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Leadership, Fairness and Gender: A Practitioner's Perspective.

By

Colette Finn BA MA FAMLS

A Portfolio of Exploration submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the examination for the:

DBA (Business Economics) Degree of the National University of Ireland – University College Cork

School of Economics

Head of School: Professor Connell Fanning

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Page

Table of Contents ii

List of Tables and Figures vi

Declaration vii

Acknowledgements viii

Abstract ix

Portfolio Introduction 1

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Central Research Objective 1

1.2 Rationale for the Portfolio of Exploration 2

1.3 Introduction to the Author 3

2 Format for Meaning Making Development 5

2.1 Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development 9

2.2 Knowledge Construction 12

2.3 Obstacles to Personal Change 16

3 Format of Portfolio of Exploration 21

4 Conclusion 23

Page

Essay One – Personal Development Review 24

1 Introduction 24

2 Past Professional Experiences 27

2.1 Early Work Experiences 28

2.2 Working Outside Ireland 39

2.3 Returning to Ireland 46

2.4 Building Political Awareness 55

3 Conclusion 59

Essay Two – Reading for Change: Generating Clarity 62

1 Introduction 62

1.1 Structure of Essay Two 65

2 Understanding Leadership 66

2.1 Understanding Care as a Barrier to Leadership 70

2.2 Impact of Reading 74

3 Understanding Fairness 76

3.1 Impact of Reading 88

4 Understanding Gender and Leadership 90

4.1 Understanding the Presence of Women in Leadership 93

Page

4.2 Understanding Gender Quotas 95

4.3 Understanding Essentialism 98

4.4 Impact of Reading 101

5 Conclusion 102

Essay Three – Analysis of Learning Revealed in Practice 104

1 Introduction 104

1.1 Structure of Essay Three 104

2 Myers Briggs Analysis 105

3 ACBO Template 109

4 Managing By Values Experiment 115

4.1 Leadership in Business 125

5 Pursuit of Gender Quotas Experiment 128

6 Conclusion 140

Page

Portfolio Conclusion 144

1 Introduction 144

2 Overall Portfolio Framework 146

3 Contribution to Knowledge 159

4 Conclusion 164

References 167

List of Tables Page

Table 1. Kegan's (2009) Four Column Map of Immunity to Change 18

List of Figures

Figure 1. Drawing of a beautiful lady or an old hag? 13

Figure 2. ACBO template 108

Declaration

The Portfolio submitted is my own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere.

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Colette Finn

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Abstract

This Portfolio of Exploration outlines the course of learning by a practitioner on a personal leadership journey. It constructs a functional examination of ideas around leadership. It explores the belief system which underpins leadership practice and it also explores to what extent the increased participation of women can lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership. Different models of leadership are explored to find the model which can best fit with the author's perception of leadership. The Women's Intercultural Leadership Model is discussed. This model conceptualises leadership as the envisioning of oneself and others as potential leaders. It seeks to promote that recognition whilst at the same time encouraging personal transformation. The promotion of a values based leadership is examined. The value of fairness is examined as an element of functional leadership. The extent to which increasing the number of women in leadership can lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership is explored. Drucker's assertion that every practice rests on theory is used to unearth the underlying assumptions of this reflective practitioner doctorate. Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development and Subject-Object separation is used to explicitly examine knowledge construction. Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Assumption/Commitment/Behaviour/Outcome (ACBO) template are used to promote practice change.

Portfolio Introduction

1. Introduction

This thesis is set out as a Portfolio of Exploration. This Chapter has three main purposes. Firstly, this Chapter sets out the central research objective, provides a rationale for the pursuit of this practitioner doctorate and introduces the author. Secondly, this Chapter outlines the key framework which is used to unearth and develop the author's meaning making system (MMS). Thirdly, this Chapter introduces the structure of the subsequent Essays and highlights the contributions of each of these Essays contained in this Portfolio of Exploration.

1.1 Central Research Objective

The central research objective was to develop my potential for leadership so as to progress my practice, embedded in the principles of fairness and gender equality. This work has made a significant contribution to my meaning-making system by clarifying my understanding of leadership and how fairness and gender influence leadership. The process has proved to be challenging but also immensely stimulating. For example, with this enhanced understanding of leadership, I have been able to expand my leadership into areas that I would previously have left to others. This opportunity has proved enormously worthwhile at both the personal and professional levels. For example, I was part of the editorial team which published a text *The Road to 50/50 - Gender Quotas for Ireland* (Clancy *et al.,* 2012). This text focused on the debates in

the Dáil and Seanad, regarding the introduction of legislation to implement Candidate Selection Gender Quotas for future general elections in Ireland. This was passed in July 2012. In January 2013, I left my managerial role in the public health sector so as to pursue other areas of interest. In February 2013, I was appointed as a board member to the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland. I am now Chair of the Audit and Finance committee of that board. The processes which were necessary in order to complete this Portfolio of Exploration have produced the adaptive changes that I needed in order to address the challenges that I outline in Section 1.2.

1.2 Rationale for the Portfolio of Exploration

This rationale for the Portfolio of Exploration outlines the reasons that I commenced the DBA (Business Economics) in April 2009. I had spent sixteen years as a section manager of a laboratory discipline in a Public Voluntary Hospital. I wanted to improve my leadership practice. I also wanted to be better equipped to deal with more senior managers. In addition, I wanted to be able to be more flexible in my responses to situations that I found difficult. I also sought to expand my options when it came to looking beyond my current position. I wanted to possibly move to a different area of employment. Finally, I wanted to be better able to communicate with clarity and courage around subjects in which I was interested. At the start of the programme I was unclear what those subjects would be.

I also sought to resolve the issue of working full-time outside of the home whilst also being a primary carer. I was aware that I did not want to take on a more time consuming role. It seemed that pursuing an increased leadership role would run counter to my desire for work life balance. It seemed at the time that the only way to resolve my desire for more time at home was to work part-time. Yet I considered that that option was not possible from a practical perspective. As the manager, I considered that it would have been unsatisfactory for patients, for my employer but also for myself, if I were to manage that section on a part-time basis. I chose to invest in myself in order to resolve this dilemma.

1.3 Introduction to the Author

I commenced my managerial role in a laboratory context in 1993 when I was appointed to manage one of the laboratory sections of a Public Voluntary Hospital. I had no academic management qualifications when I took up this position. I had moved from a non-managerial post in another hospital laboratory into a managerial role. I subsequently undertook a Masters in Healthcare Management which I completed in 2001. I found this programme useful as it introduced me to the skills and ideas that were necessary to manage more efficiently and effectively with an overview of value for money. However, eight years later and facing possibly another fifteen years in management, I felt that my organisation bore no similarity to the knowledge that I had obtained from this Masters Programme.

On this course I had learned that services should be planned with a budget and identifiable timelines. I had learned that management should be about the three E's – Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness. I had learned that Economy should be about controlling costs by careful management, that Efficiency should be about the best possible use of available resources and that Effectiveness should be about identifying desired outcomes and measuring if they were being obtained. Staff should be managed to get the best performance possible. In turn, I should have received feedback from my manager in relation to my professional performance.

In my organisation there was a global hospital budget, which was based on the previous year's budget. Service planning did not take place. Replacement of equipment would occur when a breakdown situation happened. Contact with my line manager was at my request. This dissonance between the 'theory' of management that I had learned and the reality of management that I was experiencing led me to undertake the DBA (Business Economics).

I was particularly interested in the practitioner element of the course. I believed that an academically-based *technical* qualification was not what I needed. I was particularly excited by the course format of focusing on Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) in order to develop my mental complexity explained in Section 2 below. I was also using Drucker's view that *"Every practice rests on theory, even if the practitioners themselves are unaware of it"* (1985:26). This I understood to mean that we make

assumptions about how the world works which we do not examine. I regarded the option of exploring several areas of interest as engaging, as I have a broad interest in the field of economics, management and politics.

Initially, my area of interest was around 'fairness'. I had the idea that the world, my organisation and I would function better if there was an element, or at least a greater element, of fairness at play. I also felt that I was a 'woman' operating in a 'man's world'. The issue of women in leadership and my contribution to understanding myself as a woman in a leadership role was also an area that I wished to explore further. Indeed, the impetus for this Portfolio was my need for greater clarity about how I as a woman could function more effectively in the world of work. At the time I did not identify this in terms of leadership. Leadership was something that others did. I saw myself as a follower and an influencer and I needed to understand how I could shape the world around me in a more direct way.

2. Format for Meaning Making Development

Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) is a constructive developmental theory of mental complexity. He contends that each person constructs their own meaning and that this becomes more developmentally complex as the person matures. This theory is an elaboration of cognitive theory and looks at the development of the activity of meaning construction (Berger, 2006).

Kegan contends that far too little attention has been paid to the adult developmental dimension in organisational learning theory. He, along with others, contends that the field of 'leadership development' has not paid sufficient attention to the importance of mental complexity where leaders are concerned (Senge, 2006; Heifetz, 1998; Schon, 1984). He further argues that human development is about the expansion of the 'operating system' rather than the addition of more knowledge and skills. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive and the addition of more knowledge and skills can lead to an expansion of the operating system in the process. However, Kegan and Lahey (2009:29) caution:

> *However, many, if not most, of the change challenges you face today and will face tomorrow require something more than incorporating new technical skills into your current mind-set. These are the "adaptive challenges" and they can only be met by transforming your mind-set, by advancing to a more sophisticated stage of mental development.*

Application of Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) has supported and challenged the construction of my personal and professional thinking throughout this Portfolio. Its role has been highly salient in developing and elaborating my meaning making system. The concept of Subject-Object separation has been especially central. Kegan holds Subject-Object separation to be the process through which assumptions which were previously an implicit part of thinking become explicit and amenable to examination. With evolving mental complexity this process results in increased

awareness alongside a greater capacity for introspection. The evolution of mental complexity is desirable in order to promote leadership effectiveness.

Specifically, this theoretical perspective, and especially his conceptualisation of Subject-Object separation, has supported me to develop in both my personal and professional developmental journey. For example, in a work and voluntary context, it has enhanced my capacity for autonomous and complex thought on the subject of leadership, fairness and gender equality. I am now more acutely aware of the complexities which many men encounter in mediating their home and work lives. Indeed, I now see the transformative potential of gender coalitions and alliances, with men and women working together for progressive change, across a range of issues including fairness as a business value and gender balance in Irish leadership.

Kegan (1994:32) describes the Subject-Object separation concept as follows:

> *"Subject" refers to those elements of our knowing or organising that we are identified with, tied to, fused with, or embedded in.*

This means that when we are subject to our knowledge we are unaware of the assumptions that we are using in order to construct our knowledge. We are unable to scrutinise our thinking. It is part of who we are. We consider that it defines us. We identify with this thinking and knowledge. In consequence, we are unable to make explicit our assumptions and how we construct that knowledge. We fail to scrutinise the underlying assumptions that drive the

construction of our knowledge. When we complete the Subject-Object separation we are able to become aware of the assumptions we are making. These assumptions go unacknowledged when we are constructing our knowledge. Once we become aware of our assumptions our knowledge becomes separate from ourselves, we are no longer fused with it. Kegan (1994:32) describes this process in the following terms:

> *"Object" refers to those elements of our knowing or organising that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalise, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon*.

Therefore, the evolving mind appreciates that knowledge is constructed and that by surfacing the underlying assumptions then a reconstruction of our knowledge and our understanding of that knowledge is possible. The evolving mind also has increasing complexity which has several important features:

1. Principles of **how** one constructs one's thinking, to also include feeling and social relating.
2. Principles not of content but rather the organisation of that content of thinking, feeling and social relating.
3. Each order of consciousness moves the knowledge construct from being implicit to being explicit and open to scrutiny.
4. Movement from a lower order of mental complexity is transformative, incorporative and qualitatively more complex.

5. Growth of the mind is never fixed; there is always the potential for increasing complexity.

2.1 Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development

In this section, I describe in brief my understanding of the five stages of increasing mental complexity in Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994). This description is useful because it sets out for others how mental complexity evolves from early childhood. It explains how the concept of increasing mental complexity can be demonstrated. If evolving mental complexity in children can be understood then the transformation that occurs in adulthood becomes more comprehensible.

In the first order of consciousness children usually between the ages of two and six come to see objects and people as permanent and existing separately from themselves. This is known as the principle of independent elements. Thus when someone goes out of sight they understand that they continue to exist.

In the second order of consciousness children come to develop the principle of durable category. During this development they come to understand that objects and people possess certain properties which do not change and remain durable. When a child views people on the ground from the top of a tall building, they understand that even though they look small from that height they have not changed in size. The change in 'what' they see is transformed by

'how' they see. The visual information of the small person is superseded by their understanding that the size does not change, merely their perspective. By understanding how children come to 'change' their minds it becomes less difficult for us to understand that as adults we also come to 'change' our minds.

The third order of consciousness – the Socialised Mind (Stage 3) – develops the principle of cross categorical knowing. This is the ability to subordinate the now and durable category to interactions between two durable categories. Abstract thinking becomes possible. Self-regulation becomes possible. Ultimately it is about the ability to act independently whilst also being able to consider the other person's point of view. The adult with the Socialised Mind is a team player and will consider the other person's perspective. However they tend not to question the dominant culture. They are a faithful follower and show loyalty to the culture or people with whom they identify. They are reliant and seek direction from others. Two separate studies demonstrate that at least eighty seven percent of adults attain this level of mental complexity (Kegan and Lahey, 2009:28).

In the fourth order of consciousness – Self Authoring (Stage 4) – the self moves from being a faithful follower to being more of a self-regulator. There is a development of one's own belief system and standards. The ability to assume responsibility and make decisions in complex, uncharted situations becomes less challenging. There is the development of self-regulation where

independent, intellectual self-sufficiency becomes more attainable. There is an ability to step back enough from the social environment to generate one's own personal authority. They can evaluate and make choices about how they construct their situation which is not influenced by external expectations.

In the fifth order of consciousness – Self Transforming (Stage 5) – the person has the ability to grasp contradictions at the same time. They understand the limits of their own knowledge construction. They are not perturbed by what that might mean. They have the ability to be comfortable with the knowledge that their way of knowing is partial or incomplete.

The fourth and fifth orders of consciousness, however, are levels of mental complexity that only a minority of adults attain (Kegan and Lahey, 2009). In each of the shifts from one level of consciousness to another there is a shift in mental complexity. This shift occurs without the person being conscious of that process. Once the shift occurs there is a transformation of the thought process. This programme specifically focuses on using this concept of Subject-Object separation in order to promote increased mental complexity. I aimed to become more aware of the assumptions that I was using. Once I became aware of those assumptions I was then able to examine them and retain or reconstruct them as I thought appropriate.

2.2 Knowledge Construction

Part of the difficulty in describing the concept of thinking and knowledge is that we use the language of the physical body when talking of mental matters. The English language is also not well suited to understanding the relationship between entities and processes (Kegan, 1982[1996]). He discusses this point by explaining the process of making a fist and then opening one's hand and the fist disappears. Western grammar separates entities and processes as if the distinction were absolute. He points out that Eastern cultures do not see night and day as static poles or distinct realms the way Western culture does. These are seen as sub processes that tend toward each other. Therefore the practicality of increasing mental complexity as a concrete experiment is difficult to describe plus it is a process which is a continuum and is not fixed in time.

The idea that we make the meaning of our reality, rather than somehow happen upon it, is demonstrated in the picture in Figure 1 (Cassini, 2012). This picture can be seen to display a young woman or an old hag. It is in substance a two dimensional representation of coloured shading which we construct to represent the image.



Figure. 1. Drawing of a beautiful lady or an old hag?

Source: (Cassini, 2012).

As Kegan (1982[1996]:11).further explains:

> *What an organism does is organise; and a human organism organises meaning*

Thus it is not just that a person makes meaning as much as that the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning-making. There is no feeling, no experience, no thought, no perception, no 'thing' independent of a meaning making context. It becomes a feeling, an experience, a thought, a perception, a thing because we are the meaning-making context. Therefore he notes we selectively pay attention to certain information and tune out other information but ultimately we choose what information we pay attention to.

Humans make meaning of their surroundings, and for them that meaning is the surroundings. For example, two people who see the same picture differently may actually, in their seeing of it, create two different pictures. Therefore knowledge is a verb not a noun (Blacker, 1995). This is a profound concept and its implication is that I now encounter the world with a much more deliberate awareness that I am making my knowledge.

Kegan (1994) expands on the difficulties encountered in moving beyond a person's way of knowing. He discusses the difficulties encountered when people think they want to change but have anxieties preventing them from changing. Kegan also describes how this impacts in an organisational setting, how information is received or not received, sent or not sent. Kegan emphasises that there is an underestimation of how powerful a factor the individual's level of mental complexity is when organisational change initiatives are undertaken.

Kegan and Lahey (2009) contend that the changing demands of modern life may be developmentally unsuitable for many, even perhaps most adults. Instead of blaming adults for being unable to meet these demands, Kegan asks that we learn how to support development.

The idea of information is also critical to Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994). Kegan believes that while information is helpful, it is

usually not sufficient for adults. As growing and changing people, all adults need more than mere information. They also need transformation. Transformation is more than adding information into the container, for example, one's mind. Transformation concerns a change to the very form of the container. This means making the container larger, more complex, more able to deal with multiple demands and uncertainty. According to Kegan, transformation takes place when the individual is newly able to step back, reflect on something and make decisions about it. Kegan has developed his theory of Subject-Object separation as a means of transformation. Significantly, Kegan (1994) claims that transformative learning occurs when someone changes, *"not just the way he behaves, not just the way he feels, but the way he knows—not just what he knows but the way he knows"* (Kegan, 1994:17).

At the outset of this programme there seemed to me to be insufficient emphasis in the workplace, on the need to understand the complexity of human relationships. While we do not choose the people that we work with, we do build bonds and human relations in the workplace. The bonds may not be permanent or durable. Human relations in organisations can be functional or dysfunctional. The overriding skill of any leader is to get the best out of themselves and the people that they work with. Therefore, I needed to surface any anxieties that I had in relation to my research questions – how can I develop my perception of leadership, is fairness an element of functional leadership and to what extent does the increased participation of women lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership?

As Kegan and Lahey (2009:xiv) state, the one thing that all the leaders that he has worked with had in common was:

> *A deep and abiding recognition that their people bring their humanity to work with them every single day; that the absolute division between the work realm and the personal realm is naïve and unhelpful; and that twenty-first-century leaders must find a more effective way to engage the emotional lives of their organisations and their leadership teams.*

2.3 Obstacles to Personal Change

Wanting to change our behaviour and achieving that change are not easy tasks. Kegan and Lahey (2009) point out only one in seven seriously at risk heart attack patients manage to make the lifestyle changes necessary to reduce their risk of having another event. If this shift in thinking, in a life and death context, is difficult to achieve, what are the chances that it will be achieved in more mundane circumstances? Kegan and Lahey (2009:56) describe the three dimensions of our immunity to change as:

- Change prevention (thwarts challenging aspirations)
- Feeling system (managing anxiety)
- Knowing system (organising reality)

Kegan and Lahey (2009) use the four column map outlined in Table 1 to demonstrate and unearth the anxieties that can mask competing commitments to our stated goals. Using the four column map it is possible to surface the anxiety which is present in Column Four and preventing the implementation of Column One commitments. They argue that by identifying hidden anxiety, a

person can examine in an explicit way whether their anxiety is valid or not. This is the Subject-Object process and this shift can accelerate the development of mental complexity. The change which is sought is more easily achieved.

I applied this to my goal of wanting to take a more proactive role from a leadership perspective as shown in Table 1.

Column 1	**Column 2**	**Column 3**	**Column 4**
Visible commitment Wanting to take a more proactive stance in areas of interest.	**Doing/Not doing** Allowing others to take the lead. Remaining quiet when I did not agree.	**Hidden Competing Commitments** Fear of being wrong. Fear of being overwhelmed.	**Big Assumption** That I would not cope well in a conflict/demanding situation.

Table 1. Kegan's Four Column Map of Immunity to Change.

(Source: Adapted from Kegan and Lahey, 2009)

Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I began to interrogate why I was reluctant to take on a leadership role. I found that I did not want to use the term leadership at first. By using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I started to unravel my thinking in relation to leadership. I became aware that I had

constructed my knowledge around leadership with a predominantly male role model in mind. I identified leadership as male, hierarchical and unfair.

By researching different concepts of leadership I was able to come to the view that a transformative, nurturing form of leadership would fit with my view of myself in leadership. I came to identify with the Women's Intercultural Leadership Model (Bazata, 2011). This promotes the concept of leadership as geese flying in a V formation where the leader can rotate and different leaders come to the fore. I came to see for example someone like Seamus Heaney[1] as an example of someone in leadership with whom I could identify. He was someone who had excelled in his chosen field, did not deny his talents but looked to encourage others to pursue their creative talents as a worthy endeavour. And he was not female.

I also explored and ultimately strongly identified with Bennis and Goldsmith's premise that *"A manager does things right. A leader does the right thing"* (2010:31). Yet, how does one decide what is the 'right thing'? Personal integrity is critical to following through on one's concept of the 'right thing'. This belief has been identified as a key ingredient for effective leadership (Bennis and Goldsmith, 2010; March and Weil, 2005). Without being conscious of it, it was a practice that I had identified with. I had tried to do the 'right thing' and I considered the 'right thing' was to manage in a way that I

[1] Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) was a Irish poet and winner of the 1995 Nobel Prize for Literature.

would have liked to be managed, that is, in as fair a manner as possible. I would concur with Corning's (2011) definition of fairness as fulfilling three criteria: equity, merit and reciprocity.

However, using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I was able to pose the question – is fairness an element of functional leadership? This question of fairness as a leadership value was of particular interest to me. The Managing By Values experiment described in Essay Three was used to explore this issue.

At the outset of this doctorate I had identified fairness as an issue of concern only to women. I had seen leadership as a primarily 'masculine' domain, and one which had little concern with fairness as a value. My rather binary thinking on this issue came to be seriously challenged in the learning process. I came to realise that there were men who also saw fairness as a significant ethical issue. However a definition of fairness could vary from one person to the next, so did fairness have any relevance in a leadership context?

Moving from the concept of fairness to the criterion of gender, it became clear to me that the issue I identified with was not so much having more women *per se* in leadership roles but rather having more women *and men* in leadership roles that valued the role of fairness. Admittedly, it was not always possible to achieve fairness, as we are human and can always do better. Fairness as a goal,

however, was one that I would hope to achieve in the majority of my dealings with other people.

The issue of the link between gender and leadership continued to interest me. I joined with a group of women and founded the The 5050 Group – Balancing Politics in September 2010. My experience with this group is discussed in Essay Three. Whilst seeking to promote more women in senior decision-making positions in both my own organisation and the wider society I was also seeking a fairer society as I saw it, both in terms of female participation but also fairness in general. For me, the objective was not only to have more women participating but also to have more people who would promote the idea of fairness. I was keen to see what the difference might be if there was increased participation of women in senior public roles generally, and especially in electoral politics. Yet I did not know what the difference would be if more women were present. This was problematic because I could not advocate for a particular stance when I was unclear about the merits of the argument.

Therefore I needed to explore and clarify my thinking on what exactly I meant by fairness and to what extent would increasing the number of women in leadership lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership. Was fairness very much a personal choice which would vary for different people? Was fairness relevant in terms of leadership? Did the number of women in leadership

matter? Would leadership be different because more women were there? I explored these questions as set out in Section 3 below.

3. Format of Portfolio of Exploration

In Essay One I completed a Personal Development Review. This Essay outlines my reflections over my working life on how I tended to make meaning. In the Essay, I drew on Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) to assist me in becoming more aware of my meaning making system. I examined my reflections using Kegan's Subject-Object separation. I firstly elucidated what assumptions I used in guiding my practice in the past. Then using Kegan's Subject-Object separation, I made explicit what assumptions I was working on, the meaning that I was taking from my surroundings and an examination of that meaning. I also used Drucker's premise that *"Every practice rests on theory, even if the practitioners themselves are unaware of it"* (1985:26). Throughout this Essay I outlined how I built my awareness of the assumptions that I was utilising in my practice. This could be a useful exercise for other practitioners if they wish to follow the same format.

In Essay Two I expanded my thinking by exploring the relevant literature regarding the central research objective of enhancing my understanding of leadership and how fairness and gender influences leadership. I identified practice changes that I wanted to implement in order to enhance my leadership

effectiveness. I also explored whether the value of 'fairness' was too idealistic and unrealistic. My purpose was to understand and give clarity to how the issues of gender, fairness and leadership are considered by other authors. With this increased clarity I attempted to improve my leadership practice. This may contribute to how others might learn to view leadership and the influence of fairness and gender on leadership.

In Essay Three, I outlined the experience I took from participating in experiments in my professional practice and as a community activist. In Section 2 I used the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (2000) to examine my personality type and to expand my leadership ability by examining my strengths and weaknesses. In Section 3 I used the Assumption/Commitment/Behaviour/Outcome (ACBO) approach developed by Daly and Walsh (2012) as a reflective practice tool. In Section 4 I described the experiences I gained in the Managing by Values Experiment (Blanchard and O'Connor, 1997) implemented in my own organisation. In Section 5 I outlined my experiences and learning in being one of the leaders in The 5050 Group – Balancing Politics. These experiments may guide others as to how they might make changes to their practice.

Finally, the Portfolio Conclusion outlines the key learning for other managers interested in leadership and how fairness and gender influence leadership. It may also be of interest to policy makers and academics.

4. Conclusion

This Portfolio Introduction sets out the context in which I undertook the programme of development for my Practitioner's Doctorate. It describes the central research theme of improving my leadership effectiveness and the complexity with which I viewed leadership and the influence of fairness and gender on leadership. I have also outlined how I proposed to use my understanding of Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) and his theory of Subject-Object separation to advance my mental complexity. Kegan's theory contributes a sense of both the content of change, in the orders of mind, and the process of change, in the Subject-Object shift in order to advance mental complexity.

I have outlined the three Essays that follow where I explore my professional practice; my reading around themes generated from that exploration and focused experiments conducted to promote changes to my practice. Learning in the context of what is relevant for my peer community of other managers is provided in the Portfolio Conclusion.

Essay One: Personal Development Review

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Review is to document my thinking processes as they have developed in my personal and professional life. It describes in detail the important junctures that have occurred. It is a reflection of my past experiences and the important ideas that I would have had around the central research theme of leadership, fairness and the influence of gender on leadership. It documents my world view and helps the reader to understand my perspective.

It points the way for Essay Two where I explore the literature on my research questions of how can I develop my perception of leadership, is fairness an element of functional leadership and to what extent does the increased participation of women lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership? It also points the way for Essay Three where I use the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality type analysis, the Assumption/Commitment/Behaviour/Outcome (ACBO) template, Managing By Values Experiment and The 5050 Group Experiment, to aid my practice.

Besides Kegan (2009; 1994; 1982[1996]) there are a number of other significant contributors to my understanding of adult mental development (Rooke, and Torbert, 2005; Torbert *et al.,* 2004; Belenky *et al.,* 1986[1997]; Drucker, 1985; Schon, 1984). This is important because it seeks to expand my

learning as a person and as a professional. In this review I hope to surface the underlying assumptions and deconstruct my knowledge. I have selected the knowledge that I have come to know. By describing my experience and examining what I thought then and what I think now I hope that I can use that distancing to better understand how that knowledge was created. By having that deconstruction I can better interrogate the knowledge that I took from my experiences.

I make the meaning out of what has happened to me. I want to understand more explicitly what meaning I have made of those experiences. In gaining those insights I hope that I can become more enlightened about the meaning that I am making. By making explicit my thinking it points the way for how I can use Subject-Object separation to have a more nuanced understanding of how I constructed my thinking. It helps me to let go if it transpires that I have now changed my view. I am now no longer fused with the knowledge I have created.

In coming to understand that I was selecting the knowledge that I used, I needed to unearth what assumptions I was using. We simplify our knowledge and use categories in order to manage the complexity of living on a day to day basis. However we need to test from time to time if those simplifications and categorisations are valid or need to be amended. I wanted to test for my assumptions in an explicit fashion and find the basis upon which I was constructing my knowledge. The purpose of using Kegan's theory of Subject-

Object separation was that my assumptions which were previously unexamined could be made explicit for examination. This process makes thinking tangible and using Kegan's theory then I can look to retain, change or replace the simplifications or categorisations that I have constructed. In explicitly seeking out this knowledge, I endeavour to better interrogate my thinking and seek to change my attitudes and behaviour in leadership contexts if necessary.

In this Essay the Personal Development Review. I am attempting to put this into effect. In recounting my experience in my professional life I am attempting to ascertain what assumptions I am using. I am attempting to surface what was previously implicit in my thinking.

My development goals were that I wanted to improve my leadership practice. In the past I would have observed others in a leadership role and I wanted to unearth that experience and examine how I had come to form my view of leadership. I also wanted to be better equipped to deal with more senior managers. I had come to a point where I needed to be able to gain a greater understanding of how others viewed their leadership.

At the start of the DBA process I was having difficulty dealing with those in authority. In addition, I wanted to be able to be more flexible in my responses to situations that I found difficult. For example, I wanted to continue to work

outside of the home whilst also maintaining a good work/life balance. The complexity of combining paid work and being the primary carer of my daughter was a serious issue for me. I needed to bring clarity to how I might advance this dilemma. I also sought to expand my options when it came to looking beyond my current position and possibly move to a different area of employment. Finally, I wanted to be better able to communicate with clarity and courage around the subjects of leadership, fairness and gender and how fairness and gender influenced my understanding of leadership.

My difficulty had been that a lack of clarity around my views had led to a degree of uncertainty around my ability to debate these issues. The issues of concern were how I viewed myself in leadership terms. How the issue of my gender influenced that vision. Also whether my gender was inherent to my values and whether the promotion of female leadership would be of benefit to the wider society. The source of this uncertainty had been the idea that women and men were equal but not the same. Therefore how did I as a woman reflect my own values and ideas whilst acknowledging that I viewed myself as a 'woman' in a 'man's world'.

2. Past Professional Experiences

I now turn my attention to the basis of my personal development review. In this section I attempt to get at the various influences which have informed my intellectual and professional journey. This then in turn helps to explain what

rules or assumptions have guided me in my knowledge construction. It serves to illuminate for myself and for other practitioners how I have constructed my knowledge when dealing with the kind of complex issues that I, like others, face in negotiating everyday life. How I deal with such issues is important in that I can attempt to surface that knowledge and in the re-examination come to a more nuanced understanding of that complexity.

2.1 Early Work Experiences

My first work experience was a summer job in the Woolworth's Store in Dublin as a Sales Assistant in 1975 at the age of sixteen. I did not enjoy being a Sales Assistant. I disliked dealing with the public. I found the interaction with work colleagues difficult. I was shy and preferred to remain quiet. I found the work tedious and unsatisfying. Looking back I think my own lack of self-confidence was most of my difficulty. In my own comfort zone I was reasonably well able to interact with others. However in social settings my lack of self-confidence caused me to feel uncomfortable and avoid these situations.

The organisation of this workplace was hierarchical with the part-time temporary staff seen as the least important. The Sales Assistants wore a housecoat over their own clothes and to my recollection were exclusively female. The senior managers wore suits and were exclusively male while the floor managers also wore suits and were both male and female.

I think this early work experience made me place a strong emphasis on wanting to enjoy my work. I considered it to be potentially destructive to the human spirit, if the individual did not derive satisfaction from their day's activities. I would concur with Max Ehrmann's[2] sentiments that it is important to be interested in one's work, however humble. This made me want to study to have a job that I would find interesting. I found academic achievement something I could do. I think I tended to follow the path of least resistance.

Similarly money has never been the primary motivator in my career. While I understand that poverty is not pleasant and I like the security that money brings, I have never focused on the size of the salary that would be paid in post. Indeed in my early career I would not have given this much consideration. I also never aspired to being rich. The ambition to make my first million by the time I was thirty, never occurred to me.

The aspects of the job that I would have emphasised would have been - how much I would have enjoyed the work, how well I would get on with colleagues, the distance I had to commute, whether the work was worthwhile, these would have been most important. Currently, it would also not be an important feature. I would require an adequate salary to cover my expenses but I would also look at how it would impact on my desire for enough time to be a good parent and to have an active life outside of paid employment.

[2] Max Ehrmann (1872-1945) was an American writer famous for his prose poem 'Desiderata'.

My interests were in science and I liked the quantitative nature of scientific enquiry. I also wanted a ‘job’ - I did not want to study science with no idea of what job I might do. Certainty around job prospects was a real requirement. My parents were not wealthy and they would have been anxious that I would get an income and become financially independent of them. I think this was why I chose to study for a tangible career. I think the emphasis on acquiring a technical skill links to my requirement to being a practitioner and able to perform a task.

At the time I saw a defined outcome as a necessary pre-requisite. Therefore I ended up choosing Medical Laboratory Sciences, which would train me to become a Medical Scientist. I also wanted a career which did not involve dealing directly with the public. I enrolled in the Dublin Institute of Technology, Kevin Street, in 1977. I qualified as a Medical Scientist in 1980. I continued to study part-time and achieved my Fellowship of Medical Laboratory Sciences in 1984.

I greatly benefited from my college years. The class was small – twenty one in total. It was the first time that I was in a mixed gender class. I had previously been educated in a single sex secondary school. Therefore my experience had been very much in an all-female environment.

The college lecturers were a mixture of male and female. The Head of Department was male with a male assistant head. In the 1980's students were at the bottom of the college hierarchy. While the format of the college was less hierarchical than my summer job experience there was a hierarchy none the less.

I got a student placement in the laboratory of a teaching hospital in Dublin. The laboratories were in the process of being merged with another group of laboratories onto the one site. There was significant apprehension amongst the staff in relation to this merger. The question of who would be in charge was the main contentious issue. Information was based on rumour and supposition. The threat of redundancies was not present but the promotional prospects of some individuals were being impacted. As a student my position was temporary, therefore I did not have a position to lose. However others had worked for a significant period of time for both of the organisations and it was inevitable that some would gain while others would lose out. It was not apparent how the decision making process was being conducted. Subsequently, positions which were given to some people were overturned in the courts at a later date. My observation at that time was that there was a lack of transparency in the process and therefore it was unfair.

I got a permanent job at this facility and I worked quite contentedly for some years. I enjoyed scientific enquiry and got along with my work colleagues very well. However managerial staff tended to be male. Communication was

frequently an issue, with more junior staff not being told about how decisions that affected them were being taken. Also changes that would occur in other parts of the hospital and would impact on the laboratory were not communicated until after the decision was made and the impact was being experienced. This led to considerable discontent and dissention amongst my colleagues. I knew my immediate managers but others in management were unknown to me. For example I did not know the Chief Executive or the Director of Personnel of that organisation although their decisions were impacting on me. This would have contributed to my belief that leadership was predominantly male and unfair.

Performance management was problematic. Some in senior positions had a relatively light workload while others would spend long hours at work. However, some managers did not have anyone recording their attendance and had no clear outputs required of them. Both got equal treatment when it came to pay and conditions. There was no one willing to take the underperformers to task. For junior members of staff there was a monitoring system for time keeping and attendance. The atmosphere was positive. I think most considered it preferable not to be too closely monitored and tolerated those that underperformed.

I considered this unfair and I made the assumption that the not for profit nature of the business was the reason that the organisation was performing in this way. I also considered that in the for profit sector that poor communication,

underperformance and unfairness would not be tolerated. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I now understand that the management of the service was the issue and the not for profit/for profit nature of the business was not the causative factor.

I started to travel outside of Ireland in the early eighties. The first trip that I made was visiting France, Germany, Austria and Italy by train for a month. We travelled extensively staying in youth hostels and meeting many people from different countries. I travelled with a classmate and I was very homesick for the initial part of the trip. I was starting to push my boundaries. Although I was a quiet person and liked to have a secure base I recognised that I needed to push my limits.

I loved the experience and the endless possibilities that travelling in Europe opened up for me. The culture, the fashion, the transport systems, it all seemed so sophisticated in comparison to what I had left behind in Ireland. Each year I would travel for a month visiting Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Switzerland and also back to the other countries previously mentioned.

Ireland in the early eighties was very socially conservative (Callan and Farrell, 1991; Pyle, 1990). It was at this time that the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) started to campaign to insert into the Irish constitution a

protection to the right to life for the unborn (O'Carroll, 1991). I had been raised a Roman Catholic. However I had learned from my parents that I should act on my own conscience.

It was my first conscious decision to go against what those in authority in the church would have said. There was a very divisive campaign but ultimately the amendment was passed. It was a turning point for me in relation to the Catholic Church. It started a shift that my own private conscience became my moral compass. It would begin a process where I would come to reject the concept of God or a higher moral authority.

I began to become aware of the restrictive nature of Irish society, particularly for women. It was something that I reacted against. It seemed to me that the natural progression for women was limited to remaining unmarried and having a career or marriage and having children but not the combination of both.

Article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution recognises the position of mothers in the home. The Irish Constitution is explicit in its view of the gendered nature of care and the special role of women within the home. It states:

> *1. In particular, the State recognises that by her life within the home, woman gives to the State a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.*

2. The State shall, therefore, endeavour to ensure that mothers shall not be obliged by economic necessity to engage in labour to the neglect of their duties in the home.

It was not that long since the marriage bar[3] in the Civil Service had been lifted. The government had also resisted the introduction of equal pay until joining the European Union in 1973. Government and leadership was very much the domain of men (Witz, 1992). In the Irish context in which I was maturing as a young woman leadership was for men and it was of a hierarchical nature.

I had come from a working class background where trade union membership was the norm. I became the student union representative for my class of student medical scientists. Work placements were part of the training process and students were expected to do the work of a qualified person but to be paid a fraction of the salary. There was a campaign for better pay for students, when they went on their work placements. Jobs were also scarce and there was a campaign to increase the numbers employed in the public service.

I remember an incident when there was a strike in McDonald's on Grafton Street in the early eighties. I was walking with one of my friends from college and she wanted to pass the picket in order to buy a burger. I disagreed but it

[3] This was a rule in the Irish Civil Service which was ended in 1973, where a female employee had to resign her post upon marriage.

did not seem to be a problem for her. I cannot remember what she did but I did not pass the union picket. My loyalty to unions was an issue that I had to surface. I had formed the view that unions were necessary in order to deliver fairness to working people. With the use of Kegan's Subject-Object separation it is an assumption that I would continue to hold.

The meaning that I had taken of leadership in the Irish workplace/society in the early 1980's was of leadership that was hierarchical, male and unfair. There was the all-male Catholic priesthood influencing the predominantly male politicians to ban access to abortion in Ireland in 1983. There was a Constitution drawn up by all male participants in 1937 defining a mother's place as in the home, but also that the caring role within the home was to be delivered by women (Keogh and McCarthy, 2008).

I had an interest in working outside of Ireland but the question was where? I would have said that I was not a risk taker, however having read Penrose (1959[1995]) I am actually a risk taker but I just research the move enough that any uncertainty that might arise is reduced to its absolute minimum.

Although Penrose is talking in terms of risk taking in relation to the growth of the firm her theory resonates with me in terms of the growth of the person. I think we do have to push our limits to grow and for those who view themselves as risk averse like myself, I would identify with Penrose's thinking

in this context. She argues that risks can be high from the perspective of the financial losses that could occur but if the uncertainty is reduced to a minimum then the expansion of the firm can take place. This has become part of my developmental goal to move beyond my present area of employment. If I can reduce the uncertainty around how a decision will impact then even if the risk of financial loss is high then it is possible to make this move thus expanding my limit.

At the time it was possible to get work in the Middle East, which would have included the added benefits of housing and a social network. However it was a lifestyle that I considered would not suit me. The social life there was restricted. Expatriates tended to live in compounds and socialise amongst themselves. My social skills were limited. I had the good fortune to work in Baghdad, Iraq on a holiday locum for two summers. I understood from that period that while the work was interesting and I was experiencing a different country, climate and culture, the social aspect of my life was important to me and this aspect was not satisfactory.

Work-life balance is important to me. I work on the assumption that an unfulfilled working day is eroding to mental health. Therefore, I think it is important that work is satisfying for people. I also think that if something is worth doing it is worth doing well. However, I think that all work and no leisure time is also detrimental to one's mental health (Blanchard, 1999). Therefore, I think balance between what is termed the private world of home

and the public world of work is important to me. I think I would also have assumed that this is a gender issue, in that women tend to be more reluctant to sacrifice time spent at home for time spent at work (Bunting, 2005; Russell Hochschild, 2003).

I think work is an important part of my life but that family and friends are also important (Gaffney, 2013). I think I strive for a sense of equilibrium. I will not do something unless I think it is a good idea even if everyone else is doing it. I abstained from alcohol until my late twenties although there was quite a drinking culture in Ireland (Byrne, 2010).

The uncertainty in private sector industries around security of employment I find troubling. I do not think it is desirable to employ people under such uncertainty. Yet I understand the advantages for the economy of a competitive market where unsatisfactory enterprises fail and more satisfactory ones take their place. However I think the uncertainty that it brings to individuals and to society is a high price to pay. The question is 'Is it too high?' I know that security of employment was one of the reasons that I stayed with the public sector as my employer. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I have examined this issue. Ultimately I think job insecurity is unfair (Standing, 2011).

2.2 Working Outside of Ireland

I continued to be interested in working overseas and in 1986 my patience in waiting for the job that would suit me was rewarded. I obtained a post working for the Department of Foreign Affairs on the Medical Laboratory Training Programme, in Lesotho, Southern Africa. Lesotho was a former British Protectorate which gained its independence from Britain in 1966 (Bainbridge, 2009). It then became a constitutional monarchy. It was a landlocked country within South Africa and was approximately the size of Munster. It had a population of approximately two million then and its economy was very dependent on South Africa.

In 1986 there was an apartheid regime in power in South Africa. This was a system of segregation based on race (Brooman and Roberts, 2001). Many donor countries were based in Lesotho because of the international trade boycott of South Africa. Lesotho was identified by the Irish government as a major recipient of Irish aid because of the similarities between Ireland and Lesotho – a small country in the shadow of a bigger neighbour.

Although Lesotho did not operate a system of apartheid it was apparent the impact of being so close to a country that did. There was a separate passport control queue for 'White' and 'Non White' people wanting to enter South Africa from Lesotho. I could see that this system was patently unfair even though it did not discriminate against me directly.

The Project started in 1980 and it provided for the establishment of laboratories to support the services offered in the hospitals in Lesotho. The Project had funding for the building, renovating and equipping of laboratories from the Department of Foreign Affairs Bilateral aid programme. Local staff were employed by the Government of Lesotho. The project was also involved in the training of Laboratory Assistants in the National Higher Education Training College in the capital Maseru.

Graduates from the course were then employed by the hospitals in Lesotho to provide services that previously had been unavailable. Some of the graduates from this course were then sent to Ireland to complete their studies at the Dublin Institute of Technology, Kevin Street. The plan was that these graduates would work alongside the expatriate scientist and eventually take over the running of the service.

I was recruited to teach Clinical Chemistry on the training course and act as an outreach worker to graduates of the course who were now working in district hospital laboratories. I also provided advisory support to the manager of the service in the main hospital in Maseru. They were able to discuss any difficulties with me and I was to offer whatever assistance I could. The administration a quality assessment programme was also under my area of responsibility. This entailed the distribution of samples for testing by the laboratory assistants in the district hospitals. This acted as a guide to the

competence of the graduate and the methods being used. It was a national quality control programme.

In practice the graduates were often better at the sample analysis than I was, because Microbiology was not my specialist area. Also I was relatively inexperienced as I was only four years post my qualification. This I found disconcerting, however in Africa expatriates were considered to be 'experts'. This was very beneficial for me because I started to gain the confidence that I lacked when I first came to Lesotho. However because of this lack of confidence I did not see myself in a leadership role. In applying Kegan's concept of Subject-Object separation, I am now able to separate my feeling of being 'in over my head' with the practical reality that I was able to manage and that I was in a leadership role.

I found the attitude of some the Irish expatriates towards the Basotho (word for people from Lesotho) strikingly similar to the attitude some British people would have had to people from Ireland (Swift, 2002). There was an attitude from some that the local people were lazy, stupid, unreliable and untrustworthy. I found this interesting given that the Irish would have generated similar sentiments from the British. When I interrogated what 'assumption' I was using it is as follows - when people were put in an environment that promoted certain behaviours they tended to display that behaviour. Kegan has alluded to this in his discussion of the Milgram

obedience to authority experiments (Kegan and Lahey, 2009:18). I considered this attitude as fundamentally unfair.

The manager of the project was in the last six months of his contract. I got on well with him and I appreciated his support. I expected as the manager that he would be in control of his brief. Essentially I had no previous experience of this type of work. The work was developmental, in that there was no pre-existing template to go on. We were learning as we went along. Also, at that time, the thinking was, bring in the 'experts', train some locals and after a relatively short period, leave and allow the local people to take over the running of the projects.

However I felt very uncomfortable with the idea that I was an 'expert'. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I have had to interrogate this. The hierarchical nature of leadership in this instance was what I was uncomfortable with. Also I did not have all the answers but I did have some. In doing this review I started to understand how I was constructing my idea of leadership but also my idea of fairness.

In practice I was being given a lot more responsibility than I would have been given back in Ireland. I found that I thrived on it. This was an example of what Kegan (personal communication) calls an "ideal learning environment" where the challenge was marginally greater than one's abilities.

Drucker (1966[1985]:71) argues and I concur that organisations need to be based on the premise that they are being run by ordinary people and that the effective executive makes their strengths productive:

> *To make strength productive is the unique purpose of organisations. It cannot, of course, overcome the weaknesses with which each of us is abundantly endowed. But it can make them irrelevant. Its task is to use the strength of each man as a building block for joint performance*.

I was uncomfortable with the hierarchical nature of leadership and also the idea that the individual was more important than the team. The practice of recruiting one highly paid individual also undermined the team-based approach where local knowledge often went unused. I considered the concentration on my abilities to be unfair. I also considered unfair the expectation that the supporting networks which I had benefited from in Ireland and were now absent would not be necessary for the long term sustainability of the service in Lesotho. It undermined the team-based approach where a collaborative endeavour using a multiple number of strengths was considered more productive (Michaelson *et al.,* 2008).

The manager of the project left after six months, and he was replaced by a new manager shortly afterwards. This individual was, with the benefit of using Kegan's Subject-Object separation, a very different style of manager. He was less directive than my previous manager, which I found difficult as a young inexperienced worker. The relationship between the Basotho counterpart and

the new manager was altered. Local counterparts were very sensitive to social status and great care needed to be taken when dealing with them. There was a large disparity in incomes between the expatriates and the local counterparts. I was aware that offense was being given where none was intended.

This caused a change in the group dynamic working on the project. I had expected that the management style would remain the same. If I am to examine this using Kegan's Subject-Object separation - my assumption was that management was male, hierarchical and ultimately about being right. With this experience I was starting to become more self-directed.

What I found interesting in this situation was that the manager seemed to be unaware of how others were reacting to him. Kegan has argued that we *'organise meaning'* (Kegan, 1994:29). Perhaps he had a less directional approach to management or he judged that we were doing a great job so why interfere? The ability to receive feedback on oneself and to act on it – when and where appropriate – has been proposed as an essential requirement of an effective manager (Drucker, 1999). Inbuilt psychological protectors that we are not aware of that make this very difficult (Kegan and Lahey, 2009). From an organisational perspective there is an underestimation of the difficulties for adults in making changes:

> *This lack of an adult developmental dimension in organisational learning theory has never been more important than the present, as*

> *leaders increasingly ask people to do things they are not now able to do, were never prepared to do and are not yet developmentally well matched to do.* (Kegan and Lahey, 2009:5).

Only one in seven heart attack victims facing certain death succeed in making the lifestyle changes necessary to prevent another event (Kegan and Lahey, 2009). It is therefore even more difficult when that imperative is absent In order to become a more effective manager one needs to recognise the changes needed. Unless one is prepared to be receptive to feedback, one will not know what to change or how to change.

I have had this observation that I have seen other managers operating differently to how I would have performed. Therefore the question arises - what type of manager am I? I decided that I needed to understand myself a little better. I used the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs Myers, 2000) as the most appropriate tool for this analysis. This is described more fully in Essay Three, Section 2.

2.3 Returning to Ireland

After four years in Lesotho, I came back to Ireland in 1990. I completed an evening Arts degree in Economics and Psychology in University College, Dublin (UCD). I studied Economics because I wanted to understand how the economy worked. I studied Psychology because I wanted to understand more about people. I found the course in Economics more interesting than I had anticipated. It helped me to understand how firms work on a micro level and also how they fitted into the overall economy. Psychology gave me some insights into theories of personality and mental health. I also enjoyed the break from learning about science.

I had taken a career break from my job in Ireland while I was in Lesotho, so I returned to this job. I found that my view of the world had broadened. I knew I did not want to go back to the same job. However it was an income and being risk averse when it came to job security I chose not to change at that point. I had taken on the Arts Degree to help me settle back.

My ambivalence about living in Ireland in the 1990s was that I had consciously chosen to leave in 1986 because it was so socially conservative and I wanted to work abroad. When I returned in 1990 that social conservatism was still present (Dillon, 1993). I had returned for family reasons in 1990 but by 1991 those reasons were no longer there. The period in Lesotho had made me very self-reliant. Lesotho was very under-developed with basic services

like clean water, electricity and suitable roads not necessarily available. I was beginning to understand the importance of good government and politics to the provision of those services. Similarly if something needed fixing it was sometimes the case that I was the most able person around. This experience helped me to gain the confidence that I was lacking before I went there. I was starting to appreciate that good leadership was important and something to which I could aspire. However I viewed it as hierarchical and predominantly the domain of men, which I viewed as problematic.

I realised I needed a change of job. I found the work that I was doing was not challenging enough. I had become accustomed to stretching myself. I found I missed the extra demands that my job in Lesotho had placed on me. I considered working overseas again but I decided I did not want to work in a developing economy, at that point in time. I found the enormity of the problems associated with extreme poverty and underdevelopment too daunting. I felt that I could not do this type of work again and remain an optimist. The unfairness of the system that distributed resources in such an unequal way was very disturbing to me.

Therefore, when a manager's job came up in Cork in 1993, I decided to risk the move. I had no connections with Cork. Therefore I knew no-one when I went there. I understood from my time in Lesotho that a social network would not be that easy to secure. The expatriate community in Lesotho was in one sense a ready-made family. It provided a network of potential friends. This

would not be the case in Cork. Essentially I would only know the people that I worked with. At that time Cork was four hours' drive from Dublin, with major traffic congestion. Returning every weekend would not be possible, plus I did not want that to be the case. I had gained the confidence and self-reliance in Lesotho to make the move.

I started in my new job in February 1993. I was employed as the Senior Medical Scientist in a laboratory discipline of a Public Voluntary hospital in Cork. I had four Medical Scientists and one Clerical Officer reporting to me. The hospital was an Acute General hospital owned and operated by a congregation of Catholic nuns. The majority of patients (80%) were covered by medical cards with a minority of fee paying or private patients (20%).

When I took up my post, I discovered that the previous section manager had left suddenly and without explanation. This person was a religious sister and the staff came into work one day to find that her office had been cleared out. Prior to her departure there had been significant discontent amongst the laboratory staff about excessive workloads and inadequate equipment. Staff had complained about these issues to the Matron and the General Manager of the hospital. However the staff were not briefed as to how the situation was to be resolved. The staff were told that she was no longer working in the laboratory and a new manager was to be recruited. I was appointed nine months later. No-one was appointed as an interim manager and the section was operated by the staff collectively.

The hospital management consisted of the General Manager, the Matron (a religious sister) and a Clerical Officer who acted in the role of personnel manager. The equipment in the laboratory was antiquated with most of the instruments at least ten years old. I was told at the interview that the laboratory was in need of an equipment upgrade and that this was accepted by the management at the hospital. However when I took up the post, this became less of a priority. On the job I learned that laboratories were very far down the priority list. However, I understood the importance of laboratory results. The Kevin Murphy case would highlight this subsequently.[4]

I found dealing with hospital management challenging. I had the expectation that they would be concerned about what I was concerned about. There was no service planning and managers were expected to make do, as far as I could ascertain. There were no scheduled meetings with management to plan how the service was to be provided. Orders could be placed for consumables (like reagents and plastics) but there was no service planning for the replacement of equipment. Workload activity was not controlled. Therefore new services in the hospital could be added which would increase the workload of the laboratory without us being even notified.

[4] Kevin Murphy, 21 years old, died as the result of a high calcium level in his blood. His condition of primary hyperparathyroidism has a success rate of 96% if treated appropriately. The laboratory result was given to two clinicians but treatment was not instigated in time to prevent his premature death.

The hospital management would talk about the budget being tight. Yet no department had a budget. There was one budget which was the hospital budget. Financial information about my department if it existed was not given to me. I found the job extremely frustrating. I felt that the job that I was doing was not appreciated by hospital management.

Staffing was also a difficulty. After only eight months in the job I found myself working in a department where three of the four staff were on maternity leave at the same time. This made the installation of new equipment essential if the service was to continue. In 1994-95 I got replacements for the staff on leave. In 2013 that would not necessarily have been the case. Fortunately six months after my arrival a consultant clinician was appointed to my laboratory on a part-time basis. Together we set about improving the standard of the equipment in the department. It took a lot of meetings, phone calls, letters and constant lobbying by us of hospital management to get new equipment installed. Looking back I marvel at the pressure I was under to keep the service going. I considered it an unfair system in which to manage. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I have interrogated my assumption that I should have been treated fairly.

I thought my experience in Lesotho would have prepared me for what I had to deal with in Cork. I expected in management terms that systems would operate more efficiently than in Lesotho. There, I had no expectation that this would be the case. In Cork I did and this was part of my frustration. I was also

passionate about my work and it bothered me to think that others were not. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I can now understand that my priorities were not necessarily those of the general manager. This has been a key issue for me, how to remain passionate and not to become disillusioned in an imperfect world.

I could not understand how in a developed economy that there was no system in place for the planning and delivery of services. The lobbying of hospital management was on an adhoc basis and seemed to me a crude mechanism to allocate resources. I had expected that the management of the organisation would follow some kind of a rationale. I probably was 'in over my head' (Kegan, 1994). I framed the world around how I was thinking. I also did not recognise the disconnect between authority and responsibility. I felt responsible for a service that I did not have the authority to change. This contributed to my sense of unfairness in the way I was being managed.

At that stage I had decided that I needed a better understanding of the demands of management. I enrolled in a Master's programme – a Master of Arts in Healthcare Management with the Institute of Public Administration in 1998. My thesis was on service planning within the publicly funded sector of laboratories in Ireland. I found the disparity of resources versus test numbers in different laboratories to be significant. Also service planning was either absent or unsatisfactory. My thesis demonstrated that resource allocation in the

publicly funded laboratories that I studied was not based on a uniform allocation of resources and that service planning was problematic (Finn, 2001).

Just before I completed my Masters I gave birth to my only child in 2000. I returned to work in 2002 with a greater need for balance between my world of work and my home life. However at that time I did see the world in very absolute terms. It was slowly dawning on me that the way I saw the world was not the way other people saw the world as previous episodes have indicated.

The noughties brought about a change in the Health sector with the formation of the HSE (Health Service Executive) in 2004. Under the provisions of the 2004 Health Act all the Health Boards were brought together under one management structure. The Chief Executive Officer was the accounting officer and responsible for the budget which was just under 15 billion euros in 2009. There was now a greater emphasis on healthcare in the community, largely provided by general practitioners. This was particularly important for the organisation that I worked for. The Horwath Teamwork report completed in 2008 was published in 2009[5] on acute hospitals in Cork and Kerry. This recommended that all acute complex care including cancer should be delivered in Cork University Hospital and all other healthcare should be delivered as close as possible to the patient. This therefore meant great challenges for my organisation.

[5] Horwath and Teamwork Report (2008) commissioned by the HSE was entitled 'Securing clinically safe and sustainable acute hospital services. The next steps for Cork and Kerry.'

However professional bureaucracies were difficult to manage (Sandberg and Targama, 2007) and as they get bigger they were not necessarily the sum of the parts. I was beginning to participate more in other management areas of the hospital. I was appointed as Project Manager from my organisation to the reconfiguration of the laboratory services in Cork and Kerry in 2009.

The Fianna Fail-Progressive Democrat Coalition Governments (1997-2007) had placed an emphasis on relying on the private sector to supplement the public health system. In 2005 Health Minister Mary Harney announced plans to provide 1,000 extra beds by the private sector co-located with public hospitals. I considered this to be unfair because access to the private beds was based on ability to pay and not on medical need.

I believed healthcare was a service that everyone should have access to, based on medical need. In 2011 over forty eight million Americans did not have private health insurance (CDC, 2011). I have had to challenge why I am so committed to the public provision of healthcare using Kegan's Subject-Object separation. It transpires that I was confusing the provision of healthcare with access to healthcare. This was based on the value of fairness.

My interest in leadership commenced in Lesotho. I read leadership books over the years (Mandela, 2008; Obama, 2004; Jenkins, 1995; Iacocca, 1986). However I found it difficult to identify with the leadership role. Leadership

particularly in the political sphere was predominantly male (Pande and Forde, 2012). The one female leader of the 1980's – Margaret Thatcher[6] was even less appealing to me. Television programmes presented leadership in an unattractive manner for me. Alan Sugar[7] in the BBC TV programme 'The Apprentice' and its Irish counterpart in the person of Bill Cullen[8] on RTE television portrayed leadership as hierarchical and adversarial. While it may have made for good television entertainment, I disagreed with the analysis that concentrating on people's inadequacies was the way to be a successful leader. I preferred the analysis that leadership was about maximising people's capabilities (Drucker, 1966/85) I also found that these programmes did not have a value system with which I could identify.

As a parent I have thought my daughter to be considerate towards others and that everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. Yet it seemed to me that when we became adults and entered the workplace we were supposed to forget these basic values. I did not accept that this was a fair way to behave.

[6] Margaret Thatcher (1925-2013) was Conservative Prime Minister in Britain 1979-1990.

[7] Alan Sugar appeared in the BBC TV series The Apprentice, which began being broadcast in 2005 and was based upon the popular U.S. television show of the same name, featuring the American entrepreneur Donald Trump. Alan Sugar is a British business magnate, media personality, and political advisor.

[8] Bill Cullen is an Irish businessman, reality TV and media personality. Cullen was the former owner of the Renault Ireland franchise.

2.4 Building Political Awareness

The awakening of my interest in politics/economics had happened in Lesotho. For the first time I made the connection between people's living standards and the politics and stability of the Government. I also became aware that peaceful democracy was something to be nurtured. In Lesotho I saw an economy based on subsistence farming, donor aid and repatriated monies from the South African mines. Basics like access to clean drinking water, proper sanitation, access to food and shelter – these were items to which, most of the population in Lesotho, had limited access. Yet they were living side by side with a small minority who lived in large houses and had a housemaid and a gardener. I formed the view that there was something intrinsically unfair in any system where there was such a stark income inequality. In 2011 an Irish person had a life expectancy of 80 years with the equivalent figure for Lesotho at 48 years (World Bank, 2011).

Politics in Ireland in the twentieth century was a product of the War of Independence and the Civil War after 1922 (Kissane, 2007). Political parties were based on the opposing factions from the Civil War[9] Fine Gael was aligned to the Christian Democrats in Europe. It was seen as a conservative party yet also appealing to the 'Just Society' advocates and Garrett Fitzgerald's

[9] The Irish Republican Army (IRA) and its political party Sinn Fein split into two factions after the War of Independence was ended in 1920. In the 1980s these parties had evolved into Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. Both were essentially Christian Democratic parties in European terms. Fianna Fail tended to appeal to lower income groups while Fine Gael appealed to more conservative middle class voters.

[10] more Social Democratic stance. Fianna Fail with support from more working class and trade union based support was seen as representing the conservative working class. The Irish Labour party was part of the Socialist grouping in Europe. At the start of the 1990's the intervening twenty years had seen Fianna Fail majority governments or coalitions between Fine Gael and Labour (Lee, 1990).

In 1990 when I returned to Ireland there was the election of the first female president of Ireland – Mary Robinson[11] In the subsequent general election Labour formed a coalition government with Fianna Fail. However this combination was changed midway through the term with Fianna Fail leaving office and Labour forming a Government with Fine Gael and Democratic Left (Adshead, 2009). The conservative nature of Irish politics seemed to be changing. In 1997 when the Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left coalition was defeated I decided I needed to become active politically and I joined a political party.

I joined a political party because I felt it was unfair to criticise others for not acting if I was not prepared to act myself. I also began to debate with other activists the merits or not of particular policy positions. I had come from a

[10] Garret Fitzgerald was an Irish politician and leader of the Fine Gael party from 1977 – 1987. He was Taoiseach on two occasions.

[11] Mary Robinson was a barrister, politician and academic.

working class background but had managed to gain a third level qualification. However I was not well versed about different political ideologies.

I am concerned with the role of women in the workplace and in society. Biologically women usually between the ages of twenty and forty-five can produce children (CSO, 2012). This is when they are also participating in the paid workforce. I believe that everyone when they reach adulthood should be a contributor. Some chose to do that by caring for others. However I think how we value carers is a problem (Coyle, 2011). Therefore the carer is vulnerable to exploitation because they do not have direct access to their own finances.

I think most women who chose to work outside the home also want to be able to spend time with their children. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I have also come to realise that men may want this too but that the traditional single earner model allowed for only one partner to do most of the caring. Therefore the career model of the male family man with a female partner at home taking care of the children needs to evolve.

Penrose's (1959[1995]:35) emphasis on the productive services to be gained from the effective management of human resources is critical. It is only when the productive services are employed that the firm is set to grow. I would use the analogy that it is like having a resource sitting on a shelf, if it stays on the

shelf then it is not productive. However when it comes into play then and only then does it become productive:

> *Thus, the managerial competence of a firm is to a large extent a function of the quality of the entrepreneurial services available to it.*

My dilemma in pursuing this idea was that I considered that my values did not fit with the business world that I was observing. The idea that I as a woman had values that did not fit into a world created predominantly by men was my difficulty. The absence of women in leadership roles served to influence my thinking that the values that I had were somehow gender related. Yet Margaret Thatcher has been held up as an example of a woman who made it to the top of her profession – politics, yet she did not represent my values?

The issue of equality particularly for women has interested me. The conflict between the 'public' world of paid work and the 'private' sphere of home and family has also been of interest to me. I would have placed a large emphasis that while work was important to me that it was not all of my life. I would place great importance on family and friends. Yet I am committed to any projects that I put my mind to – yet how do I achieve a satisfactory balance?

Women cannot have it all is the refrain from Anne Marie Slaughter[12]. Is it that men have sacrificed being a parent if they are in a leadership role? However using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I have surfaced my underlying assumptions about leadership and how fairness and gender influence leadership. This has generated my three research questions – how can I develop my perception of leadership, is fairness an element of functional leadership and to what extent does the increased participation of women lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership?

3. Conclusion

In this essay, with reference to Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) I have examined the progress of my professional development to date. Kegan's concept of constructive developmentalism and its foundation that every person constructs their own reality has been of particular relevance. I have drawn on Kegan's theory of Subject-Object separation to further explore my ideas and practice. In looking back over my career I have identified the significant ideas that have shaped my thinking.

I have become increasingly reflective and engaged in terms of the different meaning making systems that were going on in me around the subject of leadership and how I viewed others in that role. By using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I discovered that my knowledge of leadership was very

[12] Anne Marie Slaughter was Director of Policy Planning in the Obama Administration 2009-2011. She left her post sighting family commitments as the reason for her decision.

much constructed around it being male, hierarchical and unfair. I very much viewed myself as a 'woman' operating in a 'man's world'. By making those assumptions object this has greatly helped with my understanding of different approaches that may be useful in my dealings with other managers.

In addition, I am now more alert to the ways in which colleague's meaning making systems may change over time. Enhanced awareness helps me to better understand their approach to the organisation. These kinds of situations serve to illuminate how Kegan's work has improved my understanding of a very complex workplace setting, leading to greater personal job satisfaction from awareness, to understanding and into practice.

Fundamentally, leading change in me is one of the major aspects of this Essay. Thus, in this Essay, I have reflected on the key events of my professional life over three decades which have significantly informed how I have observed developmental change in myself. The central research objective was to develop my potential for leadership so as to progress at the micro level enhanced models of practice, embedded in the principles of fairness and gender equality.

The Essays that follow explore the themes of what is leadership? Is fairness a valid business value and how does gender influence leadership? In Essay Two I give an account of the literature that I use to broaden my meaning making

system. I use these explorations to guide changes to my practice described in Essay Three.

Essay Two: Reading for Change: Generating Clarity

1. Introduction

This Essay focuses on the literature that I used to develop my thinking on leadership and fairness and the influence of gender on leadership. The research questions were how can I develop my perception of leadership, is fairness an element of functional leadership and to what extent does the increased participation of women lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership? By examining the literature around leadership, fairness and the influence of gender on leadership, I came to a better understanding of my own construction of these topics.

I have examined what other authors have to say on these themes. I have used their writings to interrogate my own thinking on these issues. By interrogating my thinking my aim is also to inform others as to how their thinking might be influenced by this thesis.

The aim is to become more self-authoring and less a recipient of 'received wisdom'. This essay outlines my reading and adds critical reflection to my thinking. With this clarity the aim is to transform my knowledge and understanding. In looking at what others have had to say on the themes of leadership, fairness and gender generated from Essay One, the ultimate aim is to improve my leadership effectiveness.

Kegan (1994) argues that we create an attachment to our knowledge and create a protection system around that knowledge which makes it difficult to change. By recognising that attachment then we can move to a more complex mode of thinking. Increased mental complexity correlates with managerial effectiveness (Kegan and Lahey, 2009). The core premise is that our best efforts to change are habitually impeded by forces within us that work to prevent that change. Kegan's approach acknowledges the often good, if poorly understood, reasons for our behaviour. In essence, our failure to bring about the changes that we desire are not for the lack of good intentions. Furthermore, Kegan contends that change-resistant behaviours have a very good reason for being. They are there to prevent harm to ourselves as perceived by ourselves. Above all, Kegan poses the question of what gets in the way of our changing our minds that gets in the way of achieving the goals we have set for ourselves.

This particular question, as it is posed here by Kegan, has been core to my personal and professional experience over a number of years. It is a question that has often frustrated me, especially as it has pertained to my working life in the Irish Health Sector. What would happen if I chose to make a significant change in my life? In this essay, I take this theme further by reflecting on the role of fairness, gender and leadership in the context of promoting positive change in myself both in the 'private' realm (i.e. domestic) and in the public' realm (i.e. the world of paid work and the political realm).

My basic premise is that this introduction presents a framework for how I will proceed in improving my understanding of how my gender influences my values and leadership so that I can change and improve. This in turn, relates to my abilities to influence my organisation to change and improve. Ultimately, this understanding generated my research questions – how can I develop my perception of leadership, is fairness an element of functional leadership and to what extent does the increased participation of women lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership? These are the substantive themes underpinning this Portfolio of Exploration.

The basic challenge has been that a lack of clarity around my views has led to a degree of uncertainty in relation to my ability to debate these issues. Thus, my main development goals are to have clarity about my ideas and to communicate more courageously regarding the issues that matter to me. The issues of concern are how I view myself in leadership terms. How the issue of gender influences that vision both in terms of how I view myself in leadership and how I view others in leadership. Also, whether the role of my gender is inherent to my values and whether the promotion of female leadership will be of benefit to the wider society. A fundamental issue has been the idea that women and men are equal but not the same. Therefore, the question may be asked: how do I as a woman reflect my own values and ideas whilst acknowledging that I view the world as a 'man's world'. I also wish to improve my leadership effectiveness by building my awareness of the knowledge that I have constructed.

My development goals are specific to me and my work environment and circumstances. I think this Portfolio, however, would also be of interest to other middle and senior managers working in organisations where the link between leadership, fairness and greater female participation are of significant importance. I also consider that engaged and interested members of the academic community and policy makers working in the area of leadership theory and practice would be similarly interested in this Portfolio.

1.1 Structure of Essay Two

In the next sections I explore the questions that have arisen from my Professional Development Review. Section 2 deals with my reading on the subject of Leadership. Section 2.1 outlines enhancing my understanding of care as a barrier to women in leadership. Section 2.2 interrogates the impact that this literature had on my understanding of leadership. Section 3 deals with fairness and how other authors view the value of fairness. Section 4 outlines my reading on Leadership and Gender. Section 4.1 expands on the question of the presence of women in leadership. Section 4.2 discusses the positive and negatives aspects to gender quotas. Section 4.3 interrogates the concept of essentialism. Section 4.4 outlines the impact of this reading on my understanding of gender and leadership. Section 5 summarises the section and points the way to how the reading would lead to changes that I could bring to the exercise in Essay Three.

2. Understanding Leadership

Many theories have been put forward of what constitutes good leadership. The list is wide ranging and I will give a discussion of the literature that I used.

The Great Man Theory began to be discussed in the literature in the nineteenth century. Leaders were considered a product of their societies. Examples included Julius Caesar and Alexander the Great (Bolden *et al*, 2003). They were almost exclusively male and usually had a military or political background. The gendered term for this theory also reinforced the perception that leadership was about men

The Trait theories evolved from the Great Man theory looking at the key qualities that successful leaders displayed. These traits drew on virtually all known adjectives for desirable characteristics. For example, words like trustworthy, ambitious, adaptable, confident, creative to name a few. However studies could not identify consistent traits which were essential to successful leadership (Stogdill, 1974).

Situational or Contingency theories concluded that no one leadership style was effective for all situations. Leaders adopted a different style or approach depending on the challenges being faced. An authoritarian style may have been appropriate if the leader was the most knowledgeable and the group was inexperienced. A team based approach may have been more appropriate to

maximise productivity from the skill sets of a more experienced group (Hersey and Blanchard, 1977).

Subsequently, Transactional theory came to the fore. Transactional leadership focused on the role of supervision and the organisation in a hierarchical mode of leadership. Performance was maximised when the chain of command was definite and clear. Obedience to instructions by the followers was expected and monitored. It also proposed that workers were motivated by rewards and punishments (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leadership focused on the connections formed between leaders and followers. Leaders were focused on the performance of the group members. They led by inspiring and motivating their followers (Bass and Riggio, 2005). Transformational leaders through their use of vision and high moral standards gained respect and trust from followers. They promoted creativity and encouraged innovation. They offered support through good communication. Ultimately followers wanted to follow and emulate their leaders (Burns, 1985).

More modern authors such as Bennis (2009) proposed that the two essential components of good leadership were creating a vision and translating that vision into reality. Others proposed that leadership was a skill that could be learnt (Bennis and Goldsmith, 2010).

Servant leadership has also been described (Greenleaf, 1970[1991]). By combining two seemingly contradictory terms Greenleaf sought to make a provocative statement. He proposed a reconsideration of the very nature of leadership. Previous leadership models had described leadership in terms of a solo figure or hero. He wanted to challenge the organisational pyramid of the leader on top and the followers or subordinates beneath. Ultimately he proposed turning this pyramid on its head. He deliberately used the term 'Servant as Leader' and not 'Leader as Servant'.

Servant leadership emphasised service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community and the sharing of power in decision-making. In Servant leadership attributes grew out of the inner values and beliefs of the individual leaders. Personal values such as fairness and integrity were crucial. Advocates for Servant leadership proposed that the value systems held by Servant leaders were unique (Russell, 2001).

However others questioned whether Servant leadership was compatible with the emphasis on individual effort and performance (Lloyd, 1996). Others saw it as perpetuating an andro-centric patriarchal norm of master/slave or masculine/feminine political economy (Eicher-Cart, 2005). The emphasis on serving a higher purpose led others to express concern at its religious overtones (Lee and Zemke, 1993).

There have also been proposals that women as a category tended to manage differently to men (Roesner, 1990). From the perspective of feminist theory, gender is understood as a basic organising principle that shapes the conditions of women's lives. Leadership theory and analysis has been based on studies of the experiences of white males and this does not necessarily extrapolate to other groups (Blackmore, 1989).

The women's intercultural leadership model promoted the idea of recognising the leader within each person whilst also being supportive and valuing the contributions of the followers (Bazata *et al*, 2011). The example that they used to illustrate this leadership theory was geese flying in a V formation. The lead goose would tire and would rotate back into the formation to rest, while another would take its place in the lead. This drew on the strength of all the birds to reach their final destination. This pluralistic leadership model promoted the recognition of all members as leaders and followers and called for the recognition of leaders that were previously unseen (Hackman and Wageman, 2007).

Feminist leadership theory promoted the equality of men and women but it further argued for a rebalancing of the power structures which had evolved in society (Batliwala, 2008). However women were seen as the 'other' and therefore were under pressure to conform to the masculine norm (Gilligan, 1977). Connell (2005) pointed out that this can also be a problem for some

men. The conflict between the private world of care and the public world of work were seen as problematic for those in leadership:

> *Some tasks which were once the responsibility of parents are now easier to delegate or farm out. The Weberian separation of the public and private spheres, invented in the male professional world, is called into question by the increasing influence of women more reluctant (or less able) to leave their family responsibilities at home.* (March and Weil, 2005:14).

2.1 Understanding Care as a Barrier to Leadership

Care responsibilities may be a significant barrier to assuming leadership roles (CSO, 2012). Childcare has been identified as one of the main barriers to women in leadership (Gardiner, 2000). Care whether it is childcare or elder care, it is a societal issue. All needed care in their early life and at times when becoming an adult. Indeed care is a fundamental requirement of life.

The gendered nature of care in Ireland is illustrated in the Census of 2011. In 2011, half a million women were looking after home/family compared to just 9,600 men (CSO, 2012).

> *Women will only become leaders in greater numbers when men become fathers* (Wittenburg-Cox, 2013)

She argues that when care is only seen purely from the perspective of an individual couple then inevitably one partner, usually the woman has to step back completely from the paid workforce.

An alternative is the Nordic model of state subsidised childhood care and education. This is considered one of the best systems for childhood well-being (OECD, 2009). However in Ireland there is little agreement on the best way to deliver children's well-being[13]. There is a realignment taking place nationally and internationally as women move out of the home and into paid work (Sandberg, 2013). The unacknowledged work that was previously carried out by women now has to be catered for. Traditionally, men operated in a world where all the care that was necessary for them to function was carried out by someone else, usually their wives (March and Weil, 2005). This care which consisted of running the household and taking care of and monitoring the children was done by someone else. This allowed the partner in paid employment to concentrate almost exclusively on their employment because someone else was meeting the care needs. This situation was ameliorated for couple with more resources as they could buy in child- care and concentrate on their own care by outsourcing cleaning, house/car maintenance and gardening.

[13] See for example articles in Irish Times by Breda O' Brien 'Irish Families Don't Want a Nordic Model' (Opinion and Analysis, May 28th 2011) and counter arguments by Dymphna Devine and Ursula Kilkelly 'Nordic Childcare Model Best for Economic and Social Wellbeing. (9/6/2011)

Wittenburg Cox (2013) makes the case that the care issue should be examined from three perspectives. She talks about the three C's, Couples, Companies and Countries. She argues that the debate tends to be around 'Fix the woman' with authors urging women to become more assertive and take their place at decision making (Sandberg, 2013). The counter argument is 'Fix the System' – implement a Nordic type childcare system. It may well be that an element of *both* needs to happen. Women and indeed men need to stop seeing childcare as a 'women's issue'. There are two parents so therefore it is an issue for both genders but it is also an issue for society. The rearing of the next generation of well-functioning adults is important for a sustainable future.

Therefore companies and countries need to play their part as well. The workforce is made up of people with home lives which are important, not least because it helps them to function well at work. It is important for society that young people learn good values. If less attention is paid to their care there is a risk that the next generation will be less capable than the present one. The company and country policies makes good business sense too (Wittenburg-Cox and Maitland, 2008). Women are fifty percent of the population (CSO, 2012) and therefore fifty percent of the talent pool. A comment on Wittenburg-Cox's blog (2013) describes the difficulties of combining paid work with child rearing which does not take account of the companies and countries element:

> *'I learned it is not about 'choice' at all when I moved from the Netherlands to the UK. I had imagined a 4/day a week job for me at a senior level, possibly for my husband too, and sharing childcare, like all my friends do in the Netherlands. However in the UK, it's almost*

impossible to find a job like that. On top of that, working hours are much longer in the UK so a joint family dinner my friends in the UK only have on Sundays I believe. Then after school care is not very well organised in the UK either. As a result I opted out of a senior job, and went free-lance, so I can create the flexibility I need, sacrificing a large part of my income in the process. My husband does the long hours and full responsibility for the income. A very different choice from what we would have done in the Netherlands. And all related to Countries and Companies. It has really shocked me how my own personal choices have been driven by these 2 external C's to a much larger extend than I believed possible.[14],

As women move out of the home, the care that was previously delivered there needs to be addressed by both parents. However concentrating assistance on individual couples does not give choice at all. There needs to be a much larger vision of what care entails. This involves companies and countries as well.

Wittenburg-Cox (2013) maintains that only proactive management pushing, mainly led by enlightened men, leads to gender balance at corporate level. However, expecting women to then behave as men is a counter-productive exercise if the objective is to lead to more diverse gender balanced organisations.

[14] Comment from Inge Woudstra on Wittenburg Cox blog (2013).

2.2 Impact of Reading

The dearth of women in leadership positions has been well documented (Pande and Ford, 2012). In general, leadership has been perceived as being a mainly masculine pursuit. In consequence, women were less likely to be seen as leaders regardless of their capability or effectiveness. Effective leadership tended to be associated with communication and decision-making styles associated with men – directive, authoritative and expedient – as opposed to the communal and inclusive styles attributed to women (Merchant, 2012).

Initially I did not see my area of interest in terms of leadership. Leadership was something that others did. In a sense I saw myself as a follower and an influencer. I needed to come to an understanding of how I could shape the world around me in a more direct way.

My understanding of leadership was framed by my view that most leaders were men. Although there had been some breakthroughs for women in Ireland, e.g. the election of Mary Robinson as the first female president in 1990, it was more the exception than the rule. The role model of the leader out in front was a model with which I did not identify.

Furthermore, leadership as a concept was sometimes bound up with notion of ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. I had an inherent dislike of this kind of competitive conceptualisation. I had to interrogate my reasons for my dislike of this

understanding of leadership using Kegan's Subject-Object separation. In competitive terms, there are always 'winners' and 'losers'. Thus, this posed the question - could I promote a world where everyone was a winner? Could I promote a world where the number of winners were maximised? My adherence to a sense of fairness was also crucial to my world view wherein the world could be a positive and progressive place in which all share in its wealth and prosperity.

My world view may be dissonant with a world in which competitive ethic is exalted (Shields and Bredemeier, 2009). Thus, I needed to be able to defend my view as being both practical and rational. I found support for these views in the work of some authoritative commentators (Corning, 2011; Corning, 2003; Nussbaum and Sen, 1993; Freire, 1970[1996]) who commend the role of cooperation and reciprocity as critical to a functioning and fair society.

3. Understanding Fairness

The word Fair is used in public discourse, Fair play[15] Fairtrade[16] and Fair Deal[17] are a few examples. The impetus for examining fairness as a value was my perception that criticism of publicly funded organisations was unfair. Publicly funded organisations can come in for criticism, because it is argued that they cannot go out of business. The market discipline for most private sector organisations is that they will cease trading if they do not make a profit (McCloskey, 1985). The exception to this argument is private sector organisations that are too big to fail or monopolies that are vital to the economy.

Publicly funded organisations can be protected from the disciplines of the market place. As a public servant I was conscious of this criticism but found it to be unfair. Publicly funded organisations do not explicitly make a profit to continue in business, and their debts can be met by the tax payer. This also seems unfair and has led to some privatisation of publicly funded organisations (Klein, 2001; Linowes, 1988).

Drucker (1990) looked at the non-profit organisation. He pointed out a very important issue when asking the question "*What is the bottom line when there*

[15] Fair play is a term used to denote agreement amongst participants that play is just.

[16] Fairtrade is an international organisation which seeks to promote a better deal and improved terms of trade for producers and workers.

[17] Fair Deal is an Irish Government scheme to fund affordable long term care.

is no 'bottom line" (Drucker, 1990:107). He maintained that for profit organisations did have to measure profit and loss whereas non-profit organisations did not:

> *In a business, there is a financial bottom line. Profit and loss are not enough by themselves to judge performance, but at least they are something concrete.*

This point raised the issue of funding for non-profit organisations. A for profit company had to know how it was going to generate enough revenue in order to fund its activities. It also had to make a profit so that it could continue in business. Competencies in publicly funded medical bureaucracies tended to be around technical expertise e.g. as a doctor, a nurse or a medical scientist (which was my area of expertise).

In the health sector the function of the finance department was to ascertain if there was adequate finance to fund the organisation's activities. The function of the healthcare professionals was to treat patients. The two groups tended to operate in parallel (Klein, 2001). Yet there was little attempt to bring the two groups to the table (Finn, 2001). The criticism was a variation of a quotation attributed to Oscar Wilde (no date)[18] that "*Accountants know the cost of everything and the value of nothing, and doctors know the value of everything and the cost of nothing"*. Measuring performance and results meant different measurements to different personnel.

[18] Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) was an Irish writer and poet.

Sandberg and Targama (2007:129) looked at the issue of how vision can be used as a tool to embed in the organisation their business theory (Drucker, 1994). They defined it as:

> *..vision can be seen as an attempt to create a conceptualisation of the future ambitions of a corporation.*

They used the example of the Swedish furniture company IKEA. Their core purpose was *"to develop functional and beautiful furniture that most people can afford to buy"* (2007:101). One of their competencies was *"Profit gives us resources"* (2007:102) this referred above all to being aware of costs. It stipulated that profit should be achieved by keeping the lowest price in combination with high quality. This enabled all employees to have a shared understanding of the company's core purpose of making profitable but affordable furniture.

An organisation that knows its business purpose is more likely to remain profitable (Drucker, 1994). Drucker (2008) promotes the idea of the constant questioning that needs to happen to improve an organisation's performance. However is fairness a valid business value? Does corporate social responsibility and sustainability really mean anything in business?

One of the most prominent exponents of the concept of fairness was John Rawls (1971[1999]). Rawls argued that justice was a social contract based on

fairness, assuming a well ordered society. He argued that most reasonable principles of justice were those that everyone would accept from a fair position. However he went on to revise the liberal content of his ideas (Rawls, 1993). Rawls came to accept that his ideas were based on the assumption that society was stable and relatively homogenous. He later came to understand that there were in reality a plurality of incompatible and irreconcilable doctrines co-existing within democratic states.

Sowell (1987[2007]) contrasted the thinking behind the ideological origins of political struggles. Sowell argued that ideas looked at through the lens of the 'Constrained' and 'Unconstrained' visions helped one to understand how people differed often in wanting to get to the same place. Politicians of different ideologies often identified that they wanted to achieve *"the greatest good for the greatest number"* (1987[2007]:119).

Sowell defined two differing positions - the Constrained and the Unconstrained. He identified two key criteria for distinguishing both visions - who should decide and how the decision making process was to be carried out. He defined the constrained vision as seeking to analyse, prescribe or judge only the processes involved. In the constrained vision, the level of material well-being, was seen as the product of vast numbers of people over vast regions of time. The constrained vision saw future progress as a continuation of such systemic interactions and threatened by attempts to substitute individually excogitated social schemes for those evolved patterns.

Adherents to the constrained vision argued that these could never have been planned. The emphasis in the constrained vision was on individuals acting independently. Laissez-faire economics was an example in economics where the locus of discretion was innumerable individuals. In the constrained vision this was seen as the best method of maximising material gain.

In the unconstrained vision the outcome was the key criteria. The unconstrained vision advocated for deliberate social decision-making for the common good.

However Sowell (1987[2007]:155). also pointed out that there was a difference between the two visions of outcome for example on the definition of equality:

> *It is not over the degree of equality that the two visions are in conflict, but over what it is that is to be equalised.*

In the constrained vision, it was discretion which was to be equally and individually exercised as much as possible. In the unconstrained vision, it was the material conditions of life which were to be equalised.

Sowell (1987[2007]:220) considered the concept of social justice and the differing emphasis in each vision:

> *In short, those who argue for social justice argue for a particular set of results while Hayek's objections are to the process implied by seeking these or any other specific social results for particular individuals or groups*

Yet Freire (1998:22) would argue:

> *My abhorrence of neo-liberalism helps to explain my legitimate anger when I speak of the injustices to which the rag pickers among humanity are condemned*.

The concept of 'fairness' was defined differently according to the two visions

> *The greatest danger of the concept of social justice, according to Hayek, is that it undermines and ultimately destroys the concept of a rule of law.* (Sowell, 1987[2007]:221)

The clash between the two visions can be best described as what one considers the only practical means to behave the other considers as morally reprehensible.

This indicates the fundamental disagreement between the constrained and the unconstrained political positions. The unconstrained vision cannot accept

results which are not desirable. The constrained position is that the best outcomes that can be achieved is achieved through adherence to process. Niskanen (1973) and his theory around budget maximising bureaucrats, would point out that incentives and constraints which are the 'processes' have to be taken into account in the delivery of good leadership.

Political debates are sometimes presented in terms of Right and Left. Sowell (1987/2007) identifies those on the Right as placing the emphasis on processes and argues that outcomes cannot be pre-determined but that this way will lead to the best outcomes. He argues that those on the Left reject this analysis and argue that the outcome is the paramount consideration and that process is secondary.

Niskanen (1973:7) also challenges thinking in relation to the supply of publicly funded services. He points out that:

> *Economics has not, to date, provided a theory of supply by bureaus. …what services the government ought (italics in original) to finance.*

This issue of 'fairness' has come up regularly in my reflections. Yet with different meaning making systems it is difficult to come to a defined conclusion. I was interested to read if fairness was something tangible. As Checkland (1981:50) puts it:

> *Scientifically acquired and tested knowledge is not knowledge of reality, it is knowledge of the best description of reality that we have at that moment in time*.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) argue that the quality of social relations is built on material foundations. Therefore the scale of income differentials affects the way that we relate to one another. They looked at data on income inequality across time and different geographical locations. They concluded that the perception of fairness was impacted by the extent to which incomes became increasingly unequal.

It has been argued by Professor Kathleen Lynch (2010), that wage differentials and income inequality run counter to the aim of fairness. This criticism she directs at the Trade Union movement which would promote wage differentials amongst different grades of workers.

The issue of trust at a corporate level and a wider societal level is also an area of interest. Wilkinson and Pickett (2009:3) argue that income inequality leads to the breakdown of trust. The main argument is that income inequality is bad

for everyone in society. It leads to a breakdown in trust and that this is an essential ingredient that binds a society together. They present data which supports their arguments:

> *It is a remarkable paradox that, at the pinnacle of human material and technical achievement, we find ourselves anxiety-ridden, prone to depression, worried about how others see us, unsure of our friendships, driven to consume and with little or no community life…Often what we feel is missing is little more than time enjoying the company of friends, yet even that can seem beyond us. We talk as if our lives were a constant battle for psychological survival, struggling against stress and emotional exhaustion, but the truth is that the luxury and extravagance of our lives is so great that it threatens the planet.*

They argue that individuals feel powerless to resist the 'materialism' that is promoted as necessary.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) argue that mainstream politics seems to have abandoned the shared vision that is necessary to create a better society. They also point out that voters seem to have lost confidence in the collective belief that society could be different. Instead of a better society, the only thing almost everyone strives for is to better their own position – as individuals- within existing society. Leadership ethics promotes 'fairness' as an important feature (Bennis and Goldsmith, 2010).

As Kegan (1994) points out there is a complexity about how we construct our knowledge. Therefore different people make meaning differently and therefore is there a one correct definition of fairness? As a leader how does one measure what is the 'fairest' thing to do. In the debate over what constitutes effective leadership various aspects are discussed - leadership traits, leadership charter– which recommends ethically and socially acceptable forms of behaviour, leadership 'mind-sets' with the emphasis not on behavioural outcomes but inherent capabilities (Rooke and Torbert, 2005) – where should the emphasis lie?

Corning (2011:17) suggests that we are in fact 'hot-wired' to behave fairly and that this is a survival instinct:

> *So the essential first principle in every social relationship, and in every (stable) human society, must be honesty and fair play. Deception, lying, cheating, stealing, or any other action that deliberately causes harm to another person is (among other things) an example of unfair conduct. Ultimately it undermines the implicit social contract based on mutual trust and reciprocity that we all ultimately depend on in our social relationships.*

However he recognises that our meaning making systems make us vulnerable to those that surround us:

> *As a species with a deep history as social animals, we are highly sensitive to our social environments and, by and large, are keen to get*

> *along with the people around us. The psychologists tell us that we are therefore very prone to accept and accommodate to what others expect of us, especially if they are authority figures.* (2011:17)

As the Stanley Milgram experiments (Kegan and Lahey, 2009) demonstrated in the 1960s, people will behave in unexpectedly cruel ways when influenced by authority figures. Corning accepts that there are many complexities involved in ascertaining a fair outcome yet he would argue that three guiding principles should be used.

1. Equality or equal shares.
2. Merit.
3. Reciprocity. *"There is no duty more indispensable than returning a kindness".* (2011:26)

This brings Corning (2011) to his fundamental tenet that the 'Golden rule' is a universal norm which is widely recognised in many different religions. The golden rule is to do onto others as you would have others do onto you. Corning also cites Kant[19] and the "categorical imperative" and John Rawls[20] as invoking the same 'golden rule'. He summarises as follows:

> *….fairness is about the quality and content of our relationships with one another. It refers to both the processes and the outcomes of our social interactions* (2011:30).

[19] Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German philosopher.

[20] John Rawls (1921-2002) was an American philosopher.

There are those who argue against this ‘Golden rule’. Dawkins (1989) and Rand (1957[2007]) contend that ‘self interest’ is the guiding principle in economic life. Rand contends that the rich are rich because they deserve to be and the poor are poor mostly through their own failings. Corning (2011) rejects this analysis and suggests the evidence from studying primates would indicate that those that evolved a social strategy went on to prosper.

Homo sapiens (latin for wise man) evolved in a rich but variable and unforgiving environment, which ultimately they have come to dominate (Corning, 2003). In gradually abandoning the relative safety of the trees, probably because the forests were shrinking, and adopting a radically new survival strategy as wide ranging ground foragers, the earliest human ancestors had some severe disadvantages. Nevertheless, over time they were able to develop a variant of the baboon strategy. They formed small, cooperative social groups built around coalitions of closely related males. This cooperative social strategy was indispensable:

> *The outcome of this multimillion-year evolutionary process, which occurred roughly in three distinct stages or phases, was a species that pursued its basic survival enterprise in closely cooperating and intensely interdependent groups with a high degree of sharing, reciprocity, and mutual aid – especially where food and defence were concerned. Thus a human society can accurately be called a “collective survival enterprise”* (Corning, 2011:37/38).

Corning (2011) argues that the ideas of individualism in modern capitalism run counter to our human nature. A study of hunter-gatherer cultures, leads to the conclusion that the value system of modern market capitalism does not reflect 'human nature' (Gowdy, 1998). The assumption that humans are naturally competitive and acquisitive and that social stratification is natural-does not apply to many hunting and gathering peoples. The view of human nature as embedded in modern Western economic theory is an anomaly in human history. Men and women may differ in what they consider as fair (Eckel and Grossman, 1996). Others argue that fairness is driven more by culture rather than genes (Henrich *et al*, 2001).

3.1 Impact of Reading

My understanding of what constitutes fairness is informed by these authors and how organisations and communities function best when equity and reciprocity are seen to be present. Fairness is subjective. However there is an implicit understanding by most people about what constitutes fairness. My own view informed by my experience is that fairness is promoted around people having their say. If people feel that their views are being taken on board then I think they are more likely to find that fairness has been at play.

My idea was that healthcare, from the fairness perspective, should be provided by publicly funded providers was challenged. My main concern on this issue was that access to healthcare should not be restricted by income. This was not

the same as saying that healthcare should not be provided by for-profit organisations. There can be drawbacks to using private providers which were not always apparent. For example, if a private hospital goes out of business, the medical records are lost. This can be important in the tracking of a medical condition. Continuity is important in healthcare, in that aftercare can often go on for long periods.

One of the attractions of a competitive economy is the concept of choice. In a well-functioning market there will be a choice of providers (McCloskey, 1985). The choices that people make therefore are uncertain. This leads me to the conclusion that the understanding of human choices is uncertainty. The different meaning making systems of people makes leading in an uncertain environment a daunting task. Yet uncertainty is a necessary part of having choice, therefore there seems to be no control.

I have come to the conclusion that all organisations need to understand how they can be funded. All organisations need to invest in infrastructure. If organisations are only meeting their immediate costs then they are not able to invest in infrastructure and remain sustainable.

I found Sowell's (1987[2007]) contributions to my understanding of different political perspectives enlightening. Previously I would have seen political opponents are lacking humanity or being ignorant of the consequences of their

political stances. Therefore, my thinking was more closely associated with the unconstrained variety. However I can understand the point made in the constrained vision around incentives and constraints and that control of outcomes is not possible. But ultimately if the outcomes are that vast numbers of people live in relative poverty, then I think there has to be a better way. Therefore, I think for me the constrained and unconstrained visions do not need to be mutually exclusive. I can see merit in using both. Now I have a more nuanced understanding of the constrained thought process. I may find unacceptable how it will impact but I can now understand that their understanding is not necessarily driven by greed or malice. However is fairness a valid business value?

4 Understanding Gender and Leadership

The issue of the influence of women in leadership and whether the fair representation of women required their presence was of concern to me. The study of gender differences in leadership encompassed both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Studies have shown that women tend to use a more participative style than men (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). Sturges (1999) found that women and men define career success differently. This study found that women tended to see career success as personal achievement, self-development, an interest in intrinsically rewarding roles and work-life balance, whereas men tended to view success as high salaries, promotion and status.

The gendered nature of the English language has influenced the concept of leadership as a particularly masculine pursuit (Bolden *et al.,* 2003). 'Man' as a social animal (Corning, 2003) also included 'woman' yet woman was bundled together as 'man.' Belenky *et al.* (1986[1997]) looked at the area of female education and asked the question if women learnt differently to men. In the preface they challenged their reluctance to 'be' in their book. They articulated it as follows:

> *We came to see, however, that in serving merely as conduits for the women's voices, we were behaving with the double-edged "selflessness" common among women, exhibiting an appropriately humble respect for the wisdom of others, but also a cowardly reluctance to construct and communicate our own knowledge.* (1986[1997]:xvi).

They identified as a particularly female culture the practice of allowing others to take the lead and negating their own role in the pursuit of their goals.

Belenky *et al* (1986[1997]). also argued that intuitive knowledge was generally assumed to be more primitive, therefore less valuable, than 'objective' modes of knowing. Intuitive knowledge was seen as a female way of knowing. As Kegan (1994) has articulated, knowing was an activity in which the person was an active participant. Therefore, by definition women's ways of knowing was different to men's ways of knowing but judged to be less valuable.

Despite significant advances in education and participation in politics for women, they remained underrepresented in political and business leadership across the world (Pande and Ford, 2012). Equality means equal but not necessarily the same. However if the dominant culture was male how did women find their voice? They outlined this as follows:

> *Feminists are beginning to articulate the values of the female world and to reshape the disciplines to include the woman's voice, while continuing to press for the right of women to participate as equals in the male world.* (Belenky *et al*., 1986[1997]:6).

There was the belief in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, that educating women would interfere with their ability to reproduce and was used to justify female exclusion from education (Rosenberg, 1982). Indeed, the mental processes that were attributed to men that involved consideration of the abstract and the impersonal were labelled 'thinking' while those pertaining to the 'emotions' were largely relegated to women and did not carry the same authority (Belenky *et al.,* 1986[1997]).

The authors of the major theories of human development have been men (Berger, 2006). These have included Freud, Jung, Piaget, Perry and Kegan. The promotion of questioning around truth, knowledge, authority, evidence and to whom one should listen was a main objective of education. Kirkup and Von Prummer (1990) looked at the issue of those who argued for a special

focus on women students. The assumption that the pedagogical techniques appropriate for men were suitable for women was challenged by their research.

Gilligan (1977) traced the mainly female development of morality organised around responsibility and care rather than the predominantly male morality of rights as described by Piaget and Kohlberg. She also contrasted the idea of 'blind justice' which was mainly advocated by men with the morality of responsibility and care mainly advocated by women. She argued that the female version was seen as the 'other' whereas the male version was seen as the accepted approach. The symbol for justice has commonly been a woman with a scale in one hand and a sword in the other. Yet what she argued was that women did not develop their moral compass in this way. She argued that while differences in self-definition did not necessarily divide along gender lines, that many more women than men defined themselves in terms of their relationships and connections.

4.1 Understanding the Presence of Women in Leadership

It was not until 1893 that women in New Zealand were the first in the world to gain the right to vote in elections (Ramirez *et al*, 1997). Ireland granted women over the age of thirty the right to vote in 1918 and equal suffrage with men in 1922. By 1994 ninety four percent of countries worldwide had granted women the right to vote. This shift in thinking about the sexes was profound. The equality agenda was not likely to happen quickly. The culture which saw men

as dominant now had to accommodate two genders which were supposed to be equal.

Phillips (1995) argued that the absence of descriptive groups led to the omission of concerns which were of particular interest to that group. In elected assemblies Phillips maintained that the representation of ideology alone was not sufficient. Gender imbalance in leadership roles and especially in representative politics she maintained led to the negation of concerns which were of particular concern. The lack of women in the Dail (Irish parliament) has been an issue of particular concern to the Dail itself (Oireachtas, 2009). Following the General Election in 2011, the Dail was overwhelming male - 85% of TDs were male (the previous Dail had 87% male).

O'Connor (1998) asked if there had been any change in the position of women in Irish society over the preceding forty years. O'Connor suggested that two views were elicited – that it had changed completely and that it had not changed at all. She further suggested that evidence for both views could be obtained. She pointed to the fact that since the early 1970s', different wage scales for men and women had been abolished, the marriage bar had been lifted, inequalities based on gender in the social welfare system had been changed, legal entitlement to maternity leave without the risk of dismissal, had been enacted.

However she also argued that many elements had not changed. Women were under-represented in the political system, at the higher echelons of the economic system and in institutional church structures. Women were still paid less than men (Oostendorp, 2009). They tended to be in a small range of paid occupations which were predominantly service ones (Anker, 2000). They also tended to carry the main responsibility for domestic and child care activities (CSO, 2011).

Mansbridge (2005) also argued that there needed to be a critical mass of women in leadership positions before issues which were important to women became a cause for consideration. However, if gender equality is the context then space needs to be created for the values and traditions that women hold.

4.2 Understanding Gender Quotas

> *As I write, descriptive representation by gender improves substantive outcomes for women in every polity for which we have a measure. And as I write, significant representation by gender cannot be achieved in any existing polity without some form of gender quota* (Mansbridge, 2005:622)

Quotas have been shown to be the most effective mechanism for improving the numerical representation of women in parliament (Pande and Ford, 2012). They also encourage a rethinking of the issue of representation by forcing a

change in attitude to the inclusion of both genders. Quotas are a blunt instrument but the potential negative impacts are outweighed by the positive impact – the political empowerment of women (Mansbridge, 2005).

In countries where women are expected to be the primary caregivers for children and the elderly, there will be an under-representation of women in politics (Krook, 2005). Women are therefore socialised not to see themselves as competitors in the political arena (Lawless and Fox, 2005). Quotas are necessary when women are significantly underrepresented in proportion to their presence in the general population. This underrepresentation constitutes a strong signal that cultural, economic, institutional and societal factors combine to unfairly limit women's access to equal representation in public office (Gardiner, 2000).

The opposition to quotas varies from country to country. In France the collection of data on the ethnicity, race or religion of individuals is restricted leading to problems with women even being considered a group. In the United States, the implication of quotas implies the negation of merit, unfair competition and the interference of individual freedom. By contrast African states are more accepting of different territorial, ethnic and linguistic groups being represented descriptively through the allocation of seats (Mansbridge, 2005).

Argentina was the first country in the world to implement legislative gender quotas in the election of national legislators in 1993. Until that point internationally, gender quotas had been limited to intraparty rules in other countries. The impact in Argentina was dramatic. In the Argentine Senate, the participation of women increased from five percent in 1993 to forty four percent by 2005 (Jones, 2005).

However the effectiveness of quota legislation has varied (Krook, 2005). Quotas are considered to be positive in principle when there is significant underrepresentation of women and where the targeted quota legislation is likely to be effective (Jones, 2005). Some countries have not found it necessary to implement legislative gender quotas in order to improve the representation of women, for example Denmark. Voluntary quotas have been successful in other countries, for example Sweden.

There are different reasons for quota legislation being effective. The most effective quota laws contain several key features – a high minimum percentage of women candidates, application to all legislative seats, larger electoral districts and adequate enforcement of compliance (Jones, 2005). Quota legislation that is likely to be effective is positive

Quota legislation that is likely to be ineffective has negative outcomes. This is because it allows the establishment to claim to have supported legislation to

enhance women's representation. It also weakens those that have supported the quota legislation. These are likely to have been feminist and indeed female proponents. They are then placed in the position of having to explain the quotas failure to their constituents (Krook, 2005).

Quotas can promote the perception that candidates are not being elected on merit. In the political domain Tullock (1965) pointed out that being part of a political family dynasty, money and established networks were just some of the advantages that can make candidates more successful than others. There was also a denial that high-ability women were not being lost to leadership positions. As Obama (1995[2004]) puts it in relation to different racial groups "*We were always playing on the white man's court"* (1995[2004]:85). In other words the dominant culture was white male and the rules were set out by the dominant culture.

4.3 Understanding Essentialism

Phillips (2010) argues that essentialism or the dangers associated with viewing groups as being a homogenous unit is a problem with promoting the presence of one descriptive group. When discussing more women in leadership, essentialism can be a negative outcome.

Firstly it essentialises 'women'. This means that the category 'women' comes to be understood as a homogenous group all fulfilling the same characteristics.

This is clearly false but it is an unfortunate outcome when leading to the idea women are all the same.

Secondly it excludes all those that do not fall into this category – namely men. There can be the idea that in seeking to redress the imbalance in numbers for women that men somehow do not have *any* difficulties. This is also clearly untrue.

Thirdly when arguing for a greater number of women in leadership the assumption is made that the characteristics which some women display will automatically be transferred. This is also not necessarily the experience. For example, women can be seen as being empathetic and therefore the assumption is that all women are empathetic. Conversely men can be seen as not being empathetic.

These are examples of essentialist thinking that can result from looking at gender specifically in leadership positions and the use of quotas to produce more women in leadership.

People have multiple identities which are flexible and socially constructed (Mansbridge, 2005). Social psychologists have shown that we judge members of an in-group as more alike than they are in fact and members of the out-

group as more different from the in-group than they in fact are (Turner, 1987). This is because there is confusion that by advocating for the presence of women that that will lead to automatic outcomes.

Is it just as simple as "*add women and stir"* (Cornwall and Goetz, 2005:795) to make a democracy more diverse and therefore more representative? Cornwall and Goetz argue that the simplistic view that more women will lead to a more representative democracy is naïve. "*Women in office do not necessarily defend a feminist position on polices*" (Corning and Goetz, 2005:784). The simplistic assumption is that by increasing the numbers of women in political office will automatically leads to a fairer, better government.

If political learning is mediated through patriarchal and traditional institutions then women receive little training for democratic participation. They often have too weak a foundation to mount a campaign. The apolitical and informal associations that women tend to be attracted to can cut them off from political networks. These kinds of factors combine to highlight the kinds of challenges that women (and men) face in seeking to create a private and public sphere, which is fairer and more successful in terms of its realisation of greater work/life equilibrium.

4.4 Impact of Reading

By arguing for the greater inclusion of women in leadership position I was inadvertently being critical of men. Also I was assuming that women were a homogenous group. I ascribed my practice and understanding to all women and not to men. It informed my understanding that the dearth of women in leadership positions is a problem for all both men and women because it is not making best use of the talent pool.

In the debates that I was involved in initiating about increasing the number of women in political leadership, a recurring question was 'What difference would it make'? I found this a particularly challenging question. There are many men that I admire in leadership positions, so I was forced to think about what would be so different if those leaders were women. The answer was that I did not identify with those men. Therefore for me to see myself in a leadership position I needed more women to be there. By increasing the number, the normalising effect would be that more women would see a leadership role as something that they could do which had previously been the domain of men.

This helped me to understand my ideas around gender and the differences in values that I had assigned between the two sexes. They seemed to be saying that in a 'man's' world there are difficulties for men that do not frame their world along the lines of the dominant male culture. Also there are women that

identify with the rights based approach and are therefore more comfortable in a 'man's' world than some men.

Belenky *et al.* (1986[1997]) speak to the finding that women tend to be the listeners while men do the talking. This is an observation that I find helpful and it is how I would behave in public. While I am confident in my own circle I do not tend to move outside of this realm too easily. This is in marked contrast to the commonly viewed stereotype that men do the listening and women are the talkative ones. Therefore how does gender influence leadership?

5. Conclusion

In this essay I have looked at the central research theme of leadership and the influence of fairness and gender. I have outlined the literature that I have used on these topics and how it has influenced my thinking. These are the learning outcomes which I have found useful for my peer community of other managers interested in the value of fairness in leadership and how gender impacts on leadership. My understanding of the issue of care and how it impacts on the combination of paid work and parenting has been instructive.

I have examined the different theories of leadership that I have found useful particularly as they pertain to a woman. I have drawn attention to the importance of understanding our personal values and how they apply to our

leadership. I have discussed that by understanding our value systems I think we can come to implement a more nuanced understanding of others. This helps us to implement fairness in our leadership. Using Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) has helped me to make explicit my assumptions about the world around me and to better interrogate how I am constructing my understanding of that world. This I think is useful for other managers to use the same approach because it is only by being aware of our theories that we can come to make wise choices for change. In the next Essay I discuss in detail the experiments that I used to enhance my leadership practice.

Essay Three – Analysis of Learning Revealed in Practice

1. Introduction

In this essay I describe in detail the experiments that I used to promote my leadership effectiveness, to examine the use of fairness as a business value and to enhance my understanding of the influence of gender on leadership. I describe my use of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs Myers, 2000) analysis to assist me in my understanding of my leadership practise. I also use the Assumption/Commitment/Behaviour/Outcome template (Daly and Walsh, 2012) to aid my understanding of my leadership practice. The Managing by Values experiment is used to test if fairness is a valid business value and to promote my leadership practice. The Pursuit of Gender Quotas experiment is used to promote my understanding of women and leadership. By participating in these experiments I was able to use Kegan's Subject-Object separation. When my assumptions became explicit, by making them object I was able to re-examine my assumptions.

1.1 Structure of Essay Three

Section 2 outlines the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) analysis. It describes in detail the results of this analysis for my understanding of my leadership practice. Section 3 describes the ACBO template (Daly and Walsh, 2012). This template was designed for organisations to examine their theory of the business (Drucker, 1994). I describe how I adapted it to examine my

leadership practise. Section 4 outlines my participation in the Managing by Values strategy in my organisation. Section 5 describes my experience of the 5050 Group – Balancing Politics and the promotion of candidate selection gender quotas to increase the number of women in electoral politics. Section 6 outlines the conclusions that were arrived at by these experiments.

2. Myers Briggs Analysis

It was not apparent to me at the start of the DBA that leadership was my area of interest. At that point I had been unaware of how resistant I was to the idea that leadership was something to which I could aspire. Using Kegan's Subject-Object separation I was able to examine this and conclude that because I had seen leadership as a predominantly masculine activity that I needed to redefine leadership in terms with which I could identify. I had also come to the conclusion that leadership traits that I had observed in others were different to my own traits. I wanted to ascertain scientifically what my preferences were using the Myers Briggs analysis.

The Myers Briggs Type Indicator (Briggs Myers, 2000) identified two different orientations to four mental processes. These four mental processes with two different orientations were described by them as

- Introverted (I) - Extraverted (E),
- Sensing (S) – Intuition (N),
- Thinking (T) – Feeling (F)

- Judging (J) – Perceiving (P).

They hypothesised that people used these processes with a hierarchy of preference. This resulted in the description of sixteen personality types. I was identified as ISTJ

Introverted – indicating a preference for drawing energy from one's inner world of ideas, emotions and impressions rather than drawing energy from the outside world of people, activities and things.

Sensing – indicating a preference for taking information through the five senses and noticing what is actual rather than taking information through a 'sixth sense' and noticing what might be.

Thinking – indicating a preference for organising and structuring information to decide in a logical, objective way rather than by a personal, value based way.

Judging – indicating a preference for living a planned organised life rather than a spontaneous, flexible life.

The Myers Briggs exercise was useful for me in that it identified and explained the preferences that I had. This helped me in the following ways.

1. To understand my preferences in terms of the Myers Briggs labelling. This had the impact of surfacing how my preferences were influencing how I was handling the information that I was receiving. With this new understanding I started to examine how this was influencing the way I was constructing my knowledge. I am strongly Thinking in my preference and I

have become more aware of this. I now try to at least to be aware that a Feeling approach is another possibility.

2. To recognise these as strengths and to be more accepting of my preferences. These are my natural abilities. Drucker (1999) would advise that one should concentrate on one's strengths.
3. To be more understanding of the preferences of others. With the Myers Briggs exercise I understood that the preferences that I have are not shared by others. This insight has led to a better understanding of others.
4. To seek to be less rigid around the preferences with which I had been identified.

The analysis provided useful information around areas of improvement. It pointed to the potential to overlook the long range implications in favour of day to day operations. It advised to give more consideration to the insights and hunches that may come to mind about situations. It pointed to the potential to overlook interpersonal niceties and to give greater consideration to the human element and to communicate deserved appreciation. The potential to become too rigid in my thinking, considered inflexible by others and less open to innovation was also pointed out. It advised to consider fresh alternatives and avoid routine existence. The potential to expect others to provide the same level of detail and conform to the same operating procedures was also indicated. The development of patience for those who communicate differently and bypass standard operating procedures was also advised.

> *The limitation of distinctions between ways of knowing that do not get at lesser and greater capacity is that, popular though they may be in management training circles, they may actually have little to do with worker competence. Since they do not suggest a journey of increasing epistemological vision, the only curricular purpose such stylistic distinctions imply is an enhanced ability to understand one's own and other's preferences and perhaps, learning self-consciously to use a style to which one is not naturally drawn* (Kegan, 1994:201).

The criticism by Kegan that personality type analysis does not address the mental complexity of the person is a valid argument. However when it is used to address a better understanding of the preferences of different personality types this can lead to a better understanding within organisations. I found it very useful in understanding other people when it came to how they were constructing their way of knowing.

3. ACBO template.

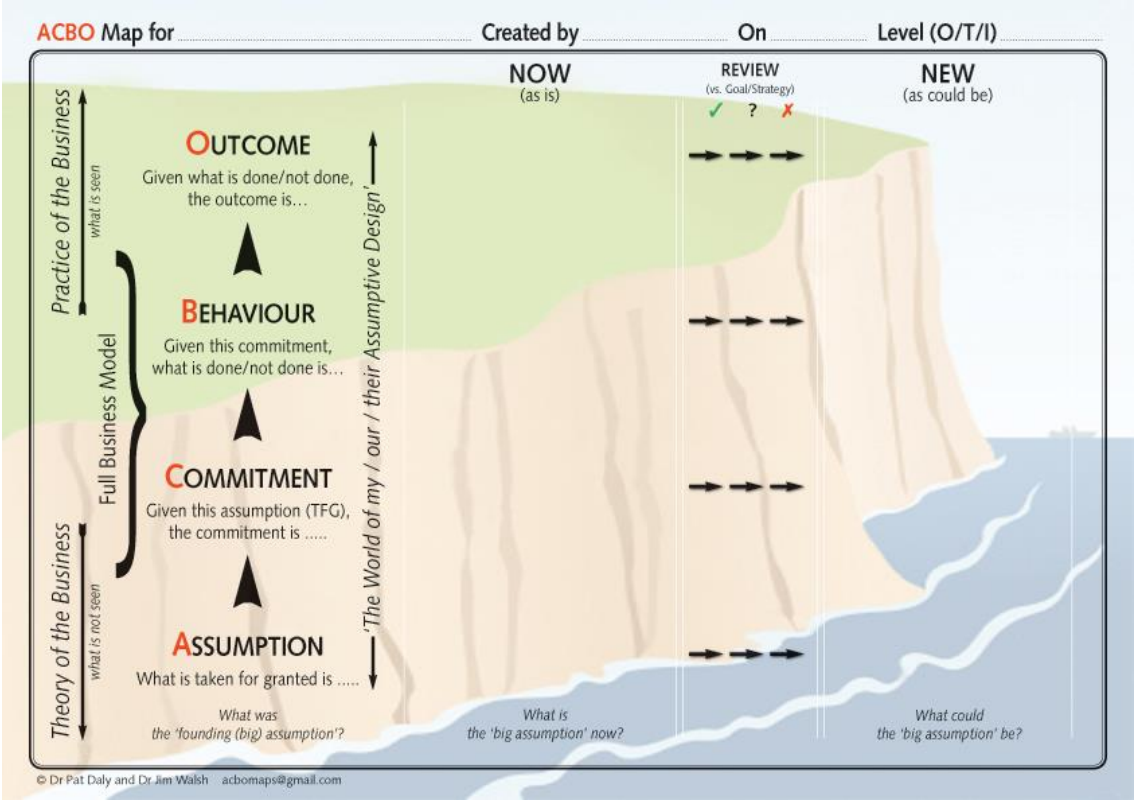


Figure 2 Assumption/Commitment/Behaviour/Outcome Template (ACBO).

Source: (Daly and Walsh, 2012).

The Assumption Commitment Behaviour Outcome (ACBO) template was a framework developed by Daly and Walsh (2012). This template is shown in Figure 2. This template seeks to make explicit the assumptions which are beneath the business theory of organisations by observing the practice of the business (Drucker, 1994). This is based on the idea that the theory is unseen and therefore hidden but the practice is what can be observed. If there is a difference between the theory and the practice then this approach can draw attention to this dissonance. What one is doing and what one thinks one should

be doing in the business may be different. This approach can be useful by making one aware of what is actually being done as opposed to what one thinks is being done.

I adapted this template to my own practice. I started to document occasions when my practice did not meet my goal of enhancing my leadership effectiveness. I began to become more aware of situations where I would remain quiet when I should have been more vocal. As Kegan and Lahey (2009) have pointed out we are unaware of competing commitments against our stated desire to change. Adapting this template to my practice, I attempted to observe myself explicitly around the issue of confidence and communicating courageously. As they (2009:47) point out:

> *Courage involves the ability to take action and carry on even when we are afraid. No matter how big or consequential a given step may be, that step cannot be said to involve courage if we are not somehow afraid to take it.*

In my work situation I tried to become more outgoing in relation to giving my views and ideas. Using the ACBO template I documented changes to my practice. A new Chief Financial Officer was appointed in August 2010. He had worked in the private sector and had been a manager in an Information Technology company. I was conscious that he might find it difficult to penetrate the workings of the organisation. At the start of my management career I was aware that I had not been able to help the Business Manager that

had been appointed soon after I commenced my job. So I decided that I would initiate a meeting with this new manager.

I gave him my view of the organisation. I talked to him about how healthcare was a complex business. I talked to him about the interplay between politics and healthcare. I suggested how he might deal with certain people and issues. In turn he helped me when it came to issues that I needed help with. We did not always agree. Our core purpose was to put the organisation on a more financially sustainable footing and in the process to advance patient care. I felt we dealt with one another in a sincere and a fair-minded way.

Another example where the ACBO template surfaced my reticence to put myself forward was in the situation where an extra payment was being made to staff while doing overtime. For historical reasons certain payments were being made which had become custom and practice. There had been no official agreement by management that this should be the case. There was a renegotiation of the overtime payments nationally and these payments came to light. I explained the background to him. He decided that there was no justification for the payment and gave notice that it was being discontinued. I explained his reasoning to staff and supported his rationale. They accepted his position although there was a vocal minority in disagreement. However the majority accepted the position and the dispute did not escalate.

The ACBO template identified for me an area which I had failed to get a response on and that I needed to pursue this further. This was to do with a backup system for the water production for my service. Water was a vital ingredient to my service and a breakdown of the equipment which provided this water would mean that the laboratory service could cease abruptly. This was a particular problem over bank holiday weekends where repairs would be delayed for three to four days. We had already had experience of two breakdown situations. I had received permission from my line manager to purchase a backup system but it was subject to another manager also giving consent. This had not been forthcoming. I initiated a meeting with another manager. He followed up on the issue and got it implemented. It involved him in an area which was not his direct responsibility. Previously I would have been hesitant in making the approach.

The ACBO template made explicit the importance of identifying clear objectives when managing a service. It helped me to clarify my thinking around a sustainable business. Without investment in infrastructure and staff a business becomes unsustainable. Therefore all organisations need to understand that they need investment. Publicly funded organisations need to seek out investment funding from elsewhere if insufficient funding is coming from Government.

I secured information about Project Bonds. This was an initiative taken by the Economic and Financial Affairs division of the European Commission. This

was a pilot scheme to be implemented by the European Investment Bank. The objectives of the pilot phase were to stimulate investment in key strategic European Union infrastructure projects. These included transport, energy and information technology. It also aimed to establish debt capital markets as an additional source of financing for infrastructure. A lack of investment in information technology was considered a serious difficulty in managing healthcare (Porter and Teisberg, 2006). My initiative was that the hospitals in Cork could apply for funding to improve the Information Technology infrastructure in the region. I gave the information to the Chief Financial Officer. Previously I would have considered it outside my area of responsibility.

The ACBO template helped me to identify that I did not react in the same way to different people. In the case of people that I held in high regard, I found that I tended to be more reticent about challenging them. I came to recognise that with some people I would seek their approval. If approval was not forthcoming I would become hesitant and unsure. It was quite a revelation. I would have understood that I did not necessarily tell senior managers what I thought. However I was surprised how reticent I could become if someone that I held in high regard perhaps a peer or more junior to me would challenge me.

When dealing with one of my senior staff that I held in high regard, I found that I was more likely to heed her criticisms. This was something of which I was not aware until I started to use the ACBO maps. Once I realised that I had

this reaction with her I was more aware that I needed to monitor my reaction to her in particular. It also helped my confidence around my ability with dealing with more senior managers.

I also tended to be reticent with those with assertive personalities. This was partly due to my own view of the adequacy of my ideas and partly this was due to a desire to avoid conflict. With the ACBO template I recorded incidents where I subsequently realised that I had not stood my ground sufficiently. This helped me to resolve on the next occasion that this would not recur.

In my practice I identified my reticence about putting myself forward when it came to participation as a leader. When the course director suggested that there should be class representatives I decided that I needed to participate more. It was also part of my view that representation should be gender balanced, so I volunteered to be a class representative.

I had joined a political party in the late nineties. I was becoming more aware that I could be critical about how the country was being governed if I was not prepared to help people that I would support to get elected. Therefore, I resolved to be more inclined to become involved. When nominations for membership of the Central Council were being sought in 2009 I put my name forward and was accepted. Previously I would have declined.

The Central Council was made up of representatives from each constituency in the Irish republic. This body was the representative forum which met with the party leadership on a quarterly basis. It passed motions which could become party policy. In 2011 this political party entered Government and the Council became more strategically positioned to influence policy that was being implemented. For example, I spoke against the sale of the harvesting rights of trees grown by Coillte. The Government subsequently decided not to sell the harvesting rights. It was not possible to ascertain the level of influence this body had on this decision but it was part of the consultation process.

4. Managing by Values Experiment

I had become involved in the Managing by Values initiative at my organisation in 2009. In that experiment I was examining the values base of the Public Voluntary Hospital where I worked. I was particularly interested in fairness as a business value. This organisation had sought to re-evaluate its original value base in light of its transition from an entity overwhelmingly managed and staffed by religious Sisters to an organisation operated by a non-religious management team and staff. It had been reorganised as a limited company with charitable status and was increasingly embedded in the secular world and grounded in a business model. This transition had posed significant challenges to the religious Sisters as they found themselves in a world radically different from that originally envisaged by their Foundress.

To challenge and improve my practice I volunteered to become a member of the Human Resources strategy group tasked with implementing the Managing by Values (MBV) approach (Blanchard and O'Connor, 1997). This publication promoted the idea that by committing to a common purpose and shared values, that a business could become more successful and ultimately more sustainable. The authors sought to promote a more fulfilling and therefore more productive workplace. They argued that this in turn led to increased customer satisfaction and ultimately a greater return for the owner/investor. By participating in the strategy group it placed me in a position where I had to argue for the validity of this approach.

The MBV strategy was led by a manager from the Human Resources Department and a facilitator with an expertise in leadership and the MBV approach. Criticism of the (MBV) approach had been made informally to the Human Resources manager by a board member. He maintained that it was too idealistic and not grounded in the real world. He was sceptical of the idea that the implementation of shared values and common purpose would lead to business success. I was unclear how to address his criticism that values were unimportant when running a successful business. I needed to be able to demonstrate to myself that the premise of the MBV approach was grounded in the real world.

The strategy was part of a business exercise, as advised by the management consultants employed by the Religious sisters. Therefore, in order to observe

the MBV approach being practiced in the workplace, the Human Resources manager, the MBV facilitator (a member of the Religious sisters) and I went to visit a facility in Dublin, where MBV was being implemented. This organisation had spent extensive time and money using this approach and I was interested to see it in practice.

This organisation looked to meet the needs of people that were not having their needs met by any other facility. They provided a homeless shelter for active drug users. Other homeless shelters did not cater for people that were active drug users. The CEO of the Dublin organisation was an enthusiast for the Managing by Values approach. We met with the CEO, the Human Resources manager and another manager of this organisation. The visit demonstrated that they were very committed to the MBV approach. After this visit I felt more convinced that this approach had merit.

The original founding purpose of my organisation was to provide healthcare to the poor of Cork. The organisation was founded in 1857 and therefore there have been many changes over its more than 150 year history. One of the issues that had arisen for the hospital management team was that they were given a fixed budget each year. That budget was based on a historical cost plus an estimate of the cost of the number and complexity of patients that should be treated. Therefore they also had an activity budget. One of the difficulties in a medical bureaucracy was how to control the activity (Porter and Teisberg,

2006). There was a limited supply of resources but an unlimited demand for healthcare.

As part of its plan to regain some control over the hospital's finances, the organisation had embarked on developing a new hospital strategy. One aspect of that strategy was to identify 'the Hospital Way' or 'the Hospital Ethos.' This was identified in a confidential internal staff survey in 2006 as being a unique characteristic of the organisation. However, it was found that there were different definitions of what exactly was meant by the 'Hospital Ethos' therefore it was necessary to explore what was meant by this term. Another of the findings of the confidential internal staff survey, was there was a lack of trust between staff and the hospital management team.

In order to further elucidate the 'Hospital Ethos', the organisation embarked on developing a Human Resource strategy, which was to identify the value system and core purpose of the organisation. I decided to participate in the Human Resource strategy. My goal in participating in the MBV strategy was to test myself. I wanted to become more proactive in promoting my idea that organisations are human activity systems and that we should bring our values to work with us. I was interested to see if I could persuade the management team at my organisation to thoroughly interrogate the business model that they were pursuing. I was also developing my own confidence in moving out of my comfort zone of managing in my own department and moving into a realm where I thought I could be of use and be more effective.

From a leadership perspective it is important that the values upon which you place your stance are clearly understood by yourself (Blanchard and O'Connor, 1997). This allows you to remain strong and courageous. Facing down opposition or implementing unpopular actions is not easy. I found it useful and it prevented me from being undermined to have a reference back to the underlying values that inform your decisions. Ultimately it was about the why of what you are doing. I found that it was important to refer back to this occasionally in order to maintain a correct path. Sometimes this may mean that one comes to alter what one is doing. This is not weakness but rather a courageous thing to do. To be wrong or to have veered away from one's stated intent is possible. However what I find important in the interrogation of that intent and the values that underpin it.

The MBV approach was a useful way of putting into practice Drucker's theory (1994). He argues that 'what' the business is doing is more important to its future sustainability than 'how' it manages its business. Drucker cautions that without clarity around 'what' business one is in, the experience has been that businesses may go out of business because their theory of the business has become obsolete. The MBV premise was that by working on the business's core purpose that this would enhance the success of the organisation's prospects.

I was aware that my organisation's theory of the business was changing. The Teamwork Report (2009) had recommended that all acute complex care

including cancer for the Cork/Kerry region should be centralised in one hospital in Cork city. It also recommended that all other care should be delivered as close as possible to the patient. This report was calling into question the need for three publicly funded acute hospitals in Cork city. It was explicitly recommending that all acute services should be transferred to Cork University Hospital. It was also recommending that in the other hospitals there should be a change to the services that those organisations should provide. My organisation was not envisaged as providing acute care in the future. Therefore it needed to examine its role as an acute facility and if it should concur with the report's recommendations.

These were questions which needed to be answered. Should it oppose the transfer of acute care and argue to maintain those services? Or should it seek to change its theory of the business i.e. 'what' it was there to provide? It was not an easy task. It was particularly difficult when this interrogation was pointing in the direction of a radical change to the services that were being provided and the centralisation of acute services onto another site. Also whose interests were to be served? Were the best interests of patients the priority or would the interests of the staff be of greater concern?

I decided to debate this issue with the one of the Senior Clinicians of my organisation and arranged a meeting. He listened to what I had to say and was very engaged in the discussion. I was encouraged by his interest but there was no immediate follow up. I brought along information in relation to reforms

which were proposed for the American Health system as proposed by Porter and Teisberg (2006) and Bodenheimer (2010).

I also debated the importance of identifying the business purpose with a Board member who was from the religious order running the organisation. I used the example of how would the organisation chose between patients. The scenario was two patients with identical clinical needs but only one bed, what influences would help decide who should be treated? She said she was interested and supportive of using the MBV approach. However, she had little involvement in the day- to-day management of the organisation. Therefore there was no follow up with the MBV facilitator or myself.

I also met with the then CEO who, while sympathetic to the idea, was close to retirement and retired at the end of 2011. The new CEO was appointed in February 2012. At that point some clarity had been brought to the issue of 'what' this organisation should be doing. The third acute hospital had been re-designated as a specialty hospital but would not handle acute care. This left two acute hospitals in the city with the proposal still that there should be only one.

I would argue that too little attention has been paid to the management processes needed in a larger organisation to capture the productivity gains of smaller units. The assumption is that the larger units will be the sum of the

parts. However the productivity gains which are inherent in smaller units do not necessarily transfer to the bigger organisation. This has been my experience moving from a larger organisation to a smaller operation. In smaller organisations it is easier to keep track of the tasks that staff are allocated. In well managed smaller facilities there is a camaraderie which develops which leads to productivity gains. It is more difficult in these set ups for people to do less than their fair share. The complexity of managing in larger organisations in the public sector does not get sufficient attention (Checkland and Poulter, 2006).

A number of workshops were held to understand the values base of the organisation. No definitive definition was found for the 'Hospital ethos' however a consensus identified that the organisation viewed itself as a 'community'. It had originally been a group of sisters who lived as a congregation committed to helping one another and the wider community. They were also committed to providing for the health needs of the poor. Over the years the business theory had changed and become less focused on the original ideals and vision of the founding sisters. The collegial culture in the organisation was being described as the 'Hospital ethos' and that this had led to the positive work environment leading to greater productivity.

As outlined for the Board member, one of the questions asked at the MBV workshop for staff was, if two patients presented with equal medical needs but that only one bed was available how would one decide how to allocate the

bed? This scenario led to quite a debate. One of the learning outcomes was how incentives to attract private patients could run counter to the supposed vision of helping the poor. I used the business literature (Sandberg & Targama, 2005) to make the point that coming back to the stated core purpose or vision was useful. The example that I used was the furniture store IKEA's use of vision as discussed in Essay Two. This example helped people in my organisation to understand from a business perspective the point of explicitly identifying the core purpose of the organisation. It helped them to understand how without this explicit referral back to the core purpose that the organisation could stray from its stated intention.

What I found in the MBV experiment in my organisation was that it did improve my practice. I became less cautious about who I would approach with my ideas. I found that senior managers were willing to listen to the ideals of the MBV strategy. The approach challenges thinking. By explicitly asking the question what is the core purpose and how do I evaluate this purpose, it makes people stop and think. However, if you are not prepared to have your thinking challenged then the method can become a tick box exercise, where people just go through the motions. I had the experience where one manager refused to answer the question by saying that another bed could always be found.

At the same time I looked at my own core purpose and value system. Along with the ACBO template I attempted to understand my own business theory of myself, where I was the business (Drucker, 1994). Therefore I decided that I

needed to test what I was doing as my theory of what I was about. I also used Penrose (1959[1995]) where she identifies that it is the managerial services which are generated from the resources within the firm that are the key to the growth of that firm. Penrose argues that it is not so much the resources that are contained within a firm which are crucial to growth but rather the services that those resources yield. I decided to apply this to myself and that it was my services which were key to growing my leadership effectiveness both in the workplace but also in other domains.

I decided my own core purpose as – 'living a happy and healthy life for the benefit of myself and others'. The values that I used to realise that vision –

- **Fairness** – a sense of fair play is important to me. I find that I cope best if I feel I and others have been treated fairly. I feel aggrieved if my view of fair play has not happened.
- **Sincerity** – I find following through on one's beliefs to be the best policy for peace of mind.
- **Positivity** – I think one should always strive to have hope. There are always negatives but to concentrate on the positive one can make progress (Gaffney, 2013).
- **Harmony** – if I do not take regular times for reflection, rest and rejuvenation I find it difficult to function well. On this I identified a brake/pedal issue for me (Kegan and Lahey, 2009). On the one hand I wanted to improve my leadership effectiveness yet my brake was my desire to avoid stress and overwork. The source of this stress was my lack of confidence.

4.1 Leadership in Business

My lack of confidence in business leadership was framed around my view of leadership in the public system. I had completed my Masters in 2001 by distance learning with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) in Ireland. By definition all participants were public servants. I would have viewed myself as a public servant rather than working for a not-for-profit organisation. In my experience in the public system authority is hierarchical and centralised. Although one can be promoted into a more responsible position, there is often no real delegation of authority from central management. This I would have viewed as being peculiar to the public system. There was an understanding about the constraints and incentives when working in the public system amongst the participants on the IPA course.

Niskanen (1973) argues that public servants are a particular group of people. He argues that certain types of people become public servants that are different to those in the private sector. This argument feeds into the stereotype of how a 'public servant' behaves. It is a view for which I would have concurred. However using Kegan's Subject-Object separation, now that I surface that assumption I would change my assumption. I have not found any evidence to support that assumption. In my experience the people who work in the for profit laboratory service are very similar to those who work in the public system. The management of for profit services can be different, with greater autonomy and attention on costs. For example, budgets are given more specific attention in private medicine with a breakdown of costs incurred on a monthly

basis. In my experience financial data is not as readily available to managers at my level (Finn, 2001). However, I think I was operating with the idea that 'public servants' were different to others in the 'private sector' and I felt less adequate because of that.

In the group work that we did on my Master's course, it was taken for granted that power was centralised. I found it easy to participate in the group work. This was also in the early noughties when the Irish economy was becoming more prosperous and there was a demand for public services to be expanded. Unemployment was at 4% in 2001 (CSO, 2001). The numbers employed in the public service were not seen as excessive, or as a burden on the 'real' economy, or as having excessive pay rates.

In 2009 when I commenced the DBA, the Irish banks had been taken into state ownership to different extents. The tax revenues had contracted drastically because of the property crash and there had been a significant increase in unemployment. Unemployment as of 2009 was running at 12% (CSO, 2009). The public expenditure deficit had become unsustainable and a major reform of public expenditure was required. Labour costs were the largest part of that expenditure and public servants were seen as having protected employment and above average wage rates.[21]

[21] See for example, an article in the Irish Times, "Study reveals public sector 'pay -gap' " 12/10/ 2012. www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2012/1012/breaking33.html.

I find it instructive to reflect on my reaction to the DBA class setting when I commenced in April 2009. I did feel intimidated by my classmates. With one exception they were all male. The class were mainly Masters of Business Administration graduates working in the private, not-for-profit or semi- state sector. I viewed the majority of them as on their way up the career ladder with ambitions to move to more responsible positions. I on the other hand was more interested in moving to a different 'space' not necessarily by way of a promotion. At that time it was not clear to me what that move would be.

However I viewed the other participants as being part of the 'man's' world of Business Leadership (Pande and Forde, 2012). The course director organised some group work and there were two separate presentations. Group members arranged to meet with one another outside of the class to produce the presentations. My observation of how I behaved then was that I allowed others to take over.

Essentially I lacked the confidence to make my voice heard. Also I had formed the view that somehow 'they' were in business and I was in something else. The nature of that something else was not sufficiently clear. I wondered how I could improve my leadership effectiveness if the public system was not a 'business.' A view that I have formed is that too little attention is paid to the training of professionals within the publicly funded system about the running of their service as a business (Middleton, 2010).

From my professional experience surely a Hospital is a business too? Yet there is very little business planning in publicly funded laboratories in hospitals for example. In my Master's thesis (Finn, 2001) I interviewed other managers in publicly funded laboratories. I found that most did not operate to a business plan and had very little input into the budget allocation for the service that they managed.

5. Pursuit of Gender Quotas Experiment

The initial impetus to my pursuing the national campaign for candidate selection gender quotas was out of frustration with opposition to the implementation of gender quotas from within the political party of which I was a member.

The advice from an experienced politician from within that political party was that we needed to generate a wider debate amongst the general public. I was surprised by that response. I had expected that she would argue that our opponents were ill informed and should be dismissed. She was more used to meeting the opposition than I was. She understood that we had to bring enough people with us to make the change. She understood the transition of truth as proposed by the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauser (1788-1860) "*All truth passes through three stages. First it is ridiculed. Second it is violently opposed. Third it is accepted as being self evident"* (Drumm, 2011:x).

I looked to encourage others to organise the conference held in University College, Cork in September 2010 called '*Moving in from the Margins'*. This was organised by Dr Sandra McAvoy and Ms Fiona Buckley, Departments of Women's Studies and Government, respectively. Out of that conference the 5050 Group – Balancing Politics was formed.

We debated what our objectives would be and the values that underpinned them. We eventually decided that we would have the sole objective of the implementation of the recommendation of candidate selection gender quotas from the 2009 Oireachtas Report (Oireachtas, 2009) on *Women's Participation in Politics.* This objective was underpinned by the values of fairness and equality.

My initial participation was very much framed around being supportive to others who had greater expertise on this topic. There were several academics involved whose expertise in various areas I considered superior to mine. We also had the talents of a practitioner in the business of communications. She introduced us to the skills of blogging and the use of social media like Facebook and Twitter. I started as Deputy Treasurer and eventually became Treasurer. I also learned how to administer the blog site.

The core group consisted of eight to ten members all based in Cork. We identified that we needed a presence in Dublin and sought to encourage the

formation of a group of likeminded individuals. We had partial success in this, in that a group was formed. However, the main leader in that group had her first baby the following year and no one stepped in to take on her role. This led to the Cork group supporting the organisation of events held in Dublin which was a considerable drain on the resources available to the Cork group.

The Cork group also had some internal disputes which are instructive from a leadership perspective The issue was around the participation of men in the group. Whilst I sympathised with the argument that some women tend to defer to men particularly in areas where they lack confidence (Gardiner, 2000) I was not convinced that excluding men was the way to deal with this issue. There was also the criticism that the committee members were too 'middle class'. The ideological differences between women can lead to conflict when differing ideologies come together to pursue a single agenda item such as gender quotas (Friedan, 1963).

The 5050 group had the advantage that we had put in writing our core objective – the pursuit of the implementation of gender quotas and the principles upon which we operated - equality and fairness. Therefore we could not include or exclude participants based either on their class or gender. I was very clear that we were doing the right thing. I think one of my strengths is that if I am convinced of an argument I will defend it as the right thing to do. It also demonstrated the merits of stating the values upon which any project is based.

As part of the process of improving our debating skills, the 5050 Group organised a media training seminar. This consisted of a daylong event, where we were filmed being interviewed on the topic of gender quotas. Up until that point I had tended to leave it to others to answer questions on the topic. Now I was being directly interviewed about the pros and cons of gender quotas. We had debated the topic at the start of the meeting and I had tended to listen. However when it came to my turn the feedback that I got was that I had communicated reasonably well.

By using the ACBO template I was better able to identify my actions which ran counter to my thinking. Gradually I was able to change my practice to become more in keeping with my stated goals of communicating more courageously. This was particularly relevant in the 5050 Group. I found with people with assertive personalities or those that I held in high regard I was more likely to allow them to take control of the situation. I discussed these occasions with others in that group. I found it helpful to understand when conflict was necessary without the situation becoming fractious or unpleasant. By discussing these occasions with one another we were able to hold the group together.

I found that for all my advocacy of the importance of the care role that is played by women in the private sphere (March and Weil, 2005), that I too undervalued that contribution. The ACBO template helped here because I found that my view of being supportive was as much to do with the value that I

placed on it as others. For example, in a conflict situation that I had with one participant in the 5050 group, I found that I had remained quiet. When I reflected on this it was my response that was problematic. It was not that she did not value what I was doing; it was that I did not value what I was doing. *"No one can make you feel inferior without your consent"* (quotation attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt[22]).

In the debate it is important that all can have their say. Therefore that includes those that disagree. Some debate in a mischievous way. By that I mean that they are not sincere about their true intent. It is important to recognise this. However others are genuine in their different perspectives (Sowell, 1987[2007]). Having an open debate when there is disagreement is ultimately the most effective means to come to a fair outcome.

I viewed leadership as a means to an end and not an end in itself. I wanted to build my leadership capacity and skills but for a purpose, to do something or change something, and not because leadership was a product or service for consumption. Ultimately it was about establishing a 'why' of leadership (Sinek, 2011). I wanted to promote the ideal of equality between women and men in my leadership. I needed to explore if this had any place in the business world. I needed to understand the role of my gender in the organisational context and my experience of leadership.

[22] Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) was the longest serving first lady of the United States as wife of President Franklin D Roosevelt (1933-1945).

The problem of essentialist thinking can be a negative outcome of gender quotas as discussed in Essay Two. There was confusion and some argued that a man could not represent a woman's perspective and vice versa. Also a female candidate does not represent the views of all women. Therefore why was it that the lack of a female presence in leadership was such a problem? I did not have the language or understanding to clarify my thinking at the start of this experiment. However my reading outlined in Essay Two clarified my thinking on the complexity of arguing for a greater presence of women in leadership. It also clarified how essentialist thinking is a risk of gender quotas.

I considered one symptom of the lack of women in politics was the lack of affordable childcare. The political party that I was involved in would have had equality as a founding ideal. I had presumed that this would mean that all would be in favour of promoting more women in politics. Gender quotas have been demonstrated to be the most effective way of dealing with the barriers that face women when seeking to enter politics (Caul Kittilson, 2005).

Phillips (1995, 2010) helped me clarify my thinking. Phillips (1995) argues that if particular groups are excluded from decision making then issues that are important to that group may not be represented by others from outside of that group. In the case of the group 'women' the absence of 'women' is a problem.

However, that is not the same as saying any woman can represent all women. It also is not saying that a woman would be better than a man at representing ‘women’; ‘women’ do not all think the same. Therefore, no one person is going to represent ‘women’. This is a difficult argument to construct.

Phillips’s (1995) contribution to the theory of representation draws upon debates concerning gender quotas in Europe. She argues that the absence of women is an important issue that can only be dealt with by electing a critical mass of women. In making this argument she warns against the dangers of essentialism.

My interpretation of what she is talking about on essentialism is as follows. We have to simplify complex information in order to deal with it. Therefore, we categorise people and things, according to what we categorise as their essential elements. This can lead to stereotypes of people but also attributes and characteristics can also become essentialist. So for example - Is a zebra really a zebra if it does not have stripes? Clearly there can be instances of zebras that do not have stripes but they remain zebras none the less.

Women are caring, men are competitive. That implies that all women are caring and all men are competitive. If you are competitive does that make you a man? Are you not a man if you are not competitive? Essentialism is seen as something to be avoided. The reason it is to be avoided is that essentialism is

used to simplify a category, but then the simplification becomes a defining characterisation. By categorising people with broad generalisations, there is a danger that these become hurdles which all have to surmount in order to fit the definition.

However, she also argues that essentialism is more of a necessary evil in that we need to simplify categories. She argues that the use of categories should not be used to imprison people. She argues that there is a necessary abstraction in order to form concepts. However, she warns of the dangers of essentialist thinking, which makes the categories too rigid, whilst also acknowledging its usefulness.

The Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Act 2012 seeks to encourage all parties in receipt of public funding to field at least thirty percent of candidates of either gender in the next general election. It is to be at least forty percent in subsequent general elections. With this form of quota all political ideologies are being encouraged to pay attention to the gender of the candidates that they select. Therefore, the difficulties which can arise if only women from one particular ideology are encouraged to run should be avoided.

In the public meetings that I was involved in organising, there were varying reactions to the idea of the implementation of candidate selection gender quotas. There was significant opposition to the idea of quotas. Some of this

opposition was based on a misunderstanding of the concept. Candidate selection gender quotas are not reserved seats. Reserved seats are where particular posts must be filled by a particular gender.

Others of these oppositional arguments related to the idea that candidates should be selected on merit, i.e. people should only gain preferment as a result of merit and hard work. It is documented that significant barriers can be present for all (Tullock, 1965) but highly gendered barriers remain for women (Gardiner, 2000). Phillips (1995) would argue that quotas simply level the playing field.

I also came to an understanding that the simplistic assumption that the categories male and female are biologically determined was problematic. While people's respective behaviours have been influenced by their biology they also are socially constructed (Connell, 2005). More recent critical engagement with the relevant literature, particularly Connell's work on hegemonic and subordinate masculinities - has been especially influential in my developmental journey. This is because Connell contends that there is no such thing as a single concept of masculinity, but, rather that many different masculinities exist. These masculinities are each associated with different positions of power. Connell's more nuanced understanding of gender relations has challenged my previously rather polarised view of men and women. His work has highlighted the level of diversity amongst men and the degree to

which men, particularly subordinate men, for example, gay men, may also be marginalised within the work environment. Connell (2005:xxiii) contends:

> *De-regulation of the economy places strategic power in the hands of particular groups of men – managers and entrepreneurs….these groups are the bearers of an emerging hegemonic of masculinity in the contemporary global economy, which I call 'transnational business masculinity'.*

Initially, I would have concurred with the belief that there was no need for quotas that women would gain success on the basis of merit. This would have been particularly the view post the election of the first female president of Ireland in 1991. Subsequently in 1997 a second woman was elected to that office. In public discourse, this argument about 'merit' has been proposed by a number of prominent politicians, most notably Joanna Tuffy TD.[23]

Also the debate tended to be 'sexist' with female politicians only being asked what they thought of quotas. This led to the exclusion of men from the argument. As Deputy Ciaran Lynch[24] stated *"Gender parity is not a gender issue; it is a societal issue"* (Clancy *et al.,* 2012:125). Using Phillips's (1995, 2010) theoretical contribution as a base outlined in Essay Two, I came to a more nuanced understanding of the arguments.

[23] Joanna Tuffy, Labour party TD for Dublin Mid-West since 2007.

[24] Ciaran Lynch, Labour Party TD for Cork South Central since 2007.

One emergent viewpoint particularly amongst younger women was that they had no experience of the barriers and that gender composition in the political domain was of little concern. Their collective view was that an individual's gender was of little account when seeking public office. They proposed the argument from meritocracy. They believed that a person would succeed if the candidate was of sufficient merit. In essence, they tended to the view that the political system was fair, equal and of course gender-neutral. Thus, if a person worked hard enough and was sufficiently able then s/he would succeed. In essence, their attainment of public office was solely due to their ability and hard work.

Through these debates I have become especially aware that access to public goods, such as Higher Education and its attendant opportunities such as well-paid employment, are not available to all. This awareness has helped me to challenge the received wisdom concerning fairness and equality, especially issues of gender equality.

My increased conscientisation meant that I am now in a position to constructively challenge the dominant meritocratic perspective on gender equality (Freire, 1970[1996]). Conscientisation is the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. I have come to the view that action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality (Freire, 1970[1996]). He proposes that we acquire social

myths which have a dominant tendency, and so learning is a critical process which depends upon revealing real problems alongside actual needs. One such myth would be that if you are poor it is your own fault (Rand, 1957[2007]). It is this new found knowledge, developed through reflection and action and consistent with Freirean pedagogy, that has usefully informed my involvement with the 5050 Group.

My increased awareness of the limits of liberal democracy and gender equality has been especially useful in explaining to diverse audiences the barriers which many women face, especially those from marginalised backgrounds. In essence, this more complex level of understanding and engagement has rendered me a more active citizen. This outcome is particularly valuable in the contemporary public sphere, wherein consistently negative public discourse, for example, in relation to the economy, may leave us as a citizenry detached and apathetic, leaving important decisions to others. Above all, this level of increased insight and understanding has enhanced my ability to grapple with perceived fairness and equality grievances in relation to work place disputes.

Another key assumption of mine was that my world was a better and safer place for me if I avoided conflict with others. I am politically active and very much engaged on addressing social justice issues, as I see them. Yet, in meetings at work I would choose to remain quiet, listening rather than having

my say. In coming to a more nuanced understanding of these issues I have become more confident in debating areas of disagreement.

In order to inform the debate on increasing the presence of women in electoral politics and to have a succinct historical record we in the 5050 Group decided to publish a book (Clancy *et al*., 2012). This book contained all the speeches made in the Dail and Seanad debates in relation to the Candidate Selection Gender Quotas part of the Electoral (Amendment)(Political Funding) Bill (2012).

I am now better equipped to engage with and constructively address the issue of female representation in politics, which previously I would have struggled to understand. This enhanced understanding has improved my ability to argue the case and to deal with arguments that have no substance or are based on untrue assumptions.

6. Conclusion

This Essay has presented the unfolding of changes to my practice by my participation in several different processes which I have treated as 'experiments'. The purpose of these experiments was to examine my ideas and assumptions about the knowledge that I have created. I sought to examine and improve my leadership practice through these experiments. The scenarios involved my workplace with the MBV experiment, as a community activist in

the 5050 group and in general everyday operations. I have documented how they have influenced changes in my leadership practice.

My understanding of the world was very much through the lens of a ‘woman’ in a ‘man’s’ world. I considered that my gender was a highly significant organising concept in my life. My understanding of leadership and how as a woman I operate has been radically modified. I believe that my practice has been greatly enhanced by these insights. Using Kegan’s Subject-Object separation I have sought to re-examine those insights.

Evidence from the literature outlined in Essay Two demonstrates that the need to have a gender balanced political representation. This is what democratic justice demands. I have come to see action as the imperative and therefore I see my participation as crucial to fulfilling my goals of increasing my leadership effectiveness. It is equally important that I continue to promote the value system that I have come to understand as equality and fairness.

I have come to a more nuanced understanding of how I can contribute in advocating that businesses need to interrogate their purpose and identify the values that underpin that enterprise. Too often businesses are content to continue if they are profitable. By not identifying their purpose they miss the opportunity to contribute to a sustainable future for the coming generations.

Similarly businesses that are funded through the taxpayer also need to understand their purpose and the values that underpin that purpose. But they also need to understand that they are businesses and that sustainable economic performance is a necessary part of any business.

The development of gender parity across leadership roles but especially in the political domain has been an aspiration of mine. I have managed to make a contribution towards this goal by being part of the editorial team of the book *The Road to 50/50 – Gender Quotas for Ireland* (Clancy *et al.*, 2012). I am very proud of that achievement and appreciate the help, encouragement and support of those involved in that project.

This may be useful for other managers interested in leadership, fairness and the role of women in leadership. I found the use of the ACBO template was very helpful in promoting change to my behaviour by informing my intellectual and practical understanding of leadership. In making explicit my behaviour the ACBO template enabled me to change my practice and move towards the objective for which I was aiming. Often we did not pay attention to our practice and it was only when we shone a light on it that we became aware of it. I was surprised to find that I behaved differently with different people. The ACBO template helped to point this out to me. I had been keeping a diary but I found that this did not force me to look at my practice in the way that the ACBO template did. It pointed out more explicitly what actions were being

taken/not taken and informed the underlying commitments, behaviours and assumptions underlying outcomes.

The Myers Briggs Type analysis was also useful in surfacing my underlying assumptions. The debates around the promotion of the increased participation of women in leadership positions also helped my practice by increasing my awareness of the arguments both for and against. I also developed my understanding of different modes of leadership. In coming to a more nuanced understanding of leadership this led to increasing my ability to push my limits beyond those that had been present previously.

In the Portfolio Conclusion that follows I discuss what I found useful from the experiments outlined in Essay Three. I further discuss what might be of interest to other practitioners interested in the area of leadership particularly with reference to fairness and gender.

Portfolio Conclusion

1. Introduction

In this Portfolio of Exploration, I have established a way of enhancing my professional practice within a clear framework and statement of my values.[25] In this Portfolio Conclusion I summarise the construction of this framework and the learning outcomes that may be gleaned by other practitioners.

This thesis describes the development of a critical and reflective attitude in terms of enhancing leadership effectiveness. The interdependent and transformational relationship of practice and theory has been demonstrated over the course of this portfolio. In the future, the learning gained will promote the ability to generate a learning enriched work environment, both as a paid professional and as a community activist. The description of this process may be useful to any practitioner interested in increasing their leadership effectiveness.

In this portfolio, I have sought to answer the following research questions:

- How can I develop my perception of leadership?
- Is fairness an element of functional leadership?

[25] Fairness, Sincerity, Positivity and Balance.

- To what extent does the increased participation of women lead to a qualitatively different type of leadership?

Overall, this portfolio has engaged with the above questions in some depth. Throughout the document, there has been reflection on the relevant processes for understanding these questions, alongside some of their key implications for the personal and professional arena. In essence, experiments relating to these questions, may assist others in understanding leadership, at the personal and professional levels. These experiments have helped to facilitate professional leadership development through an exploration of the values base of an organisation and by identifying and justifying improvements in practice, particularly with regard to the influence of fairness and gender.

The learning gained in this portfolio is significant to other practitioners across a number of domains, particularly the professional domain. First, there is the sharing of interpreted meaning through what is termed 'critical friends' amongst peers (Francis, 1997). In this instance 'critical' is the willingness to challenge underlying assumptions around what is seen as being worthy.

Second is the development of interpersonal communication skills needed to sustain this process. This form of communication and interpretation tends to occur at the informal or non-formal discursive level. This informal mode of communication may be particularly relevant to women, who may otherwise hesitate to speak in a formal domain. The informal discursive sphere may be

more inclusive and supportive and this may assist some in communicating more freely. This developmental process may subsequently help them to find their 'voice' in the more formal work sphere or wider public domain. The methodology of research by 'experiment', especially the techniques of handling the data generated in a communicable manner is promoted by this approach (Chambers and Clarke, 1999). The learning gained from methodology of research by experiment, combined with its core aim of analysis and interpretation for potential organisational decision making, may be especially salient for practitioners in leadership.

In the next section, I will outline a summary of each essay alongside the potential beneficial learning for cognate practitioners in two modes. The first mode concerns the methods that I have employed in this portfolio. The second focuses on the findings from each of the methods.

2.0 Overall Portfolio Framework

In the Introduction to this Portfolio of Exploration, I identified for the reader the central research theme of improving my leadership practice. I outlined the rationale for undertaking a practitioner doctorate. I discussed in some detail Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) and my use of Subject-Object separation to advance mental complexity. I discussed my use of Drucker (1985). I identified the specific research questions that were being addressed as outlined above. I explained the structure of the Portfolio.

In *Essay One – Personal Professional Review*, I outlined my professional experience throughout my career. I explored the significant events and attempted to surface my underlying assumptions (Drucker, 1985). By examining my past recollections I was able to formulate my research questions around leadership, fairness and gender. My practice was being directly influenced by the hidden assumptions that I had around these themes. Decisions that I was making about how to behave were being impacted by these hidden assumptions.

The analysis of this process may be useful to any practitioner interested in using this framework to understand their hidden assumptions. In becoming aware of this theory of my knowledge construction I was able to better interrogate my past recollections cognisant that I was the one who was making my meaning.

When I became more aware of these hidden assumptions I was able to seek to examine them (Kegan, 1994). Kegan describes Subject-Object separation as a means to increase mental complexity. Therefore, the evolving mind was able to become more alert to their unconscious assumptions and by unearthing these assumptions could seek to alter them.

My research questions were generated because I found that I had not examined my assumptions regarding leadership and fairness and whether my gender

significantly influenced my leadership approach. In seeking to increase my effectiveness in a leadership role, I sought to surface any anxieties that I had around my underlying assumptions.

These anxieties revolved around a reluctance to embrace a leadership role; a conviction that being female was significant in leadership; an assertion that fairness was fundamental to leadership. I needed to come to a better understanding of the influence of fairness and gender on leadership in order to advance my leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, I needed to come to a better understanding of the tensions between work/life balance so that my effectiveness was optimised. In essence, the questions generated were related to how I viewed the world through the lens of a 'woman' in as I perceived it, a 'man's world'.

This examination pointed the way for the literature in Essay Two that I explored in order to inform my meaning making system. This literature was used to broaden my mind-set and to further unearth my assumptions. In this context, I strongly commend the use of a personal professional review for other practitioners interested in improving their leadership effectiveness. This review has been instrumental in assisting the process of examining the underlying assumptions that lay hidden. This surfacing has supported me in enhancing my present learning and points the way for continuing professional development into the future.

Fundamentally, the review has assisted my professional practice. It has helped me to foster an improved critical and reflective attitude regarding my understanding and articulation of the interdependence between practice and theory. In light of this significant beneficial learning, the use of Subject-Object separation was instrumental in challenging my assumptions, I suggest that a practitioner working in a cognate field to my own may derive some considerable benefit from engaging in a similar personal and professional review.

In *Essay Two - Reading for Change,* I interrogated the literature and examined the reading that I had done to bring greater clarity to my thinking regarding the research questions that I had chosen to explore. These research questions had become more focused by the use of the review outlined in Essay One.

Essay Two was constructed into three sections around the themes of broadening my understanding of leadership; the concept of fairness as a value; and the influence of gender on individual leadership approaches. The challenge was that a lack of clarity around my assumptions had led to a degree of uncertainty in relation to my ability to interrogate the issues of leadership, fairness and the influence of gender on leadership.

In Section 1 of Essay Two the literature pointed to the masculine nature of leadership theory and the extent to which it had become synonymous with a

particular type of masculinity (Bolden *et al,* 2003). The experience and example of male leaders were pervasive. The dominant patriarchal culture and competitive nature of business leadership was highlighted. This caused me to rethink my view of leadership and the influence that the masculine norms of leadership had had on my understanding of leadership.

My antipathy to the hierarchical nature of leadership was also surfaced. This interrogation led to the recognition that a transformational and co-operative form of leadership was an option. The model as proposed by the Women's Intercultural Leadership Model (Bazata *et al,* 2011) fulfilled the criteria for an inclusive and less hierarchical mode of leadership. This placed the emphasis on co-operation and on the team. Ultimately however the leader had the casting vote. The emphasis was on maximising agreement and coming to a just and equitable decision.

It also introduced the concept of a rotational leadership, where others take the lead. This ran counter to the rather linear progression promoted in popular leadership literature (Welsh and Welsh, 2007). Whilst not negating the talents and achievements of individual leaders and their part in the success of their businesses, it proposed that longevity in leadership was not always necessary or indeed desirable. It also was a format specifically proposed to suit women. Alternatives to the patriarchal form of leadership were presented as a means to foster diversity.

More generally, the promotion of a leadership culture which is inclusive of all, alongside their needs, is beneficial. As women assume leadership roles, their contribution cannot be expected to be a continuation of patriarchal norms. The diversity which is an inherent ambition of expanded leadership roles can only prosper if an accommodation can be facilitated.

The founding assumptions of businesses are interrogated around the 'what' (Drucker, 1994) and the 'how' (Bennis and Goldsmith, 2010). More fundamentally the issue for leadership is the 'why' (Sinek, 2011). In contemplating leadership others need to surface how intrinsic the 'why' is to how leadership is conducted. For Homo Sapiens (wise man) the ultimate ambition is to survive and reproduce. As some in our communities inherit the talent to become more materially well off, it behoves those in leadership to understand the values that underpin their ambitions and aspirations.

For cognate practitioners in leadership I would recommend the importance of understanding their motivation is assuming a leadership position. Fundamentally what they achieve is very much influenced by that starting motivation. An underpinning of that motivation is also necessary by the frequent re-engagement with that founding principle.

Section 2 of Essay Two expanded on the concept of Fairness. The literature revealed the complexity of this word yet also how ubiquitous it was. The

complexity of understanding was demonstrated by the idea that some saw Fairness in terms of the process that was followed, while others lay the emphasis on Fairness being delivered through desired outcomes (Sowell, 1987[2007]).

Others considered Fairness as an understanding that can be agreed by the majority of participants (Corning, 2011; Checkland, 1981). The emphasis on the interrogation of thought was insightful in that it explained the extent to which knowledge was a process and not a thing (Kegan, 1994). It further emphasised the imperative for debate. The leadership element of Fairness was to have an understanding of the importance in conducting that dialogue.

The importance of cohesion around income and the linkages between those that prospered and those that struggled was argued by others as crucial to delivering Fairness (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009; Freire, 1998). The extent to which an agreed view of Fairness was crucial to the cohesion of the community was highlighted.

The literature highlighted the complexity of the value of Fairness. It clarified that the construction of Fairness was not a fixed concept. Each person had their own construction of the concept. However the guiding light was proposed as the Golden Rule of each person treating others as they would like to be treated (Corning, 2011). This pointed to the imperative for those in leadership to be

aware of the values that underpinned their leadership. Similarly it pointed to the importance of following through on those values in the conduct of their business.

For cognate practitioners interested in Fairness as a value it is important that the values upon which leadership is based can be clearly understood by all. This allows one to remain strong and courageous. Facing down opposition or implementing controversial actions is not easy. Being aware of one's values prevents one being undermined. To have a reference back to the underlying values that inform decisions is very useful. Ultimately it is about the 'why' of what one is doing.

Sometimes this may mean that one comes to alter what one is doing. This is not weakness but rather a courageous thing to do. To be wrong or to have veered away from one's stated intent is possible. However what is important is the interrogation of that intent and the values that underpin it.

Fairness is in the mind of the user of the concept and therefore, it is the nature and the quality of the debate that goes on that is the crucial point. However different meanings can be arrived at and this can be a source of conflict. Corning (2011) maintains that ultimately a consensus can be reached to the majority's satisfaction. Above all, there is satisfaction in coming to an agreed understanding of Fairness.

The third section of Essay Two discussed the literature in relation to both the qualitative and quantitative influences of gender on leadership. The emphasis was particularly in relation to the influence of women. The literature pointed out the complexity of understanding the influence of gender on leadership (Gilligan, 1977). Phillips (1995) argued that the absence of descriptive groups led to the omission of concerns which were particular to that group. However she cautioned of the dangers of essentialism or stereotyping that can occur when this point was argued (Phillips, 2010).

The idea that both men and women have multiple identities which are flexible and socially constructed pointed to the complexity of specifically examining the influence of gender (Mansbridge, 2005). Arguing for the presence of women encourages the belief that there is some essence of womanness and femininity. Similarly, the difficulties for men being seen as a homogeneous group was also signalled (Connell, 2005). Also that people grouped together can be less similar than those outside that group was highlighted (Turner, 1987).

However the justice argument in a representative democracy argued that the leadership should be reflective of the population. This population needed to be represented both descriptively and ideologically (Phillips, 1995). The gendered barriers that women face in advancing to leadership positions was explained (Gardiner, 2000). Furthermore the finding was that descriptive representation could not be achieved without some form of quota (Mansbridge, 2005).

The imbalance in the descriptive representation of women in leadership internationally both at corporate and political level was documented (Pande and Ford, 2012). The form of quota being implemented was seen as being crucial to the success or failure of the initiative to increase female representation in electoral politics (Jones, 2005).

For practitioners interested in gender equality in leadership, the complexity of increasing the number of women in leadership positions was highlighted. An awareness of the essentialist risks when categorising women and men as a homogeneous group was pointed out. The unintended consequence was possibly that men were unfairly vilified and women unjustly revered. Similarly the complexity of specifically gendered influences on leadership was not supported. However the loss of high ability women to the system was considered problematic.

In *Essay Three – Analysis of Learning Revealed in Practice* a description was given of the methodology and experiments used to advance leadership capabilities. Changes to thinking based on the reflective change programme and how it had influenced perspective on leadership practice was outlined. A number of interrelated scenarios were focused on to monitor responses in leadership situations. From these scenarios the core learning was established for personal growth and intellectual development. The aim was based on a desire to enhance leadership effectiveness.

In Section 2, the use of the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to enhance leadership practice was demonstrated. This tool can be used to build knowledge of the practice strengths in leadership. Its original focus was primarily for establishing a person's preferences for career choice and building organisational teams. However the use to interrogate responses to others was shown to be beneficial. Adaptation to alternative less favoured modes of operation was shown to be useful.

In Section 3 the Assumption Commitment Behaviour Outcome template was adapted to interrogate leadership assumptions and behaviour. Drucker (1994) asserted that every organisation whether a business or not had a theory of the business. These assumptions were the founding assumptions which went to create the theory of the business. They shaped the organisation's behaviour, dictated its decisions about what to do and what not to do. They identified the organisations values and behaviour.

Eventually the founding assumption became obsolete. Without a re-examination of the founding theory of the business the assumptions became invalid. However assumptions were hidden, but they were the foundation upon which practice was based. The ACBO template attempted to surface the hidden assumptions.

Behaviours which ran counter to the desired leadership practice can be highlighted by this template. In the experiments with the ACBO template practise more towards the desired goal can be encouraged. Also a reconstruction of the practitioners understanding of leadership can be promoted using this template. Leadership seen in terms of the assumptions of the practitioner can be supported.

In Section 4, I sought to interrogate the value base or foundations of the theory of the business of the organisation for which I had worked through the Managing by Values experiment. Their theory of the business had become obsolete and they were endeavouring to come to an understanding of the future of the business. It also sought to explicitly surface the underlying values.

In tandem with this I sought to surface my values and the 'why' of my leadership approach. In doing this I proposed that by developing the entrepreneurial services of an individual that would lead to the growth of the person (Penrose, 1959[1995]). This may be useful for other practitioners to imitate.

In Section 5 participation in the 5050 group experiment promoting Candidate Selection Gender Quotas for the Dail elections demonstrated the complexity of. I demonstrated my experience in the promotion of greater female political participation in leadership roles and its influence on my leadership

effectiveness. Furthermore, I demonstrated how changes in my thinking impacted on my leadership capacities and approach. Fundamentally, it broadened my thinking regarding leadership and gender.

Specifically regarding my 5050 Group activism, I, along with others, had worked to create greater gender balance in terms of political representation in Ireland. My political activism on this issue was prompted by the dilemmas posed by a transition from a male dominated leadership to a more gender balanced leadership. Initially, the central purpose was that it would make a difference. I found it quite challenging to untangle my thinking on this complex and contentious issue and come to a firm conclusion.

I would have broadly concurred with this 'meritocratic' perspective concerning self-advancement in the work domain. A meritocratic perspective on professional advancement is 'a common sense' view of the world. However, while developing this Portfolio, I have reviewed my perspective to some considerable extent. I have engaged in a thorough on going critical reflection on my own position. Over the last three to four years I have come to recognise the barriers that some face particularly women when it comes to leadership advancement. Also how some do not acknowledge how they have benefitted from the resources which others in the past and present have invested in advancing standards for others. Similarly others in my peer group might not necessarily have experienced those same benefits. It pointed to the uneven access to resources that can be a feature of communities.

Proactive approaches in promoting best practice by fostering an environment in which each person feels valued may contribute to the enhanced performance of both public and private sector organisations and are a very significant dividend, from which we can all potentially benefit. This can benefit men as they incorporate the care role into their lives. This may help to retain qualified personnel which were previously lost to the system.

Overall, I sought to understand my meaning making system, both in terms of my professional career and as a political activist. I also examined how in using that learning I could deal with many of the anxieties which had prevented me from moving to a more effective leadership process.

3. Contribution to Knowledge

This Portfolio of Exploration has led me to take a more nuanced view of fairness. I have worked hard and thus to some considerable extent I do deserve my modest level of success. However, I also now see that I was a significant beneficiary of state investment in the development of a 'knowledge economy' through its investment in Higher Education. In essence, I had been a significant beneficiary of Ireland's commitment to advancing its citizens' living standards. To some extent, I had benefited from both luck and opportunity alongside my commitment to hard work. I also came to acknowledge that not everybody has access to this level of relative privilege and opportunity. This enhanced understanding may be useful for others.

A proactive stance on promoting fairness in the work place may contribute to reducing costly adversarial strategies played out in tribunals and courts. Above all, a work culture which promotes able, highly qualified men and women in leadership roles has the potential to contribute substantially to informing the development of greater equity across the wider society.

The diversity which is the inherent objective in promoting greater female participation in leadership may not be realised because of the pressure to conform to the dominant culture. Ultimately leadership is about challenging the status quo and received wisdom and reinvigorating the value systems that underpin a stable environment. Therefore there needs to be a constant re-evaluation of the core purpose of good leadership.

The combination of parenting with paid work needs further attention. It is not until parents need to access good quality affordable childcare that the problems become apparent. Many are unaware of how the structural problems which pertain to the combination of parenting and paid work will impact. Care in both the personal and parenting manifestation needs to be incorporated into company and national policy positions.

The dearth of female participants in Politics and by extention Economics in Ireland is problematic. Disenchantment with the almost exclusively male-dominated majority culture needs to be addressed. This absence can promote

the concept that politics is not relevant to women. Their lives and values can be excluded from the economy and economic theory. When women make up more than fifty per cent of the population there needs to be a greater presence of women in public life.

Difficulty for women (and some men) fitting into a dominant male culture is problematic. Child-rearing can be shared between partners however child bearing is an exclusively female activity. This is of real significance to the participation of women in a world defined by how men function. In my doctoral class, four of the participants had additions to their families during the course of the programme. If they had been female participants the difficulties which women face because of child bearing place an added barrier which is not there for their male counterparts. While all participants can come up against significant difficulties, child bearing is a significant gendered obstacle that men do not have to contend with.

There needs to be a constant examination of constraints and incentives in order that end results are desirable or at least acceptable. For example dealing with the problem of absenteeism through an abuse of the certified sick leave scheme can lead to calls for its abolition. However this penalises genuine participants. It is a good thing that if people are sick that they can insure themselves for that eventuality. However there is a danger that a small number will view this as an entitlement and demand more than their fair share. This highlights the need for well managed systems in order not to undermine the desired outcome.

Sowell's (1987[2007]) contributions to understanding of different political perspectives is enlightening. Political opponents can be seen as lacking humanity or being ignorant of the consequences of their political stances. However a more nuanced understanding of their thought process can lead to a greater degree to which respectful debate can take place. There may be disagreement on the process versus the outcome but an understanding needs to be promoted that opposing arguments are not necessarily driven by greed or malice.

In debates it is important that all can have their say. That promotes a sense of fairness. The outcome that that includes those that disagree is an essential part of the process. However some can debate in a mischievous way. This means that they are not honest about their true intent. It is important to recognise this. However others are genuine in their different perspectives (Sowell, 1987[2007]). By having an open debate when there is disagreement then ultimately that is the most effective means to come to a fair outcome.

In essence, this thesis has sought to demonstrate the relevance of transformational learning which may be utilised by change agents working in the leadership and management domain. The learning outlined in this document has the potential to facilitate an enhanced understanding of the often complex experiences and assumptions which underpin the meaning making systems of managers in their often highly complex and challenging work roles.

In this thesis, the primary identified 'community of interest' were those interested in leadership particularly middle managers who worked in public bodies and who were animated by leadership issues in their workplaces. The learning as it was outlined in this document shows some of the inherent challenges for this leadership cohort in grappling with issues concerning leadership, fairness as a business value and the degree to which gender influences leadership. *Inter alia*, the key concerns outlined in this document focus on women in leadership roles alongside greater fairness in the workplace.

Continuous professional development in relation to deepening reflective practice may yield considerable benefit to a professional working in a field similar to my own. I acknowledge, however, that from an *external* perspective what may appear to be highly similar practice settings may be in reality quite different, demanding intricate responses. Notwithstanding this complexity, a similar professional may still gain benefit from reflective learning processes and practice in relation to both the personal and professional.

The competitive nature of the modern workplace and its encroachment into the private sphere plus the level of uncertainty that it generates is problematic. Yet there is no denying the productivity gains that have occurred as a result of capitalist innovation. In coming to a more nuanced understanding of how to decide what is the 'right' thing to do, others may find this helpful. However

this thesis has illustrated the complexity of coming to a conclusion about what is the 'right' thing to do.

4. Conclusion

This Portfolio Conclusion presents a summary of the essays contained in this doctoral thesis. These are the learning outcomes which I have found useful for my peer community of other managers operating particularly within a public sector environment. I have outlined the format of the Portfolio of Exploration. I have given a thorough discussion of the learning outcomes of each of the three essays.

The issue of care and how it impacts on the combination of paid work and parenting was discussed. The different theories of leadership have been interrogated particularly those that may be useful to a women. Attention has been drawn to the importance of understanding personal values and how they apply to leadership. By understanding the value system that underpins leadership a more nuanced understanding of others can be achieved. Values are not benign there are very powerful. The implementation of fairness is complex but ultimately rewarding.

The use of Kegan's Theory of Adult Mental Development (1994) has been a powerful tool in challenging assumptions and moving to a more complex mode of operation. This is useful for other managers to use the same approach

because it is only by being aware of our theories that we can come to make wise choices for change.

The meaning making systems that human activity systems develop are complex and ultimately ever-changing. Therefore, understanding needs to be flexible enough to take account of this. Also the irreducibility of human activity systems is something that is not widely accepted but is crucial to the success or failure of any operation or plan.

In the Portfolio, I have concentrated on changes to my leadership practice in the workplace but also the wider societal setting. I have sought to identify the assumptions that I used in my leadership. I have also sought to understand what meaning I was taking from my experiences and to have greater clarity around the theories underpinning my knowledge base.

This led me to implement a change programme that sought to build my confidence around participation in areas which I had previously left to others. It sought to change how I handled situations and people that I found challenging. It sought to gain a more nuanced understanding of the non-profit business sector. It sought to elucidate the conflict that I felt between the public sphere of paid work and the private sphere of unpaid care work of family and friends. It sought to generate a greater understanding of the role of values in

the business world. Others may find this a useful format to pursue. This poem seems a satisfactory way to conclude.

All that I would like is to be human,

having a share

in a civilised, articulate and

well adjusted

community where the mind is given

its due

but the body is not distrusted. (MacNeice, 1939[2011]).

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