that they *ran into each other from
time to time (Interview 4b, p. 6, lines 13–14). As the shy person, he was, he described how he had plucked up the courage to ask her to the movies (Interview 4b, p. 6, line 14). She agreed and they went to the drive-in.

At that time, he was considering an honours degree but did not have the means to finance further study. He discussed the issue with the company he worked for and asked them to extend his bursary. To his delight, the company agreed.

Two months later CJA went back to university and, together with his professor, designed an honours degree in his field. He was the first student to follow an honours degree in that field as there was no such degree at the time. He shyly recalled how he had thought about the girl he had met in the administrative office and when her father was transferred back to the company after moving away, he took an opportunity to visit her. At the end of the year he went back to the same company and bumped into her sister who revealed that the girl and her father were both working for the company again. Grinning widely, he recounted, I was so happy. We started dating. It wasn’t long until I realised this was the girl for me (Interview 4b, p. 6, line 25). Emphatically, CJA explained that he had worked too hard and had had such determination to succeed that he had no time to date much. They dated from 1970 and were married in 1973, 43 years before our interviews.

CJA reflexively described his wife as his best friend. As he spoke, I thought: This may be a good time to deepen the journey of emotional reflexivity. It may be easy for him to express his feelings if the questions are about his wife.
I asked him “Was she the first person you could open up to about your dreams and desires?” Struggling with words to express his feelings for her and his innermost dreams and desires he raised his arms above his head again. Inhaling deeply and clearly uncomfortable, he answered,

*I wasn’t the sort of guy that would easily talk about touchy-feely things in my life. I grew up in an environment where people were very straight up and down. My mum, as much as she cared for my sister and me, was not a very expressive person herself. She was not the kind of person to just come and give us a hug. We were very much separated as grown-ups on one side and kids on the other. If you ask people from my era, particularly the farming folk, you would probably find the same sort of thing. You know, the kids had their place and the grown-ups had their place* (Interview 4b, p. 6, line 31; p. 7, lines 3–7).

Although CJA still struggled to express himself using emotive words, he explained that, as a grandparent, he had evolved and became more demonstrative, in particular with his grandchildren. He explained that the generation gap between him and his mother had also contributed to the culture of ‘children should be seen not heard’. He added that he had grown up in an environment where expressing feelings was not typical. Listening to him and observing his body language, I thought: *He is not ready to go deeper and perhaps I need to allow him to tell the stories until he is comfortable about talking about his feelings.*

Reflecting on his relationships with his children, he described wonderful memories of trips overseas. He smilingly discussed the joy he had experienced sharing these
holidays with the children and described his family as very connected. His smile lit his face up and his eyes gleamed as he talked about his children and grandchildren. His love for them was evident in his absolute commitment to and joy in doing things for them, taking care of them and ensuring their general well-being.

I asked him how he had told Mrs CJA he loved her. Chuckling and without hesitation he replied that it had been easy. He then proceeded to tell a story about how well he and his family-in-law got along, something he did every time I asked a question that involved emotion.

CJA described his wife as his best friend, first and only serious girlfriend, confidante, supporter, life partner and the one person who probably knows me better than I know myself (Interview 5, p. 10, line 20). He acknowledged the depth their union and also his deep love, commitment, appreciation and respect for her and the significant role she played in his life.

The next subsection discusses the situations in CJA’s life that influenced his subconscious blueprint and triggered his reflection and reflexivity about his life and belief system.

6.7. UNVEILING CRITICAL LIFE AND LEADERSHIP INCIDENTS

During the initial interviews, we focused on life history to understand the context in which CJA had grown up, his environment and the influences in his journey to leadership. I wanted to understand his life story before focusing on the critical leadership incidents. This understanding was necessary because of the
multidisciplinary approach to the study. My hope was that, in this way, we could link both the psychosocial issues and agency to his leader-identity and emotional reflexivity process.

At the outset, my intention was to create an environment in which CJA felt comfortable. We needed time to become acquainted with each other as researcher and storyteller. In addition, he needed time to become comfortable with the purpose of my study and with me, as a researcher. For this reason, I started slowly so as to give the interview process time to unfold and develop naturally.

In this leg of our journey my intention was to unearth, interrogate, interpret and understand CJA’s experiences of challenging life and leadership situations. Taking himself back to situations that had been highly charged with emotion was essential in helping him to access his thoughts and feelings reflexively. In this way, during the interviews themes and categories emerged about his journey.

I had not anticipated the first critical incident because we had not yet embarked on his leadership journey in his life story. However, it happened naturally during the fifth interview and was valuable in terms of confirming the presence of emotion in reflexivity.

6.7.1. Interview with Mrs CJA

As the bedrock of his life and leadership journey, Mrs CJA represented the rose on the dial of his internal compass. It was evident that she played an extremely role in his life. I noticed during our conversations that she popped up automatically in his
explanations and descriptions of experiences in his life. I remembered the directions to his home and smiled. He headed the page, ‘Directions to (wife’s name) and my home’. This life story of his leadership journey would be incomplete without her voice. With his consent, I asked her to participate in an interview in order to give me an additional perspective. She agreed and joined us in Interview 5. Including her in the study also addressed my aim of demystifying the research and acknowledging her place in his story. I indicate her voice in red italicised text.

Smiling nervously, she stepped into the room as did CJA, although his smile was more a gesture of welcome and acknowledgement. She sat down in the chair facing CJA, diagonally and slightly to my right. As she sat down, I thought: Perhaps I should change the seating so that they are next to each other and facing me more directly. Then I thought: Moving the furniture around may be an imposition; I’ll leave things as they are. I should have thought about this before she joined us.

I started the interview by thanking her for joining us. After explaining the confidential nature of my research, I proceeded with an explanation of emotional reflexivity. She listened attentively, nodding as I spoke. I explained that the questions would focus on her observations and perceptions of her husband’s emotions and the behavioural cues, signs and signals. I explained that, if there was any question with which she was uncomfortable she was free to refuse to answer the question and that the same applied to CJA. I explained that I included her because she was part of his story and that she could assist CJA to become more comfortable with his emotion in our research journey.
My aim was to discuss with him some of the most common words used for expressing emotion verbally. I hoped that, when we worked on understanding his emotional reflexivity during his critical leadership incidents, this would facilitate CJA’s access to the affective words.

Looking at CJA, I reminded him of the purpose of the research. I rephrased it and said: *I want to dig into and understand your life story. I want to unearth the relevance of emotions, events and influences in your life, to your leadership. For example, what you learned growing up, what influenced you, how you felt about the experiences in your life and how it may have influenced your decisions and actions as a leader. In addition to your story, I want to unravel and understand the origins of your emotion and how you make connections in processing all this information.*

Looking from one to the other, I explained further: *I thought that if I could document a leader’s journey from childhood to adulthood and into leadership, showing the interrelationships in his story and the relevance of reflexivity in thoughts, feelings and actions, it could provide insight into how and why leaders make decisions and act the way they do. It could give them insight into possibilities for leader self-development in dealing with leadership challenges.*

I explained that, as his wife, she observed, experienced and interacted with him on a daily basis and, for this reason, her input was valuable. She nodded attentively. However, I noticed that she was a little nervous. She sat with her legs crossed and her hands tightly clasped. In an effort to help her to relax, I explained that my interview questions would be simple and impersonal. I gave her a few examples.
How do you know when he is happy? How do you know when he is excited, and so on? I asked her the same question but about feelings such as regretful, irritated, joyful, anticipatory, sick, frustrated, angry, hurt and sad.

As we proceeded I noticed she had unclasped her hands. She described her husband as emotional but controlled, level-headed and even-tempered. Her accounts indicated that CJA demonstrated negative affect with different intensities of the same facial expressions, for example, an upset expression and demeanour differed in intensity from those communicating anger. She explained that CJS isolated himself and immersed himself in a task until he felt better. She remarked that, during his angry moments, he always said, "let's put it in the Lord's hands" (Interview 5, p. 7, line 19). She also described how frustration was different from anger because he would mumble about the frustration incessantly. She explained she felt his mood more than she saw it.

Her observations also indicated that CJA demonstrated positive affect differently. He became more involved with the family and animated in sharing his excitement, happiness or anticipation. She said he demonstrated this by including her, for example, in his search for adventures and projects around their home.

It was a significant moment when I asked about sadness. She related that she saw it on CJA's face. In this reflexive moment, while recounting his mother's death, she became emotional and started crying. Through the tears, she said it just upsets me when he gets sad. He is such a strong character (Interview 5, pp. 7, 23). He doesn't want anyone to worry about him. His mum raised him without a husband. She was a
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very hard woman but she had great strength. He is softer but she influenced him. She knew she had to be strong. Maybe that’s where he got it (Interview 5, p. 8, lines 3–5). Looking at CJA, I noticed that he was concerned for her and that there were also tears in his eyes. As I looked at him he said; I feel like she feels now (Interview 5, p. 7, line 25).

This was an emotional moment. I felt their sadness. I noticed my reaction to their emotion. My breathing was a bit shallow and, at times, I held my breath, empathising with and feeling concern for them. At this point an important methodological reflexivity decision confronted me. I thought: Ok, I am a researcher. I must maintain my role. I wanted to go into the emotion and question their emotional experience. However, I considered the ethical implications and decided that their emotional safety was more important. In a tender voice and leaning toward them, I suggested they take a moment and hug each other.

I thought: Wow, what I am hearing is exactly what I experience in our interviews. He is an inherently gentle, empathetic individual, deeply influenced by his mother and their circumstances, to be strong. This may be where his emotional control originates. I must ask him. This incident demonstrated the interrelation of the psychosocial influences on decisions and actions, for example, as noted earlier in the study, those decisions and actions he regretted.

As the researcher I was delighted because their emotion was clearly present in their reflexive experience of their feelings regarding his mother’s death. Their emotion also confirmed that emotional reflexivity is relational because this incident was about
their shared relationship, feelings and recollections of his mother. Mrs CJA was emo-
tional in relation to her thoughts and feelings about him and his mother and vice ver-
sa. I thought about how amazing this emotional response was in light of the research
question. However, at the same time, I was touched emotionally and aware about
ethical concerns regarding emotional safety. My reaction, my thoughts and feeling
were happening simultaneously. In their reflexive moment, I observed a vulnerability
and tenderness in this great leader towards his wife. It was difficult to be there with
them and not feel what they felt in relation to my own context. My husband’s face
flashed through my mind and I smiled, reflecting on our bond and the long history we
shared. Bringing my attention back to the present, I quietly observed CJA embracing
his wife. His experiences as a boy flooded my thoughts:

*I see his story in my mind, the modest beginnings and the experiences in his child-
hood that that spurred him on – developing his strength of character and establishing
his beliefs and ethics all the while developing his leader identity. He was sheltered
from the influences of a big, vibrant city life. His mother’s strength influenced him as
she struggled to provide for them while managing her single-parent lifestyle. Alt-
ough isolated in a remote, rural environment, he experienced the influences of so-
cial construction in his interactions with neighbours on the farm, his parents,
teachers and friends. Attending boarding schools developed inner strength, inde-
pendence, self-control, self-reliance, determination, aspiration and ambition. He na-
vigated and overcame some of his childhood fears and anxieties. Some left their mark
reflected in ‘I’m ok’. This is probably what Burkitt (2012) refers to as “self-feeling”).
These are the antecedents that defined and refined his leader identity.*


I allowed them some time to calm down and watched as they hugged and laughed
through their tears – hers evident and his, stifled. To ensure their emotional safety, I
decided to end the session as soon as they indicated that they were calm. I
explained in a soothing voice, making eye contact with each of them: *This was quite an emotional experience for you. I think we should stop now. I want to leave immediately to give you a chance to reflect on your experience together. I see you are becoming a bit emotional again. I want to acknowledge your emotion and thank you for your trust. I also want to express my excitement that you are visibly emotional because that is what my research is about.*

In that moment, they had both laughed and I could not help joining in. I concluded the interview so as to give them private time to comfort each other and reflect. They walked out with me and stood in the driveway holding each other and waving as I drove away.

Although this incident may reflect as an ethical issue in research, I wonder how valid a study involving emotional reflexivity would be without any trace of visible emotion. Their emotion was less about the study and more about reminiscing about a time and in particular about a loved one whom they valued.

Driving home I listened to a jazz CD of Richard Elliot’s. My husband and I often danced to this CD – in the kitchen, in the lounge and wherever we found ourselves when he played his music. My mood was reflective. For me this interview was a wonderful affirmation of emotion in reflexivity, of how similar we are as humans and how we complicate our lives in our interpretations of the experiences and events that make a mark in our lives. I reflected on how, as demonstrated by CJA and his wife, feelings remain with us throughout our lives. Their feelings seemed to become reactivated in their conscious, reflexive experiences. In their emotional moment, it
appeared that their feelings had influenced their reactions. I reflected on the experience:

As I drove home today I remembered Holland’s (1999) transdisciplinary reflexivity. I reflected on how psychosocial and cultural influences can create relational limitations. I reflected on my own preconceptions about this research and how in getting to know one another CJA and I were able to overcome those relational limitations.

My ruminations took me to my OD interventions. One of the industries in which I frequently conducted these interventions had been struggling with the implications of negative perceptions of emotion in the workplace. With the advent of democracy in South Africa at the time, this particular industry had experienced significant organisational culture challenges. Two of the programmes I had developed and facilitated for this organisation included diversity appreciation and developmental team building.

> Discussions during these workshops often revealed the extent to which the managers and leaders demonstrated their personal viewpoints in their workplace interactions. From this study, leaders could potentially perceive and experience their colleagues, employees and stakeholders in different ways. We allow our preconceptions to guide and influence our interactions. Leader emotional reflexivity has the potential to deepen leader self-understanding to develop depth in leader identity.

> The depth that I am thinking about involves those qualities in reasoning, feeling and communicating with others that distinguishes a leader in a crowd or in a crisis or celebration that inspires admiration, trust, confidence and a genuine liking of the person.


I telephoned CJA the next day to check on them. He said they were fine and thanked me for the call.
6.7.2. A significant paradigm shift

In addition to the experience described above, we embarked on the critical life and leadership incidents with his recollections and narratives of these events as they had occurred.

In 1976, just before the Soweto riots in South Africa, CJA and his wife travelled to Oregon in the USA. Oregon University had accepted him into their MBA programme and he and his wife lived there for two years. He described these two years as an experience that made an enormous impression on me (Interview 2, p. 2, line 24). I had two years to really reflect on things in a very academic, intellectual environment (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 4–5). He spoke in a reflective rather than a matter of fact voice tone. This voice was softer than usual and reflected his emotion and conviction about this time in his life which he deeply valued. He said I love America for what it did for me. I don’t want to live there but those two years changed me (Interview 2, p. 1, lines 7–8). I kept a log of the places we visited and the things I observed. I know, in my own life that experience marked a point where my life changed (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 7–8).

Since reflexivity is about a shift in perspective with recognisable implications, this disclosure was immensely important. It revealed a striking consciousness in CJA’s thoughts and feelings about experiences that had challenged his emotional commitment to his own deeply entrenched values and beliefs. This challenge to his belief system had been so significant that it had sparked a turnaround in his
perceptions, attitudes and actions as well as changing his self-feeling as described by Burkitt (2012) and commitment to his previous perceptions and beliefs.

CJA recalled and described the impact of the American Constitution and the Declaration of Independence on his perceptions and beliefs about life. Sitting quite still with a slight smile he explained, one of my subjects was ‘An Introduction to American Law’. I had to go and sit in a courtroom and listen to cases. I had to learn the American Constitution and the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal and so on. It had an enormous influence on my life (Interview 2, p. 1, lines 15–18).

Smiling contemplatively, he recalled how his mother had read to them about the west and the Grand Canyon, thus instilling a keen interest and sense of adventure in him. Speaking in a slightly firmer tone, crossing his legs and folding his arms, he said, when we came back my mum remarked that I changed since we got back. I said, ‘Mom, I am changed. Some basic things in South Africa are inherently wrong. For the first time in my life, I question how we do things, like the way we treat black people in this country is not right, you know.

He continued and explained, I felt that awareness deeply and it became well established within me because for two years I was away from the situation in South Africa. I debated with people and with professors about what was happening in the country. That experience sharpened my sense of right and wrong that was already there from my childhood experiences, instilled by my parents. Although uncomplicated, unsophisticated people, they were people of great integrity. For them, there was a right
way to do things and a wrong way, but it was within a system that was inherently wrong (Interview 2, p. 1, lines 23–32).

With conviction and sincerity in his voice, he described how he had felt burdened and compelled to make a difference and do things differently when he returned to South Africa. He had reflected deeply during the two years away and had questioned both his own beliefs and the ‘apartheid’ (segregation) system in South Africa. Casting his eyes downward, he recalled:

After I got back, I saw life differently and questioned my life. I got to a point where I started saying ‘but hang on, that’s not right’. In the work situation, I developed the confidence to say, ‘I disagree with you. I don’t like the way you do things’. It was not an overnight thing but the way I went about things changed (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 8–12).

It changed me. Change is the word. The question then is to what … I think it changed my established outlook on life … relevant to people around me, situations I found myself in, my family, everything. It uprooted some of the beliefs about how things were. Had I not gone there, I may have gone along with the rest of the population until all the changes came about and maybe only then my life may have started having more consciousness about it (Interview 9, p. 3, lines 15–19).

Throughout this discussion CJA was consciously engaging his emotional reflexivity. As indicated above, emotion was evident in his tone of voice. His emotion was also evident in his smiles and laughter when he recalled happy childhood experiences as well as the adventures he and his wife had had while in the USA. Casting his eyes
downward at times, folding his arms and crossing his legs suggested feelings of discomfort such as shame about the apartheid system in South Africa.

His internal, emotional conversation, wrestling with ontological assumptions about human rights in South Africa, his home, had created a shift in his perceptions of purpose, equality, justice and humanity. Experiencing a different culture in a foreign country, studying the American Constitution and questioning the merits of right and wrong in society and in South Africa, in particular, altered his values. This experience played a significant role in his subsequent emotion about and interpretation of events during his life and his leadership journey. As he spoke I could not help thinking about my experience living and studying in the USA.

We continued the discussion about multicultural relationships and how his experiences in the USA had shaped his beliefs and values. At this point I felt sufficiently comfortable with him to probe his views on our cultural differences in this research bubble.

I asked him about his thoughts and feelings about our differences. He sighed and replied:

Well, I think the difference is not because of race and gender, but I think difference about life experience and that sort of thing might make it a little more difficult. For me, lets again take (friend and colleague) to try to illustrate it. He goes to a good school. He goes to foreign universities like me … a university in the USA. I think the way he looks at life and the way I look at life may probably be quite similar. Whereas somebody that grows outside of that, black or white, male or female, if the environ-
ment and the experiences in life that you grow up in is very different … that is probably more difficult. I don’t think it’s about race or gender. It’s about the life experience that went with that. I think if one took a black kid and a white kid and raised them in the same environment it will be much easier for them to relate than two white kids in two different environments (Interview 5, p. 1, lines 7–18).

I asked him how much more authentic he thought the journey may have been if we were more culturally similar. Thoughtfully, he replied, I don’t think it would have made a difference (Interview 5, p. 1, line 21). Sighing again, he said, I’m not sure. We are digging into things that I haven’t thought about. It rather challenges me to think about it. Maybe it could have been the opposite. It could have been someone like me, who looks like me with the same experiences. You almost think … what the point is, you know. Whereas talking to you … you are challenging me. You are coming from a slightly different perspective. I do not think it would have made a huge difference. In fact, I think, in thinking about it … if someone is too similar, you run the risk of assuming too much. I often preach that in the MBA classes. When you put a team together, do yourself a favour and do not have a team of clones like you, because it stifles good debate. It stifles innovation and creativity. You need all types of people in your team and often, differences bring out better debate as opposed to underlying assumptions (Interview 5, p. 1, lines 23–27; p. 2, lines 1–6).

I had exposure to black leaders at the very early stages of the political turnaround in the country. Initially, I was very conscious, for example, when we had lunch together. It was very clear that there was a black person sitting across from me. Certainly, I felt quite guarded, you know … not wanting to step on toes, but also not wanting my
toes stepped on. It was that sort of thing, and then came the change for me in 1995, and I decided to create the black economic empowered entity in SA. (Black colleague) and I met. I can’t tell you when it changed. The first meeting was very courteous.

Chuckling, CJA continued: He, in his inimitable slow talking style, never said anything that hit my sensibilities as being bad. In fact, I liked the way he perceived the business. He told me about his business and the fact that he was a financial person who got his hands dirty to understand the business. I thought I rather liked that, you know. We met repeatedly and as I say, somewhere along the line, I don’t know where, we got to a point where he was no longer this black businessman who wanted to do business with us. We became friends.

I was conscious that I had stopped seeing him as a black person or a white person. This was quite long after we had returned from the US. Ultimately, that was just a next step where colour just disappeared. All I can say is that I experienced the feeling that I could be friends with this person. We passed the black businessperson stage and I met his wife at functions, and then his kids and then his colleagues and their families and then we went off for a weekend. Then one realises, hey man, we have the same challenges. They want their kids to succeed, battling with their grades, making sure the kids are ok. All of a sudden, one comes away from these interactions and realises we are human beings, not foreigners.

While that can be intellectual, somewhere along the line my heart changed with it. Moreover, I think it’s just positive exposure. Had my exposure been negative, I may
not have changed my fundamental views. It may have remained intellectual aware-
ness. However, it became an issue of the heart. He is no longer one of my black
friends. He is one of my friends. Somewhere along the line, I internalised it emotion-
ally and all the prejudices of the past and these artificial devises from the past fell off
the bus you know. I think the more people experience that, the more the prejudice
will start falling away (Interview 5, p. 2, lines 9–30; p. 3, lines 1–11).

It was evident that emotion was central to his reflexivity as he thought about and
explained his experience of intercultural relationships and the shift in his belief
system. I commented on the role of emotion and he replied:

Yes, one’s mind is easy to change, not very easy, but easier. I think your heart
needs to change. When I teach the kids, I often say to them, leadership is about the
mind and the heart. Don’t be scared to follow your heart sometimes because the
heart can be clearer than the mind. Changes must become intuitive. Saying good
morning to a person because he is black is not meaningful. Saying good morning to
a person because he is human is different. It is intuitive. Once one gets to a place of
doing it intuitively one starts to judge the person accordingly and it’s not about black
or white (Interview 5, p. 2, lines 14–21).

I asked him if this meant his underlying subconscious beliefs had gone and he
responded, saying:

Not necessarily gone, but I say to myself, the underlying beliefs were wrong and I
challenge them and discard some of them. I mean, I can never completely remove
the reality that I grew up in an environment where the divide between black and
white was huge. I can’t wish it away. It’s about how I reacted and what I do with the baggage that I’m carrying around with me and what I am doing with it today. For me that’s the key issue. It’s about coming back to the currents that move one around in life, when some of them are wrong one has to move them away (Interview 5, p. 2, lines 23–27; p. 3, lines 1–2).

I asked him how he had known they were wrong and he replied:

You don’t know except when you start running into things and you become more conscious about them. I mean America is full of prejudices. It’s not just about race. I look at the fights between Christians and Muslims, between Muslims and Muslims, Protestants and Catholics. These beliefs are so deeply entrenched. Some people walk away from them. Some people cannot walk away from them.

In some of my circles, there are still some people stuck in the past. I know some black people who are the same. We all need to confront some of the basic beliefs we have and to test them by some norm. The problem is that we don’t all live by the same norms. At some stage, there are universal values like honesty, integrity, respect and so on. When I reflect on my own experiences measured against these values, to decide what’s right or not, only then can I make good strides forward. In the end, what helped me were the positive experiences, especially in the USA. They created a platform where I could start judging some of the other areas in my life (Interview 5, p. 2, lines 4–17).

CJA consciously ruminated about his experiences during his childhood, as an adolescent and as a young adult married and in a foreign country. We interrogated the
context of his childhood experiences as they related to his experiences in America. He reflected on the conscious awareness created by his emotional engagement with daily exposure to the people and experiences in the USA. Smiling, his face lighting up, he said, *it's been forty years since we returned from America, but I can remember every day like it was yesterday* (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 23–24).

6.7.3. Utah and receiving the Boss of the Year award

Two affirmations of his leadership during CJA’s career are particularly significant. The first relates to a company in Utah in the USA that, in light of the contribution he had made with his thesis, sought his advice about a crisis that had resulted in the loss of lives. For reasons of confidentiality I am not able to provide more particulars. The other incident concerns a Boss of the Year award conferred on CJA.

Reflecting on his invitation to Utah, I asked:

Patty: *What was your internal conversation about going to Utah to offer advice about the dire situation?*

Reflecting on this question, CJA became animated. Enthusiastically he described his internal conversation and his feelings:

CJA: *It slowly dawned on me that I was one of the foremost experts in the world. This intellectual accomplishment in my thesis put me onto the world stage as an authority. It gave me a lot of confidence and helped many people. I felt gratified. I’m much more comfortable with myself as a result. I travelled extensively and now I was*
As he considered his receiving the Boss of the Year award, CJA described his feelings when he had accepted the award.

CJA: I feel uncomfortable when people make a fuss of me. Where is this coming from? I don’t know. I like recognition because it affirms and confirms. I just don’t like too much public fuss. I think it comes from my humble beginnings.

Patty: Could it still be that deep-seated fear of “I’m not sure I can hack it?”

Thoughtfully, he agreed. With bright eyes and smiling widely, he described the awkwardness and emotional discomfort he had experienced accepting the award.

CJA: I remember the next day my secretary was like a mother hen and I wanted to say, ‘get out of my way’. All my colleagues lined up in the halls cheering and clapping. It was an out of this world feeling. It was the most incredible feeling I have felt in my life. For me, the best recognition is from the people and from colleagues. I knew that it came from their hearts. I was so emotional (Interview 7, p. 6, lines 19–21).

Patty: Where was ‘I’m ok?’

CJA: I think it was there. I think those people meant more than recognition to me. It meant they were proud of me. In my view, it was recognition for them too. I was very
emotional. I could have burst into tears right there. It was a real ‘wow moment’ (Interview 7, p. 6, lines 28–30).

Patty: Where were all those rich people from your childhood now? Replying in his matter of fact way he said, I don’t know ... I’m ok (Interview 7, p.7, line1).

Patty: How do you feel now just thinking of it?

CJA: Emotional, it was like ... do I really deserve this. It was not about achievement. It was about ... wow, I am lucky. It was about feeling gratitude. So many people helped to get me where I am today. As he spoke, his face lit up like the face of a child opening a gift at Christmas.

CJA’s self-talk involves self-criticism as he measures himself in relation to his subconscious blueprint. Shy, yet confident and assertive, although he doubts his own worth, his self-criticism occurs in the context of integrity and his purpose as regards others on this earth. ‘I’m ok’ represented his deep need to be appreciated and acknowledged by others. The moment when CJA had accepted his award symbolised all his childhood aspirations and affirmed his greatest desires.

6.7.4. Navigating a hostile takeover

Another critical incident related to a decision taken by a company to split the company to form a new one which would be beneficial to its shareholders. At the time CJA was the managing director, reporting to the CEO. The company had been navigating a difficult time, partly because of the economy and partly because of
political changes in the country. After restructuring the company, the leadership had decided on the split.

Since the events that had occurred were in conflict with CJA’s core values and beliefs, this had represented the most difficult challenge he had faced in his leadership career. However, this critical leadership incident heightened his beliefs about integrity, fairness and human dignity and justice (how things ‘should be done’ – following processes and with respect and transparency. I asked him to tell me about this experience.

CJA: *It started when we were going to split the company. Before that split, several companies were sniffing around for a deal. We refused their proposals and believed we would create great value for the shareholders just with the split. We knew somebody was pursuing the company because they were buying the shares* (Interview 9, p. 2, lines 11–13).

The interested company had requested a meeting. When the delegates from the other company arrived, the atmosphere had been tense because CJA and his colleagues had figured out the possible reason for the meeting.

CJA: *We knew what the meeting was about. They came in. They walked into our conference room. The secretary offered coffee. We were all waiting for the coffee and nobody said a word. Everyone was quite uncomfortable* (Interview 9, p. 2, lines 22–24).
Recounting the details of the discussion on the intended takeover, CJA described how emotions had flared during the discussion. Animated, flailing his arms in the air and with glaring eyes, he described the directors’ anger. His body language, tone of voice and the deep frown etched on his forehead all indicated visible emotion. One of the directors lost it and angrily said, there’s the door you can get out (Interview 9, p. 3, line 1).

Patty: What was actually happening? What emotions could you see in your colleagues?

Referring to the sentiments of his colleagues regarding the nature of leadership, CJA explained:

The CEO was as mad as a snake! The gall of these people angered us. The way they went about it was just wrong. We were in fight mode! We were going to do what we believed was right (Interview 8, p. 4, lines 5–6).

CJA’s words spilled out rapidly. He was animated, making hand gestures and moving in his seat. With wide eyes, he spoke purposefully. It was hard for me to get a question in. It appeared that he was re-experiencing the emotions. He recounted the challenges involved meeting with the interested company because this company’s way of doing business was questionable in light of his beliefs and ethics about business.

Patty: As a leader, what were you thinking?
CJA: *I was annoyed but also galvanised into action to fight it and see it through. That was what I was paid for. That was what I signed up for* (Interview, 9, p. 4, lines 19–20).

This disclosure was significant and was augmented by his nonverbal behaviours and body language. The significance was he demonstrated that emotion was infusing his reflexivity at that instant. He explained that the leadership was confident and aware of the reason why they were splitting the company, namely, that they had anticipated that it would add value for the shareholders. He also believed this proposition was preferable to the potential effects of a hostile takeover. He became visibly agitated again and said in an authoritative voice, *we thought b%$$+&r you. We will show you … you are not going to do that* (Interview 9, p. 4, lines 28–29).

At that moment, Mrs CJA knocked gently on the door and entered the room with a sweet *“hello”*. CJA turned his head and smiling warmly, returned the hello. She looked my way and said: *“Sorry to interrupt.”* Smiling, I replied, *“hello … that’s ok … how your mum doing is?”* Smiling warmly, she replied, *“all sorted. Mum is good”*. She offered us more tea and then left the room. CJA relaxed after this interruption. I decided to go back to discussing his thoughts and then work up to the emotions. We proceeded with the interview.

Patty: *Let’s continue where we left off… What were you feeling then?*

He described feeling vulnerable about the potential implications for both the company and the employees. From his expression and his body language, it appeared as though he wanted to shake off the feelings flowing through him as he
recalled and talked about the experience. During our interviews, he talked about other, similar experiences. It was clear that there he had, as he put it, ‘hanging’ emotion from previous leadership encounters.

I noticed he was becoming agitated again as he emphasised his feeling of annoyance because of the unfair way in which the issues had been handled. He strongly expressed the concern he had felt about working for a company whose business ethics he had questioned. His hands went behind his head as they usually did when he felt uncomfortable about the emotion. Raising his arms above his head seemed to help him calm down and breathe deeper. The tone of his voice changed and became slightly less authoritative.

Confronted with reliving this particular situation and trying to understand my questions about his emotion, CJA appeared to be more uncomfortable and emotional about the actual event than about expressing his emotion. Sometimes, when he became uncomfortable within the emotion, he proceeded to tell a story. Noticing the shift, I decided to stop the questions about his feelings and I reverted with him, to the story in order to give him some time to regain his composure.

Patty: *Was there any discussion about wanting you out?*

He explained that he had known that the company wanted to retain his services. However, he was emphatic that he had decided that would not work for a company whose leaders had questionable ethics and were driven by self-interest. However, he admitted that in retrospect, he might have presumed more than he should have at the time. In this moment, CJA again demonstrated his emotional reflexivity - thinking
back about his thoughts, actions and decisions, questioning them in the present moment and considering how he could have reacted differently. I asked him:

Patty: Of what significance were your childhood experiences to this experience?

He took a few minutes to think about the question and explained that his reaction about the unfairness in this instance may have originated in his childhood experiences of discrimination. When he was growing up, self-interest had been a foreign concept in his household and to a certain extent, in his community. His family and the community offered assistance to one another during difficult times.

Patty: What was your internal conversation regarding the takeover?

He explained that he recalled experiencing constant emotion during the takeover and described the inappropriate verbal outbursts from a particular leader from the other company.

CJA: I remember myself saying ... we have to push. This makes one angry, you know. In Afrikaans, I would say, ‘Ek raak opstandig’ (I become rebellious). This was because these individuals were stepping over major personal boundaries. When I think about this experience, even today… Experiencing a few seconds of speechlessness and waving his hands while shaking his head, he continued… I don’t care much for this individual. I want nothing to do with this person. He is a... he did the company a big disservice. Whenever I tell the story... those days were emotionally tough. It was clear that this experience had deep seated 'hanging' emotion.
At this point, I began to glimpse what seemed to be the beginnings of his emotional reflexivity process emerging. He had demonstrated how ‘wow moments’ or epiphanies were ignited by significant experiences, situations or events. He explained how he had become rebellious because of the disrespect that had occurred during interaction with the other company executives. However, he had told himself, *we have to push...* demonstrating what he referred to as being ‘galvanised’ into acting. He repeatedly explained in previous interviews that, when confronted with difficult challenges, both in his personal life and as a leader, he would ‘spring into action’. Recalling a telephone conversation during this time, he described his immediate reaction and his physiological response demonstrating that he experienced his emotion in his body or physiologically.

CJA: *The wind was taken out of my sails and I was flabbergasted. Initially, I thought he was just pulling my leg, but when I realised he was serious I became concerned as to what brought this on. His voice tone and abusive language already annoyed me. I just lost it and started fighting back, confronting him with the facts of the matter but also shouting at him at the top of my voice. As my annoyance grew, my heart rate increased quite markedly and it felt like I would burst a blood vessel* (Exercise 2, p. 1, lines 12–22).

At this point, I thought it was important to bring him back into the present and to increase his awareness of what I was noticing in our exchange. I thought that doing this may assist him to become more aware of his emotional reflexivity as he re-experienced this critical incident, as opposed to him focusing on answering my questions. In this way, I wanted to reinforce his consciousness about his reflective
and reflexive thoughts and feelings. In essence, we were learning how to recognise, acknowledge and work on understanding his feelings and emotions and, where and how they had originated in his life.

During our conversations, we were interrogating how his emotions related to specific experiences that had made a deep impression on both his belief system and his overall context. As we talked about the feelings he experienced, I referred back to our previous interpretations linking new information that emerged to previous disclosure about experiences in his childhood. These experiences included his father’s death and how his mother had dealt with it, which seemed to have unearthed the beginnings of the development of his inner compass. I questioned and we unravelled his emotions and actions regarding the day to day challenges in his leadership activities. For example, we discussed what he had felt and how he had dealt with disputes and disagreements during meetings about leadership issues as they related to the stakeholders.

During these conversations, we went back and forth between previous disclosures and current interpretations about noticeable behaviours that reflected emotion in order to understanding how and where the feelings had first arisen in his life. This was how we unearthed and interpreted why and how his emotions had surfaced during specific incidents and how they impacted his decisions and actions throughout his leadership career and as he consciously and reflexively recalled them during our conversations. In this way, his meaning making deepened progressively as we explored the context of each feeling relative to his experiences during his childhood and beyond with family, teachers, community members and later, with
other leaders, his leadership team, employees and stakeholders. We talked about his thoughts and feelings then and at the present moment, interpreting and analysing as the conversations and understandings deepened and we con-structed his narrative.

During the interview in question, I redirected CJA to one of his responses when he had stated, *I feel about something and then I act rationally* (Interview 2, p. 1, line 30).

Patty: *Tell me more.*

Without hesitation, CJA explained that he thought most leaders did this without a conscious awareness of it. Nodding his head, he said that this research experience had taught him that there was a lot more emotion involved in leadership than he had ever thought and that perhaps this was a good thing.

In a continuous, repetitive dance we whirled and swirled back and forth, around and back again as we uncovered his emotional reflexivity, isolating specific responses to feelings and thoughts in order to understand how they had contributed to his belief system. We explored how his perceptions of his life philosophy and purpose had developed and connected with his inner compass and also influenced his decisions and actions in life and in his leadership.

### 6.8. SUMMARY

The focus on the research story encompassed direct quotations from CJA, significant events, experiences, situations and influences in his life. In sketching
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CJA, I provided details about his birth, schooling, young adulthood, academic accomplishments and my impressions of him as a person. In addition, I discussed how his parents and the broader community had contributed to the shaping of his moral compass. I focused on four critical incidents one in his life and three from his leadership career that provided opportunity to excavate his emotional reflexivity process focusing on his disclosures as well as behavioural cues of his emotion. I described his emotions and behaviours, our interpretations of how they arose and their relationship to experiences from his childhood, his life and his leadership. Finally, throughout this research story, I included my reflective analysis, thoughts and emotions, as well as my reflective rationale for certain actions as we journeyed together in our quest to co-construct his story in order to develop a substantive theory.
Part E comprises one chapter as follows:

**Chapter 7**

I discuss how the substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity emerged and developed. I include segments from the interviews to illustrate the hermeneutic process involved in our co-constructions and how the theory emerged.
We should every night call ourselves to an account: What infirmity have I mastered today? What passions opposed? What temptation resisted? What virtue acquired? Our vices will abort of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift (Seneca).

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This leg of the journey focuses on a conceptual framework of the way in which CJA experienced his emotional reflexivity. In this chapter, I develop the substantive theory, grounded in the story. I begin with CJA’s ‘wow moments’ as motivators for his emotional reflexivity including extracts from the interviews to illustrate the analysis in excavating an overarching, emotional reflexivity process. In my analysis and our interpretations, I illustrate with a model of his overarching emotional reflexivity, how I integrated our interpretations with abstract, second-order constructs from the literature and CJA’s concrete experiences, as described in Chapter 6. Finally, I explain and present the three dimensional model namely, the Interrelated model of leader emotional reflexivity.

7.2. CJA’S HEARTFELT EPIPHANIES

In reflecting on his life and leadership story, CJA identified critical incidents that fuelled emotion and urged him into action. These incidents included his mother’s death described in (§ 6.7.1); his experience of living and studying in the USA (see § 6.7.2); receiving a ‘boss of the year’ award (see § 6.7.3) and the hostile takeover
These ‘wow moments’ emerged as he consciously engaged his mind and his emotions in reflecting, recounting and describing events and experiences that were especially meaningful in establishing his inner compass and leader identity.

CJA’s ‘wow moments’ were not limited to his positive experiences. We were unable to disclose all the critical life and leadership incidents in his life in the study for confidentiality reasons. Nevertheless, one such noteworthy leadership incident that constitutes a ‘wow moment’ and can be mentioned here is the retrenchment of several thousand people that had occurred in an attempt to turn the company he worked for around. Despite the retrenchment experience being negative at the time of its occurrence, CJA described his reflexive experience of them as positive. In consciously re-experiencing the retrenchments, his meaning making (emotional reflexivity) involved a reversal of perception and negative emotion as a result of learning from the experience.

In re-experiencing and reflecting on his thoughts and feelings about life and leadership incidents, CJA passionately described his ‘wow moments’ as moments that ‘grabbed his heart’. Smiling, his eyes sparkling, he explained they were moments he wanted more of, moments he wished would last longer. By contrast, although also a heartfelt he explained that negative heartfelt epiphanies initially ignited a flight response within him. For example, he explained that emotion that challenged his moral compass elicited an immediate flight response, a need to get away. In these instances and especially when he was at home, he would instead engage in an activity that required focus and concentration. Clarifying his response,
he explained that he consciously walked away from issues that felt less serious. I asked him whether engaging in an activity meant he was regulating or controlling the emotion and he responded negatively. He explained that he could not control or regulate his emotion and that it stayed with him. He explained further that he controlled his reaction to the emotion. I asked him the following question:

Patty: *In terms of feelings, how do ‘wow moments’ manifest?*

After a slight pause, he explained that for him ‘wow moments’ have a physiological manifestation. As an example, he explained the excitement he had felt when he had visited Alaska with his wife. With awe in his voice he described the ice-capped mountains, the bald eagles they observed in the trees while he and his wife drifted in a boat down a river. He said he could not stop smiling and even now in the present moment his excitement and awe were evident in the smile that lit up his face. In his words he said, *the feeling is quite intense* (Interview 8, p. 5, lines 11).

In the critical incidents (see §§ 7.7.1–4 above), CJA described his feelings and his thoughts about his feelings. In all these instances, he said that these experiences still elicit emotion reflexively. Reflecting on his travels and achievements, he explained these occasions as a mixture of adventure, anticipation and things he dreamed about, residing in his subconscious. He said that in those moments, although he had been aware of the privilege of being there, at the time, he did not consciously reflect on why it was great.
As CJA reflected on his travels to the Grand Canyon, I could not stop the memories of my visit with my family. I recalled my mother and aunt joining us on a drive from Colorado to Arizona. As he spoke, I recalled the heat and images of beautiful, bright blue pools in the Colorado River as it flowed through the canyon. I felt the ‘privilege’ he referred to earlier. I had experienced this feeling of privilege with deep gratitude. I, too, in my childhood had never imagined that I would ever experience the Grand Canyon or the USA.

I thought about how CJA’s life had evolved because of his inner feelings and thoughts about experiences that had impacted him during his childhood and throughout his life and leadership. I recalled the Huey, Dewey and Louie story in Chapter 6 and reflected on how he vicariously revelled in their adventures and how some of the experiences in his life mirrored those adventures.

As I listened to CJA describe his ‘wow moments’, I considered Denzin’s (1992) definition of epiphanies as, “… existential moments in the lives of individuals that rupture routines and lives, and provoke radical redefinitions of self and perhaps one’s life project” (p. 26). Individuals believe that such events change them and make them different people (Gibbs, 2007). However, given the research problem that reflexivity theory places little emphasis on emotion (Holmes, 2010), I must hasten to emphasise that I also considered that CJA described his ‘wow moments’ as intense feelings of physical excitement, feelings of anticipation, adventure, dreams and privilege (see Interview 8, p. 5, line, 11). CJA’s expression of this feeling as a ‘wow moment’ fully captures the complexity and intensity of the emotions and thoughts he experienced within the experience. I thought about reframing as an epiphany but
decided that while an epiphany describes the outcome of the experience it does not capture the emotion CJA described. For this reason and, for academic writing purposes, I decided to reframe CJA’s ‘wow moment’ in the thesis as a heartfelt epiphany.

At this point it is necessary to consider the second order constructs from the literature and what scholars are saying about emotion. Helm (2009), in a review of emotion, disputes its physiology. Drawing on the theory of import, involving emotion as feelings of assessment, Helm asserts that feeling emotion is about feeling the intention of the emotion (aimed at an object). He explains that the physical feelings humans experience does not constitute the total realm of emotions. While the theory of import, according to Helm (2007), has numerous implications, for the purpose of the present research, his argument that humans have the capacity for many types of emotion, as opposed to only one, is applicable.

In contrast to Helm (2007), Holmes (2010) argues that reflexivity is embodied in and involves experiences that are relational and, as such, it involves cognitions as well as emotion. Burkitt (2012) agrees with Holmes that reflexivity is relational, embodied and cognitive, and involves an internal discussion. Burkitt agrees with Helm that emotions motivate reflexivity. However, he argues that emotion not only motivates but, also permeates reflexivity.

In view of the above, one has to acknowledge that emotions are more than just social constructs and, while they connect humans, they can contribute to internal conflict (Ferguson, 1996). Following on from this point, although this study is about
the sociological context of emotional reflexivity, one cannot ignore the neurological implications of emotion and the role played by the brain, namely, the two neural pathways involved in generating action by processing emotion in the brain. This neurological processing occurs from the sensory thalamus to the amygdala and, for more advanced deliberation, to the sensory cortex. These two pathways are complementary, ensuring for example immediate lifesaving actions or more carefully considered actions in response to events or meaning making (Zhu & Thagard, 2002).

During one of the interviews, I commented on CJA’s heartfelt epiphanies and how I understood them.

Patty: As you are speaking, I see the ‘wow moments’ or emotions you experience as a bridge connecting your aspirations and experiences from the past, with events and experiences in the present, reviewing your subconscious beliefs and anticipating relevant desires in the future. It sounds as if ‘wow moments’ for you are the unconscious connectors in the present, with your past, and future into your desired future.

CJA: Absolutely, I think so … it’s why certain things capture you and your imagination. Wow moments may be different for other people. Smiling, CJA described other wow moments he experienced for example in nature, watching the cranes in the Okavango swamps, camping on the islands, watching a herd of elephants crossing only fifty yards away. Those places ‘wow’ me every time. I observe them and can hardly believe I was there (Interview 8, p. 4, lines 27–30).

Integrating CJA’s emotional reflexivity into our interpretations thus far, I developed a model to illustrate his overarching emotional reflexivity process. Stimulated by a
heartfelt, significant psychosocial experiences, events and situations from the past (antecedents) and the lingering or what Burkitt, (2012) calls ‘self-feeling’ influenced by social construction, emerge subconsciously and integrate with the heartfelt. Depending on the type of emotion, negative or positive, CJA is initially either motivated to distract himself or is propelled by the emotion to take action relevant to an anticipated then makes future desire/outcome (see Figure 7.1 below).

![Figure 7.1: Ramsey. (2014, July, 31). Model for the LER bridge metaphor: Overarching LER process.](image)

Processing the last interview, I reflected:

*CJA made significant connections between his emotions, body, thoughts and actions and his life story. His narrative was unfolding and evolving as we figured out his emotional reflexivity in relation to the foundations of his values, beliefs and experiences, his training, development and education. It was a wonderful interview because he was a step ahead of me. Before I asked a question based on a previous response, he would go there. This was a huge milestone in our journey and it delighted me because, at the start of the interview, I was concerned that our process*
was still a bit intellectual. It seemed that he was learning and growing in his understanding and interpretations as we co-constructed meaning from his life and leadership experiences.

Throughout our interview journey, there were many parallels in our life experiences. We both came from blended families. We were satisfied with the basics of life. I married my high school sweetheart, the first and only man I loved. My husband and our two daughters lived in the USA for six and a half years while studying. As with CJA, the experience altered our perspectives on life. My husband and I, in our love for nature, travelled throughout the USA. We too, visited Alaska and the Grand Canyon. Our plans for the future involved caravan travel into Africa, something CJA already enjoys. So, it seems that preconceptions are just that… Society may label us different because we are from different cultures, races, socio-economic status and gender. However, we can rework the limitations of cultural and psychosocial imprints. Leaders can recolour, reshape and repopulate the matrix in their subconscious, much like the concept of neuroplasticity (the brain developing new neural pathways), and consequently, be more open to embracing different views about others.


Next, I discus how we interpreted the lived experiences relevant to his emotional reflexivity processes.

7.3. INTERPRETING CJA’S FIRST ORDER LIVED EXPERIENCES

In this section, I describe CJA’s emotional reflexivity processes from his perspective and include extracts from the interviews. After our final interview, excited about revisiting the data, I reflected:

This interview was remarkable. CJA described how he experiences a complex circular series of cycles involving more than one process. He described emotional/cognitive/resolution cycles in various stages of conclusion, coupled with physiological processes. I get dizzy just thinking about it. My mind is like a prism
ideas as I analyse and interpret the data. As I mull over his descriptions, my stomach knots and gurgles in protest. Although I am excited about CJA’s interpretations, I am anxious about figuring out how to represent them in his story. I have this delayed, cognitive processing scheme where I need a bit of time to soak up and integrate information. I think it has its roots in my need to please my mother as a child.


In our final interview, I asked CJA about the cycles he described:

Patty: Why are they not linear?

CJA: Linear for me implies what I do is a continuation of the previous thing. The linear part is my experiences from one issue to the next but not my emotional reflexivity about the issues (Interview 8, p. 3, line 30).

Patty: Help me understand it.

CJA: I think one engages in emotional reflexivity all the time. Emotions about things trigger it (Interview 8, p. 4, lines 2–3).

Earlier, during Interview 2, CJA said his emotions spur him into taking action. Describing the cycles, he explained, for me, in some instances, emotional reflexivity occurs in a full cycle. This means the cycle is closed, the issue is resolved and I can move on. Some are half cycles that may not conclude because the issue is ongoing like the restructuring. That took four years. Sometimes there are cycles within cycles, meaning new concerns arise about ongoing issues. Some of the problems are interrelated but you have to see each one independently to find solutions (Interview 8, p. 1, lines 4–8).
Recalling the restructuring which involved employee job losses, he reflected that it involved ongoing emotional reflexivity because of the intensity of the situation. *I also think these processes are context-dependent, making them different in each situation, like with the takeover issues. In the telephone conversation, for example, we started talking and the temperature went up to 100 degrees. I think there is a whole host of processes in figuring out solutions. In one, you may feel your blood pressure increase immediately, whereas in another you may feel a bit of worry or concern and a slight knot in your stomach. Others like an interruption to sign a document may stir up a feeling of irritation that passes quickly. It depends on the situation and the circumstances* (Interview 8, p. 1, lines 25–31).

Explaining the context of his emotional reflexivity, CJA described physiological, cognitive and emotional processes, occurring differently in each situation. He explained that when he reaches a conclusion, he feels emotionally resolved. Alternatively, with no resolution, he explained, *the feelings hang and its case of what next. Emotions don’t go away, they hover. I have to consciously, close gates during the sequence of events. I don’t control the emotions, they are there. I consciously focus on not letting the big, unresolved issues spill into the next issue. So, I control my reactions to the emotions. For me, the smaller cycles are benign but each requires your attention. Some issues are big, some are good and some are tough* (Interview 8, p. 2, lines 3–7).

Relevant to CJA’s descriptions is Rimé’s (2009) “model of the double impact of a past negative event” (p. 75). Although not about emotional reflexivity, his study about sharing emotion, has application value regarding lingering emotion or Burkitt’s (2012)
‘self-feeling’. He argues that, depending on intensity, emotion does not disappear as circumstances change but sets up residence within the life of a person. High-intensity emotion has a stronger and more extensive impact on subsequent life. Therefore, experiencing the emotion represents the beginning of multiple processes, including cognition, symbolic, affective and social processes, as well as stimulating meaning making (see Figure 7.2).

CJA explained the context of his emotions. Some issues go to the heart of my technical competence (Interview 8, p. 3, line 3), while others go the heart of my personal ethics (Interview 8, p. 3, line 12). The context is different. The consciousness comes in terms of not allowing the circles to get caught up in one another. I definitely see my process as cyclical. You have to look at it, analyse it and do something about it. Each has its own unique set of emotions. The good ones reset the clock a bit (Interview 8, p. 3, lines 13–16).

Figure 7.2: Adapted from Rimé’s (2009) Model of the double impact of past negative events (Illustrating the relevance of lingering emotion and its impact on current experiences).

Source: Rimé, 2009, p. 75
He explained that technical crises may awaken feelings of worry. Having dealt with several technical issues, he described a level of familiarity with the feelings involved, explaining that they involved fear of the unknown, with the fear manifesting physiologically as a knot in the stomach. CJA said the extent of the physiological response reflected the size of the issue, what and who was involved and how fixable it was. He explained, *the emotion is about uncertainty, apprehension and not knowing all the facts. Once I had the facts and could develop a plan, the emotion changed to expectancy and I focused on resolution* (Interview 8, p. 3, lines 6–9).

Referring to a crisis with significant implications, which I cannot disclose for confidentiality reasons, CJA explained, *this was a huge technical dilemma but because we came to a successful resolution, I said, let’s learn from this so we don’t make this mistake in the future. When I think about this today, I feel good emotion. I think about how we were able to resolve the issue … It came full circle because it had a solution and an end* (Interview 8, p. 3, lines 9–12).

On the other hand, he explained his reaction and emotional reflexivity when confidential leadership issues challenged his personal ethics. *Here, my character, who I am and who I stand for came into question, that part of me that involves my philosophy of life. This makes me angry when someone else questions my integrity especially when I know how I go about doing things* (Interview 8, p. 3, lines 24–26).

Patty: *What emotions come up when you think about this issue?*
CJA: *To this day, I still get angry. Emotion lingers with relationship issues* (Interview 10(b), p. 4, lines 9).

Here, CJA confirmed the relational nature of emotional reflexivity. He recalled meeting with *someone with a bit of the lingering issues*, at a business school function. He explained that his reaction to seeing this person was cordial. In his characteristic, matter-of-fact tone of voice he said:

*I consciously cut them out and control my reaction to them. I know that when I start thinking or talking about it, I get angry again and the emotion resurfaces as I re-experience it. Even questioning the integrity of others who I know are good people, like my colleagues and family, angers me. The Bible speaks about forgiveness. They stepped over a line. Had they apologised it may be different* (Interview 8, p. 4, lines 9–12).

The bridge metaphor comes to mind here (see Figure 8.1). In his description of his emotional reflexivity processes, CJA reflected on his emotions about leadership issues, his technical knowledge, his training and the reflexive discussions with his team. During the reflexive discussions with his team, or the ‘reflexive yoga’ as he now refers to these discussions because of the intensity of dealing with conflicting thoughts and ideas, he had an opportunity to affirm his decisions and wrestle with conflicts within the resolution process. Part of this process involved learning from mistakes, and considering new ways of doing things in the future. He agreed that a leader who is consciously and emotionally reflexive influences and develops an emotionally reflexive organisation.
Again, although not specific to leader emotional reflexivity, Rimé’s (2009) study on the social interrelatedness, sharing and regulation of emotion confirms the relevance of the LER bridge metaphor model (see Figure 8.1). Rimé argues that a memory network, working in line with emotional experiences and current adjustment, retains the indicator functions of emotions. Thoughts about negative emotional experiences trigger a re-examination of the functioning memory, thereby reigniting reflection, which involves overwhelming thoughts and visuals and a desire for interrelation. The emotion surfaces as a response that stimulates meaning making. Rimé (2009) asserts emotions are indicators of cognitive dissonance between worldview assumptions and the occurring incident. In this way emotions rouse action in the individual to decrease the dissonance. Thus, emotions are critical for a shift in human adjustment, creating potential for growth and development. Accordingly, emotions “contribute to expanding, adapting, transforming and repairing the individual’s models, theories, assumptions” and other views of themselves and the world (Rimé, 2009, p. 81).

CJA summarised his emotional reflexivity process briefly, saying:

*I feel, think consciously or subconsciously, while drawing on experience, internal beliefs and values embedded in the DNA, you know, the integrity and ethics* (Interview 8, p. 4, lines 17–18).

In conclusion, I asked: *How was this journey for you?*

Smiling widely, he replied, *it was interesting and different. I am not quite sure what I expected. The journey we went through was a lot longer than I thought it would be*
and a lot deeper. I discovered things about me that I never knew existed (Interview 8, p. 7, lines 2–4).

Patty: *Could we have done it quicker?*

CJA: *Probably not. It gave me insight into why I did things the way I did, which I would not have thought about had we not gone through this journey. It made me think about things that I had not thought about before. It was interesting in many ways. Many of us don’t consciously consider why we think about and do things the way we do. As a leader dealing with multiple issues daily we probably don’t consciously realise that we are emotionally reflexive* (Interview 8, p. 7, lines 6–10).

The preliminary literature review provided a means to develop the interdisciplinary conceptual framework which guided and enabled a focussed line of questioning, co-constructing and interpretation, and facilitated identification and consolidation of themes and categories throughout the interviews. In this way, the emergent theory solidified the interrelation between this leader’s psychosocial antecedents and his emotional reflexivity. Thus, the emergent theory illuminated the direction of the literature review and underscored the areas that needed detailed exploration of the literature and explication to develop the substantive theory.

With this interrelated understanding of leader emotional reflexivity, I present a three-dimensional conceptual model for LER namely: *The interrelated, subjective LER process* (see Figure 7.3); *The interrelated, subjective LER cycle* (see Figure 7.4); *The interrelated, subjective psychosocial antecedents involved in LER* (see Figure 7.5).
Figure 7.3: Ramsey (2017, January 8). A model of the interrelated, subjective LER process: An illustration of cyclical process of LER and the underlying influence of social construction, the subconscious blueprint and leader identity.
Figure 7.4: Ramsey (2017, January 8). A model of the interrelated subjective LER cycle: An illustration of CJA’s experience of resolved cycles and unresolved half cycles of reflection and reflexivity.
PART F - CHAPTER 7
EMERGENCE OF A SUBSTANTIVE THEORY

In the cycle of interrelation, as we create our realities (see Figure 5.3), feeling, questioning, resolving occurs (see Figure. 7.4). This feeling (heartfelt epiphany) stimulates questioning and motivates the desire for equilibrium through resolution. This feeling, whether positive or negative, occurs reflexively in relation to current leadership situations and experiences. In this way, context emerges through agentic rumination. In the case of negative feelings or those experiences that disturb habitus or create conflict with the subconscious context, the experience of reflexivity is intensified (Akram & Hogan, 2015) motivating dialectical, dialogical questioning. Reasoning and emotion being interdependent and interrelated (Burkitt, 2012; Holmes, 2010) shapes and influences the inner dialogue (Burkitt, 2012).

Questioning is about uncertainty and discomfort (Pollner, 1991) and involves habitus (Burkitt, 2003) and the desire to revert back to established ways of doing things. Leader social and institutional construction, based on the embedded subconscious design, act as a lens in magnifying or diminishing the inner compass. In this way, social and institutionally conditioned beliefs, habitus, agency and structure influence leader self-critical questioning and evaluation. Such questioning occurs in relation to feelings about the self, as well as those involved in the leadership situation and the world (see Figure 7.5).

The interviews revealed a passionate leader, with an inimitable inner compass. His life experiences shaped his legacy of questioning existing perceptions. Many of his self-reflective and reflexive questions stemmed from challenges to his most important values, namely, fairness, equality and justice in everything.
The questions he experienced were rooted in his emotional commitment to the ethical standards he embraced in living according to his values. CJA and I journeyed together; discovering, interpreting and understanding his emotional reflexivity processes (see Figure 8.3). Throughout our adventure, our lives intersected. For this reason, I believe this is an appropriate time to share my narrative as the researcher and how it influenced the retelling of his story.
7.4. **SUMMARY**

I developed a conceptual framework of LER processes and explained how CJA experienced his emotional reflexivity. Using the LER bridge metaphor model, I elucidated his internal cognitive, emotional processes. In this manner, I looked to his story to develop a substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity. Building the substantive theory, I used abductive reasoning and integrated our interpretations and his lived experiences with the second-order abstract concepts proposed by scholars.

In retelling CJA’s story, I included parts from the interviews to highlight our process – digging, interpreting and understanding his innermost emotions and thoughts about critical events and situations in his life. In addition, I included my thoughts, analysis and reflections illustrating the dual reflexivity within the study, to add depth.
Part F encompasses the following two chapters:

**Chapter 8**

I share a personal experience in my life that was relevant to the study.

**Chapter 9**

This part entails a summary of the thesis as well as the weaknesses, findings, implications and recommendations of the study.
8.1. INTRODUCTION

In this segment of the journey, I share the activities leading up to an experience in my life that had a significant impact on me specifically because of its relevance to the study. I begin with a brief personal introduction to create context.

8.2. MY STORY WITHIN THE STORY

To begin at the beginning of my story would take away from the purpose of this thesis. Therefore, a recent beginning with a tiny measure of demographic detail is more appropriate. One of nine children, I was named Patricia Myrna Marshman. I met my charming husband, first boyfriend and only love at the tender age of eighteen. We were married in 1980 after a passionate, high-school romance that stretched over three exciting years of intense dating. Reflecting on our marriage reveals that the years since 1980 were wonderful, filled with surprise, adventure and not without challenges that only served to strengthen our bond.

We travelled extensively throughout our marriage and lived in the USA for close to seven years where our two daughters, Stacey and Tatum, enjoyed their formative schooling. Living in Colorado and, for a short time in San Francisco, California were the most rewarding years of our life together. We grew as a couple and a family and learnt more about ourselves during that time than any other. When our children left
the nest to start their own families, we found ourselves in an interesting phase of our lives and we wanted to celebrate our new found freedom as a couple. We did this by travelling to at least one international destination every year, henceforth. This tale begins with our preparations for one such adventure.

8.3. A TALE FROM TWO REFLEXIVITIES

On 3 August 2015, Prof and I had a supervision meeting. The topic of our discussion was about writing up my research. At the time, as noted in Chapter 1, I was struggling to conceptualise a writing style to represent the data and found myself working on my thesis for the entire year (2015) without significant progress. This is the same supervision meeting I shared in Chapter 1 when Prof suggested that I write from memory. However, there was some missing information. This is what happened before his insightful and valuable suggestion:

We had a lunch meeting at a restaurant. The setting was dark and rustic with lanterns glowing on the tables. We sat at a corner table. Since it was a weekday around noon, the restaurant was quiet. Prof had already ordered lunch because I was a bit late. I ordered a Greek salad and mango juice. The atmosphere in our meeting was different from other meetings. Prof was solemn and less forthcoming compared to other meetings. I was too. He asked me, "Where do you sit and work on your research ... Do you have a space that serves as a muse?" Thoughtfully, I replied, I work everywhere in my home. Smiling inwardly, I thought, I do love that I have a variety of spaces to work in. Looking at Prof, I replied, the balcony is my favourite space. I love the room Mark and I created there. I enjoy the view of the hills, the trees and the birds chirping, especially early in the morning.

On this note, I felt an earthquake erupt in my heart. Breathe Patty, breathe ... I told myself. I squeezed my hands together tightly, hoping it would dissolve the rising wave of panic enveloping my body. My face felt miserable. It felt like the muscles dropped, succumbing to gravitation. I felt my breath stop and the heaviness in my chest pulled me forward in my chair.
Wow! I am struggling to rewrite this right now. My face just dropped. I need a moment. I’m right back there ... Ok, let me proceed.

Prof sat quietly. With his elbow on the table he thoughtfully stroked the white beard on his chin. His other forearm and hand rested on the table in front of his chest. After a short while he interrupted my thoughts and it seemed he read them too because he asked, in a very gentle tone of voice, “How has Mark’s death impacted your research?”

Instinctively, I leaned back into my chair, took a moment and a deep breath. Tipping my head to one side and averting my eyes from his, I answered, I don’t see things the same way anymore. My journey with God is much more intense. He replied, “That is very important.” We were quiet for a few moments and the waiter interrupted us with the food.


After lunch, our meeting proceeded as I described at the beginning of the journey. Driving home was surreal. In fact, everything felt surreal. I felt excited and eager to write. In some way writing this thesis felt like Mark was on the research journey with me, Prof and CJA. I listened to Marc Antoine and Richard Elliot, jazz artists Mark and I enjoyed. The instrumental melodies washed over me, massaging my soul. I felt grateful for our journey together.

The time preceding Mark’s death was busy, exciting and filled with preparations and anticipation. In July 2014, eager and with enormous expectancy, I completed my fieldwork. I took the month of August to prepare for a planned trip to Bali, Indonesia. At the time, Mark and I were in the process of finishing some renovations to our home. Our property is situated high and on a very rocky stand/lot with terraced garden beds. Gardening was another of our adventures and we wanted a small herb
and vegetable garden. Having no room on the terraces, Mark was excited and was in the process of building a mini greenhouse that would provide a workable space for the vegetables and herbs and protect them from the abundant birdlife. It was birthday gift from him to me. My birthday was approaching in October.

Filled with excitement about the beginning of the spring season, we prepared the mini greenhouse for planting before our holiday in September. Mark in typical excess, bought a variety of seedlings not caring about the conditions they needed in order to grow. We planted them together, laughing and sharing the pleasure of a project completed.

In addition to the greenhouse, we took on a DIY project laying laminate floors in a room we set up as a meditation/prayer space in our home. Enthusiastic about early morning and evenings in this space, our plan was to add plants, pillows and an ocean mural on one of the walls. Laying the strips of flooring proved challenging but we pressed on consulting Google for video instructions. The first quarter of the room was a game of let’s repeat what we just did. Mark, however, in his genius way, figured out the process. As I recall, that was the best joint project experience we ever had. Typically, we would have had some good fights in-between such a project. We worked together, laughing and joking, with music in the background. It took four weekends of sweating in between the cool, restoring, spring, breeze from the window and front door.

Our anticipated holiday plans in Bali included a tour around the island, visiting the temples, spa treatments, yoga and two favourite activities, long walks on the beach
and swimming in the Indian Ocean. Bubbling with anticipation, we could hardly wait
to leave. On 19 September 2014, expectant, happy and with childlike excitement,
we boarded a plane to Denpasar, Indonesia. The journey was long, but we loved
travelling and enjoyed every moment. We arrived in Bali on a balmy Saturday
afternoon and collected our rental car, a gold coloured Toyota Avanza, in the high-
rise parking facility at the airport.

Traffic in Bali is otherworldly. Scooters buzz through the crowded streets in their
hundreds, taking the smallest gap in between cars and instantly filling it. Interes-
tingly, while we were there we noticed that there were no incidents of road
rage, a characteristic of the religion reflected in the culture; we were told. The hotel
was set in a village surrounded by obscure homes. The décor was modern with hints
of Balinese furniture and architecture. On our second day, we began our exploration
and visited the temples and the markets, enjoying delicious Balinese cuisine with
hard-to-swallow imported red wine served in the tiniest wine glasses. We missed the
abundance of delicious South African wine and the ample servings back home
laughing and joking about it at dinner. The heat was intense and we enjoyed languid
dips in the hotel swimming pool while practicing the few Indonesian words we
learned with some of the locals. The people were friendly and helpful and enjoyed
our bad pronunciation of the words we thought we had mastered.

Significantly, by the morning of our fifth day in Bali, we talked about how
uncharacteristic it was that we had not been to the beach to swim in the ocean.
Typically, on our coastal holidays the beach was the first place we visited. After
breakfast, I convinced Mark to go swimming at the beach nearby. We stopped at a
store for some cold drinks and he bought two chocolate bars, smiling as he handed them to me. We set off like two kids on an adventure. It was a hot, humid day. We strolled down the beach together our feet and calves darkened by the black beach sand typical of the south-western side of the island.

Mark went in for a dip and I noticed the waves crossing over one another as they broke on the sand. I called out to him and suggested we walk further to find a more suitable place to swim. We walked into the waves together and his last words to me were, “Wow, the current is strong”. On that day, just after midday, on 25 September 2014, my soulmate, confidante, one and only love, partner in everything, my husband, drowned in the Indian Ocean. The rip tide was too strong. Exhausted from fighting the waves, he drowned before the surfers reached him.

When the first surfer emerged from the ocean, he said with pain on his face, “the guy just up and died”. I completely dismissed his words believing Mark was just tired and that he would at any moment begin paddling from the surfboard, to safety. I kept saying in a low voice “paddle babe, paddle. Come on!” He didn’t paddle because he couldn’t. He was gone, taken up into the arms of our Lord. For the next hour, I administered CPR and continued throughout the drive to the hospital, with help from the ambulance attendant. Our efforts were futile.

On the evening of 26 September 2014, in shock, devastated, physically weak, feeling like I was in another dimension, alone in our hotel room, I tried making sense of what had happened. My mind would not cooperate. Instead, it felt blank. I leaned against the headboard and sat up in bed the entire night incessantly calling on God
for strength. I needed strength to do what was required to get Mark home. In those
moments, I could not fathom the feelings I was experiencing in the depths of my
soul, of my being. Mark’s suitcase was on the floor against the wall on my right as I
sat on the bed. I kept looking towards it, hoping he would emerge from the bathroom
to the left of the suitcase, at any moment. I couldn’t breathe. Overcome with
inexplicable pain and internal chaos, I wrote in my travel journal:

What pain is this?
That hastens me to breathlessness,
Where ceaseless breaths
Do nought to kerb its deepening depths!
When tirelessly I fight to numb its hold,
I feel most weary and yes, so old!

Is love so fierce?
That more brings forth a tide of pain to pierce!
What little hope of endless joy we crave?
Before time ill spent beckons the grave.

I hold forever in my heart, my love ...
Our depth, our joy, our pain, our love and zest!
And pray our bond and You,
Forever in God’s arms may rest.


When I looked at the time on my cell phone, it was 5:57 a.m. I recall that I started
this poem in between drying my hair the previous night. My energy was low and the
dryer was heavy. Sitting in front of the mirror, I took breaks to rest my arms and
gazed out of the large window on my left. The reflection of the vacant king-sized bed
behind me screamed, ‘He’s not coming back!’ My face and eyes were puffy and felt
wet and sticky as I looked alternately at my reflection in the mirror, the empty bed and the window. I didn’t care. I let the tears roll down my face to drop wherever they chose.

I remember the noise from the dryer helping with the deafening silence in the room. I felt intense pain in my chest. It felt like my heart was literally chopped into pieces. I could barely sit upright and just breathing was exhausting. I gasped for breath as I dried my hair, put the dryer down and reached for my journal. I think I wrote to feel normal, to do something familiar and perhaps mostly, in search of meaning.

Reading this poem now, in August 2016, I hardly believe I wrote it. I have no recollection of where the words came from, the recesses of my mind, the depths of the pain I felt in my heart or the emptiness in my body and my soul. Reflecting on it now constricts my breathing. I cannot believe he is dead … dead, what a horrible word.

Mark’s passing catapulted me into a state of intense, emotional reflexivity. In the months that followed, deep within the stages of grief, I relived the events of that day, thinking about what I thought and felt in those endless moments, questioning how I could I have avoided it, berating myself for not doing more, blaming myself for his death. Repeatedly, I experienced every second and every feeling, the panic, intense fear, physical pain and discomfort in my chest and stomach. I felt my body quiver in hope and need for intervention from God as I prayed. I also experienced my rational self in those moments. “Patty, everything will be ok. Mark is fine. No! He may not be fine! He may be dead! No, he can’t be. Oh, please God, please … What will I do?
How do I tell my kids? How will I explain to them their dad is gone and it’s my fault? I should have done something, anything... more. Take control Patty, he is ok.” I remember his face, his hands, feet, toes and the tattoo of my name on his left arm. He was not “ok”. Again, trying to make sense of my loss I wrote:

_I feel paralysed by my feelings. Now, seven months after Mark’s death I can’t get back the brief clarity I had while following the legal and logistical requirements to bring Mark home from Bali. My mind knows what to do but my heart has no strength, or is it the other way around?
_


My thesis became my lifeline. In some way, it was a tangible connection to him. I sat on our balcony bringing Mark there with me, working on it, finding motivation in my memory of our love and our life. I wrestled with my loss and with existential
questions about the meaning of my life with my husband and now, alone. I questioned the value my thesis besides the connection it symbolised between us.

Questioning the purpose of my life, I searched for answers about death and eternal life, praying for signs from God to show me what heaven was like. He answered my prayers.

Although I understood and found refuge in my religious beliefs, many thoughts invaded my mind, twisting my heart, evident in the emotional, paralysis and hurting my body. I was deep in the miry clay trekking forward one heavy step at a time, clinging to my thesis, grateful, praying to God for strength and guidance. Every moment in 2015, was a moment in prayer to reach the next moment.

As I reflect now, working on my research each day, really experiencing the depths of emotional reflexivity albeit in a state of grief, brought with it gifts from heaven. In 2015, I worked tirelessly, most days finishing only a paragraph that I reworked several times later. Sending a draft to Prof, I recall reading his acknowledgement, “thank you, Patty, I received your 60 pages”. Writing about it now makes me laugh.

In experiencing the research journey intertwined with my grief, my heart expanded through the daily routine and intellectual stimulation the research offered me. The study opened my mind to a deep, conscious awareness of reflexivity and in particular, of emotion in reflexivity. In experiencing the study, pushing myself, drawing on my emotional reflexivity about Mark’s death, I developed a deeper appreciation for the importance of the concept of a paradigm shift in relation to
leadership and the power leaders have in impacting people’s lives. My work has new meaning for me because of the study.

In writing my thesis, I experienced a shift in the way I react to others. Engaging with CJA about his life and leadership, and with Prof, in his lengthy emails and text messages, in his admonishments and encouragements, I developed a deeper appreciation for context. In OD, context is critical as I connect with leaders emotionally. I found that taking the time to reflect on context in every situation has added a layer of depth to my perception. I have discovered that I can deal with conflict or difficult situations differently now. Applying the bridge metaphor for emotional reflexivity, I now view the emotion that I experience during challenging situations as heartfelt epiphanies. When I experience intense feelings, they become my propellers. In my work, and in my life, reflecting on the context of others as well as my own from the past, present and future perspective is what enables a more intentional and productive reaction to significant experiences.

On a personal note, I value my connection with God and the Holy Spirit more now than ever before. I feel God cloaking me with love and comfort. I feel his presence in every cell in my body, filling me with strength, direction and intention. Gratitude, abundance, comfort and being in the moment have new meaning for me now.

From this research experience, I know that emotion is central to reflexivity. I am not suggesting that leader emotional reflexivity compares to grief. Grief is gut-wrenching, sometimes debilitating and all-encompassing in its assault physiologically, cognitively, emotionally and spiritually. Although the research journey compared to
the physiological, emotional and spiritual intensity of grief, the difference is that there is no loss in research. The analogy that grief extends to leader emotional reflexivity is in the potential for growth and learning and, an internal, emotional shift away from narrow, limiting perceptions.
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_A self is not something static tied up in a pretty parcel and handed to the child finished and complete. A self is always becoming_ (Madeleine L'Engle).

9.1. INTRODUCTION

On a final note, I begin this segment with a précis of the study. The thesis comprises four parts, namely, Part A: Preparing the reader for the journey (Chapter 1); Part B: The research journey (Chapters 2, 3 and 4); Part C: Direction from the literature (Chapter 5); Part D: The leader and his story (Chapter 6), Part E: Towards developing a substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity (Chapter 7); and Part F: Final reflections and concluding chapter (Chapters 8 and 9). The synopsis is followed by a discussion of first, the findings, second, the implications, third, the conclusions fourth, the recommendations and finally the noticeable weaknesses. I begin with the précis.

9.2. PRÉCIS

In _Chapter 1_, I began with an introduction to the writing of this story. Beginning with scholarly advice on how to creatively write up qualitative research, I elucidated the interesting and colourful techniques available, the creativity allowed and the criteria involved in ensuring the doctoral standards and a plausible gestalt. I described the way that my unorthodox first chapter unwittingly evolved from my experience of reflexivity in my study. The constant reflexivity I experienced during this writing
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phase provoked, stimulated and directed insight, understanding, interpretation and discovery not only of emotion in reflexivity, but also in the writing style and format for the thesis. In addition, I chose this unusual first chapter as an explanation of the illustration of language both as the vehicle and as an instrument for co-developing the narrative and retelling the leader's story. Addressing reflexivity in the writing, I included reflections on my internal process and my emotional and physiological experience of undertaking this research. I explained the editing of transcriptions to improve the reading experience. Finally, I described my editing of the text in the dissertation to facilitate an easy reading experience.

In Chapter 2, I delivered a scholarly perspective for the study to create context for the research problem and shared what inspired me to undertake the research Here, I began with the South African context and the challenges of a new democracy relevant to global dimensions in leadership development. Following on leader performance I elucidated the need for more than mere training programmes to develop leader mental and emotional capacity. In explaining what the literature has to say about emotional intelligence and the focus on regulating and controlling emotion, as opposed to understanding the source of emotion, I presented various scholarly perspectives. These included rational mental models, a constructive developmental perspective, and the agreement in large organisations on the value of emotion in leadership.

In Chapter 3, I described how the study was conceived and developed with consciousness of researcher reflexivity. I described this reflexive experience in how I formulated the key focus of the study. I explained that the primary focus of my study
was to unravel, interpret and understand the dynamics of the internal emotional reality of this particular leader. The essence of the study involved his internal, subjective, emotional experiences and interpretative processes and their context. The context involved his self-reflexivity, relative to his life story and career. I proceeded with a description of my aim to excavate the leader’s subjective emotional reflexivity process and, thus, to develop a substantive theory.

In formulating the research question, I explicated my own inner conversation to illustrate how I understood the research problem relevant to my work. I described my reflections about how I experienced leaders in my work and the way I understood the research problem, namely, ‘emotion is undervalued in reflexivity theory and hence leader reflexivity’ by engaging my internal reflexivity process. With insights obtained from the literature, I explained how I arrived at the research question namely:

What is the emotional reflexivity process of a leader as he reflects on his daily leadership role?

With the research question in mind and with help from the literature, I described my reflexive process in developing the objectives for the study. In this constant process of recalling and re-experiencing the emotions involved in my work dealing with the inner workings and emotions of leader decision-making, behaviour and performance, I explained how I called on my ontology and epistemology, my passion for my work, my socio-cultural/political context and, what the scholars say about engaging in qualitative research and, accordingly, explained the anticipated theoretical and practical contributions for the research.
Finally, I described my epistemological circularity and the emotions involved in my experience of the five circular phases of the research process to give the reader a lifelike experience of what epistemological circularity entails. Given the nature of the study, with two parallel, but interrelated, intersecting streams of reflexivity – mine and my storyteller’s – I wanted the reader to experience at the outset the way plunging into reflexivity and really experiencing the questions and emotions created a consciousness of my epistemic, methodological and methodological reflexivity, directing my path throughout the research.

In this way, I hoped to convey an understanding of emotional reflexivity, using my own researcher experience of the various kinds of reflexivity as an analogy for understanding leader emotional reflexivity. In elucidating my epistemological circularity throughout the phases, my intention was to demonstrate how the different types of reflexivity continuously intersected in each of the circular research phases, adding richness to the way that I perceived and experienced the study. I believed this was important as a contextual precursor to understanding CJA’s emotional reflexivity processes.

In Chapter 4, I began with a scholarly review of the literature relevant to designing the research and the different varieties of methods in qualitative inquiry. I described the various historical moments in qualitative research and included the reflexive process in establishing the blurred genres moment as applicable to the study.

I described the process of moving through the research phases conceptualising the research design. Thereafter, I proceeded and illuminated my discovery of the
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constructivist, *blurred genres*, approach and the philosophical underpinnings of my constructivist ontology and epistemology in designing an interdisciplinary, reflexive, life story approach from a topic viewpoint. Since I chose a single life story approach, I presented the challenges relating to the case study as an example of how I would address the issue of trustworthiness in a single life story. Explaining my use of metaphor, which formed a golden thread throughout the story, I explained the usefulness of life story in answering the research question from a psychosocial perspective.

Next, I illuminated my choice of Straussian grounded theory for analysis of the data (Glaser & Strauss, 2009). I explicated the way Straussian grounded theory resonated with my constructivist interpretive approach for unearthing this leader’s inner emotional world. Regarding my application of the literature, I explained how I incorporated the literature as expert witnesses from a Straussian grounded theory perspective. I explained my application of a middle of the road approach between the ‘ignorance is bliss’ perspective and having an understanding of the topic before embarking on the study (Shank, 2006). I steered clear of the literature until the data were saturated and found a natural inclination toward the literature for guidance on proceeding with deeper analysis after completing the in-depth interviews.

Generating theory from my findings, I applied abductive reasoning, which proceeded from the lived experiences presented in the critical incidents within the context of CJA’s life story, to the abstract thoughts and emotions, using Mouton and Marais’s (1996) analytical tools typology to guide the development of a substantive theory for LER. I followed with a discussion of the usefulness of life story in generating theory
from the interviews, using narrative analysis and rigorous thematic comparison of
data with data, including field notes, reflective notes, personal journal entries, as well
as documents from my storyteller and supervision notes. In this way, I developed
themes using open, axial and selective coding and organising the themes into
categories as these emerged. Because of the nature of the research involving
emotions, personal experiences and meaning making, the ethical considerations
were important.

Abiding by the general principles of moral and ethical behaviour in research, I
discussed how I developed rapport in my relationship with my storyteller. I described
how we navigated ethical concerns as we encountered and experienced them
throughout the research, while consistently focusing on ensuring respect through my
behaviour and ensuring my participant’s emotional safety. In addition, I described
how I adopted the three-step research ethics code of behaviour of the Faculty of
Management and clarified my roles and responsibilities as the researcher, noting the
boundaries between research and counselling, given my training.

Thereafter, I illuminated the key decision steps in the research process, namely: (i)
the leadership setting and how I was reflexively guided by the interdisciplinary
research approach, strategy and research question in the choice of setting; (ii)
access to my storyteller and how I planned to make contact with previous clients as
gatekeepers. I explained how this initial strategy changed because of my experience
of CJA. I followed with an explanation of the significant suitability of my participant in
my decision to follow a case study approach; (iii) selecting my storyteller and the
initial decision to use non-probability criterion-based qualitative sampling led by two
leaders who had previously confirmed their participation. I planned to ask for their assistance in referring me to other leaders and proceeding with the snowballing technique; (iv) data collection involving an initial face-to-face unstructured interview, followed by eight in-depth, open-ended semi-structured interviews, one which included my storyteller’s wife and an additional interview with his sister on the family farm.

In addition, I explained my use of methodological and field notes, during the interviews, reflective notes after the interviews and reflective supervisory notes. I then explained how I recorded the interviews and stored them on an external USB flash drive and on the OneNote application on my computer and, finally; (v) my strategies to ensure trustworthy research.

These strategies, explained in detail in section 4.9.4 included to begin with, credibility. Here, I focused on thoroughness in the long in-depth interviews. I applied supervisory debriefing conducted by Professor Schurink and a peer review by Dr Magda Hewitt. In addition, I applied member validation (see Addendum 1) as well as checking the accuracy of our interpretations throughout the study. With consistent observation during the interviews, triangulation and verification by interviewing CJA’s wife and sister, I ensured additional rigour in the study. Outlining the strategies for analysing and redeveloping the themes and categories in the thesis, I described my use of Straussian grounded theory techniques in analysing the data. Using a reflective, emotional academic style in narrative format, I employed thick descriptions including both CJA’s and my own context, rationale and thought processes with reflections of researcher reflexivity throughout his story.
To address dependability and authenticity, which occurs through credibility as already discussed, I tracked the research process using memos. Open-ended questioning and the critical incident technique facilitated the development of CJA’s story. I strengthened the story by illustrating our learning as we co-constructed our interpretations in the two parallel streams of reflexivity. I consistently integrated practical examples, my work experiences, current events, the various notes and journal entries and wisdom from scholars in the story.

Addressing confirmability, my researcher reflexivity and self-reflexivity throughout the study intertwined with CJA’s biographical story and created a parallel reflexivity experience lending greater depth and understanding to the construct under study. My understanding as an instrument in the research does not mean absolute truth about emotional reflexivity was obtained, but rather greater depth. I found that I could not separate the two streams of reflexivity, thereby adding my own subjectivity, which I appreciated as increasing insight in our interpretations.

Finally, in ensuring the trustworthiness, reflexivity was critical especially given the nature of the study. The entire thesis provides evidence of thick, reflective, emotional and academic descriptions. I described my non-stop, frustrating and rewarding experience of epistemological circularity through the research phases. Reflecting on my own subjectivity, I considered my personal biases in relation to the research maximising the supervision debriefings for added clarity and understanding. I added diagrams (figures) in keeping with Straussian grounded theory data analysis, photos and direct quotations from CJA to demonstrate the research topic in the retelling of his story.
Weaving in my reflexive experiences and our emotional meaning making throughout the thesis provided explanations of how and why I arrived at my decisions and actions. I also described how I implemented techniques and my motivations for questions and probing. My intention was to retell CJA’s story in a manner that conveyed the emotion involved. In this way, I hoped to demonstrate the research problem in the writing.

In **Chapter 5**, I presented a scholarly perspective for the study. I began with an explanation of the interdisciplinary approach and the disciplines included in the study. I explained how I had created a leadership development context within the multidisciplinary, theoretical framework. Thereafter, I continued and discussed the value of emotion and reflexivity in global leadership development. I presented detailed descriptions and arguments from the literature for each of the constructs involved in answering the research question namely, leadership and leader-identity development, how leader identity develops from self-concept/identity as one of many identities representing the self. Expounding reflexivity as the next construct, I discussed its origins in reflection and how scholars define this construct, while paying attention to the two streams of reflexivity. I proceeded with a detailed elucidation of the foundational importance of Holland’s (1999) transdisciplinary reflexivity model to create deeper understanding of the interrelated, rational roots of reflexivity. Finally, I discussed the different perspectives and the nature of emotion. Using insights from the literature, I described how emotion arises and manifests in the body and the importance of interrelation in understanding emotion. This detailed discussion was fundamental to expanding on the limited studies on LER processes,
thereby filling the gap in the literature. I explained my extrapolations from the existing literature in making meaning from what was available in studies on reflexivity, emotion and leader development and applying these insights from scholars as experts to answering the research question.

Next, I elucidated the sociological, psychosocial and cultural determinants of LER and how the socially situated setting of leadership encompasses constructs from psychology. I discussed at length how emotion, agency and habitus are socially embedded within the individual. Within this context, I explained how interrelated, external, psychosocial conditioning such as organisational institutionalising and socialisation, along with structure and agency, have an impact on a leader’s internal world in developing his/her leader identity. Here, I included Bandura’s (2006) four principles of agency and discussed their relevance to developing leader identity through emotional reflexivity.

These descriptions and discussions in the thesis included practical examples, namely, the 2016 American presidential election and the motion picture “Crash”, my experiences with and reflections on interventions involving leaders and managers in my OD role as illustrations of how the subconscious blueprint informs leader actions and decisions. In these descriptions, emotion and social conditioning, the past and current context of experiences and situations, personal inclinations, personality and self-concept, considered choices and institutional influences, collectively and reflexively, come together in illuminating LER.
In addition, I discussed the need for self-awareness and subjectivity relevant to continuous and consistent LER to develop leader identity. I illuminated how an understanding of interrelation and emotional reflexivity processes has the potential to facilitate the development of emotional/cultural insight and competence over the span of a leader’s career. My intention was to develop a substantive theory by illuminating the way emotional reflexivity involves a rational, dialogical, relational, interpretive, embodied experience. Importantly, I wanted to highlight how leader reflexivity, involving questioning, reviewing and reconstructing ontological beliefs and socialised assumptions, occurred through the experience of emotion. Emotion, therefore, was the stimulator of a reflexive, cognitive-emotional paradigm shift essential for developing leader identity for future worldwide leadership. In developing the substantive theory, I hoped to challenge the research problem.

**In Chapter 6,** I presented the data in the form of a life story narrative. I began the leader’s narrative with a short story about how applying Staussarian grounded theory techniques using comparative analysis facilitated the discovery of the ‘CJA’ pseudonym for my storyteller. I then proceeded to describe our exciting voyage into the life of this esteemed leader. I described how, together, we walked a path into the deepest reaches of his mind and, as much as he could allow, into his heart to excavate his emotional reflexivity process.

In detailed narrative style, I described how on this journey, CJA reviewed and interrogated five decades of the mysteries of his life and leadership to reveal his emotional meaning making and interpretation as we co-developed his narrative. I
elucidated our process of moving back and forth between the data to deepen our understanding and interpretations with the aim of developing a substantive theory. I also provided quotations from CJA as we dug, sifted, sorted and unearthed his memories of events, experiences, situations, loved ones, friends, family, educators and the world in our quest to understand his emotional reflexivity process. I described and explained how events, experiences and situations in his life linked to the psychosocial antecedents and influenced his leadership decisions and actions. In presenting my thoughts and reflections in the story, I illustrated the various types of researcher reflexivity in the writing of the thesis. Finally, I described the critical incidents in his life and leadership and the emotions they elicited as CJA addressed these challenging life and leadership experiences. In this way, focusing on the critical incidents, we began to uncover his emotional reflexivity processes.

In Chapter 7, I described the emergence of the substantive theory of leader emotional reflexivity. I included segments from the interviews to illustrate our iterative process of comparing previous disclosures and interpretations with new emerging insights as we excavated his emotions towards interpreting and understood his emotional processes reflexively. In this process of analysis, the LER bridge metaphor model emerged from the data (see Figure 8.1) and as we co-constructed and interpreted his subjective, internal, emotional meaning making. I explained how I combined our interpretations with abstract second-order constructs (Mouton, 1995) from the literature and CJA’s significant critical incidents and life story situations.
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In **Chapter 8** I presented a poignant experience in my life that significantly intersected with the study. Describing the experience, I explained how it impacted the study and what I learned from it. I discussed how this personal experience could be considered as a weakness of the study but that in my opinion, it added depth to the research that might otherwise not have been present. Next, I discuss the noticeable weaknesses of the study.

**Noticeable weaknesses**

Let me begin by acknowledging that the ontology and epistemology of the study recognised that knowledge is subjective, always evolving and transforming, and is not static or completely objective. With this subjectivity in mind, throughout our journey CJA and I unlocked, conveyed and co-constructed meaning as embedded in our own socio/cultural/political worlds, through our conversations and interaction with each other.

In qualitative research, random sampling is atypical. Therefore, samples may be small, as is the case with this life story study, thereby raising the issue of bias (Morse, 2015). In this instance, I selected my storyteller because he demonstrated significant ability to answer the research question, thus suggesting researcher bias in the study.

Throughout the research analysis process, I was cognisant of the criticisms of grounded theory methodology. The most notable is the split between Glasserian and Straussarian perspectives (Goulding, 2002) and unclear procedural guidelines.
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(Benoliel, 1996; Charmaz, 2014). The concern is that the split creates confusion in understanding and application. Indeed, confusion was the case initially, but through my reflexive process, a deeper understanding emerged. Straussarian grounded theory allowed use of the literature during the proposal development stage of the study and in the literature review after the interviews. In using techniques from Straussarian grounded theory for data analysis, I found that once the data were saturated, I experienced a natural pull towards the literature.

Another criticism is the misalignment resulting from grounded theory’s origin in positivism/objectivism while employing constructionist and interpretivist tools (Bryant, 2002). In view of the above, an interpretivist approach lends itself to lack of standardisation, which means there are no specific linear criteria that set out the path to follow. While this provided freedom to unearth meaning, scholars warn that it creates an opportunity for vagueness (Glesne, 1999). However, Straussarian grounded theory does provide structure in the data analysis through thematic analysis and coding.

With respect to the benefits of using grounded theory, it offered the dimension necessary to develop an understanding of and, to interpret multifaceted phenomena (Charmaz, 2003) from a multidisciplinary perspective. In analysing the data, grounded theory takes social matters into account (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) because it allows for the discovery and emergence of theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), well suited to my constructivist, interpretive framework.
With respect to the trustworthiness of qualitative research, researchers apply strategies as outlined in the literature (Guba, 1981; Morrow, 2002, 2006). In considering the weaknesses of research one must also examine these strategies and techniques used and the impact they have when conducting the research. In particular, applying the parallel criteria, namely, authenticity, dependability and transferability, outside of a post-positivist research perspective means there may be logical discrepancies and overlap.

However, there is no specific measure of whether these strategies are correctly and appropriately applied except for the researcher's interpretation of how they apply. If we recognise numerous realities, how certain can we be that all the realities involved in a study, are indeed accurate (Gray, 2008)? This subjectivity in striving for trustworthiness presents an area of uncertainty in qualitative research (Morse, 2015).

Regarding data collection, while interviews are more suitable for qualitative research, single participant interviews may lack the depth needed for deep analysis (Holmes, 2010). For this reason, I conducted in-depth interviews lasting three to four hours each. I interviewed the participant’s wife and sister to provide perspectives from relatives who enjoy a deep relationship with CJA. While these participants provided additional perspectives on CJA’s outward behavioural displays, they did not offer insight into his internal emotional meaning making. In addition, since they were family members, the issue of bias also arises here. I therefore, carefully considered issues concerning the analysis of the data.
Like most emotional experiences, emotional reflexivity is difficult to research (Fineman, 2004; Holmes, 2015). While textual analysis provides contextual data with respect to norms about emotional experiences, this method is not relational or active and therefore does not lend itself to the actual interactions involved (Holmes, 2015). In addition, while the study acknowledged the neurological foundations of emotional and reflexivity processes advantageous for an integrative leader development framework, the research embraced a sociological perspective.

Emotion and reflexivity as social constructs are difficult to research because the literature on these constructs is not conclusive. Also, both constructs are multidimensional and, as such, involve numerous neurological and physiological processes which were noted but not studied for the purpose of this study. The multidimensional nature of the study therefore presented paradigmatic consideration.

With respect to the interdisciplinary research paradigm, although philosophy was not one of the disciplines included in the study, philosophical principles are entrenched in research analysis and reflection. Therefore, the interaction of philosophy with social psychology, particularly as it relates to LER, reflects a weakness in the study. These interactions are at best irregular and vary depending on the respective perspectives of the two disciplines (Bunge & Ardila, 1987; Hoerl, McCormack, & Beck, 2011).
9.3. KEY FINDINGS

As noted above, the study acknowledges that numerous processes are involved in LER. The research confirmed the following findings integrated with acknowledgement of the numerous multidimensional, neurological, physical, emotional and cognitive processes:

i. Emotion as a human capacity is central in leader reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012).

ii. Emotion shapes and influences reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012).

iii. Reflexivity has cyclical and transdisciplinary foundations (Holland, 1999).


v. LER is ongoing, as is reflexivity (Archer, 2003; Gray, 2008), and because it is not labelled, leaders may not be consciously aware of it (see quote from CJA); however, leader identity reflects in how leaders respond to their internal emotional reflexivity.

Many of us don’t consciously consider why we think about and do things the way we do. As a leader, dealing with multiple issues daily we probably don’t consciously realise that we are emotionally reflexive (Interview 8, p. 7, lines 6–10).
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vi. Lingering emotion about significant past life and leadership incidents, together with self-feeling (wow moments) in the current situation, inform leader reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012; Holmes, 2010, Rimé, 2009).

vii. Fundamental to reflexivity is Holmes’s (2010) argument in favour of “emotionalising” reflexivity theory.

viii. Interrogating life story meaningfully illuminates the psychosocial (Holland, 1999) determinants as the source of emotion in reflexivity.

ix. The study confirmed the power of emotion in leadership (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000; Ayoko & Konrad, 2012; Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002; Hansen et al., 2007; Huxtable-Thomas et al., 2016; Li et al., 2016; Rubin et al., 2005; Sadri et al., 2011) and illuminated the value of understanding and consciously engaging in emotional reflexivity to challenge and reconstitute a limiting, leader, subconscious design.

Next, I address the implications of the findings.

9.4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

Fundamental to understanding emotional reflexivity is Holmes’s (2010) argument in favour of “emotionalising” reflexivity theory. The relevance of this argument is confirmed by the above findings. The study highlighted the presence and influence of emotion and emotional reflexivity in leader identity development. The study also highlighted that leader identity may influence organisational identity. I now address further implications of the findings from the following perspectives: (i) the researcher
as an instrument in the study and (ii) developing local leaders towards LER in a global leadership context.

i. The researcher as an instrument in the study

The goal of constructivist interpretive research is to create deeper understanding. In order to do so, researcher and participant/storyteller should engage in consensually reformulating their co-constructions, while being open to new interpretations as the narrative subjectively evolves throughout the study (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Given the nature of this study, my experiences as an instrument in the research presented a complex emotional reflexivity experience that was interconnected with and ran adjacent to that of CJA’s. This parallel, interrelated experience was unavoidable in view of the connection and overlap between my methodological and emotional reflexivity and self-reflexivity and CJA’s reflexive biographical narrative and emotional reflexivity, as illuminated throughout the story. I therefore found it was valuable to observe and engage both emotions and habitus reflectively and reflexively through incessant note-taking (Fitzpatrick & Olsen, 2015).

In this corresponding experience, I found that consciously engaging in methodological emotional reflexivity throughout the various phases of the research added dimension with respect to inter alia, an embodied understanding of emotion in reflexivity. Actively noting and recording my thoughts and feelings, how I felt them in my body and how the ceaseless questioning led to new insights provided deep insight rather than a risk that needed to be avoided (Fitzpatrick & Olsen, 2015). The
experience was mindful and increased the richness of the story. On 9 January 2017, I reflected:

*I’m so exhausted. This deadline I have given myself is excruciating. My mind feels numb and dull, while my body feels like a truck collided with it. I am tired of being tired. My emotions are rapidly veering toward the ‘I don’t care’ stages of depletion. I find myself reflecting more and more on the meaning behind pushing one’s self beyond what one imagines one is capable of. It makes me think about where the strength comes from. I recall a teacher’s words when I was in the ninth grade. I had just met my husband and, very much in love, we saw each other every day. He fetched me from school and needless to say we were the talk of the school. This particular teacher’s words were, “you will be pregnant before the end of this year.” I recall feeling shocked that a teacher could think this about me. I recall being confused and became anxious about other people’s perceptions of my relationship with my then boyfriend. I felt embarrassed, wondering if the whole school believed this of me. I remember feeling very hurt and deeply maligned, especially since I loved school and was always in the top three performing students in my class.

His words were out of my control and there was nothing I could do to change them. However, the deep feelings they stirred in me set in motion an intense desire to prove him wrong. These words and the feelings they ignited were all the motivation I needed. He had given me more focus and determination to finish the year and continue to matric. I have learned over the years and not only with this one experience, but with many others, including my thesis, to never give up, no matter what.

This memory, at this time, near the completion of my thesis, takes me back to CJA’s description of his angst about going to bed alone every night at age five and a half, in a strange environment where all he had was his inner conversation. The significance of the power that exists within the emotion about the conversations we have with ourselves is what I will focus on in future, in my work with leaders.


The findings of the study suggest that depth in leader self-knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their life stories facilitates how they act on and experience their
multiple roles in society. The findings also suggest that meaningfully interrogating, confronting and reviewing past decisions illuminates their source and their foundations. Meaningful interrogation in this study meant CJA opened up honestly about himself.

He revisited the various stages in his life, beginning with his childhood. In so doing, he allowed vulnerability and emotion to surface. In developing a trusting, supportive and respectful research relationship, we made valuable connections between his personal behavioural patterns, social and cultural constructions. These constructions included his beliefs, values and the personal ethics contained in his subconscious structures and involved how emotion about the constructions influenced his leader identity which was perceptible in his actions and decisions.

In view of the above, a theoretical leader identity, development framework is insufficient to trigger the paradigm shift involved in becoming an emotionally reflexive leader. Therefore, developing leader identity through leader emotional reflexivity (LER) must take account of two defining and necessary elements. Firstly, theoretical understanding of leader self-concept and its relevance to leader identity is necessary. Secondly, LER requires personal investment and commitment to leader self-development and intense life-story review. In developing LER, it is critical that a conscious distinction be made between awareness and applied awareness of LER. LER is about taking action to reflect the paradigm shift in the way leaders think and feel as a result of challenging their subconscious landscape. This shift is demonstrated by CJA’s critical incidents, in particular his experience of living in the USA.
My experiences as an OD consultant, juxtaposed with CJA’s story and the American presidential campaign and election, offered practical examples of how a leader life-story context colours and influences leadership actions and decisions.

LER consciousness involves a cognitive emotional shift away from narrow ideological perceptions and beliefs (Holland, 1999). Such a shift allows leaders to find relevance and meaning in the place they occupy in the world, as opposed to their actions being reduced to the outcomes of social conditioning, logic or leadership positions in the workplace (Archer, 2003, 2012; Delbridge & Edwards, 2013).

I include a quote from CJA as a reminder of what consciousness about LER would reveal:

After I got back, I saw life differently and questioned my life. I got to a point where I started saying ‘but hang on, that’s not right’. In the work situation, I developed the confidence to say, ‘I disagree with you. I don’t like the way you do things’. It was not an overnight thing but the way I went about things changed (Interview 2, p. 2, lines 8-12).

It changed me. Change is the word. The question then is to what … I think it changed my established outlook on life … relevant to people around me, situations I found myself in, my family, everything. It uprooted some of the beliefs about how things were. Had I not gone there, I may have gone along with the rest of the
population until all the changes came about and maybe only then my life may have started having more consciousness about it (Interview 9, p. 3, lines 15–19).

ii. Developing local LER to meet the demands of global leadership

Given the global demands that organisations face, applying LER for local leader identity development must incorporate a realignment of the idea of African versus Western leadership. I am not suggesting that leader development should negate cultural context; rather I propose a more globally inclusive, constructionist leader identity development approach. This realignment should take account of socio-cultural and political influences on organisational culture (Kwantes & Boglarsky, 2007) and the lingering effects of apartheid on South African leader identity (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004).

A constructionist approach includes the production of new knowledge (Bolden, 2009) to equip and enable leader self-development. Using this constructionist LER approach, leaders can develop their leader identity to deal more effectively with an increasingly competitive global economy, as described in Barratt and Korac-Kakabadse (2002) and Giamporcaro and Viviers (2014).

Inherent in a constructionist leadership paradigm is the idea of leadership embracing and reflecting a collective understanding that facilitates sense making (Ospina & Sorenson, 2006) from a global perspective. Life stories about leadership influence the functioning of social systems and, hence, the lives of the society that forms part of the social system. In this way, leadership is a meaning-making process (Pye,
Consequently, leader identity development through life-story emotional reflexivity is a method through which new ways of understanding are learnt and developed (Fairhurst, 2005; Foldy, Goldman, & Ospina, 2008). From this constructivist perspective, LER and life story provide the means for opening up this subjective human space. From a training and development perspective, therefore, it is critical that institutions employ or train suitably qualified professionals to facilitate or provide such training.

Before proceeding with the contributions of the study, I want to take a moment to reflect on how I feel today during this critical time of finalising my dissertation.

*I feel emotionally restored and refreshed this morning. The dullness in my brain has cleared. I am filled with anticipation and exuberance about completing my thesis. Working on the dissertation, I am sitting in my lounge, listening to light, classical music on DSTV, Channel 787. Right now, I am listening to Schubert’s Sonatina No. 3 in G Minor, played by Isaac Stern and Daniel Barenboim, from their album, Schubert: Sonatinas, Op. Posth 137. After reading and making notes about an email from Prof about the final requirements and deadlines related to submitting my thesis, I took some time off. Just a few hours with my family filled me up emotionally and restored my energy to push forward and finish my thesis. Also, I called Prof and expressed my stress and concern and as usual his wisdom, empathy and genuine interest fuelled my determination to finalise the thesis.*


### 9.1. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

In illuminating the contributions of the study, I consider two questions from the perspective of the themes and categories identified in developing a substantive theory.
First, and from a theoretical perspective, I answer the question, what does leadership development research gain from the study of LER processes? Second, and from a methodological perspective, I answer the question, what does research methodology gain from the study of LER processes? Third, and from a practical perspective, I answer the question, what are the various functions that LER can serve?

Theoretical contribution:

i. What does leadership development research gain from the study of LER processes?

The first and fundamental theoretical gain involves the theory and model for understanding the emotional reflexivity processes of a leader. Leader emotional reflexivity is an unexplored area and therefore the study contributes to knowledge within leadership development theory as well as reflexivity theory. The study reveals the nature of emotional reflexivity. In addition, the research explicates the psychosocial antecedents of emotional reflexivity and the role these antecedents play in a leader’s internal, emotional processes.

A second theoretical gain is in addressing the gap in the literature on leader emotional reflexivity processes as it relates to the personal, subjective, emotional meaning making of leaders, particularly in developing a leader identity. To this end, the study highlights the value of LER theory for reconfiguring management development processes and opens possibilities for studies regarding the implementation of LER in organisational settings.
A **third theoretical gain** is that insight into LER processes might initiate a swing from negative perceptions of emotion in leadership towards recognising the opportunity for developing leader identity in a new way that provides access to the leader’s inner emotional world.

A **fourth theoretical gain** involves a paradigm shift with respect to emotion in reflexivity. The study highlights the significance of emotions and emotional reflexivity in developing leader identity that may also impact on developing a contextual organisational identity. Here, the research underscores the value of awareness of how past and current events and emotions impact on a leader’s current and future decisions in the organisation.

**Methodological contributions:**

ii. **What does research methodology gain from the study of LER processes?**

The **first and fundamental, methodological gain** from this study is the application of consciousness in engaging the various types of researcher reflexivity in conceptualising, designing, writing about and implementing the relevant research strategy, methods and techniques.

A **second methodological gain** is in the application of Straussian grounded theory methodology in the study using diagrams in order to develop depth in the interpretations and understandings. In addition, the study contributes in terms of
reconfiguring Straussarian Grounded theory and the issue of co-development as it relates to another’s reflexivity.

A **third methodological gain** is one that I hope for. This methodological gain is the intersection of researcher personal/self-reflexivity with the various types of researcher reflexivity and in this case with the research topic, as **valuable** to the study as opposed to a weakness. I found that within the social sciences my conscious, intense engagement with researcher reflexivity could not occur outside of or separate from my personal context because my personal context is contained within the design of the study and embedded in the writing of the thesis described by Johnson and Duberley, (2003) as “epistemological and ontological commitments” (p.1294).

The **fourth methodological gain** involves studying leadership in the organisational context and from a socio-psychological perspective.

**Practical contribution:** What are the various functions that the study of (LER) processes can serve?

The **first practical contribution** is that the study provides understanding of LER processes and its potential value in leadership development specifically, leader identity development. Understanding in this developmental context is best appreciated on three levels:
PART F – CHAPTER 9
PRÉCIS, FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

i. how a leader internally and subjectively navigates the collective emotional stimulus of living up to the company strategy in an interrelated, globally competitive environment;

ii. how a leader’s internalised understanding and emotional commitment to his/her subconscious blueprint influences his/her interpretations, decisions and behaviours;

iii. how psychosocial antecedents influences the development of a leader identity which constitutes a leader’s internal response landscape.

In view of the developmental context above, the study confirmed that LER occurs in general and especially during challenging leadership and life situations because leadership involves the interrelationship between the self and the world. Thus, leadership strategies influence on followers, colleagues and stakeholders and leader decisions and actions play a significant role in the sustainability or failure of an organisation (Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig, 2008). In a study on emotion management in organisations, Schneider et al. (2014) argue that given the social nature of leadership “… to maintain their leadership identity in leader–member relationships, leaders have to elicit emotions that are dependent on the identity of the member” (p. 412) which requires leader emotional and cultural astuteness.

Consequently, the second practical contribution lies in that LER provides the opportunity for a focus on integrated leadership development. Understanding CJA’s
emotional reflexivity process has the following practical, leadership development value:

- LER sets the stage for leaders to move from theoretical knowledge to applied consciousness about their emotional reflexivity. Applied knowledge, means having depth and insight in one’s understanding and awareness of the interrelated psychosocial, physiological, cognitive and emotional determinants and influences of self/leader-identity. This deep knowledge and understanding provides the means to develop a leader, aspiring leader and/or students about how to engage their emotional reflexivity, consciously. Consciousness of emotional reflexivity with the goal of challenging limiting leadership beliefs then becomes a precursor to developing emotional and intercultural intelligence as described by Goleman (1995, 1999).

- Developing consciousness in understanding and engaging of LER in a leadership identity development framework provides the potential for practising emotional and cultural intelligence with mindfulness in leader decisions and actions. Mindfulness is about reflection/reflexivity on and about the internal, subjective source and the reason behind decisions and behaviour (Smith & Schneider, 2009; Tuleja, 2014). In this way, leadership development extends beyond developing skills, towards accessing the emotional origins of leader internal meaning making in order to develop leaders and organisations to function effectively in a global context (Barratt, & Korac-Kakabadse, 2002).
A third practical function of LER in leadership development involves creating leader consciousness of unconscious emotional reflexivity by labelling it. The study revealed leaders engage in ongoing vacillating, emotional reflexivity. Leadership challenges constantly disrupt the often, futile attempts at dismissing or regulating emotions as suggested by Goleman (1995, 1999) and their multidimensional impact on leader performance. Making sense of emotion requires cognitive/linguistic expression. Therefore, labelling this human capacity in the context of leadership development provides an organised, rational articulation of emotion in reflexivity and creates consciousness about a leader’s internal cognitive/emotional environment especially during challenging leadership and life situations.

The fourth practical contribution involves the value that LER offers in the development of an interrelated constructivist, leadership development framework that incorporates the leaders’ internal emotional meaning making mechanisms. The substantive theory derived in the study also provides a valuable method to assist coaching and consulting psychologists in working with leader development by applying a LER process. Therefore, the study contributes to the discipline of organisational psychology and the field of leadership development.

9.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Additional research is required to understand and link the neurology of LER processes with leader identity and learning processes. This linking will enable the development of an integrated conceptual framework for global leader identity development and leader self-development. In the local context, more research is
needed to understand and open up the scholarly discussion about the implications of apartheid on leader identity and how best to apply LER in leadership development programmes to address these antecedents.

Developing leader identity from an LER perspective requires that leader development programmes and institutions equip their educators and practitioners accordingly. Educators and practitioners would need integrated personal insight, understanding and conscious, applied awareness in engaging their own emotional, reflexivity about the psychosocial elements and influences in their own life stories.

9.3. SIGNIFICANT ENCOUNTERS - BEHIND THE SCENES

My experience of the research journey is significantly depicted throughout the dissertation and therefore I feel no compulsion to add more detail. However, there were some significant experiences that I would like to highlight.

Writing the thesis was a developmental experience guided mostly by my reflexivity but also directed, influenced and improved by interaction with Professor Schurink, my husband before his heavenward departure, my peer reviewer, Dr Magda Hewitt, my three examiners and my children, who listened to my ideas and added their perspectives.

Professor Schurink was more than a promoter or supervisor throughout this experience. In many ways, he was a ‘rock of Gibraltar’ providing comfort, support and encouragement. He was a person to turn to when sporadic moments of low motivation threatened to sabotage my progress in completing the thesis. Previously,
Mark would have been my source of encouragement, security and comfort during difficult experiences. Prof probably didn’t realise how much I appreciated and needed him during this remarkable voyage. He directed and re-directed my path with advice, wisdom and passion while being emotionally available,

As my peer reviewer, Dr Hewitt was significant in providing advice about her perspective and experience with what examiners looked for in a thesis. Reflecting on her comments led to a deeper reflexive experience about the substantive theory, which resulted in extracting more from the data to develop the models further. Including her suggestions added a deeper level to the thesis.

My daughters, Stacy and Tatum, their husbands and my grandchildren were the catalysts in my journey onwards. I wanted to finish the thesis to give them the gift of perseverance, of fortitude and of taking the emotion involved with challenge and turning it into opportunity. I wanted to replace the sadness, the fear, the pain and suffering of losing their dad and my husband who was and remains a strong and ever-present compass in our lives, with hope and feelings of gratitude to God.

The three examiners represented the stage of the research that I could not wait for. I anxiously, eagerly, excitedly and humbly awaited their feedback. I had taken some risks in the representation of the CJA’s story, notably Part A, the inclusion of reflective and reflexive notes throughout the thesis and my personal story. In all honesty, although I hoped that the thesis would be enjoyable to read, I had not expected the overwhelming consensus about enjoying the dissertation. After meeting
with Prof Schurink and his wife for a celebration, I drove around the corner from their home, stopped my car and read the comments to give it time to sink in as I drove home.

I read and re-read each examiner’s comments excited to integrate their feedback into the dissertation. Their positive comments humbled, excited and energised me. In applying their wisdom and suggestions, I discovered an even deeper space of emotional reflexivity as a researcher. Their constructive suggestions for improvement of the dissertation added more clarity and strength. I am deeply touched and grateful for each of their contributions to this unforgettable experience in my life.


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priming effects on social behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 45*(1), 211–216.


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LIST OF REFERENCES


ANNEXURE 1: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

This agreement serves to confirm that the research participant mentioned below gave his/her consent to participate in the Doctoral study regarding, “The emotional reflexivity process of leaders.” The research participant agrees to provide the researcher with his/her experiences and views to the best of his/her ability. The undersigned participant understands the purpose and nature of this study and understands that his/her participation is voluntary and that s/he may withdraw from the study at any time. The participant further grants permission for the data collected to be used in fulfilment of the requirements for the doctoral degree including an article and any future publication(s).

The data collected will be used for research purposes only. The researcher undertakes neither to disclose the identity of any of the participants, nor the origin of any of the statements made by any of them. However, the undersigned participant understands that the nature and principles of this study’s research methodology applies. This means that the researcher is expected to make use of verbatim statements from the transcribed, taped interviews and/or excerpts from solicited essays and/or any other visual e.g. (photographs) in order to illustrate the everyday experiences of the research participant(s) and their views in the thesis. The participant undertakes to give a true representation of his/her experiences and views.

I, ........................................ the undersigned participant, agree to meet at mutually agreeable times and duration(s) or to other means of communication, e.g. by email or telephone, as reasonably necessary to enable the researcher to complete the study. I further acknowledge that I received a copy of this agreement and that I may contact any one of the undermentioned if I have any subsequent queries.

Signature of research participant __________________________

Researcher: Title, initials & surname: __________________________

Research supervisor: Professor Willem Schurink

Tel: 0129971516

Cell: 0827792294
Sent: 11 October 2016 10:51
To: 'patty'
Subject: RE: Patty Thesis – Story verification

Dear Patty,

XXX and I agree that you should become a writer as your command of the English language and your ability to cast complex ideas into such prosaic format is fantastic. Needless to say, reading through your work brought back the memories of those many days together at our house and left both XXX and me with a lump in the throat and shedding a few tears as the years were rolled back once more. Thank you, your analysis makes me feel humble but makes me think you had analysed someone else in the process just to make me feel good!

There is very little I can correct in your work as you captured the factual side very accurately and any changes of detail are probably attributable to my inaccurate description at the time. The few minor items listed here below are inconsequential to your analysis and it is up to you if you want to change them, as it will not affect anything that follows in your analysis.

The minor issues are:

- P. 7, paragraph 6.3.1: Ph.D. should read D. Eng. – in those days a D.Eng. was awarded where the doctoral thesis had both the theoretical foundation required and also proven practical application in the field of study
- P. 12, first line: Anglo Boer War in 1902 – should read ... 1900.
- P. 19, line 9: “My mom lived alone and went to work in a town called ----” is probably better described as it is in the local vernacular namely, a village; (Oxford dictionary has it that a village is “... Larger than a hamlet and smaller than a town.”
- P.20, lines 1 and 2: “… he and a friend chopped wattle trees and sold them” – it should read: “... he and his cousin chopped wattle trees and, with the help of his mother, sold the bark of the trees, which was used in the tanning industry”
- P 23, lines 15 and 16: “Thoughts about being a teller for the rest of my life” plagued him” - should read “Thoughts about being a laboratory technician for the rest of my life” plagued him”

As you can gather from the above it is a few minor details and of no consequence to the central theme of your thesis.

Thank you once again. I feel honoured to have been part of the journey with you towards realising your own aspirations and I wish you well with finalising your thesis. I am sure you will obtain your degree with flying colours, despite having had a bit of a doubtful character to work with as part of your study!

Xxx sends her regards and her best wishes to you.

With kind regards,

XXX
### ANNEXURE 3: BEHAVIOURAL MATRIX

#### PROFILE FOR EMOTION - CHARACTER: STORYTELLER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion and expression</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad, anxious:</td>
<td>Shifts in seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Places hands above head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincere</td>
<td>Softer voice tone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-critical</td>
<td>Crosses legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Folds arms across chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tells a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses “er”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy:</td>
<td>Smiles brightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Comfortable in seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humour</td>
<td>Laughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed</td>
<td>Chuckles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tells a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses “er”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger:</td>
<td>Authoritative voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annoyance</td>
<td>Rapid speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritation</td>
<td>Waves arms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration</td>
<td>Shifts in seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hands above head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Glaring eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wide and narrowed eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tells a story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride:</td>
<td>Shy smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About accomplishments</td>
<td>Chuckle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-deprecating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arms above head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses “er”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEXURE 4: COMPARATIVE (THEMATIC) ANALYSIS CYCLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding:</th>
<th>Selective coding:</th>
<th>Selective coding:</th>
<th>Axial coding:</th>
<th>Data level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data</strong></td>
<td><strong>Sub-themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My dad was about twelve or thirteen years old when the farm was put in his name and he worked it.</td>
<td>• Upbringing - culture</td>
<td>• Social construction</td>
<td>The proposal</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My father was good, honest, hardworking, generous and helpful.</td>
<td>• Self-concept</td>
<td>• Significant experiences</td>
<td>The leader’s story:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Mannetjie jy moet leer” (Little man/boy you must learn), because education is your future.</td>
<td>• Personality</td>
<td>• Education</td>
<td>Birth to university</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would have been great to have had a dad.</td>
<td>• Values, beliefs, Ethics</td>
<td></td>
<td>Young adult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mom raised us on the farm.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was a tough lady, a provider alone on a farm, raising two kids.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leader)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My mother was not overly protective.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mom and Dad were people of integrity.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For them, there was a right way to do things and a wrong way, but it was within a system that was inherently wrong.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming from a very small school, the teachers were out of this world.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My parent’s influence worked its way through and then I had teachers who built on that process.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of those teachers had a huge influence on me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was not much stimulation except your imagination.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By today’s standards, we were quite poor.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We just got on with it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life was not easy for my mum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She put flowers on his grave and there were no discussions about his death.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• You kids must study. I will work and make sure we have money.
• I was a model student.
• Awareness of what my parents did developed a desire to try… to be successful.
• I grew up with this need to succeed.
• My self-worth, who I was and what I could do, was often expressed as doing something for somebody else.
• I was eager to go to school and learn.
• Boarding school was a matter of adapt or die.
• Sleeping on my own was my first experience of anxiety.
• I dreaded going to bed.
• Ek verlang na Ma’ (I miss Mom).
• Kinders word gesien en nie gehoor nie’ (Children should be seen not heard).
• We were very much separated as grown-ups on one side and kids on the other.
• If you ask people from my era, particularly the farming folk, you would probably find the same sort of thing.
• The kids had their place and the grown-ups had their place.
• We were not allowed in some people’s homes.
• It did not make me miserable, it inspired me.
• I said to myself: One day I will have what these people have.
• There was perhaps a slight inferiority complex… needing to prove myself and assure myself that I’m ok.
• I was gangly, socially uncertain, skinny as a rake with brown hair; a borderline introvert and intellectually fine. I was not athletic.
• I had a fear of not making it.
• My worldview was extremely small because of my sheltered life.
• I wanted to make my mark somewhere.
• School was a way of adding more to my life.
• It opened a new world to me.
• I loved the Disney comics.
• University was a fight for surviv-
al. I moved from a farm school to a big city school.
- I obtained the worst marks in the first year of my four-year degree but adapted and improved every year.
- I said to myself … I can make it … I just have to work hard.
- I wanted to be a scientist.
- I had thoughts about being a laboratory technician for the rest of my life.
- It wasn’t long until I realised this was the girl for me.
- I was so happy and we started dating.
- We dated from 1970 and were married in 1973.
- My wife is my best friend, first and only serious girlfriend, confidante, supporter, life partner and the one person who probably knows me better than I know myself.
- Let’s put it in the Lord’s hands.
- His mum raised him without a husband.
- She was a very hard woman but she had great strength.
- He is softer but she influenced him.
- She knew she had to be strong.
- Maybe that’s where he got it.

### Open coding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have a value system I hold dear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am optimistic, my glass is always half full.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I respect other people and their views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I see the good, and strengths in others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have trust in other people to get the job done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I point people in the right direction and get out of their way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a leader, I articulate the vision in a way others can understand it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My experience living in the USA was one that made an enormous impression on me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had two years to really reflect on things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love America for what it did for me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Selective coding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentionality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forethought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reactiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reflectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Axial coding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Critical incidents:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I know, in my own life that was a point where my life changed. I had to learn the American Constitution and the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal and so on. It had an enormous influence on my life. When we came back my mum remarked that I changed since we got back. I am changed. Some basic things in South Africa are inherently wrong. For the first time in my life, I question how we do things, like the way we treat black people in this country is not right, you know. I feel like she feels now. I felt that awareness deeply and it became well established within me because for two years I was away from the situation in South Africa. I debated with people and with professors about what was happening in the country. That experience sharpened my sense of right and wrong that was already there from my childhood experiences, instilled by my parents. It changed me. Change is the word. I think it changed my established outlook on life… relevant to people around me, situations I found myself in, my family, everything. It uprooted some of the beliefs about how things were. Had I not gone there, I may have gone along with the rest of the population until all the changes came about and maybe only then my life may have started having more consciousness about it. After I got back, I saw life differently and questioned my life. I got to a point where I started saying ‘but hang on, that’s not right’. In the work situation, I developed the confidence to say, ‘I
disagree with you. I don’t like the way you do things’.
• It was not an overnight thing but the way I went about things changed
• We are digging into things that I haven’t thought about.
• It rather challenges me to think about it.
• When you put a team together, do yourself a favour and do not have a team of clones like you, because it stifles good debate.
• It stifles innovation and creativity.
• You need all types of people in your team and often, differences bring out better debate as opposed to underlying assumptions.
• I had exposure to black leaders at the very early stages of the political turnaround in the country. Initially, I was very conscious
• Certainly, I felt quite guarded, you know … not wanting to step on toes, but also not wanting my toes stepped on.
• I was conscious that I stopped seeing him as a black person or a white person.
• This was quite long after returning from the US. Ultimately, that was just a next step where colour just disappeared.
• All I can say is that it was a feeling that I could be friends with this person.
• Somewhere along the line my heart changed with it
• Somewhere along the line, I internalised it emotionally and all the prejudices of the past and these artificial devices of the past fell off the bus.
• I think the more people experience that, the more the prejudice will start falling away
• One’s mind is easy to change, not very easy but easier.
• I think your heart needs to change.
• Don’t be scared to follow your heart sometimes because the heart can be clearer than the mind. Changes must become intuitive.
• Saying good morning to a person because he is black is not meaningful.
• Saying good morning to a person because he is human is different.
• It is intuitive. Once one gets to a place of doing it intuitively one starts to judge the person accordingly and it's not about black or white.
• My underlying belief system is not necessarily gone.
• I say to myself the underlying beliefs were wrong and I challenge them and discard some of them.
• I can never completely remove the reality that I grew up in an environment where the divide between black and White was huge.
• I can't wish it away.
• It's about how I reacted and what I do with the baggage that I'm carrying around with me and what do I do with it today. For me that's the key issue.
• It's about coming back to the currents that move one around in life when some of them are wrong, one has to move them away.
• We all need to confront some of the basic beliefs we have and to test them by some norm.
• The problem is that we don't all live by the same norms.
• At some stage, there are universal values like honesty, integrity, respect etcetera.
• When I reflect on my own experience against that, to see is this right or not, only then can I make good strides forward.
• In the end, what helped me were the positive experiences especially in the USA.
• They created a platform where I could start judging some of the other areas in my life.
• It's been forty years since we returned from America, but I can remember every day like it was yesterday.
• This intellectual accomplishment in my thesis put me onto
the world stage as an authority.  
- It gave me a lot of confidence and helped many people.  
- I felt gratified.  
- I'm much more comfortable with myself as a result.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open coding: Data</th>
<th>Selective coding: Sub-themes</th>
<th>Selective coding: Themes</th>
<th>Axial coding: Categories</th>
<th>Data level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel uncomfortable when people make a fuss of me.</td>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Leader's emotional reflexivity process</td>
<td>Level C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was so emotional.</td>
<td>Cognitions</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could have burst into tears right there.</td>
<td>Habitus</td>
<td>Reflexivity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was a real 'wow moment'.</td>
<td>Internal conversation</td>
<td>Process/es</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was not about achievement.</td>
<td>Consciousness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>It was about ... Wow, I am lucky.</td>
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<tr>
<td>It was about feeling gratitude.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The wind was taken out of my sails.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I was flabbergasted.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When I realised he was serious, I became concerned as to what brought this on.</td>
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<tr>
<td>His voice tone and abusive language already annoyed me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I just lost it.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I tell the story ... those days were emotionally tough.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I like recognition because it affirms and confirms.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just don’t like too much public fuss.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I think it comes from my humble beginnings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>For me, the best recognition is from the people and from colleagues.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew that it came from their hearts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So many people helped to get me where I am.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I remember myself saying ... “we have to push.”</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>This makes one angry, you know.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Afrikaans, I would say, ‘Ek raak opstandig’ (I became rebellious).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These individuals were stepping over major personal boundaries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I started fighting back, confronting him with the facts of the matter but also shouting at him at the top of my voice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As my annoyance grew, my</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
heart rate increased quite markedly.
• It felt like I would burst a blood vessel.
• The CEO was as mad as a snake!
• The gall of these people angered us.
• The way they went about it was just wrong.
• We were in fight mode.
• We were going to do what we believed was right.
• I was annoyed but also galvanised into action to fight it and see it through.
• That was what I was paid for.
• That was what I signed up for.
• I feel about something and then I act rationally.
• For me, in some instances, emotional reflexivity occurs in a full cycle.
• This means the cycle is closed, the issue is resolved and I can move on.
• Some are half cycles that may not conclude because the issue is ongoing like the restructuring. That took four years.
• Sometimes there are cycles within cycles, meaning new concerns arise about ongoing issues.
• Some of the problems are interrelated but you have to see each one independently to find solutions.
• I also think these processes are context-dependent, making them different in each situation like with the takeover issues.
• We started talking and the temperature went up to 100 degrees.
• I think there is a whole host of processes in figuring out solutions.
• In one, you may feel your blood pressure increase immediately.
• In another you may feel a bit of worry or concern and a slight knot in your stomach.
• Others like an interruption to sign a document may stir up a feeling of irritation that passes quickly.
• It depends on the situation and
the circumstances.
- Sometimes the feelings hang.
- Emotions don’t go away, they hover.
- I have to consciously close gates during the sequence of events.
- I don’t control the emotions, they are there.
- I consciously focus on not letting the big, unresolved issues spill into the next issue.
- I control my reactions to the emotions.
- For me, the smaller cycles are benign but each requires your attention.
- Some issues are big, some are good and some are tough.
- Some issues go to the heart of my technical competence.
- Others go to the heart of my personal ethics.
- The consciousness comes in terms of not allowing the circles to get caught up in one another.
- I definitely see my process as cyclical. Each has its own unique set of emotions.
- The good ones reset the clock a bit.
- The emotion is about uncertainty, apprehension and not knowing all the facts.
- Once I had the facts and could develop a plan, the emotion changed to expectancy and I focused on resolution.
- I said, let’s learn from this so we don’t make this mistake in the future.
- When I think about this today, I feel good emotion.
- I think about how we were able to resolve the issue.
- It came full circle because it had a solution and an end.
- Emotion lingers with relationship issues.
- I know that when I start thinking or talking about it I get angry again and the emotion resurfaces as I re-experience it.
- I feel, think consciously or subconsciously, while drawing on experience, internal beliefs and values embedded in the DNA.
you know, the integrity and ethics.
- The journey we went through was a lot longer than I thought it would be and a lot deeper.
- I discovered things about me that I never knew existed.
- It gave me insight into why I did things the way I did, which I would not have thought about had we not gone through this journey.
- It made me think about things that I had not thought about before.
- Many of us don’t consciously consider why we think about and do things the way we do.
- As a leader dealing with multiple issues daily we probably don’t consciously realise that we are emotionally reflexive.