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Making Sense of Public Administrative Leadership in the Republic of Ireland

An Interpretive Research Project

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Acknowledgement

To God be all Glory, Honour and Praise

"Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours."

(*Book of Psalms chapter 86 verse 8, Holy Bible*)

This work is dedicated to Ivy, Stephanie and Sabrina

Abstract

This research is a research into the perceptions of senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland regarding their own leadership at the time when Ireland was facing a significant socio-economic crisis. The research examines the senior Irish administrative leaders' own perspectives on how leadership should be exercised, and explores how they perceived the environment they were in and on how they made sense of their own leadership responses to the perceived environment.

The research takes the Republic of Ireland as a national case study, and focuses on the public administrative leadership, which is the leadership of the implementation of public policies, rather than on the political leadership, which is the leadership of the selection of public policies (Montesquieu 1748, Ostrom 1973, Osborne and Plastrik 1997, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2003, Van Wart and Dicke 2008). The research is preluded by a conceptual discussion on leadership, morality, ethics and values (Chau 2007b); a qualitative research on leadership values in the Irish public services (Chau 2008); and a quantitative research on public service delivery perspectives in Ireland (Chau 2009). The research interviews were conducted amongst the top two echelons of public administrative leaders, with participation drawn from the Secretary General or Assistant Secretary levels of the Irish civil service, or their equivalent amongst the State Agencies.

The research employs an interpretivist approach (Mason 2002, Willis 2007), exploring how these senior Irish public administrative leaders made sense of their own leadership during the crisis period. In particular, the interpretive approach explores how the leaders perceived their own leadership, explores how they interpreted the environment they perceived themselves to be in, and explores how they made sense of their own leadership in response to the perceived environment.

The findings of the research reveal evidence pointing towards a social construction process (Berger and Luckmann 1966) through which the senior Irish public administrative leaders constructed their realities of leadership. The finding reveals that in their constructed realities, which were constructed through their dialectic social interactions, the senior Irish public administrative leaders considered that they made

appropriate responses to the socio-economic crisis. The approach which they considered appropriate could be described as a heroic (Ford et al 2008) approach, with particular emphasis on a number of positivistic leadership traits (Stogdill 1974, Gardner 1989, Méndez-Morse 1992, Spears 2000). Further, the findings indicate that in their constructed reality, the senior Irish administrative leaders had interpreted their environment as a significant crisis one, and had internalised a need to implement significant changes in response. However, the findings reveal that despite the perception of a crisis and despite the acknowledgement of a need for change, the leadership response seen as the appropriate response by the leaders themselves was one that reflects a degree of conservatorship (Selznick 1984, Terry 1995) – which is a leadership perspective that emphasises the conserving of various values and institutions (Scott 1995, Terry 2003), and is therefore a perspective that sees activating incremental change (Nadler 1988, Tushman 1988, Dunphy and Stace 1993, Senior 2002, Burnes 2004), even in the face of a perceived crisis of magnitude, as making more sense than pursuing disruptive reform or radical change (Grundy 1993, Kotter 1996). The findings therefore had revealed the existence of multiple constructed realities, some of them even appear to contradict each other.

The contribution of this research to knowledge within public sector leadership and management is the contribution to the understanding of how leadership realities could be constructed, and to understand the extent to which, in a particular constructed leadership reality, the driving of disruptive change should be balanced by the maintaining of unwavering continuity even when faced with significant national socio-economic crises. The contribution to practice is to have fostered a less positivistic view of what Irish public administrative leadership should look like, and with a constructionist perspective, to suggest a viable construct of a public administrative leadership perspective that reflects a preference for responding to a significant crisis with a degree of conservatorship rather than responding only with a bias for radical reform.

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Document One

Exploring Public Leadership in the Republic of Ireland – contending with Contrasting and Conflicting Values

February 2007

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1   Overview

At the individual level, it is a basic human instinct to follow others. Therefore the human race exists in organised societies. And where there are followers, there are leaders. The importance of effective leadership is well established as crucial to morale and success. Thus, as far back as history could record, the study of what constitute effective leadership has been seen as vitally important. Public leadership is even more critical, as the success or failure of public leadership affects not just individuals, but the well-being of the society as a whole.

One area of increasing interest is the area of ethical leadership – the introduction of the dimension of ethical values into the assessment of what constitute effective leadership. A related area of interest is that of moral leadership – the association of moral rights and wrongs to the leaders and their acts of leadership. This research falls into these subject domains, but in the specific context of the Republic of Ireland.

The findings of this research will be of benefit to both the policy makers as well as the policy implementers within the public sector. Ultimately, the general public will also benefit from more effective public leaders.

This document outlines a broad framework for how the subject is going to be examined and provides a preliminary discussion of the relevant issues.

Firstly, the rationale behind why the issues are being examined is discussed. The objectives of the research are also outlined. A brief overview of the Irish State is also given to provide some contextual background. Secondly, a preliminary literature review is taken. Thirdly, the rationale behind the proposed methodology is discussed and an overall methodology proposed. Fourthly, the approach to Documents 2, 3, 4 and 5 are outlined. These outlines should not be taken as definitive at this stage, as it is expected that modifications will be necessary when new understanding on the subject matters emerges from the research itself, which may then impact on the subsequent research methodology. Finally, some expected research issues are presented and discussed in the final section.

2 Subject Matter and Research Objectives

Preface – Presenting an Analysis Dilemma in Public Leadership

Does the end always justify the means in the context of public leadership? Would the public be willing to overlook ethical improprieties if it leads to a positive long-term result for the vast majority?

In the Republic of Ireland, a Tribunal of Inquiry was set up by the *Tithe an Oireachtas* (the Irish Houses of Parliament) in February 1997 to investigate reports of secret payments by Mr. Ben Dunne to former *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister), Mr. Charles Haughey and former cabinet minister Mr. Michael Lowry. Under the sole membership of the Honourable Mr. Justice Brian McCracken, a Judge of the High Court, the Tribunal heard evidence in July 1997 and produced a 100-page *Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry (Dunnes Payments)* the following month. As a direct result of the findings of the report, the Irish Government established a more extensive follow-up Tribunal of Inquiry under the sole membership of the Honourable Mr. Justice Michael Moriarty, another Judge of the High Court, to further investigate the financial affairs of the two politicians.

Over nine years after the establishment of the Moriarty Tribunal of Inquiry, Mr Justice Moriarty, in his 700-page *Report of the Tribunal of Inquiry into Payments to Politicians and Related Matters*, concluded that the behaviour while in office of the former *Taoiseach* Mr. Charles Haughey "can only be said to have devalued the quality of a modern democracy" (Moriarty 2006:544). The aggregate funds which the Tribunal identified as having been available to Mr. Charles Haughey in the years from 1979 to 1996, was IR£9,106,369.17. This figure excluded Mr. Haughey's income or pensions from his public offices. This figure of IR£9,106,369.17 is the equivalent of €11,565,088.84. The Tribunal further concluded thatif the aggregate figure was taken as a multiple of Mr. Haughey's then gross salary for the year 1988, which was the mid-point in terms of the accrual of the funds available to him, it represented a multiple of 171 times Mr. Haughey's gross salary of IR£53,161.00. And if that multiple of 171 is applied to the current gross salary payable to a *Taoiseach*, the

figure which was available to Mr. Haughey, in comparable terms would amount to €45 million.

Understandably, the publication of the Moriarty report was met with a chorus of indignation by the public and by the popular press. In particular, the reaction was to the inference that not only were the payments from senior members of the business community secretive in nature, but also that they took place during particularly difficult economic times nationally, and when the Governments led by Mr. Haughey were championing austerity (Moriarty 2006).

However, that notwithstanding, the period under the political leadership of Mr. Haughey also coincided with the commencement of a period of rapid economic growth in the Republic of Ireland, which began in the 1990s. During this time, Ireland experienced a boom in which it was transformed from one of Europe's poorest countries into one of its wealthiest (see Figure I-1). Ireland was given the nick-name the "Celtic Tiger" (Gardiner 1994), analogous to the "East Asian Tigers" – the countries of South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan during their periods of rapid growth in the 1980s and 1990s.

FIGURE I-1: Leader of the Pack

Leader of the pack
GDP per head as % of EU15 average
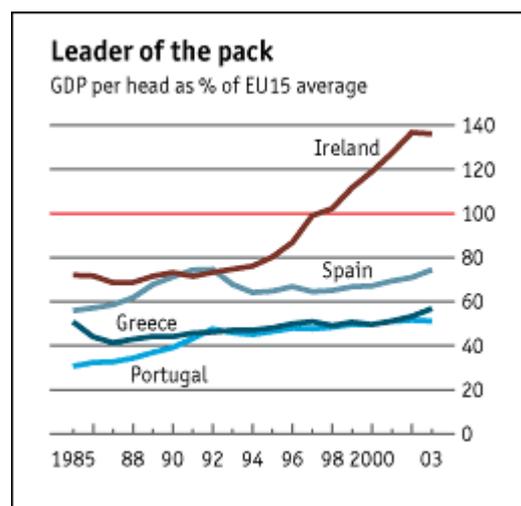
Source: Economist Intelligence Unit. The luck of the Irish, *The Economist*, Oct 14th 2004

In monetary terms, GDP per capita in Ireland grew from US$4,636 in 1979 to US$18,137 in 1996, at 1998 Purchasing Power Parity (Twigger 1998). If statistical

averages are deemed effective as a representation of the whole, then it could be concluded that the population of Ireland was indeed wealthier in GDP terms by US$13,501 per capita. The 1996 Census of Ireland gave a population of 3,626,087 (Meredith, 2006). That implies that the economy of Ireland had become richer by US$48,955,800,587 (IR£30,638,008,681 at the average 1996 OANDA Interbank exchange rate of US$1=IR£0.62583) over the same period that the then Taoiseach was found to have misappropriated a 'mere' IR£9,106,369., or a 'mere' 0.03% of the national wealth created in that period. One could perhaps even argue that the political and economic fundamentals left as the legacy of the Haughey era was the foundation of the Celtic Tiger, cumulating in Ireland growing faster than any other European economies throughout the 1990s. And although GDP growth has slowed in Ireland since 2001, it nonetheless recorded the fastest average rate in the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) area for the ten years to 2004. At 7.9%, it expanded far more quickly than the OECD average real growth rate of 2.6%. (OECD 2005) The GDP per capita for Ireland for 2005 was US$40,610, the fourth highest in the world after Luxembourg, Norway and the United States of America. (International Monetary Fund 2006)

Here lies the analysis dilemma. On the one hand, public leadership is supposed to create long-term well-being for those whom the leaders seek to lead. Effective public leadership cannot be measured simply by the fact that a public leader had influenced a significant following. Otherwise, infamous historical public leaders such as Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin or Mao Zedong, who were considered by some to be the most evil of modern era public leaders, even their leadership could be classified as "successful". Indeed, they had influenced significant numbers of fervent followers, many of whom willingly gave their own lives for their causes. But the welfare generated by their leadership was not for the universal consumption of all whom they claim to represent. A significant minority suffered substantial losses and discrimination, and the welfare gains of the chosen elites were only temporary before their regime eventually collapse and gave way to universal chaos and suffering.

But on the other hand, if the objective of public leadership is to increase the universal welfare and well-being of the followers, to maximise and to maintain their wealth in the long run, and to do so not at the expense of any significant minority group (and

thus rightly judging Hitler, Stalin and Mao to be failed public leaders), then can it be argued that the Haughey leadership can be classified as 'successful'?

Certainly the Haughey leadership had achieved all that was in the aforementioned definition. Many economic commentators believe that the economic policies initiated by the Haughey government laid the foundation for the subsequent Celtic Tiger economy (Ryle-Dwyer 2006; Stanage 2006; Young 2006). A further, albeit more contentious, argument was that the Haughey era helped not just to establish the economic fundamentals, but also to instil an entrepreneurial culture that eventually bred a generation of very successful Irish entrepreneurs. The debate was whether Haughey had intentionally and purposefully acted to create such an entrepreneurial culture, or whether the entrepreneurial culture emerged as a result of imitation of behaviour not purposefully instigated by Haughey. Either way, the effects of the Celtic Tiger phenomenon were that welfare and well-being for the vast majority of Irish citizens have significantly improved, with little possibility of any significant economic regression in any foreseeable future, and no significant minority group can claim any significant discrimination in the process.

Indeed, in response to the Moriarty report, which was, for all intends and purposes, a damning indictment against Mr. Haughey, the chorus of disapproval in particular from the popular press, the cries of corruption and the political point-scoring of the opposition parties were almost equally matched by the deafening silence of the public majority who had considerably benefited from the Celtic Tiger economy.

Equally, the untimely death of Mr. Haughey in June of 2006, some six months before the release of the Moriarty report was met as much with disappointment from those who cried foul – because of the sense that he has now permanently escaped any judicial consequences – as with sighs of relieve – because of the sense that his death provided the opportunity to now put the matter truly to rest.

Is there a clear conclusion that the acts of Mr. Haughey had marked him as a 'corrupted' public leader? Did the 'unethical' acts invalidate the 'good' of the leadership? Could the positive end ever justify unethical means in public leadership?

While it is not the intention of this research exercise to delve into ethicality of specific acts of a specific public leader, the above case in point illustrates one of the dilemmas in the realm of public leadership.

The Hypothesis and the Research Questions

A dilemma is a situation in which a difficult choice has to be made between two contrasting alternatives.

The hypothesis dilemma is that on the one hand, ethical public leadership behaviour can be objectively assessed against generic public service ethical frameworks; but on the other hand, public service leadership behaviour will only be assessed as unethical if the values of the behaviour is subjectively perceived to be contrary to the interpretive values of those being served by the public leaders.

The basis of this hypothesis is the observation that in order for public leadership behaviours to be deemed ethical by those being served by the public leaders, the behaviours should be perceived to fit the value interpretation placed by those being served, regardless of the existence or otherwise of public service ethical frameworks, regardless of whether observed public leadership behaviour conforms to the behavioural guidelines provided by the frameworks if they exist and even regardless of whether the behaviour generate positive outcomes. The hypothesis is therefore that the analysis of ethical public leadership behaviour is less about the objective evaluation of public leadership behaviours against any objective list of 'ethical' behaviours, but rather it is about whether the perceived values of the behaviour meet the value expectation of those being served.

Thus the hypothesis is that:
- The public's assessment of ethical public values is *not* based on whether public leadership behaviour conforms to any objective list of behavioural guidelines.

- The public's assessment of ethical public values is *not* based on whether there is positive and long-term overall outcomes (consequences) generated by the public leadership behaviour.
- There is an internalised set of values from the perspective of the public, influenced by the cultural perception and the value systems of the people group that makes up the public population.
- The public's assessment of ethical public values *is* based on whether the behaviour of the public leader is perceived to match the internalised set of values held by the public themselves.

The assumption here is that the public being served by the public leaders are the 'customers', whose perceived demands need to be met; and that the public leaders are the value providers who must be perceived to behave in a manner congruent to the perception and expectation of the public. This is a simplified view, as the relationship between the 'service provider' and the 'customers' are mutually influential. For example, an effective service provider may at times be successful in influencing the 'customer' in determining his/her own needs. Nevertheless, the assumption is that this simplified view is sufficiently robust to be adopted as the norm for the basis of this research.

The proposed research would therefore be based on questions designed to inquire into the following areas:

- What are the prevailing perspectives of the Irish public service leaders (or selected groups thereof) on what constitute public service values?
- From the different (or selected) strata of the Irish general public being served by the public service leaders, what are the perspectives of the general public in what constitute public service values?
- Are there discernable differences between the perspective of the Irish public service leaders and the perspective of the public they seek to serve?
- If there are discernable differences between the perspective of the Irish public service leaders and the perspective of the public they seek to serve, what might be the possible cause behind the differences?

- If there are discernable differences between the perspective of the Irish public service leaders and the perspective of the public they seek to serve, is there a perception that the differences can be bridged?

A particular public sector of interest in the context of this research is the semi-state commercial sector. This sector comprise of state-sponsored bodies, or semi-state organisations, which are commercial companies that are beneficially owned, either completely or majority, by the Government (see Appendix C). This sector in particular faces the tension of balancing the conflicting values of fulfilling social responsibilities on the one hand, which often generate very high costs and very low financial yields, and meeting commercial profit and competitive goals on the other hand, which often demand significant efficiencies. This would be the one sector where the reconciliation of perceived leadership ethical behaviour to public values perception would present the most challenges. It is proposed that this would be the sector from which cases studies can be drawn for the purpose of addressing the third area of research indicated above.

Brief Description of the Irish Public Service

This proposed research is about ethical leadership and value perspectives of leadership. The proposed research is in the context of public leadership in the Republic of Ireland. Therefore a brief description of the Irish State and of the Irish public service would provide some contextual background.

The Irish State

Ireland is a parliamentary democracy. The National Parliament (*Oireachtas*) consists of the President and two Houses of Parliaments: *Dáil Éireann* (the House of Representatives) and *Seanad Éireann* (the Senate) whose powers and functions are derived from the Constitution of Ireland enacted by the People on the 1st of July 1937. The *Seanad* is composed of sixty nominated and elected members. The *Dáil* has 166 members (*Teachtaí Dála*), elected to represent multi-seat constituencies under the system of proportional representation by means of the Single Transferable Vote.

Under the constitution, parliamentary elections must be held at least every seven years, though a lower limit may be set by statute law. The current statutory maximum term is every five years.

The Government is constitutionally limited to fifteen members. No more than two members of the Government can be selected from the *Senate*, and the *Taoiseach*, *Tánaiste* (deputy prime minister) and Minister for Finance must be members of the *Dáil*.

The Irish Civil Service

The Ministers and Secretaries Act of 1924 and its eleven subsequent amendments are the legal basis for the Irish system of central public administration. The Act provides for a statutory classification of the functions of Government under the various Departments and Offices of State. There are fifteen Ministers of Government, assisted by seventeen Ministers of State, responsible in all matters relating to the fifteen Government Departments (see Appendix I-A). The day-to-day management and administration of a Department's functions is entrusted to the Secretary General of the Department who is a permanent civil servant, appointed by the Government.

The civil service is independent in the performance of its duties and has no involvement in party politics. In fact, party political activity is strictly forbidden for all middle and high-ranking civil servants. Recruitment to the civil service is by open public competition administered by the independent Civil Service Commission. Staff are recruited at a number of different grades up to middle management level. The grading is illustrated in Figure I-2 below. In general, the grade categories represent different functions. These functions cover, broadly, four categories of duties: the administrative grades have responsibility for policy formulation; the professional grades provide specialist knowledge and skills within the civil service; the executive grades are involved in the implementation of policy decisions and the clerical grades are responsible for general duties.

Many Departments also have responsibility for state-sponsored companies entrusted with the implementation of policy. There are also a number of other organisations

within the civil service, including the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Office of Public Works, the Government Supplies Agency, the Central Statistics Office, the Valuation and Ordnance Survey Office, the State Laboratory, the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, the Office of the Attorney General and the Government Information Services.

FIGURE I-2: Irish Civil Service Staff Grades
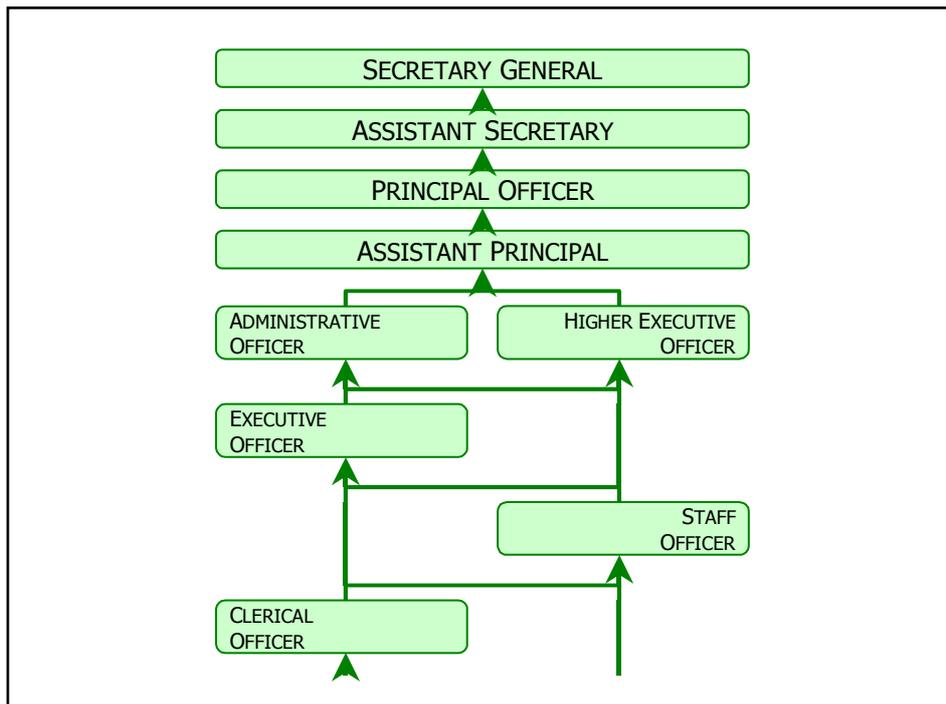
At June 2005 the numbers employed in the public service stood at 350,100 (Central Statistics Office, 2006); of these by sector they were 38,700 employed in the civil service, 254,100 in public service and 57,300 in state-sponsored organisations. The total workforce of the state was 1,857,400 that year, thus the public sector represents approximately 20% of the total workforce.

Local Government Authorities in Ireland

The Irish Constitution recognises the role of local government in providing democratic representation of local communities. Local government not only represents the people in the local communities, but also perform a number of important functions, including providing services such as water and waste collection

to their areas. Local government has therefore both a representational and an operational role, with responsibility for a range of services.

There are 29 County Councils in Ireland with a total of 753 members. The number of Councillors that can be elected to each County Council depends on the size of the county's population. Larger counties have more than one Council for each county. Within the County Council administrative area there may be a City, Borough or Town Council area. Currently, there are five City Councils, five Borough Councils and 75 Town Councils (see Appendix I-B).

Irish Semi-State Commercial Organisations

A state-sponsored body, or a semi-state organisation is a commercial company which is beneficially owned, either completely or majority, by the Irish Government. Each state-sponsored body has a sponsor Minister who acts as shareholder, either independently, or in conjunction with the Irish Minister for Finance, who may also be a shareholder.

State-sponsored bodies may be organised as statutory corporations, meaning that they are officially non-profit and do not formally have shareholders, but are a board appointed by the sponsor Minister. Others may be organised as public limited companies or private limited companies. These are incorporated with the Companies Registration Office (Ireland) as companies, but their sole (or sometimes majority) shareholder is their sponsor minister. Some of these are exempt from the requirement to carry 'limited', 'teoranta', 'plc' or 'cpt' as part of their company name. There are also companies which are subsidiaries of state-sponsored bodies, but which enjoy a separate identity and legal existence (see Appendix I-C).

3   Preliminary Literature Review

The scope of the core literature relating to this research spans two main disciplines. They are leadership studies, in particular leadership in the public sector, and the studies of moral behaviour and ethical values.

Public Leadership.

The act of public leadership had been in existence since the dawn of history. Certainly, the acts were in existence long before the study of public leadership became an academic discipline of interests. Even before the formal records of history, heroes and heroines of legends from across the globe were largely people with great feats of public leaderships.

In the Far East, there was the semi-historical legend of Yu the Great (大禹), who led and organised the early Chinese to prevent catastrophic floods and taught the people flood control techniques to tame China's rivers and lakes. Yu was immortalised by the renowned Chinese historiographer of the 2nd century BC, Sima Qian (司馬遷) in his magnum opus, the *Records of the Grand Historian* (史記) (Watson 1961). Written between 109 BC and 91 BC, the *Records of the Grand Historian* recounted Chinese history from the time of the first of the semi-mythical sage-kings (the Yellow Emperor (黃帝), commonly accepted as the ancestor of all the Chinese people) until Sima Qian's own time. As the first systematic Chinese historical text, it was widely accepted by Chinese historians as the earliest comprehensive history of China. Yu was the first ruler and founder of the Xia Dynasty (夏朝) ca. 2205 BC – 1766 BC, which was the first dynasty to be described in the *Records of the Grand Historian*. It was also recorded in the *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* (山海經), ca. 100 BC (Birrells 2000) and in the earlier *Classic of History* (書經), ca. 700 BC (Muller 1893), that in order to regulate the floods, Yu began dredging new river channels as outlets, spending a back-breaking thirteen years and some 20,000 workers in the task. As a result, Yu the Great is revered by Chinese scholars as the perfect civil servant, remembered as an example of perseverance and determination, and was even

considered to be a model ruler and moral exemplar by Confucians in later Chinese history (Legges 1893).

At about the same historical timeframe but in the other prevailing known civilisation in the Middle East, there were comparable semi-historical legends of great feats of public leadership. The Biblical records, transcribed at the same time period onto scrolls found by archaeologists in caves near Qumran by the Dead Sea (Abegg et al 1999; Wise et al 1996), recorded acts of Joseph at the courts of the Egyptian Pharaoh ca. 1800 BC, who for seven years organised and managed a nationwide food management programme that fed the nation in the ensuing seven years of famine (Alter 2004). Likewise, the later exploits of Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt ca. 1400 BC and organised them into a system of theocratic government were probably one of the earliest example of a formal system of jurisprudence.

While these global acts of public leadership took place many centuries BC, it was not until Plato (427 BC – 347 BC) was there a serious attempt to construct a systematic theory of politics and leadership (Grint 1997). Plato was considered as one of the most important Greek philosophers. He founded the Academy in Athens, an institution devoted to research and instruction in philosophy and the sciences. Plato wrote *The Republic* ca. 360 BC (English translation, Grube 1992). The Republic was written in a conversation style reminisce of the teacher-student dialogues commonly used by Plato's own teacher, Socrates (470 BC – 399 BC). It started with discussions concerning the nature of justice, with an attempt to show that justice is better than injustice. It also includes extensive discussions of the virtues, of justice, of wisdom and of courage, as they appear both in individual human beings and in society as a whole. Having reviewed various forms of government, Plato concluded in *The Republic* with an explicit description of the ideal state in which only philosophers are fit to rule.

Since then, many had written about public leadership, a great many of them biographical in nature, case-studying individual famous and infamous public leaders ranging from Alexander the Great to William the Conqueror, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, George Washington, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler and more recently Nelson Mandela and Saddam Hussein. Most were on specific leadership feats

showcased by the specific leaders in specific situations such as wars or economic reform. This is hardly surprising as most public and political processes, whether military conquests or peace processes, are essentially driven by a relatively small number of people who took responsibility for making the final decision and implementing the policies (Darby and MacGinty 2000).

In line with the development of society from military rules to citizen democracies, modern public management and leadership are concerned more with economic and social development, rather than military conquests. For example, in the current era of globalisation, decentralisation, and knowledge-based economies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recognised that the governments of many of their member countries are having to develop new public sector leadership models to reshape their own public sector leadership to cope with new challenges. These new environments require new roles for public sector leaders including change agents, promoters of enhanced performance, co-ordinators of government policies, and keepers of public service values (OECD 2001). As a result the OECD commissioned and published a report in 2001 (OECD 2001), examining key leadership issues across OECD Member countries, including examining the strategies and practices governments are adopting, and the lessons from country experiences so far. In the United Kingdom, the British Government reported on *Strengthening Leadership in the Public Sector* (PIU 2001) and in the Republic of Ireland, as part of the Programme for Better Government, the Irish Government published the *General Public Customer Survey Report 2006* and the *Business Customer Survey Report 2006* (Ipsos-MORI Ireland 2006).

In academia, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2003) developed their *Transformational Leadership Questionnaire* to assess leadership in local government, and Jean Hartley and Anna Morgan-Thomas (2003) developed a *Political Leadership Questionnaire* to assess the development needs of elected councillors.

Attempting to Define Leadership

But what is leadership? It has been suggested that leadership means many different things to different people. There have been over forty published theories of leadership

(Edwards 2000), and over 1,500 different definitions (Bass 1990), yet there is still very little consensus on what counts as leadership (Collinson and Grint 2005). Indeed, almost thirty years ago, it has already been claimed that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns 1978:2). And there would have been an even greater deluge of additional research and publication in the interim three decades since.

The act of leadership may have been in existence since time immemorial, but it was suggested that the concept of leadership was first elevated to a philosophical status by Socrates, the ancient Grecian philosopher (Adair 1989). Early leadership theories tended to describe leadership as more autocratic in nature, and classical leadership discussions tended to be on military leadership. The concept of leadership and the concept of strategy were firmly in the domains of military science long before spreading to the domains of business and organisational management studies. Indeed one of the earliest leadership writers was Sun Tze (ca. 544 – 496 BC), whose classical *Art of War* (English translation, Griffith 1971) is still to this day prescribed reading in leading military academies such as America's West Point Military Academy or the U.K.'s Sandhurst Royal Military Academy. More recently, leadership has been described as both a science and an art (Gill 2006; Grint 2001).

Traditional and conventional leadership literature identified three basic theories explaining the process of leadership:

- Traits theories that identify and emphasise personality traits that make an effective leader.
- Situational theories that prescribes different leadership styles and different leadership behaviours to different leadership situations.
- Contingency theories that look for a match between the leadership situation and the specific person.

However, these categories had been almost as helpful to bring about a better understanding of the process of leadership as they are in raising new questions. For example, with the Traits theories came the debate on whether personality traits were genetically inherited or foster through life experiences. The debate was therefore on

whether leaders were born or bred, inherited or made. Likewise, Situational theories and Contingency theories raised the debate on whether people could change, and to what extend individual personalities could be adjusted at will.

More recently, newer leadership concepts were added to the classical categories. The concept of transactional versus transforming leadership were introduced in the 1970's (Burns 1978; Bass 1985), alongside the concepts of Servant leadership (Greenleaf 1977), Inspirational or Charismatic leadership (House 1977), and much more recently, Distributive leadership (Elmore 2000; Gronn 2002)), Constitutive leadership (Grint 2001), Primal or Emotional leadership (Goleman 2004), to name but a few.

The debate concerning the role of the leader illustrates the difficulties in defining what leadership is. While there is no doubt that leaders are 'in front of' the followers, the debate is whether the followers made the leader, or whether the leader draws the followers. Tolstoy introduced the metaphor of a ship's bow-wave (Tolstoy 1991). His argument was that while, regardless of the ship's direction, while the bow-waves were always in front of the ship as a matter of fact, it does not imply that the wave has any role in either the steering or the propelling of the movement of the ship.

While the process of leadership is difficult to grasp, the evidence of leadership is often much more obvious. Human beings are endowed with intelligent judgement and a freedom to make choices. Where there is a conscious decision to follow, even if doing so reluctantly, that in itself is an evident of leadership influence. Indeed, leadership has been recognised as a social influence process (e.g. Bass 1998; Parry 1998; Yukl 2006)

Although the definition of leadership is ambiguous, the need for effective leadership is not. The importance of leadership in determining and accomplishing what we desire to achieve has long been recognised. Krause (1997) suggested that the main goal of leadership is to accomplish useful and desirable things that benefit the people being led. That would be a suggestion that few would debate against.

And in the public sector context, it is recognised that the primary role of politician is to create strategic vision, and the primary role of the civil service is to creatively lead

the implementation of the policies and the fostering of the values established by the vision (Joyce 2003)

Ethical and Moral Leadership

But is 'effective' leadership the same as 'good' leadership? How is 'good' leadership defined? This is particularly of interest in public service leadership, when the objective of leadership is to bring about the 'good' of society.

Ciulla (1999) pointed out that 'good' is more than just being effective – that 'good' can have a sense of morality. But Kellerman (2004) observed that leadership is not a moral concept and that somehow morality detracts or limits the scope for becoming more effective at leadership. The implication seemed to be that the assessment of effective leadership should be amorally based. On the other hand, Ulrich (2000) suggested that leaders who achieve short-term results but lack integrity, character and value face a significant challenge in winning the support necessary for long term performance.

To define leadership as 'effective' without the reference to ethical values seems unsatisfactory. Otherwise, we should be championing the leadership of Adolf Hitler for he led Germany from depression to prosperity, and from being a crippled military power to being one of the most powerful and efficient military machine in the world – all in a few short years (Drouillard and Kleiner 1996). Drouillard and Kleiner (1996) proposed that a more appropriate definition of 'effective' leadership should include an ethical and moral dimension and to include the desire to see others besides oneself benefit in the process.

Determining Ethics and Morality

Ethics concerns what is 'right' and 'acceptable'. The basis of ethical judgement is morality – practices and activities that are considered to be importantly right and wrong, together with the rules that govern those activities and the values to which those activities relate (De George 1999). Morality and ethics are not modern concepts.

As early as the fourth century BC, the Greek philosopher Socrates was already exploring the essence of virtue and morality (Helm 1999).

Modern day morality and ethics philosophers tend to argue that there is no one single universal basis for determining what is 'right' and 'acceptable' (Hinman 1997). Together with the sociologists and the anthropologists, they would argue that values and behaviours are learned through our lives' experiences, which include our family and societal influences and the education systems, if such a system exists, which we are subjected to from young (McNaughton 1988). The traditional religious philosophers would argue differently. They would argue that there is an absolute divine 'righteousness', as given and dictated by a supreme Deity (Helm 1981). But even amongst traditional religious philosophers we see a diversity of 'absolutism', depending on who their god is. Thus certain groups within the Islam religion would see it as 'right' to revenge a wrong, as absolutely commanded by their god to do so. In contrast, the majority of the Christian religion would see it as 'right' to forgive a wrong, as absolutely commanded by their god to do so.

However, even traditional religious philosophers would agree that absolute divine 'righteousness', whatever that may represent, is not instilled into the individuals by birth – it still had to be taught and learned. Thus, regardless of the preference for Relativism (Benedict 1934) over Absolutism (Adams 1979) or for Utilitarianism (Mill and Sher 2002) over Deontology (Kant and Paton 1948), one understanding is common, values and ethics are taught. Thus, those who control and influence the education of the various sub-groups within a society control and influence the basis of what is considered 'right' and 'acceptable' in that sub-group.

Conflicts in ethics emerge when two parties or sub-groups differ in their ethical principles, or their reasoning processes or their behaviours (Buller and Kohols 1997). Ethical conflicts are always rooted in opposing perspectives of what is considered ethically 'right' and 'acceptable' (Pojman 1994). Where behaviours are guided by mutually agreed and accepted boundaries, behaviours outside of those set boundaries will be deemed as 'unacceptable' or 'unethical'. Whether behaviours are considered 'unacceptable' or 'unethical', they are determined by the interpretation of the set boundary guidelines. However, while some behaviour are clear-cut in nature and are

therefore easily identified if the set boundary guidelines are breached, there are also behaviours that are more interpretative in nature, and cannot be clearly placed with respect to the boundary guidelines.

If national leadership ethics are to be compared, we can see the clear contrast in the perspectives and interpretation of ethics when considering, say, the sensitive topic of human rights in the People's Republic of China.

In this context, it is not difficult to see the roots of divergence between Chinese and Western values and ethics. The values and ethics influences on Western history and public governance over the last 2,000 years or so were heavily drawn from monotheist Judaism and Christianity, with their teachings of absolute righteousness. Chinese history had 6,000 years of influence from a combination of the Buddhism religion, the Taoism religion and Confucius philosophy (Cua 1999). Juggling the diversity of influence thus infused a concept of relative rights and wrongs into the Chinese interpretation of public values and ethics. It is evident that both sets of society have developed independent of each other.

It is not that China and the West have different public governance goals and objectives. But their approach to achieve these goals and objectives is significantly different. In the arena of human rights, the fundamental approach in the West is based on the notion that the security of individual freedom within the rule of law is the best way to foster order and peace from chaos and oppression (Locke 1965). This Western approach therefore champions the protection of individual rights and the rule of law. Western values and ethics are thus based largely on concepts such as liberty, justice, equity, fairness, or social contract between people and their government. In contrast, the Chinese value system, rooted in the teachings and philosophy of Confucius, did not think that social harmony would be fostered by a system of citizens' rights protected by law (Koehn 1999). Instead, the Confucius roots of Chinese society emphasise hierarchy and the need to maintain harmony at the expense of individual rights (Cragg 1995; Jacobs et al. 1995). Thus Chinese social behaviour emphasis obligations, reciprocity and the granting of favours (Buttery and Wong, 1999), which Western ethics would view as corruption behaviour.

Likewise, the Chinese Confucius social ethos are more concerned with prestige, honour, and filial piety – making relationship obligations more important and nepotism almost acceptable (Lee 1996). From a Chinese ethical perspective, fairness is whatever works for that particular situation. Whatever action or manner of speech necessary to facilitate a mutually satisfactory transaction may be considered fair. To the Chinese, the end result justifies whatever means it may take. Fairness is therefore not measured universally, but is specific to individual transactions. The concept is often alien to most Westerners who see the principle of fairness as universal.

Thus contrasting perspectives placed Chinese and Western interpretations of what is 'right' and 'acceptable' on the two opposing ends. Universal fairness is contrasted against particular fairness on a case-by-case analysis. Quality of honesty is pitched against the nicety of harmony as of supreme importance.

The contrast of the two national cultures above brings out the illustration of the difficulties in determining common perspectives of ethics and morality. In the context of the Republic of Ireland, it is accepted that there is not such a diverse culture internally. Yet the principal of ethical interpretation based on perspectives is still a very valid notion, in particular in a society where values and cultural mixes are in a state of rapid change.

4   Research Methodology

It is necessary for any researcher to have familiarity with some of the philosophical issues and arguments about the process of research, so that he/she will not fall into the errors of employing inappropriate research methods that are incapable of adequately addressing the research question (Fisher 2004).

Bryman and Bell (2003) suggested that research methods are not neutral tools, but are closely linked to the ways in which the researcher envision the connection between the various perspectives of the nature of social reality and how they can be examined. The notion of having a 'perspective' implies that an abstraction of the perceived reality exists – the construction of a theory or of an explanation based on some observed phenomenon.

However, for such constructs of theories to be deemed sound, it is often necessary to anchor the interpretation of observed reality through empiricism – the approach to the study of reality based on the notion that only knowledge gained through experiences and the senses is acceptable, and that constructs must be tested with rigour before they can be deemed as knowledge.

The empirical approach starts with the process of deduction, taking what is already known and accepted as theories to deduce a hypothesis, which must then be subjected to rigorous empirical testing and scrutiny. It should be noted however, that the findings may not always support the hypothesis, or the findings may even become the basis of either a revision of the existing theory or the development of new theories. This in essence is the transition from the process of deduction to that of induction.

While some researchers prefer to adopt their research approach emphasising either a deductive strategy or an inductive strategy to the exclusion of the other, the proposal for this research is to employ both strategies. The intention is that certain already established theories should be re-examined and re-evaluated through the research. It is also expected that new theories and concepts may be generated as a result of the research.

At a deeper level of methodological consideration, the epistemological and the ontological positioning of this research needs to be thought through.

The study of leadership is the study of behaviour. The fundamental issue is whether human behaviour comes under the category of natural science. The classical trait theories argued that leadership traits are ingrained into the individuals' genetics, and that human behaviour takes the cues from the genetic codes and their biological and chemical reactions. Taken to the extreme, this almost scientific view of human nature categorises human beings as no more than just bio-chemical 'machines'. This view would lend itself to the objectivism ontological position.

However, the general observation is that human behaviour is far from machine-like. Regardless of the extent to which human behaviours are being objectively conditioned or influenced by the external events and environment, the process of self-determination in the unique individual person plays a significant role. The general observation is that often these individual behaviours do not conform to common rationality and cannot be explained by any common 'laws'. It may well be that the alternative ontological position – that of constructionism, might be more applicable in the research into human leadership, behaviour and ethical value.

This has an implication on the epistemological positioning. If human behaviour does not fit neatly into the discipline of natural science, then it may be doubtful that the study of human behaviour can and should follow the same principles, procedures and ethos as in the study of the natural sciences. At the least, even critical realism would be considered more appropriate that the straightforward positivism. Indeed, Grint (2001) concurs that he also challenged much of the positivist thinking behind a lot of the prior leadership research, arguing that effective leadership relies on the management of subjective interpretations and to shape the thinking of others rather than being defined by them. The preferred epistemological positioning is therefore that of interpretivism, which suggests that there is a difference between human behaviour and the objects of the natural science, and thus requires the researcher to research into the subjective interpretation of social actions.

The above analysis seems to suggest that therefore for this research, a qualitative approach is preferable to a quantitative approach, as qualitative research predominantly emphasis an inductive approach and facilitate the view that social reality is an emerging and constantly changing construct (Bryman and Bell 2003).

Quantitative research versus qualitative research is a classical distinction of research strategy. However, it is not necessarily a simple mere dichotomy. It is not always that we have to pitch the two approaches from two bipolar opposites against each other (Layder, 1993). In order to foster a rounded understanding of the issues and the subject matters in this research, it is proposed that both the quantitative and the qualitative approach would be adopted in tandem.

5   Outline for Document 2, 3, 4 and 5

Overall Strategy

Fisher (2004) introduced the metaphors of the explorers and the surveyors in describing the contrasting mode of collecting and analysing research materials. This presentation of the contrast parallels the comparison between inductive and deductive research. It is proposed that both sets of approaches would be employed in this research.

The flow of the development of this research from Document 1 to Document 6 may reflect the different research emphasis, but would follows the classical research process of topic selection, review of literature, concept and theory formulation, conducting the study, completing the analysis, writing up the findings and drawing conclusions.

However, academic and business research is very rarely a totally linear process (Remenyi et al 1998). More often, it is a dynamic mix of conceptual and empirical observation and analysis, balancing the tension of deductive and inductive reasoning. Nevertheless, the overall strategy is still to collate the chaos and try to ultimately lead towards an integrated observation and conclusion at the end of the process.

The research plan proposes to explore public leadership from both the perspective of the public leaders and the perspective of the general public whom the public leaders seek to represent and to serve. The objective of the research is to explore the various perspectives of what constitute ethical values in effective public leadership.

As such, it is therefore necessary to explore perceptions and value systems in an inductive manner on the one hand (Document 3), and to survey perceived acceptance and compliance to the various value and ethical concepts in a deductive manner on the other hand (Document 4). It is also proposed that a sector analysis should be carried out through case studies, examining the attempts to balance the contrasting values (Document 5).

Document 2

An extensive literature review is one of the first and the most foundational step within the research process (Hart 1998). The scope of the core literature relating to this research spans two main disciplines. They are leadership studies, in particular leadership in the public sector, and the studies of moral behaviour and ethical values.

Specific areas of review will seek to inform the researcher of the following topical areas:

- Attempts to define the concept of leadership.
- Historical and evolving views of the leadership function.
- Roles and objectives of public service and public leadership.
- Concept of ethical leadership and ethical public leadership.
- Ethics and morality as public concerns.
- Evolution of national public ethical frameworks and case observations.

The literature review will serve as a reference point for the subsequent research and analysis.

Document 3

Document 3 is intended to explore perceptions and value systems in an inductive manner. It is intended to conduct a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews for this document. The main aim of the focus groups and in-depth interviews is to explore the concept of public service ethics and values in the context of the Irish public service.

Focus groups and in-depth interviews will be conducted with members of the civil service within all fifteen Government Departments. It is likely that focus groups will be drawn from the operational ranks and in-depth interviews from the higher policy administration ranks.

Ultimately, the objective of this document will include the identification of specific public service values and ethical issues that could be included in the subsequent more quantitative questionnaire and surveys.

Document 4

This document will be deductive in nature. The aim is to survey sections of the Irish general public to examine their perception and to assess the level of acceptance and of compliance by the public leaders to the various value and ethical concepts. A questionnaire will be designed and administered to a stratified sample of the targeted section of the general public. The advantage of stratified random sampling is that it produces samples that yield unbiased estimators of population parameters whilst ensuring that the different sectors of the population are represented (Buglear 2005).

The challenge in the context of this exercise is the size of the population. The risk is that ineffective or insufficient sample may not provide an analysis that would be a representative of the whole. The strata that are suggested for this study could include social strata, geographical strata or specific strata of those who had recent direct interaction with the public service.

The focus in the analysis will be on assessing the match between what the public leaders perceived as ethical public leadership values (as derived from Document 3), and how the general public, whom the public leaders seek to represent and serve, interpret those same values. An assessment could also be made to assess the perception of the general public as to whether those values has been adhered to or, if not, whether there were attempts to adhere to those values by the public leaders.

Document 5

To bring to bear the findings of both Document 3 and Document 4, it is necessary to confirm with a more in-depth analysis in a more focused sector.

The Irish state-sponsored or semi-state commercial sector has been proposed as a particular public sector of interest in the context of this research. This sector in

particular faces the tension of balancing the conflicting values of fulfilling social responsibilities on the one hand, which often generate very high costs and very low financial yields, and meeting commercial profit and competitive goals on the other hand, which often demand significant efficiencies. This would be the one sector where the reconciliation of perceived leadership ethical behaviour and public values perception would present the most challenges. It is proposed that this would be the sector from which cases studies can be drawn from for the purpose of providing a more in-depth analysis.

It is proposed that a small number of in-depth interviews and a small number of focus groups will be conducted specifically within this sector to refine the qualitative data initiated in Document 3 and to bring out specific issues relating to the ethical value perspectives within this sector.

It is further proposed that a more refined quantitative survey will also be carried out, building on the findings of Document 4, and administered to a selected sample of the general public served by the semi-state sector.

The potential is therefore that a more substantial finding concerning public service values and public service ethics in the Irish semi-state sector could be developed as an outcome of this document.

6   Issues Arising

With research in the realm of the natural science or research employing the natural science methodologies, there is always an integrity risk with regards to the data collected. There are always the risks that the data collected could either be incomplete and thus unable to present a complete picture representing the whole, or tainted by subjectivities and thus present a biased view. In a worst-case scenario, there is a risk that it could be both.

This research, however, is in the realm of the social sciences, and is based on examining behaviour perspectives. This research proposes to examine the values and ethics of public leadership. It necessitates the solicitation of both the perspectives of the public leaders and the perspectives of the general public whom the public leaders seek to represent and to serve.

There are some inevitable behavioural phenomena when it comes to examining perspectives in connection with public services. The nature and the contents of the information gathered will be influenced on the one hand by political gamesmanship of the public leaders; and on the other hand by the inevitable subjective-ness of the views of the general public. The implication is that extra attention is need in both the design of the research and in the process of the research implementation, so that these influences can be taken on board as part of the analysis.

Firstly, from the perspective of the public leaders, the proposed research requires open and frank analysis of the behaviour of public leaders, which may involve a degree of self-critical evaluation from those public leaders themselves. Politics and human nature dictates that individuals are less likely to be forthcoming in their participation if there is a perception that the outcome of the exercise is likely to question the effectiveness of their leadership behaviour. Even in the context of the Irish public sector, where there is a clear differentiation between the political elements of the government and the professional civil service, the latter in principal barred from active politicking, it would be naïve to assume that even the most senior of civil servants can be always trusted to be completely apolitical and impartial.

Secondly, from the perspective of the general public, the expectation is that public opinions are rarely objectively based. There is an inevitability of biased opinions when it comes to assessing the public's view on the behaviour of their public leaders, depending on the personal experiences of the individuals being questioned.

The conclusion may well be that, once more, we have to return to balancing the tension between the open inductive approach of the explorer-researcher, where the biased perspectives and the political information become part of the make up of what would eventually lead to the final findings, and the deductive approach of the surveyor-researcher, where the objective of the research is to try to pin down the knowledge in a precise, objective and reproducible form (Fisher 2004). The sense at this point is that the appropriate balance for this particular research may well favour a great deal more of the former approach than the latter.

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8 Appendices

Appendix I-A: Republic of Ireland Central Government Departments of State

The Department of Agriculture and Food
The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism
The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources
The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
The Department of Defence
The Department of Education and Science
The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
The Department of Finance
The Department of Foreign Affairs
The Department of Health and Children
The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
The Department of Social and Family Affairs
The Department of the Taoiseach
The Department of Transport

Appendix I-B: Republic of Ireland Local Government Authorities

Local Authorities in Ireland – County Councils:

Carlow County Council	Longford County Council
Cavan County Council	Louth County Council
Clare County Council	Mayo County Council
Cork County Council	Meath County Council
Donegal County Council	Monaghan County Council
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown County Council	North Tipperary County Council
	Offaly County Council
Fingal County Council	Roscommon County Council
Galway County Council	Sligo County Council
Kerry County Council	South Dublin County Council
Kildare County Council	South Tipperary County Council
Kilkenny County Council	Waterford County Council,
Laois County Council	Westmeath County Council
Leitrim County Council	Wexford County Council
Limerick County Council	Wicklow County Council

Local Authorities in Ireland – City Councils:

Cork City Council
Dublin City Council
Galway City Council
Limerick City Council
Waterford City Council

Local Authorities in Ireland – Borough Councils:

Clonmel Borough Council
Drogheda Borough Council
Kilkenny Borough Council
Sligo Borough Council
Wexford Borough Council

Local Authorities in Ireland – Town Councils:

Arklow Town Council
Ardee Town Council
Athlone Town Council
Athy Town Council
Balbriggan Town Council
Ballina Town Council
Ballinasloe Town Council
Ballybay Town Council
Ballyshannon Town Council
Bandon Town Council
Bantry Town Council
Belturbet Town Council
Birr Town Council
Boyle Town Council
Bray Town Council
Buncrana Town Council
Bundoran Town Council
Carlow Town Council
Carrickmacross Town Council
Carrick-On-Suir Town Council
Cavan Town Council
Cashel Town Council
Castlebar Town Council
Castleblayney Town Council
Clonakilty Town Council
Clones Town Council
Cobh Town Council
Cootehill Town Council
Dundalk Town Council
Dungarvan Town Council
Edenderry Town Council
Ennis Town Council
Enniscorthy Town Council
Fermoy Town Council
Gorey Town Council
Granard Town Council
Greystones Town Council
Kells Town Council

Kilrush Town Council
Kilkee Town Council
Killarney Town Council
Kinsale Town Council
Leixlip Town Council
Letterkenny Town Council
Lismore Town Council
Listowel Town Council
Longford Town Council
Loughrea Town Council
Macroom Town Council
Mallow Town Council
Mhuinebeag Town Council
Midleton Town Council
Monaghan Town Council
Mountmellick Town Council
Mullingar Town Council
Naas Town Council
Navan Town Council
Nenagh Town Council
New Ross Town Council
Newbridge Town Council
Passage West Town Council
Portlaoise Town Council
Shannon Town Council
Skibbereen Town Council
Templemore Town Council
Thurles Town Council
Tipperary Town Council
Tralee Town Council
Tramore Town Council
Trim Town Council
Tuam Town Council
Tullamore Town Council
Westport Town Council
Wicklow Town Council
Youghal Town Council

Appendix I-C: Examples of Republic of Ireland Semi-State Organisations

Irish Semi-State Statutory Corporations:

Córas Iompair Éireann (Irish Transport Company)
Electricity Supply Board
Radio Telefís Éireann (Radio and Television of Ireland)
Voluntary Health Insurance Board (VHI Healthcare)
Bord Gáis Éireann (Irish Gas Board)
Horse Racing Ireland

Irish Semi-State Limited Companies:

An Post (The Post Office).
Bord na Mona plc (The Peat Board)
Dublin Airport Authority plc
Coillte Teoranta (The Irish Forestry Board Limited)
Dublin Port Company
EirGrid plc

Prominent subsidiaries of Irish State-Sponsored Bodies:

Subsidiaries of Córas Iompair Éireann:
Iarnród Éireann - Irish Rail
Bus Éireann - Irish Bus
Dublin Bus - Bus Átha Cliath
Network Catering
Subsidiaries of Dublin Airport Authority:
Great Southern Hotels
Aer Rianta International cpt
Subsidiaries of An Post
An Post National Lottery Company
Prize Bond Company
Subsidiary of Radio Telefís Éireann:
TG4 (Serbhisi Telefis na Gaeilge Teoranta)
Subsidiary of Horse Racing Ireland:
Tote Ireland Limited

Recently Privatised Semi-State Organisation:

Aer Lingus Group plc. (Irish International Airlines) - listed October 2006 with
a minority Government holding.
Dairy Disposal Company - Dairies returned to private ownership
Irish Sugar plc - listed on the Irish Stock Exchange as Greencore Group plc.
Irish Life Assurance plc - listed on the ISE, later merged with Irish Permanent
to form Irish Life and Permanent plc.
Irish Steel - sold via trade sale to Irish Ispat.
British and Irish Steampacket Company Limited - sold via trade sale to Irish
Continental Group plc.

Nitrigin Éireann - merged with Irish part of Imperial Chemical Industries to become Irish Fertiliser Industries Limited (closed in 2002).

Bord Telecom Éireann plc - listed on the ISE as Eircom plc (now Eircom Group plc).

ACCBank plc - sold via trade sale to Rabobank Ireland.

ICC Bank plc - sold via trade sale to Bank of Scotland (Ireland)

Cablelink - owned by Eircom and RTE, sold via trade sale to NTL (and later sold on to Liberty Global Europe).

Document Two

Towards a Conceptual Framework – A Study of Leadership, Morality, Ethics and Values

September 2007

Contents

List of Figures

1   Overview

Overview of Concepts

Leadership is about influence. Leadership is purposeful in that at the core of leadership is a desire to progress from the present state of affairs to some future state of affairs. Whether the leadership style is autocratic and directive or whether the style emphasise servant-hood and participation, to lead is to imply that the leaders have either a vision of some preferred future state of affairs, which they would like to see their followers attain; or they would have a view that the current state of affairs is not desirable, and that some process of progressing away from the current state of affairs is necessary, albeit that they do not have, or do not see a need to unilaterally foster views of any definite future state of affairs.

The searching question is whether the determination of 'good' leadership can be separated from an assessment of the state of affairs that the followers were influenced to seek to attain. To totally divorce the two would be to define 'good' leadership as having willing and committed followers regardless and without any value judgement of where they are being led. Such a definition would establish religious cult leaders such as James Warren "Jim" Jones (1931–1978) of the American Peoples Temple group in Guyana as a 'good leader'. Jones influenced his followers to kill visiting U.S. Congressman Leo Ryan and a number his entourage in November 1978, and then led over 900 of his members (including some 270 children) to commit suicide by drinking cyanide (Levi 1981). Similarly but in a much grander scale, Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) successfully influenced the following of an entire nation in the 1930s, but resulted in the utter destruction of the country of Germany and much of the rest of Western Europe. It would seem most unsatisfactory to define either of these as 'good' leadership.

The proposition is that it is not satisfactory to simply define good leadership as merely being effective in having influenced followers to arrive at that final state of affairs initially encapsulated in the leader's own vision, or to have effectively influenced a

large number of followers to be committed to the leader's preferred way of progressing forward.

In particular in the field of public leadership, there have been ample case examples where leadership has been technically effective, but the final state of affairs arrived at, or the direction with which those whom are being led have followed, had ultimately been proved disastrous for the followers.

The proposition is that the differentiation between good leadership and merely effective leadership is separated by the notion of ethics and morality. The proposition is therefore that good leadership is only when effective leadership is exercised within an appropriately referenced ethical and moral framework. A further proposition is that good leadership is only possible when a framework of ethical and moral values intrinsic to the leaders guides the leaders themselves in their acts of leadership. In other words, this further proposition is that ethical and moral leaderships can only happen when the leaders themselves are ethical and moral.

The difficulty with these propositions, however, is in determining the definition of what constitute ethics and morality. The difficulty in determining a universally acceptable definition of ethics and morality means that in turn it is difficult to define what constitute good leadership in the ethical and moral sense.

In the context of public leadership, the complexity is due to the suggestion that the public are often more interested in the actual positive end state than the means of arriving at that end state. Where there were massive sufferings created by their leaders, the leaders were consigned to being condemned to the extent that it would be considered politically very incorrect to even praise aspects of their personal behaviour aside from their public leadership acts. Such were the cases of tyrannical public leaders such as Adolf Hitler in Germany, Josef Stalin in Russia and Mao Zedong in China. In contrast, where the end state of their leadership were booming economies that delivered substantial wealth and well-being to the people they led, the public tend to respond with substantial sympathy to the ethical and moral indiscretions of these public leaders. Such were the cases of charismatic public leaders such as the Irish Taoiseach Charles Haughey, whose alleged corruption almost led to his criminal

prosecution had it not been for a lack of public interests as well as his untimely demise; and the American President Bill Clinton, whose indiscretion led to his actual impeachment, but bounced back with increased popularity. If the means need to be justified by the ends, will the end always justify the means?

The proposition is that for leadership to be considered 'good', the leaders not only need to be effective in the actual influence of follower behaviours, but that their followers also need to have the perception that the leaders are conforming to some appropriately referenced ethical or moral guidelines. Thus, the proposition is that outstanding leaders need to be both technically effective as well as ethically moral before followers and observers alike would consider them as 'good leaders'.

A conceptual framework can be constructed based on the discussions hitherto presented. Figure II-1.1 below graphically illustrates the framework.

Figure II-1.1 A Conceptual Framework
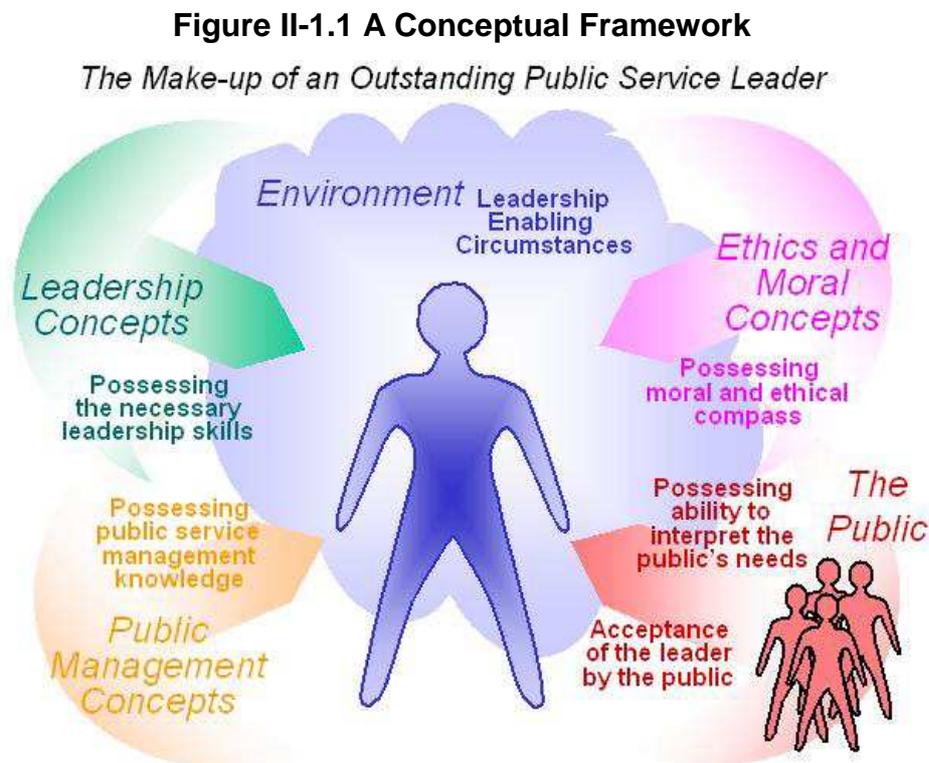
The proposed conceptual framework suggests the necessary constituents that make up the outstanding public service leader. Starting with having the enabling circumstances,

the proposition is that an individual will need to be a moral leader as well as being an effective leader with specific knowledge and skills in public service leadership. Moreover, as leaders require followers, leaders in the public services need also to be accepted by the public. The proposed conceptual framework draws from three distinct management disciplines, namely the study of leadership, the study of ethics and morality, and the study of public service management. It is suggested that each of these disciplines has significant contributions to the development of outstanding public service leaders.

Document Outline

This document commences with a brief review of the various perspectives of leadership, with an emphasis on public service leadership. It then proposes that ethics and moral values have a significant role in the make up of an outstanding public leader. Because of the difficulties in determining what constitute ethics and moral values, the notion and the constructs of ethical and moral values need to be explored before any attempt can be made to develop any conceptual framework. A conceptual framework is then proposed, attempting to identify the make up of an outstanding public service leader. The document then concludes with a proposal for further research and a discussion on the probable research approach.

2   Leadership Perspectives

Introduction

The popular and often used quotation "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step", ascribed to the sixth century B.C. Chinese religious philosopher, Lao-Tzu (老子, 604 BC - 531 BC), is in fact a slight misquote, with the original meaning slightly lost in translation. The original text came from Lao-Tzu's most significant writing, *Tao Te Ching – The Way* (道德經) (Lao-Tzu, circa.600 B.C., Chapter 64, translated by Lau 1963), and a more accurate translation from the original Chinese ("千里之行，始于足下") might be "The journey of a thousand miles begins beneath one's feet". The interpretation being that even the longest journey must begin where you stand, regardless of the relative position of where you stand *vis-à-vis* your desired destination.

The research into the topic of leadership is in many ways more challenging than a journey of a thousand miles. Yet, one must also start beneath one's feet. Thus, as a starting point, a somewhat simplistic description of leadership is adopted with the statement that "leadership is about influence".

This starting point is not without foundation. Benis and Nanus (2003) also noted the role of influence in leadership and Lussier and Achua (2004:102) defined influence as "… the process of affecting other's attitudes and behaviour in order to achieve an objective." Human beings are endowed with intelligent judgement and a freedom to make choices. Where there is a conscious decision to choose to follow, even if doing so reluctantly, that in itself is an evident of leadership influence. Indeed, leadership has been recognised as a social influence process (e.g. Bass 1998; Parry 1998; Yukl 2006). Even in early studies of leadership, the notion of influence as a key function of leadership had been very prominent. Tead (1935) described leadership as the activity of influencing people to cooperate towards some goal which they come to find desirable. Stogdill (1950) defined leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts towards goal setting and goal

achievement. Shartle (1951) described the leader as one who exercises more important influence acts than any other member of the group or organisation.

Human Influences

Human beings are social beings. It does not require substantial research to be able to observe and conclude that, in the main, human beings exist not as isolated individuals, but as groups of interacting and interdependent entities. Anthropological studies of early and primitive cultures had revealed evidence that even the earliest ancestors of mankind existed as bands and groups, rather than as a global collection of individuals. (Goldenweiser 1922). Whether this social tendency is in our innate nature coded into our genetics or whether this tendency had been evolved over time as a result of necessity, the observation is that human beings always seek to have their behaviours influenced by others, or seek to behave in such a way as to influence others.

Where there are organised groups, there are influences. And by our starting definition above, there is, by implication, leadership. Thus the act of leadership existed long before leadership became a defined subject of interests in academia. Research into leadership is thus a journey of discovery rather than an act of creation. This is likened to accepting that gravity long existed in nature, long before Sir Isaac Newton 'discovered' the phenomenon and formulated it into a scientific law, and certainly long before this scientific law made its way into the global science curriculum. Newton did not come up with a means of causing apples to fall off trees – he merely observed the ways of nature, and encapsulated the natural phenomenon into a scientific law. The similarity with the study of leadership is therefore that the notion of leadership, like the notion of gravity, is *a priori* in proposition.

Yet despite the similarity, there are also significant differences. Unlike the scientific law of gravity, the leadership phenomenon, as a behavioural phenomenon, is far more complex in its explanation. Scientific laws are absolute in essence. Apples will always fall off trees, regardless of what type of apples, their relative sizes, the type and size of the apple tree or its location anywhere on earth. Behavioural phenomena on the other hand are contingent in essence. Thus while the notion of leadership is *a priori* in proposition, the observable acts of leadership would be *a posteriori* in proposition.

The distinction between the notion of leadership and the acts of leadership has been amply illustrated when one considers the bountiful historical existence of leadership, yet observes the difficulties in defining what leadership is, despite the decades of intense research.

Historical Existence of Leadership

The act of leadership had been in existence since the dawn of history. Even before the formal records of history, heroes and heroines of legends from across the globe were largely people with great feats of leadership.

In the Far East, the semi-historical legend of Yu the Great (大禹), who led and organised the early Chinese to prevent catastrophic floods and taught the people flood control techniques to tame China's rivers and lakes was immortalised by the renowned Chinese historiographer of the 2nd century BC, Sima Qian (司馬遷) in his *magnum opus*, the *Records of the Grand Historian* (史記) (Watson 1961), which was written between 109 BC and 91 BC. It was also recorded in the *Classic of the Mountains and Seas* (山海經), ca. 100 BC (Birrells 2000) and in the earlier *Classic of History* (書經), circa. 700 BC (Muller 1893), that in order to regulate the floods, Yu began dredging new river channels as outlets, spending a back-breaking thirteen years and leading some 20,000 workers in the task. As a result, Yu the Great has been revered by Chinese scholars past and present as the perfect civil servant, remembered as an example of perseverance and determination, and was even considered to be a model ruler and moral exemplar by Confucius (孔夫子) in later Chinese history (Legges 1893).

In the Middle East, the Biblical records, transcribed onto scrolls found by archaeologists in caves near Qumran by the Dead Sea (Abegg et al 1999; Wise et al 1996), recorded acts of Joseph at the courts of the Egyptian Pharaoh circa. 1800 BC, who for seven years organised and managed a nationwide food management programme that fed the nation in the ensuing seven years of famine (Alter 2004).

Smith & Krueger (1933) noted from the various anthropological researches that even in primitive groups around the globe, there were evidence of leadership regardless of culture. Lewis (1974) noted that even when society did not have institutionalised chiefs or rulers, there are always individuals who initiate actions and play central roles in the group's decision making process.

Attempting to Define Leadership

Not only had the act of leadership been in existence for as long as civilisation had been in existence, there has also been a long history of attempts to encapsulate what exactly is the notion of leadership. As far back as 5,000 years ago, Egyptians already had hieroglyphics for leadership (*seshemet*), leader (*seshemu*) and follower (*shemsu*) (Bass 1990)

It has been suggested that leadership means many different things to different people. The word 'leader' first appeared in the English language in the 1300s; it stems from the root *leden* meaning "to travel" or "show the way" (Rost 1991:38). In the modern era, there have been at least forty published theories of leadership (Edwards 2000), and over 1,500 different definitions (Bass 1990), yet there is still very little consensus on what counts as leadership (Collinson and Grint 2005). Indeed, almost thirty years ago, it has already been claimed that "leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns 1978:2). And there would have been an even greater deluge of additional research and publication in the interim three decades since.

It has been suggested that the concept of leadership was first elevated to a philosophical status by Socrates, the ancient Grecian philosopher (Adair 1989). Plutarch, another influential Greek philosopher (circa. 45–125 A.D.) tried to compare 'great men' by pairing and comparing 50 Greek and Roman leaders in his classic *The Parallel Life*. Early leadership theories tended to describe leadership as more autocratic in nature, and classical leadership discussions tended to be on military leadership. The concept of leadership and the concept of strategy were firmly in the domains of military science long before spreading to the domains of business and organisational management studies. Indeed one of the earliest leadership writers was

Sun Tze (circa. 544 – 496 BC), whose classical *Art of War* (English translation, Griffith 1971) is still to this day prescribed reading in leading military academies such as America's West Point Military Academy or the U.K.'s Sandhurst Royal Military Academy. More recently, leadership has been described as both a science and an art (Gill 2006; Grint 2001).

In the modern era, the nineteenth century saw the dominant thinking in the notion of the 'great men' thesis. The theory emerged from the perspective to history associated with the Scottish historian Thomas Carlyle, who declared, "The history of the world is but the biography of great men." (Carlyle 1843:17). Carlyle had argued that heroes shaped and moved history forward through their exceptional leadership characteristics such as the vision of their intellect, the beauty of their art, the prowess of their leadership, and, most important, their divine inspiration. This theory essentially implies that the success of any leader is to be attributed solely to the individual without regard to the situation context (Cowley 1928). The theory was that history is what men made it to be, that great men are the ones that change the shape and direction of history, rather than allowing historical circumstances to dictate their destiny. The problem with the theory that only a few rare individuals with unique characteristics in a particular society at a particular time shaped or expedite history is that the theory is retrospective and irrefutable in nature. While it suffices as a historical description, it is perhaps unsuitable as a social science theory.

The early twentieth century saw the emergence of scientific thinking and scientific methodologies as the main research mode in academia. Thus there was resurgence in the focus on the definition of roles and the assignment of skills and competencies to these roles. This led to the development of Trait leadership theories, where the emphasis was on the traits the leader brought to the leadership role. Long lists of leadership traits emerged from numerous psychologically oriented research (for example, Bird 1940 and Jenkins 1947). The problem with this approach is that while the list of traits became more and more massive, very few of the listed traits and characteristics were universal and generic in nature across all situations. Moreover, with the Traits theories came the controversial and often socially divisive debate on whether personality traits are genetically inherited or foster through life experiences. The debate rumbled on until today on whether leaders are born or bred, inherited or

made. Stogill's (1948) critique of the pure trait theories was seen by many as the turning point when the prominence of Trait theories began to ebb.

The next wave of theories then considered the situation context and attempted to prescribe different leadership style or contingent leadership behaviours to the situations. These theories usually emphasise the situation variables that the leaders must overcome, and shifting the focus from traits and skills to behaviours. This shift coincided with the period when academia elsewhere saw an emergence in theories associated with humanist, human relations and behavioural science as well as the emergence of psychologically based small group experiments. While a number of very useful theories had been developed through this perspective, in particular the Ohio State Leadership Studies (Hemphill 1950; Likert 1959; Fiedler 1967; Blake and Mouton 1964; Hersey and Blanchard 1969; and Vroom and Yetton 1973), this approach had been criticised for being too simplistic because the nature of the models had been largely bimodal in construct. A further debate arose from this perspective is whether people can change, and to what extend individual personalities can be adjusted at will to meet the contingent situation.

More recently, the concept of Transforming versus Transactional leadership were introduced in the 1970's (Burns 1978; Bass 1985) that emphasise vision and overarching organisational change. About the same time, the concept of Servant leadership (Greenleaf 1977; Burns 1978; Spears 1995) was proposed, introducing elements of the ethical dimension and attempting to apply leadership to situations involving normative issues. The concept of Inspirational or Charismatic leadership was also proposed (House 1977) which focused on the influence processes of the leader–follower interaction and the specific leader behaviours used to create inspiration and higher level actions in the followers. Much more recently, there has been a host of newer concepts of leadership being proposed, including Distributive leadership (Elmore 2000; Gronn 2002)), Constitutive leadership (Grint 2001), Primal or Emotional leadership (Goleman 2004), to name but a few.

The numerous definition and debate concerning leadership and the role of the leader illustrates the difficulties in defining what leadership is. While there is no doubt that leaders are 'in front of' the followers, the debate is whether the followers made the

leader, or whether the leader draws the followers. Tolstoy introduced the metaphor of a ship's bow-wave (Tolstoy, 1991). His argument was that while, regardless of the ship's direction, the bow-waves were always in front of the ship as a matter of fact, it does not imply that the wave has any role in either the steering or the propelling of the movement of the ship.

Although it has been an up-hill struggle to arrive at a determination of a singular and comprehensive definition of what leadership is, the need for effective leadership is not under any doubt. The importance of leadership in determining and accomplishing what we desire to achieve has long been recognised. Krause (1997:8) had suggested that "the main goal of leadership is to accomplish useful and desirable things that benefit the people being led". In the context of Public Service Leadership, this would be an apt proposition.

Public Leadership

Traditional analysis of leadership tended to focus on leadership in the military context. Contemporary analysis of leadership has a tendency to lean towards leadership in the commercial and corporate context. Public Service Leadership seems to have taken a back seat comparatively. However, it is interesting to note that classic studies of the "Great Men" leaders were mostly biography of very successful public or national leaders.

Legends of heroes across civilisations were mostly those who served the nations or the people. The Greek classic *Iliad* by Homer (written circa. 800 B.C.) emphasised the honourable role of public leaders – "He serves me most, who serves his country best" (*Iliad* Book X, Line 297*)*. Centuries earlier, the exploits of Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt ca. 1400 B.C. and organised them into a system of theocratic government was probably one of the earliest example of a formal system of jurisprudence (Alter 2004).

While these global acts of public leadership took place many centuries BC, it was not until Plato (427 BC – 347 BC) was there a serious attempt to construct a systematic theory of politics and leadership (Grint 1997). Plato wrote *The Republic* circa. 360

B.C. (English translation, Grube 1992). *The Republic* was written in a conversation style reminisce of the teacher-student dialogues commonly used by Plato's own teacher, Socrates (470 BC – 399 BC). It started with discussions concerning the nature of justice, with an attempt to show that justice is better than injustice. It also includes extensive discussions on the virtues, on justice, on wisdom and on courage, as they appear both in individual human beings and in society as a whole. Having reviewed various forms of government, Plato concluded in *The Republic* with an explicit description of the ideal state in which only philosophers (the philosopher king) are fit to rule. To Plato, the leader was to be the most important element of good government.

Since then, much had been written about public leadership, a great many of them biographical in nature, show-casing individual famous and infamous public leaders ranging from Alexander the Great to William the Conqueror, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, George Washington, Winston Churchill, Adolf Hitler and more recently Nelson Mandela and Saddam Hussein. Most were on specific leadership feats carried out by the specific leaders in specific situations such as wars or economic reform. It has been noted that in most public and political processes, be they military conquests or peace processes, they are essentially driven by a relatively small number of people who took responsibility for making the final decision and implementing the policies (Darby and MacGinty 2000).

Of all the models of leadership hitherto developed, it could be argued that Servant leadership is the most appropriate paradigm for describing public service leadership. Servant leadership is supposed to put the primary emphasis on the needs and the desires of the followers "before the needs of the leader" (Greenleaf 1977:7). In Greenleaf's view, a great leader is seen as servant first, and that fact is the key to the servant leader's greatness. It could be argued that the relevance of the servant leadership model to public service leadership is because of its "altruism, simplicity, and self-awareness" (Johnson 2001:136). Servant leadership is supposed to "emphasizes the moral sense of concern for others, reducing the complexity engendered by putting the personal desires of the leader in conflict with those of the followers" (Whetstone 2002:389).

Nevertheless, the concept of servant leaderships does have its apparent weaknesses. The suggestion that the servant leader should first abandon his or her own preconceptions of how best to serve, then wait and listen until others define and clearly state their own needs may be criticised for being unrealistic – given the modern cultural preference for egocentricity and assertiveness as well as the nature and role of power and politics within the public service arena. Cynicism may suggest that altruism and compassion always has a price to exact in return, and that servant leadership is merely transactional leadership in a subtler disguise. Casual analysis may also conclude that in situations where the general public does not possess adequate knowledge, information or the facts of reality, where clear and urgent decisions are needed within a short time frame, the engagement for dialogue that is the essence of servant leadership does seem a little out-of-place

Administrative Leadership

In line with the development of society from military rules to citizen democracies, modern public management and leadership are concerned more with economic and social development, rather than military conquests. For example, in the current era of globalisation, decentralisation, and knowledge-based economies, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) recognised that the governments of many of their member countries have to develop new public sector leadership models to reshape their own public sector leadership to cope with new challenges. These new environments require new roles for public sector leaders including the role of change agents, promoters of enhanced performance, co-ordinators of government policies, and keepers of public service values (OECD 2001). Thus the requirement is for civil servants to implement policies and not only for political leaders to formulate and persuade the public to accept the policies. In academia, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe (2003) developed their *Transformational Leadership Questionnaire* to assess Administrative leadership in local government, and Jean Hartley and Anna Morgan-Thomas (2003) developed a *Political Leadership Questionnaire* to assess the development needs of elected councillors.

The distinction between political leadership and administrative leadership has traditionally been between policy formulation and policy implementation respectively.

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It was recognised that the primary role of politicians was to create strategic vision and to encapsulate those visions into policies, and the primary role of the civil servants to creatively lead the implementation of the policies and to foster the values established by the vision (Joyce 2003). As such, the challenge for the civil service is whether the civil servants, as public servants, are required to perform acts of leadership, or are they merely required to follow the lead of their political leaders and merely to execute the implementation of policies efficiently and effectively. This notion would suggest that administration and implementation are not leadership functions.

This tension is not new to the twenty-first century. The classical view up to the early twentieth century was that the dichotomy between the political world of policy making and the world of technical and neutral implementation presents the ideal structure for the management of the State. But already by the early twentieth century, the increased sophistication and the globalisation trends after the Second World War meant that the simple dichotomy could no longer cope with the increasing complexity. Administrators could no longer operate focusing only on technical decisions while referring any and all policy decisions to their 'political masters'. Discretions were called for and could no longer be ignored or down-played. The modern notion is that administrative responsibilities require the modest use of significant discretion. Many New Public Management Agenda now assert that "creative and robust uses of discretion" is to be encouraged. (Van Wart 2003:223) This would be the basic foundation for the role of Administrative Leadership.

3.   Ethics and Moral Leadership in the context of Public Leadership

Can effective public services leadership be measured devoid of any ethical assessment of the outcomes in terms of the long-term good of those whom they led? In other words, can effective public services leadership be assessed only on the basis of having generated a mass of followers commited to the causes instigated by the leaders, or only on the basis of having generated significant transformation in the behaviour or circumstances of the followers, but without any regard to the long term outcomes consequential to the acts of the leadership?

Whether 'effective' leadership is the same as 'good' leadership or how 'good' leadership is defined should be of particular interests to public service leaders, where the supposed objective of leadership is to bring about the 'good' of society.

Ciulla (1999) pointed out that 'good' has to be more than just being effective – that 'good' should have a sense of morality. Indeed, Ulrich (2000) suggested that leaders who achieve results but lack integrity, character and value face a significant challenge in winning the support necessary for long term performance. However, Kellerman (2004) observed that leadership is not a moral concept and that somehow morality detracts or limits the scope for becoming more effective at leadership. The implication seemed to be that the assessment of effective leadership should be amorally based.

To define leadership as 'effective' without any reference to ethical values seems unsatisfactory. Otherwise, we should be championing the leadership of Adolf Hitler for he led Germany from depression to prosperity and from being a crippled military power to being one of the most powerful and efficient military machine in the world – all in a few short years (Drouillard and Kleiner, 1996). Drouillard and Kleiner (1996) proposed that a more appropriate definition of 'effective' leadership should include an ethical and moral dimension and to include the desire to see others besides oneself benefit in the process.

A case in point might be useful to expand the discussion.

Chairman Mao Zedong – a Case Discussion

If effective leadership is assessed on the number of people whose behaviours and attitudes are affected, or if effectiveness is measured by significant transformation of either the followers or their circumstances, then surely Chairman Mao Zedong (毛澤東) would rank amongst the top effective public leaders of the modern era. During his leadership spanning nearly three decades, he effectively and significantly influenced over a quarter of the world's population and courted the interests of the leaders of the world's superpowers. Indeed, Burns, in his analysis of Chairman Mao's "Revolutionary leadership style" (Burns 1978:228-239), trumpeted its effectiveness.

Yet at the same time, millions died under his policies. Millions died from starvation as a result of his almost naïve economic policies and hundreds of thousands more from the intentionally generated social chaos in the course of his political struggles for power. Ultimately Mao succeeded in turning a vast nation with immense potentials into an isolated, introverted country with a third world status. Even Burns acknowledged that while Mao's revolutionary leadership was more transformational than that of both the French and the Russian Revolutions, it had its "massive cruelties and victims" (Burns 1978:239). The question poised is that, given hindsight into the long-term consequences, whether Chairman Mao can be classified as an effective public service leader.

Mao Zedong (1893–1976) was the Chairman of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and the supreme leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC) from its establishment in 1949 until his death in 1976. During his leadership the PRC became one of the most withdrawn and impoverished nations while the Western economies enjoyed significant economic growth in that same period.

The two most infamous historical epochs under Chairman Mao's public leadership were the Great Leap Forward (大躍進) between 1958-1963 and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (無產階級文化大革命) between 1965-1968.

The Great Leap Forward

Bolstered by the relative success of the first national Five Year Plan between 1953-1958, Mao instigated the Great Leap Forward (the second Five Year Plan) between 1958-1963. The Great Leap Forward was Mao's attempt to modernise the Chinese economy so that China would be less dependent on other countries. The Great Leap Forward was essentially a plan focused on the development of agriculture and industry. Mao's ideology was that industry could only prosper if the workforce was well fed by a robust agricultural sector, and in turn the agricultural workers needed industry to produce the modern tools needed for modernisation. Mao's methodology was to reform China into a series of communes.

However, the Great Leap Forward is now generally considered, by economists both within China and outside, as an economic catastrophe, effectively being a Great Leap 'Backward'.

The plan commenced in 1958, but already began to unravel by 1959. Political decisions and beliefs took precedence over commonsense, and communes found themselves set tasks that they were incapable of achieving. Inflated reports of the harvest for 1958 diverted human resources further away from agriculture into industry, but industrial outputs in real terms fell as a result of inferior production methodologies. For example steel produced by the backyard furnaces were all but useless. They were not strong enough to be used for the purpose of construction, which was steel's primary usage at that time. Moreover, the inefficiency of the backyard furnaces used up so much coal that China's rail system, which depended on trains fuelled by coal, suffered accordingly and the national transport infrastructure suffered a collapse.

According to the China Statistical Yearbook (1984), crop production decreased by 28% between 1958-1960. The official estimated death toll of those who died of starvation in this period was put at 15 million (States Statistical Bureau 1985:83), but other scholars such as Jiang (1986:46) estimated the number of famine victims to be 17 million. Li (1998:97-111), a former minister of the National Bureau of Statistics of

China, estimated 22 million and Banister (1984:740-741) estimated the number to be nearer 40 million.

By the end of 1959, it was obvious that the Great Leap Forward had been a failure and even Mao admitted this to the Communist Party and at the meeting of party delegates that year, resigned from his position as Head of State (although he remained in the powerful Chinese Communist Party Chairman position). He conceded the day-to-day running of China to three moderates, namely Liu Shaoqi (劉少奇, the new Head of State), Zhou Enlai (周恩來) and Deng Xiaoping (鄧小平, Chinese Communist Party General Secretary).

Within the Chinese Communist Party, members openly laid blame on the Party leadership for the disaster. Open criticism of the Great Leap Forward policy was made by Marshall Peng Dehuai (彭德懷), who was then Defence Minister, at the 1959 party conference at Lushan, Jiangxi Province. Subsequently, despite officially calling the the disaster during the three years between 1960 and 1962 as the "Three Years of Natural Disasters" (三年自然災害), Liu Shaoqi, successor to Mao as Head of State, made a speech in 1962 criticizing that "The economic disaster was 30% fault of nature, 70% human error." (Schram. 1994:289)

However, despite stepping down and being criticised, Mao's leadership influence on the ordinary Chinese people was still immense. His standing among the people was still prominent because in the minds of the people, he was the leader of the revolution. Mao was later to use this popularity with the people to resurrect his authority. It has been suggested that it was principally to crush his opposition that Mao launched his Cultural Revolution a short few years later.

Cultural Revolution

Officially called the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (無產階級文化大革命) and often shorten simply as the Cultural Revolution, its ulterior motive had little to do with a desire to realign the cultural emphasis of the prevailing Chinese society. Rather, fearing others in the Chinese Communist Party taking a leading role that would

weaken his own power, it was seen by many as an attempt by Mao to re-impose his authority on the party and therefore the country.

After taking over the leadership of the State from Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping developed their new plan to guide the economy to recovery. All had been loyal to Mao but they had shifted from Mao's brand of radical fervour to a greater emphasis on expertise rather than solely on ideological purity. But by 1965, Mao was ready to act. He realized that it would not be easy to purge the Communist Party of its entire leadership without the risk of the Party leadership sanctioning him and ending his political career for good. He knew it would take a social upheaval to create sufficient confusion to disorientate and dislodge the leadership.

By 1965, Mao had gathered a group of loyal supporters that include his wife, Jiang Qing (江青) and Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Part and the then Minister of Defense, Lin Biao (林彪).

It could be argued that the seed of Cultural Revolution was first sown in September 1965 when a prominent speech was given by Lin Biao. He urged pupils in schools and colleges to return to the basic principles of the revolutionary movement. At a Plenum of the Central Committee in August of 1966, Mao himself launched an attack on Communist Party officials for their bourgeoisness and lack of revolutionary zeal, and the Cultural Revolution was well underway.

Between 1966 and 1968, Mao, together with Jiang Qing and Lin Biao, organized a mass youth militia called the Red Guards to overthrow Mao's perceived enemies and seize control of the state and party apparatus. The Central Committee was replaced by the Cultural Revolution Committee, and local governments were replaced by revolutionary committees.

The Red Guards were also encouraged to openly criticise the liberals in the Chinese Communist Party and those who Mao deemed untrustworthy. In fact no one was safe from criticism – anyone who disagreed with Maoist ideologies was deemed to have developed a superior attitude and thus considered an enemy of the party and people.

Educational establishments in particular were singled out. They were considered to be too academic and, therefore, too elitist. Mao believed that a privileged class has developed comprising the "educated" – engineers, scientists, factory managers etc. Mao also believed that these people were acquiring too much influence and power and that they had no idea about the lifestyle of the normal person in China. Schools were closed to free students to join the Red Guards.

Mao deliberately set out to create a cult for himself and went all out to purge the Chinese Communist Party of anyone who did not fully support himself. His main propaganda ideology was a creation of a China wherein no one was better than anyone else and all working for the good of the nation – a classless society, in essence.

The movement escalated but it also splintered into factions, all claiming fervent devotion to Chairman Mao. But the unchecked and undisciplined enthusiasm of the mostly young and uneducated Red Guards had pushed China into social turmoil. Schools and colleges were closed and the economy started to suffer. Groups of Red Guards fought each other, as individual units refused to yield to each other.

By 1968, the movement that was the Cultural Revolution had got completely out of hand and was totally spiralling out of control. The timing was perhaps right to act to purge the scapegoats.

In October 1968, Liu Shaoqi, who was the head of government of China and who earlier in 1962 opening criticised Mao, was deposed, expelled from the party, beaten and tortured. He was taken to a solitary prison where he eventually died sick and alone in 1969. Deng Xiaoping was removed from top offices but not imprisoned. He was sent to a remote factory to work as a machinist. Zhou Enlai remained in power but with waning influence over political events. Historians generally see this as the end of the Cultural Revolution. Mao had witnessed the removal of his potential rivals in the party – the three people appointed to take over from him at the end of the disastrous Great Leap Forward – he therefore saw no need for the Cultural Revolution to continue.

Taking advantage of the realisation that the military was also becoming impatient with the disorder of the Cultural Revolution, Mao ordered the military to suppress the movement. He sent the Red Guards and other young people to the countryside supposedly for re-education by the peasants but in actuality simply to suppress the social disorder of the Cultural Revolution.

Mao's Leadership Influence

Mao's leadership was arguably ruthless. His ruthlessness was further amply illustrated by another significant historical event, that of the Hundred Flowers Campaign during 1956-1957. The name of the campaign originated in a poem "Let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend" (百花齊放，百家爭鳴).

Mao indicated that he wanted the intellectuals of the country to offer different and competing ideologies and opinions about the prevailing issues. Initially, the encouragement was to have intellectuals discuss the country's problems in order to promote new forms of arts and new cultural institutions. In early 1957, the focus was shifted towards inviting criticism on policy to the Central Government (MacFarguhar 1973). Liberal thinkers and intellectual Chinese responded by openly "opposing the Communist Party and questioning the Party's leadership as well as Mao's leadership" (Spence 1990:539-43). However, by July 1957, Mao indicated that much of the opinions had violated the healthy criticism level and had reached a harmful and uncontrollable state. The open policy was abruptly reversed and those who criticized (or merely alleged to have criticized) were persecuted in what is called the Anti-Rightist Movement (反右派運動). There is much debate amongst historians about the campaign being a political trap, with the allegation that the Hundred Flowers Campaign was "merely a ruse to root out opposition thinking" (Chang 2005:410).

The turmoil and disruptions of the Cultural Revolution led to a decline in industrial production of 12 percent between 1966 and 1968 (China Statistical Yearbook 1984), and forced the progress of education, scientific and intellectual development in the PRC to come to a grinding halt. In the chaos and violence that was the Cultural Revolution, many revolutionary elders, authors, artists, and religious figures were

purged and killed, and millions were persecuted and possibly as many as half a million people died. (Harding 1997:242-4). But despite the openly acknowledged disastrous effect on the nation as the result of Mao's leadership, his influence on the Chinese people remained almost mystically resilient.

When Mao died in September of 1976 a coalition of army and political leaders united and arrested his wife, Jiang Qing and her radical supporters, subsequently dubbed the Gang of Four. But the Party absolved all blames attributed directly to Mao.

The Communist Party of China's official historical view of the Cultural Revolution and of Mao's role in the Cultural Revolution was incorporated in the *Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China* (關于建國以來党的若干歷史問題的決議) adopted on June 27, 1981. In this document, it is stated that the chief responsibility for the grave 'Left' error of the Cultural Revolution, an error comprehensive in magnitude and protracted in duration, did indeed lie with Mao Zedong and that the Cultural Revolution was carried out under the mistaken leadership of Mao Zedong, which was used by the counter-revolutionaries Lin Biao and Jiang Qing and had brought serious disaster and turmoil to the Party and the Chinese people.

Thus the official view separated the personal actions of Mao during the Cultural Revolution from his earlier revolutionary heroism and it also separates Mao's personal mistakes from the purported correctness of the theory that he created.

While Mao's leadership has been undoubtedly transformational, the conclusion drawn with hindsight would be that it was far from moral or ethical. The argument is that the followers of Mao reaped very little long term good that could be directly attributed to Mao's leadership. Indeed, the historical evidence was that while his leadership influence was without a doubt strong and technically effective, many of those whom he claimed to have led were put through immense suffering and many died as a direct result of his leadership.

Ethics and Morality in Public Leadership

If the 'goodness' of Mao's public leadership is questionable, then what would constitute 'good' public leadership? Is there a role for ethics and morality in public leadership? John Gardner suggested that public leaders must offer moral leadership. He said, "they can express the values that hold the society together. Most important, they can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unit them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts." (Gardner 1965:3, 21)

Geoff Mulgan suggested that any claim to legitimate public service must include the four provisions of (i) protection, (ii) welfare, (iii) justice and (iv) truth. (Mulgan 2006:58) Protection implies the security of the people from external aggression. Welfare means at least the satisfaction of basic needs, if not increasing wealth and prosperity. Justice is the maintenance of law and order within the State. And truth implies information and knowledge and the development of them through science and education. In many ways, these four provisions reflect the satisfaction of the basic needs for the individual citizens. Against the context of needs theories such as that of Maslow's (1943) needs theories, protection would satisfy the security needs, welfare the physiological needs, justice and fairness the relational needs and truth and knowledge the self-actualisation growth needs. In the case study of Mao's public leadership, welfare, justice and truth were all but denied to the nation's citizens during his tenure as their leader.

However, while Mao's case is judged relatively clear cut, the moral interpretation of actions leading to such altruistic satisfaction of needs is not always apparent in the context of public and international politics elsewhere. Or at least, while the argument is for altruism, the reality might not be reflected as so.

For example, the argument for the protection of the national welfare of its own citizen from the effects of the narcotic trade was presented as the *prima facie* case for the invasion of Panama in 1989 by the United States and supported by the then British Government as a moral act (BBC News Archive, 20 December 1989). But the exact same argument presented by the Imperial Chinese Government to protect the national

welfare of its own citizen from the narcotic trade facilitated by the British East India Company was rejected by the British Government in favour of the "right to trade" (Beeching 1975), resulting in the British invasion of China in the Opium War of 1840-42. In both cases, a sovereign nation invaded another sovereign nation because of narcotic trade – yet in the case of Panama, the British Government supported an action to stop the trade while in the case of China, the British Government acted to protect the trade.

Anomalies can also be seen in another example concerning the sovereign protection of a country's own citizen. The United Kingdom went to war with Argentina in 1982 on foot of the Argentine's claim of sovereignty over the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic (Freedman 2005). A military task force comprising nearly 28,000 personnel and over 100 ships (National Army Museum 2006) was despatched, resulting in a war that lasted nearly three months at a cost of over 250 British lives. The population of the Falkland Islands then were just over 1,800 (Smith 1989). In contrast, just two years later on December 19, 1984, the United Kingdom government signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration with the Government of the People's Republic of China ceding, with effect from July 1, 1997 the sovereignty over the then British colony of Hong Kong to China. This was done without any formal referendum of the then 5.4 million population of Hong Kong, and despite Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's insistence at a press conference in Hong Kong two years earlier in 1982 that the British sovereign claims over Hong Kong is valid under international law (Yahuda 1996). Moreover, there was a discernable consensus amongst the 5.4 million colonial subjects in Hong Kong to prefer to remain under British rule (Buckley 1997). The u-turn appeared to have already taken place by 1983 when Queen Elizabeth II, in her June 22, 1983, speech that opened parliament (written for her by Prime Minister Thatcher's government), clearly distinguished among the cases of the Falklands, toward which Britain has "obligations"; Gibraltar, toward which Britain has "commitments"; and Hong Kong, toward which Britain has "aims." (Chalmers 1984:888).

The illustration here is that judgement of morality in the context of international and national public policy actions are often difficult to assess. The United Kingdom supported a trade that benefited her merchants but condemned the same trade on

moral grounds when no economic gains were at risk. She was prepared to go to war to protect 1,800 of her citizens, yet under the same government during the same term of office she would hand over 5.4 million of her colonial subjects in another part of the world against their will to another sovereign master. "History is written by the victors" is a truism often attributed to the late British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill but of unknown origin – it appears that not only is history written by the victors, often whether particular actions are deemed moral is also determined by the victors.

The Cross-Cultural Dimension of Public Ethics and Morality

How can such divergence of interpretation exist? Perhaps cultural interpretation plays a significant role. While there is a fair degree of consensus amongst governments of the modern era concerning the four provisions of protection, welfare, justice and truth, the divergence is on how these provisions should be delivered. Where the ends may be universal, the means can differ significantly to derive controversies.

The notion of public leaders as public servants is influenced by the interpretation of cultural, ethical and moral frameworks. The idea of service, for example, differs significantly across the global culture. In the context of the Chinese culture, which is paternalistic in leaning, the State is likened to a father figure, the head of the family, and the provider of safety, welfare and moral guidance. In this context, the people would be quite happy to be subservient. In contrast, the relationship between the people and the State in Western societies is more often seen as a voluntary relationship that is bound by a social contract. Thus, the Western notion of democracy sees the citizen with equal voices to the State, while in the Peoples Republic of China, the power distance (Hofstede 1984) remain high but acceptable to the people.

This difference in cultural context can be clearly seen in the Tiananmen incident on June 4th, 1989. The government of the People's Republic of China officially refer to this event as the Political Turmoil between Spring and Summer of 1989 (春夏之交的政治風波). Outside of China, the incident is often called the Tiananmen Square Massacre (天安門大屠殺) or the June 4th Massacre (六四大屠殺).

Zhu Muzhi (朱穆之), Secretary-General of the China Society for Human Rights Studies, when interviewed in May 1999 by the CNN Beijing Bureau Chief Rebecca MacKinnon commented "looking back at these ten years from today's vantage point, the way that the June 4 turmoil was dealt with was completely correct." His analysis was that if the government's methods were wrong at that time, and if the masses were rising up to fight for liberty and justice, as people in the West had implied, had the incident not been handled completely correct, then the masses would have remembered and rebelled again, and everyone would still be fighting. The Chinese Government would have had to suppress them even more forcefully, and the people's resistance would also become greater. Chinese society would not have calmed down so easily afterwards and domestically China would not have returned to peace, stability and economic growth so quickly. In a way, his explanation was that since China's entire society, after June 4 1989, was completely peaceful and calm, the positive end results showed that the means was correct and acceptable. The implication was that the end justified the means.

Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan-Yew (李光耀), when interviewed at the 2001 World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland, said that he "knew Deng Xiaoping was right. … There are more than 300 cities in China. When you have that kind of wildfire, you either stamp it out quickly or you are burnt out yourself." Thus Senior Minister Lee justified the actions as moral on utilitarians grounds.

Former American First Lady Barbara Bush recalled a conversation with the American Statesman Henry Kissinger shortly after Kissinger made an official visit to China in November 1989 in the aftermath of the Tiananmen incident, expressing the United States' disapproval of how Beijing handled the incident. Kissinger quoted how Deng Xiaoping asked why he was so shocked over Tiananmen given that the Cultural Revolution was going on when Kissinger himself first opened relations with China. Deng pointed out that surely that was much worse. Bush commented that Deng had made a valid point (Bush 1994).

In a declassified briefing document entitled *Themes*, dated June 29th, 1989 released by the US State Department, even the State Department conceded that "How the GPRC [Government of the People's Republic of China] decides to deal with those of its citizens involved in recent events in China is, of course, an internal affair. How the USG [United States of America Government] and the American people view that activity is, equally, an internal affair. Both will be governed by the traditions, culture, and values peculiar to each." In essence, it was an attempt on a moral defence on the basis of moral relativism.

4. Determining an Ethical and Moral Framework

The Ends versus the Means

The notion that moral and ethical behaviour is all that matters appears at time to be rather simplistic and naïve. This is because regardless of behavioural compliance to moral and ethical frameworks, sometimes what really matters is a positive consequence or outcome. This is particularly so in public leadership contexts where the safe-guarding of the actual welfare of the people is paramount. As a case in point, Mulgan (2006) quoted the Chinese Naval Commander, Hu Tsung-hsien (胡宗憲), whose much acclaimed successful anti-pirating campaigns in the South China Seas in the 16th Century were immortalise in the historical records (Fairbank et al 1974) Mulgan noted that in the historical citation of Commander Hu, the listing of his "successful tactics" has "employing moral principles" listed as a method alongside "poisoned wine" and "false intelligence" (Mulgan 2006:143-144). Mulgan suggested that the tension between means and ends, and between the morality of fixed ethical frameworks and the need for flexibility to ensure achieving the ends, are "contextually influenced" (Mulgan 2006:144). Indeed, the complexity of situations may even encompass conflicting ethical values since "ethical decisions and judgements rarely happen in situations that evoke one and only one ethical norms" (Messick 2006:102). This is similar to what Kidder terms 'right-versus-right' ethical conflicts (Kidder 1996).

Ethical Perspectives Complexity

Perspectives are what people use to interpret and make sense of the world around them. The main difficulty with determining universal ethical perspectives is that perspectives are very rarely universal. While people groups have within each group similar interpretations of the reality around them, even within relatively homogenous group, individual perspectives differ from each other. The problem is that we can never truly see someone else's perspective – we can only see what we think they might see. Messick uses the illustration that unlike buying a pair of binoculars, where one can shop around and look through different alternatives to compare how the same

objects appeared through the different lenses, one can "never see how the world might look ethically were we someone else" (Messick 2006:101).

Although we cannot see or judge from someone else's moral or ethical perspective, there are some remarkably universal approaches to impose on others our own perspectives of what is right or wrong. For example, in the Holy Bible, saying ascribed to Jesus Christ (circa. 5 B.C. – 32 A.D.) include the saying "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."(Gospel according to Matthew, chapter 7 verse 12). This is similar to Rabbi Hillel (circa. 50 B.C. – 10 A.D.) saying "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man." (Neusner at el 1995). In the Hindi Epic *Mahabharata* (circa. 500 B.C.), section 5:15:17 reads "This is the sum of duty; do naught unto others what you would not have them do unto you." (Reynolds 1988:271-272). In ancient China, Confucius (ca. 551 – 479 B.C.) wrote in the Analect (論語) "What you do not wish upon yourself, extend not to others." (己所不欲，勿施於人) (Legge 1893)

The difficulty with these classical sayings is that the proposed ethical basis is founded on the first person perspectives. As such, even a sadomasochist individual can justify the random torturing of others by the Mahabharata principle or a police office who is claustrophobic can refuse to put a suspect in a jail cell because of the Confucius philosophy.

Difficulties notwithstanding, such guiding principles or 'Golden Rules' are nevertheless useful. The purpose of building these principles into ethical frameworks is to attempts to avoid the bias of individual perspectives and to provide for some measure of what is 'right' and 'acceptable'. The basis of such ethical judgement is the set of moral values – practices and activities that are considered to be importantly right or wrong, together with the rules that govern those activities (De George 1999). Ethics and moral values are not contemporary notions. As early as the fourth century BC, the Greek philosopher Socrates was already exploring the essence of virtue and morality (Helm, 1999).

The challenge for developing contemporary ethical frameworks is due to the reality that contemporary thinking in ethics and moral values tend not to argue for one single universal basis for determining what is 'right' and 'acceptable' (Hinman 1997). This follows the classical debate between Absolutism (Adams 1979) and Relativism (Benedict 1934).

Classical moral absolutism is the belief that there are absolute standards against which moral questions can be judged. The implication is that actions can be determined as right or wrong, devoid of the context of the act. In contrast, moral relativism is a belief that moral truths are relative to social, cultural, historical or personal references, and are therefore situational in context, meaning that the morality of an act depends on the context of the act.

Moral absolutism is anchored on the principle that morals are inherent in the laws of the universe, in the nature of humanity, in the will or character of a god or gods, or in some other fundamental source. Applied to public management acts, for example, moral absolutism would judge slavery, war, dictatorship, the death penalty, or childhood abuse to be "absolutely and inarguably immoral" regardless of the customs, the individual acceptance or the historical and cultural roots of the people groups that engages in these practices (Pojman 1996:50).

Moral relativism, on the other hand, is the position that moral or ethical propositions do not reflect objective or universal moral truths. Instead the implication is that morality should be judged relative to social, cultural, historical or personal circumstances. Moral relativism argues that there are no universal standard by which any ethical proposition's truth can be assessed against. This is not a modern thesis. The first clear statement of relativism can be ascribed to the Sophist Protagoras, as quoted by Plato, "The way things appear to me, in that way they exist for me; and the way things appears to you, in that way they exist for you" (Theaetetus 152a, translated by Jowett 2006). The argument is therefore that there is no separate or objective truth apart from how each individual happens to see things.

A parallel debate, directed towards the behavioural implication of absolutism and relativism, is between Deontology (Kant and Paton 1948) and Utilitarianism (Mill and Sher 2002).

The word deontology comes from the Greek roots δέον (deon), which means obligation or duty, and λόγος (logos), which means science. Thus, deontology is the "science of duty." Deontological behaviour, rooted in absolutism, is characterised by a focus upon adherence to independent moral rules or duties. To make the correct moral choices, one has to understand what one's moral duties are and what correct rules exist to regulate those duties. When behaviour follows duty, the behaviour is judged moral. When behaviour fails to follow duty, behaviour is judged immoral. The moral proposition here is that duties and obligations must be determined objectively and absolutely, not subjectively. There is no tolerance in deontological systems for subjective feelings. Perhaps the most significant implication of deontology is that moral behaviours are completely separated from any consequence. Thus, for example, if you have a moral duty not to lie, then lying is always wrong, even if that results in harm to others. Thus, if you live in occupied France in 1941, you would be acting immorally if you lied to the Nazis about where Jews were hiding.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was perhaps the leading proponent of deontological theory. He is often regarded as one of the most influential thinkers of modern Europe and the last major philosopher of the Enlightenment era.In his seminal publication *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten)*, published in 1785, Kant proposed that categorical duties, which are based on *a priori* reasoning about the general nature of things and thus apply always, must be carried out no matter what the circumstances are.

In contrast, Utilitarianism is the ethical doctrine that the moral worth of an action is determined solely by its contribution to overall good (or utility), with utility being commonly defined by various thinkers as happiness or pleasure (versus suffering or pain).

The origin of Utilitarianism is often traced back as far as the Greek philosopher Epicurus (341 BC–270 BC), hence the modern day term 'Epicure' to denote some one

who who takes particular pleasure in fine food and drink (Oxford English Dictionary), but as a specific school of thought, it is generally credited to the English philosopher and law reformer Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). Bentham found pain and pleasure to be the only intrinsic values in the world. Most often quoted is his statement that "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do … They govern us in all we do, in all we say, in all we think … " (Bentham 1789:1)

In public sector management, Utilitarianism has been used as an argument for many different political views. In his essay *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill argued that utilitarianism requires all political arrangements to satisfy the principle that "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others" (Mill 1859:68).

It can be argued that contemporary thinking in the 21st century is once again leaning towards Relativism and Utilitarianism insofar as contemporary thinking tends to argue that values and behaviours are learned through our lives' experiences, which include our family and societal influences especially in our early formative years, as well as through the education systems, both formal and informal, which we are subjected to from young (McNaughton, 1988), and that modern public economic policy tend to be about utility maximisation (Mas-Colell, Shinston & Green 1995). (The exception is perhaps in the field of modern human rights theory, which can be argued as taking the form of applied moral absolutism, employing the nature of humanity and the essence of human nature as the fundamental and absolute base.)

However, that notwithstanding, even amongst traditional and religious philosophers we see a diverse interpretation of 'absolutism', depending on their perspectives and interpretation. The absolutism perspective is supposed to argue that there is an absolute divine 'righteousness', as given and dictated by a supreme Deity (Helm, 1981). The learning about rights and wrong is about learning what has already been established as the 'rights' and 'wrongs' and not about learning to determine any new interpretations of 'rights' and 'wrongs'. But the diverse interpretation of 'absolutism' has given us, for example, certain groups within the Islam religion which see it as

'right' to revenge a wrong, as absolutely commanded by their god to do so while, in contrast, groups within the Christian religion which see it as 'right' to forgive a wrong, as absolutely commanded by their god to do so.

In fact, the same level of conflicting interpretation and contrasting perspectives exist even within the same religion. For example, in his second presidential inaugural address, American President Abraham Lincoln said of the two sides in the American Civil War "both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other" (Lincoln, March 4, 1865). In the same way, in the First Worlds War in Europe, both the British and the Germans believed that God was on their side – the same God whom both side also prayed to. History recorded that both side called a truce to celebrate Christmas Day 1914 together, with solders from both sides coming out of their trenches to share food, sing carols and play football before returning to their own trenches the following day to continue slaughtering each other. (Brown and Seaton 1999).

Despite the extraordinary events of Christmas Day 1914, it is generally seen that leadership in the context of a religious or church organisation, especially one that subscribe to monotheism in particular cannot be separated from absolute morality. Every monotheist religion is fundamentally anchored in a set of absolutes. The espoused system of leadership and government in those organisations are theocracy and not democracy in essence – the notion that the god of that particular monotheist religion and the ways of that particular god is always infallible and unquestionably right. In a sense it can almost be considered as legitimised dictatorship at that pinnacle level, the legitimacy being given by the followers willingly giving up their rights to choose. At the implementation level of leadership, those charged with the evangelisation of the absolutes may choose to do so in a less dictatorial manner, but it is hard to reconcile democracy with the notion of absolute righteousness. The tension is between the dictates of something that is perceived to be absolutely right against the autonomy of a democratic choice in determining what is right or wrong. The argument is that a democratic majority may only imply that there are more in the wrong than in the right.

Political leadership is no less – winning politics is about convincing others that one is 'right', be it in the context of social policy, economic policy, health policy or criminal justice, and convincing others to follow this 'right' path.

Furthermore, even traditional religious philosophers would agree that absolute divine 'righteousness', whatever that may represent, is not instilled into the individuals by birth – it still had to be taught and learned. Thus, regardless of the preference for Relativism over Absolutism or for Utilitarianism over Deontology, one understanding is common, values and ethics are taught. Thus, leaders, or those who control and influence the education of the various sub-groups within a society control and influence the basis of what is considered 'right' and 'acceptable' in that sub-group. The argument is that the beliefs, values, vision and the consequent actions of the leader of a group set the ethical tone and standard for that group. Hence the argument is that such a fundamental and crucially influential position of the leader implies that the traditional separation of personal and public ethics and morality may no longer be a tenable proposition (Kanungo & Mendonca 1996).

The powerful position of a leader who also holds the helm in the education of the followers gives the leader tremendous potentials to influence. And where morality is not advocated under such circumstances, abuse of power at the expense of the 'good' of the followers will be difficult to avoid.

Conflicts in moral judgement emerge when two parties or sub-groups differ in their interpretation of moral principles, reasoning processes or behaviours (Buller and Kohols, 1997). Ethical and moral conflicts are always rooted in opposing perspectives of what is considered ethically 'right' and 'acceptable' (Pojman, 1994). To avoid biased moral judgement based only on internal perception, mutually agreed and accepted boundaries can be set up to guide external behaviour. Where behaviours are guided by such boundaries, behaviours outside of those set boundaries will be deemed as 'unacceptable', 'unethical' or 'immoral'. Whether behaviours are considered 'unacceptable', 'unethical' or 'immoral' is determined by the interpretation of the set boundary guidelines. However, while some behaviour are clear-cut in nature and are therefore easily identified when the set boundary guidelines are breached, there are

also behaviours that are more interpretative in nature, and cannot be clearly placed with respect to the boundary guidelines.

In the context of national leadership ethics, we can see clearly a contrast in the perspectives and interpretation of morals and ethics when considering, say, the sensitive topic of human rights in the People's Republic of China.

The root of divergence between Chinese and Western values and ethics is easy to grasp. The values and ethics influences on Western history and public governance over the last 2,000 years or so were heavily drawn from monotheist Judaism and Christianity, with their teachings of absolute righteousness. Chinese history had 6,000 years of influence from a combination of the Buddhism religion, the Taoism religion and the Confucius philosophy (Cua 1999). Juggling the diversity of influence thus infused a concept of relative rights and wrongs into the Chinese interpretation of public values and ethics.

Thus, regardless of the fact that both China and the West have the same public governance goals and objectives – that of safe-guarding the welfare and well-being of their respective citizens – their respective approaches to achieve these goals and objectives are significantly different. In the arena of human rights, the fundamental approach in the West is based on the notion that the security of individual freedom within the rule of law is the best way to foster order and peace from chaos and oppression (Locke, 1965). This Western approach therefore champions the protection of individual rights and the rule of law. Western values and ethics are thus based largely on concepts such as liberty, justice, equity, fairness, or social contract between people and their government. In contrast, the Chinese value system, rooted in the teachings and philosophy of Confucius, did not think that social harmony would be fostered by a system of citizens' rights protected by law (Koehn, 1999). Instead, the Confucius roots of Chinese society emphasise hierarchy and the need to maintain harmony at the expense of individual rights (Cragg, 1995; Jacobs et al., 1995). Chinese social behaviour emphasis 'obligations', 'reciprocity' and the granting of 'favours' (Buttery and Wong, 1999), which Western ethics would view as 'corruption' behaviour.

Likewise, the Chinese Confucius social ethos are more concerned with prestige, honour, and filial piety – making relationship obligations more important and nepotism almost acceptable (Lee, 1996). From a Chinese ethical perspective, fairness is whatever works for that particular situation. Whatever action or manner of speech necessary to facilitate a mutually satisfactory transaction may be considered fair. To the Chinese, it appears that the end result justifies whatever means it may take. Fairness is therefore not measured universally, but is specific to individual transactions. The concept is often alien to most Westerns who see the principle of 'fairness' as universal.

Thus contrasting perspectives placed Chinese and Western interpretations of what is 'right' and 'acceptable' on the two opposing ends. Universal fairness is contrasted against particular fairness on a case-by-case analysis. Quality of honesty is pitched against the nicety of harmony as of supreme importance.

The Role of Perception in Judging Perspectives

The above discussions illustrated the difficulties in determining common perspectives of ethics and moral values. A further complication arises when the role of perception is considered in judging moral perspectives.

Perception refers to the active process of sensing reality and organising it into meaningful views and understandings. In other words, it is how we view and interpret the events and situations in the world around us. However, perception can easily be manipulated. The process of communication can easily be manipulated to affect the judgement of moral perspective.

Returning to the case discussion concerning the Tiananmen incident in China in 1989, the news media played a significant role in the portrayal of the morality of the incident. It has to be noted that most eyewitness accounts were from students and demonstrators themselves who, by their presence in Beijing, had a 'story' of grievance to tell. Most foreign correspondents were not at Tiananmen Square and had no clear view of the Square.

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For example, Jay Mathews, who was the Washington Post's Beijing bureau chief and who was in Beijing during the Tiananmen incident, cited references (Mathews 1998) where the public were misled by the press to believe a story that is not entirely accurate. He noted for example, that over the 10 years or so since the 1989 incident, many American reporters and editors had accepted a particular version of the June 4th 1989 incident. He noted that the Baltimore Sun headline (June 27th, 1998 page 1A), while criticising President Bill Clinton attending a welcoming ceremony at Tiananmen Square, referred to "Tiananmen, where Chinese students died". Similarly, a USA Today article on June 26, 1998 (page 7A) called Tiananmen the place "where pro-democracy demonstrators were gunned down." And the Wall Street Journal on June 26, 1998 (page A10) described "the Tiananmen Square massacre" where armed troops ordered to clear demonstrators from the square killed "hundreds or more." The New York Post on June 25, 1998 (page 22) said the square was "the site of the student slaughter." However, Matthew (1998) suggested that as far as can be determined from the available evidence, no one died that day in Tiananmen Square. Matthews claimed that all verified eyewitness accounts say that the students who remained in the square when troops arrived were allowed to leave peacefully. His research indicated that hundreds of people, most of them workers and passers by, did die that night, but in a different place and under different circumstances. Many victims were shot by soldiers on stretches of Avenue *Changan Jie*, about a mile west of the square, and in scattered confrontations in other parts of the city (Declassified communication from the US Embassy Beijing to the State Department, dated June 22nd, 1989).

It was also noted that The New York Times published a prominent story on June 12th 1989, based on an account by a Qinghua University student who described machine guns mowing down students in front of the Monument to the People's Heroes in the middle of the square. But even that report was challenged by Times reporter Nicholas Kristof the next day. Another popular account picked up by a number of media reports immediately after the incident was one from Student leader Wu'er Kaixi (吾爾開希), who said he had seen 200 students cut down by gunfire, But it was later proven that he left the square several hours before the events he described allegedly occurred (Matthews 1998). Yet despite all these inconsistencies, the image of a 'Tiananmen

Square Massacre' still prevails in the minds of the public, and no journalists to date had made serious efforts to correct the perspectives.

In fact, contradicting the popular reports that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) initiated the shootings of innocent bystanders, a US National Security archives declassified communication from the US Embassy Beijing to the State Department dated the day of the incident contained an intriguing report, attributed to a Chinese-American who witnessed the Tiananmen Square incident, claiming that, "The beating to death of a PLA soldier, who was in the first APC [armoured personnel carrier] to enter Tiananmen Square, in full view of the other waiting PLA soldiers, appeared to have sparked the shooting that followed."

While few people would deny that the Tiananmen incident did occur and that there were significant casualties and deaths, the proposition is that a different picture of what could have really happened would alter the assessment of the degree of moral perspectives ascribed to the actions of the various groups on that day.

But despite the vulnerability of judging and interpreting moral perspectives, the notion still stands that for leadership to be outstanding, some positive sense of moral values must be perceived to exist. The proposition is that the perception of the existence of positive moral values in the action of the leader is a significant basis on which the leader is accepted by the followers.

5.   Towards a Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework can now be proposed based on the elements hitherto discussed.

The proposed framework would suggest that the make-up of an outstanding public service leader would reflect a number of essential constituents. As well as having the necessary enabling circumstances, the proposition is that the outstanding public service leader is not merely an effective leader skilled in the act of influencing behaviours, but also a moral leader behaving with reference to perceived positive moral values, as well as a leader who is knowledgeable in the specifics of public service management. Moreover, the outstanding public service leader needs to be one accepted by the public followers, who accepts the leadership and follow willingly rather than by compulsion. (Figure II-5.1).

Figure II-5.1 The Make-up of an Outstanding Public Service Leader

The proposed conceptual framework draws from three distinct management disciplines, namely the study of leadership, the study of ethics and morality, and the study of public service management. It is suggested that each of these disciplines contributes to the elements of the outstanding public service leader in distinctive ways, and that the contributions are significant to the development of the outstanding public

service leaders. These three disciplines interplay within the context of the prevailing environment and in the context of the public being served. (Figure II-5.2).

Figure II-5.2 Contributions to Outstanding Public Service Leader
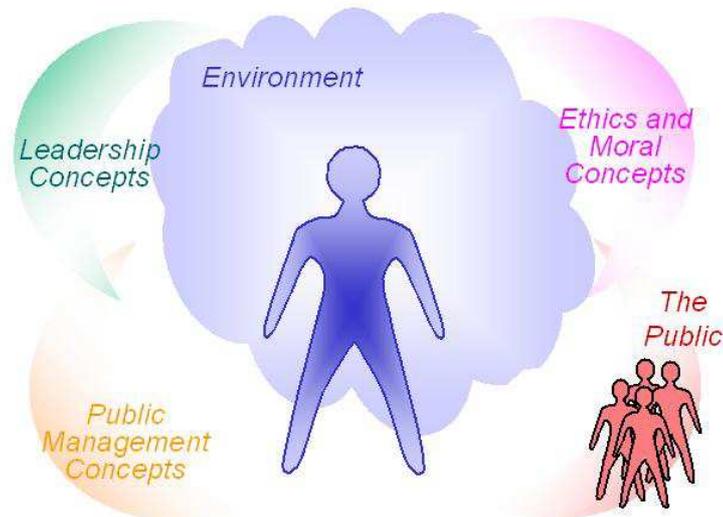
Enabling Circumstances

"Be not afraid of greatness: some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them". (William Shakespeare, Twelfth Nights, Act II, Scene V). The proposition is that leaders become leaders only when the circumstances allow them to take on the role of leadership. If leadership is about influence, and is about influencing the followers to adopt certain behaviour or to strive towards certain objectives, then it is necessary to be in a set of circumstances where their leadership influence is needed. The proposition is that, for example, the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill would not have been able to return to power and became the noted leader that turned the tide of the Second World War if Adolf Hitler did not have the ambition to conquer Western Europe and the United Kingdom. Or Chairman Mao Zedong would not have roused the passion and the fervour of the Communist revolution in China in the 1940s had there been no economic chaos created by the excesses, the corruption and the mismanagement of the economy by the then ruling Kuomintang party in China.

Some leaders proactively sought or created the circumstances; some were invited into the circumstances; some found the circumstances thrust upon them; but most experienced a combination of the above.

An Effective Leader

One of the perennial debates amongst leadership scholars is the question of whether leaders are born or bred, and to what extent. There are numerous published theories and concepts of what constitute a 'leader'. However, what appears to be common amongst these published theories and concepts is that, whatever the enabling circumstance, specific skill sets for effective leadership can be identified. These are skills that the individuals will need to learn or adopt to enable them to become 'effective' leaders.

The contribution of the research into leadership to date provided the understanding of the skill sets an individual potential leader needs to possess, in additional to the enabling circumstances, to become an effective leader (Figure II-5.3)

Figure II-5.3 Leadership Concepts and Effective Leaders

Ethics and Moral Concepts

Leadership implies influence. The altruism implicit in acts of public services implies that the public are being led 'for their own good'. But do the public being led always

know what is best for them? It could be argued that often the leaders need to convince and persuade the followers to accept what is "for their own good", hence the need for manifestos and canvassing prior to the elections of public servants. Effective canvassing will lead to those being led having the perception that their leaders are able to correctly interpret their needs and are offering to provide the solutions to meet those needs. Nevertheless, history has shown that there were some who were great persuaders, who given the enabling circumstances, had successfully led their followers towards what is ultimately not 'for the good' of the followers. Thus the proposition is that the outstanding public service leader needs to possess an appropriate moral and ethical compass that can guide their interpretation of what the public needs and how their needs can be fulfilled. (Figure II-5.4)

Figure II-5.4 Moral Leadership
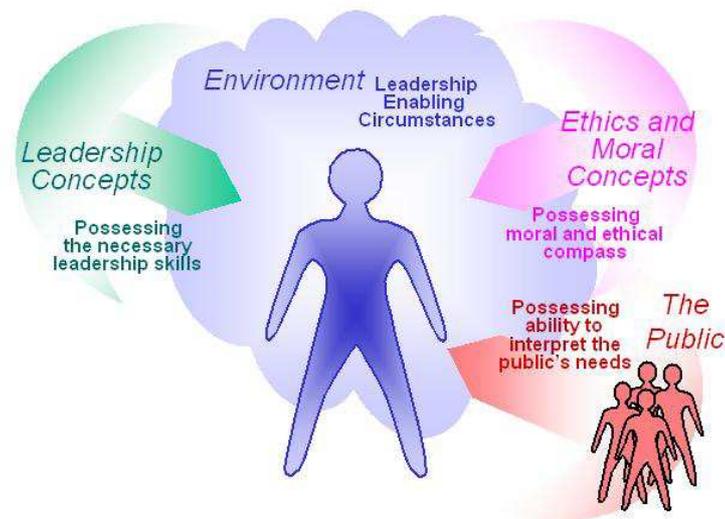
The argument is therefore that the internal ethical framework or moral compass is what enables the outstanding leader to act as a moral leader, committed to leading the followers towards that which is for 'their own good', while at the same time convincing the followers that their needs will be met.

Public Acceptance

While a moral leader may be committed to correctly interpret the needs of the followers and to provide the solutions to meet their needs, from the followers'

perspective, there needs to be a positive perception leading to the acceptance of the leadership role of the leader.

However, within the public management arena, perceptions can be easily manipulated. The skilful handling and utilisation of multi-media communication is part of the process of creating the necessary positive perceptions. And the previously proposed moral and ethical compass would be needed to prevent the outstanding leader from crossing the line between persuasive yet truthful communication and manipulative propaganda.

Moreover, in the context of democratic societies, where the minority yield to the majority; and in particular in situations where the majority only out-number the minority by the slightest of margins, elected public service leaders often find themselves 'leading' a public who initially 'follow' only by compulsion or by coercion. In these circumstances, the leader is only accepted as leader by name and position, and the followers will only comply where no alternative options exist, but will also seek to rebel against the leadership at every opportunity to do so. To create genuine acceptance in these situation, the outstanding leader needs to be able to deliver real results so that what were initially followers by compulsion may become willing followers convinced by the real and positive outcomes of he leadership.

Figure II-5.5 Public Service Leadership

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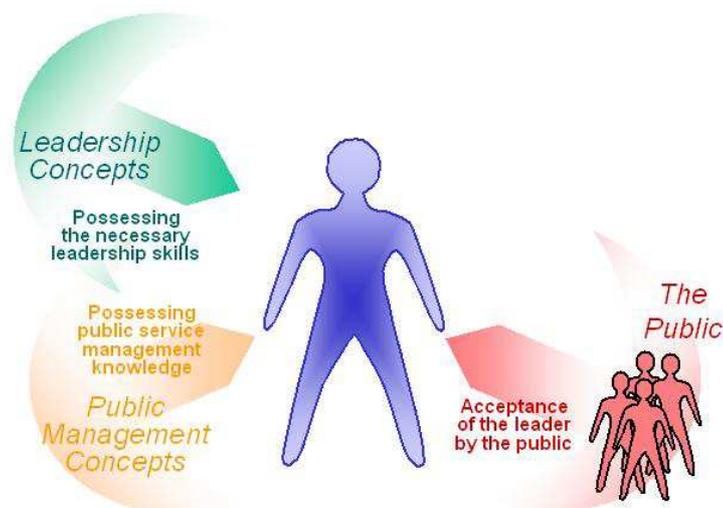
To deliver real results, the outstanding public service leader requires specific understanding of how the public sector functions. That includes the appreciation of the delicate blend of socio-political influences, the system of public governance and the unique economics of public management (Figure II-5.5).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework encompassing all the elements hitherto discussed can now be presented below in Figure II-5.6.

Figure II-5.6 Conceptual Framework Proposal

The Make-up of an Outstanding Public Service Leader
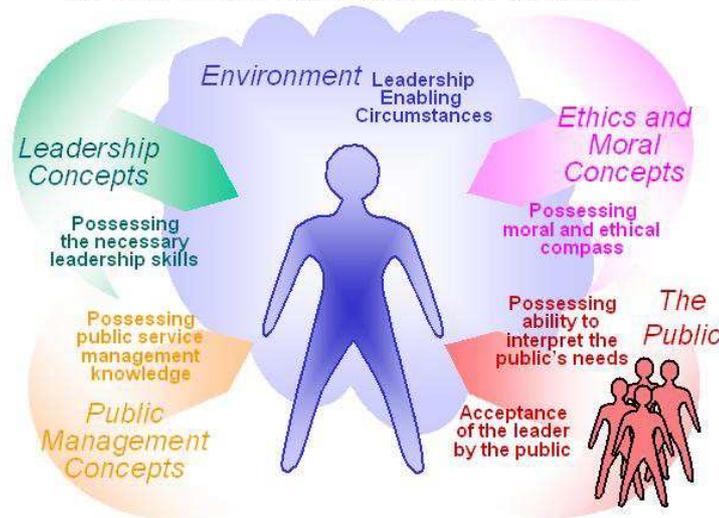
6.   Research Methodology

Epistemological Discussion

The conceptual framework outlining the proposed make-up of an outstanding public service leader has been presented. The framework proposes that factors contributing to the making of an outstanding public service leader would include the possession of generic leadership skills and the possession of specific public sector knowledge. The framework also proposes that a dynamic relationship with the followers need to exist wherein the leader needs to have the ability to interpret the needs and satisfaction of the followers and the followers need to accept the leader. Finally, the framework proposes that a moral and ethical dimension need to be present.

The focus of research into this proposed conceptual framework would be based on a number of assumptions. Firstly, it is assumed that the understanding of generic leadership skills has been well researched and well published to date – and will continue to be developed on an on-going basis elsewhere both within and outside of academia. Secondly, the assumption is that the need for specific public sector management knowledge is taken for granted since public service leadership is being exercised within that specific arena. Thirdly, it is assumed that the concept of 'following' in the context of public service leadership would be better examined by evaluating 'acceptance', since behaviour compliance is demanded and reinforced through regulations or legislations in most public service scenarios. The understanding is that behavioural compliance does not necessarily indicate 'following'. It is within these assumptions that the case for moral and ethical dimension being a key constituent of an outstanding public service leader has been argued hitherto.

However, a research dilemma exists with respect to the role of ethics and moral values in the context of an outstanding public service leader. On the one hand, there is a general acceptance that ethical public leadership behaviour can be objectively assessed against generic public service ethical frameworks; but on the other hand, public service leadership behaviour will only be assessed as unethical if the values of

the behaviour is subjectively perceived to be contrary to the interpretive values of those being served by the public leaders.

The argument is that in order for public leadership behaviours to be deemed ethical by those being served by the public leaders, the behaviours should be perceived to fit the value interpretation of those being served. This perceived fit is regardless of the existence or otherwise of public service ethical frameworks, regardless of whether observed public leadership behaviour conforms to the behavioural guidelines provided by the frameworks if they exist and even regardless of whether the behaviour generates positive outcomes. The hypothesis is therefore that the analysis of ethical public leadership behaviour is less about the objective evaluation of public leadership behaviours against any objective list of 'ethical' behaviours, but rather it is about whether the perceived values of the behaviour meet the value expectation of those being served.

Thus the initial broad hypothesis is that:

H1:   There is an internalised set of values from the perspective of the public service leaders that guides the leadership behaviour of the public service leader.

H2   There is an internalised set of values from the perspective of the public being served by the public service leaders, the internalised set of values being influenced by the cultural perception and the value systems of the people group that makes up the public population.

H3:   The public's assessment of ethical public values is not based on whether public leadership behaviour conforms to any objective list of behavioural guidelines.

H4   The public's assessment of ethical public values is based on whether the behaviour of the public leader is perceived to match the internalised set of values held by the public themselves.

To effectively research into these hypotheses, the epistemological and the ontological positioning of such a research needs to be thought through.

A fundamental issue to consider is whether human behaviour in general, and leadership behaviour in particular, falls under the category of 'natural science'. If the classical trait theories are to be taken at their simplest level, it could be argued that leadership traits are ingrained into the individuals' genetics, and that human behaviour takes the cues from the genetic codes and their biological and chemical reactions. If taken to the extreme, this almost scientific view of human nature would classify human beings as no more than just bio-chemical 'machines', devoid of free will, choices and self-determination. Philosophically, theologically and ethically, that would make human beings soul-less and the notions of morality and ethical values somewhat irrelevant. Nevertheless, such a view would lend itself to the objectivism ontological position.

However, the generally observation is that human behaviour is far from machine-like. Regardless of the extent to which human behaviours are being objectively conditioned or influenced by the external events and environment, the process of self-determination in the unique individual person plays a significant role. The general observation is that often these individual behaviours do not conform to common rationality and cannot be explained by any common 'law' in the scientific sense. It may well be that the alternative ontological position – that of constructionism, might be more applicable in the research into human leadership, behaviour and ethical value.

This has an implication on the epistemological positioning. If human behaviour does not fit neatly into the discipline of the natural sciences, then it may be doubtful that the study of human behaviour can and should follow the same principles, procedures and ethos as in the study of the natural sciences. At best, even critical realism would be considered more appropriate that the straightforward positivism. Indeed, It can be argued that effective leadership relies on the management of subjective interpretations and to dynamically shape and re-shape the thinking of others rather than being defined or restrained by them (Grint 2001). As such, the preferred epistemological positioning is therefore that of interpretivism, which suggests that there is a difference between human behaviour and the objects of the natural sciences, and thus requires the researcher to research into the subjective interpretation of social actions.

Methodology

Bryman and Bell (2003) suggested that research methods are not neutral tools, but are closely linked to the ways in which the researcher envision the connection between the various perspectives of the nature of social reality and how they can be examined. The notion of having a 'perspective' implies that an abstraction of the perceived reality exists – the construction of a theory or of an explanation based on some observed phenomenon.

This would then seems to suggest that therefore for this research, a qualitative approach is preferable to a quantitative approach, as qualitative research predominantly emphasis an inductive approach and facilitate the view that social reality is an emergent and constantly changing construct (Bryman and Bell 2003).

A semi-structured interview is the qualitative methodology proposed. The semi-structure interview is where the interviewers have more latitude to qualitatively explore into varying perspectives in response to what could be seen as significant replies, and thus more appropriate to this research then the rigid and standardised structured interview. The semi-structure interview is also preferred over the even less rigid unstructured interviews, in order to provide a somewhat guided framing for further research.

Possible Framing – Significant Event Analysis

A possible framing for the interpretive interviews could focus on the subjects' leadership related significant events. Significant event analysis is a learning methodology popular amongst medical and healthcare professionals, but arguably has its roots in leadership research. It was suggested that the systematic approach of significant event analysis dates back to the U.S. Air Force development of Critical Incident Review in the Second World War, which sought to examine "effective and ineffective examples of leadership in combat" in order to analyse the leadership actions so that training needs could be identified (Ashmore and Johnson 2006:174). This method has been "effectively used" in social research in a number of occasions (Bryman and Bell 2003:130).

The suggestion proposed here is that if a leadership incident is classified as 'significant' by the interviewee, the assumption would be that the interviewee would have interpreted the event as significant through his or her own perspective of what constitute leadership. Discussions and analysis of these perspectives would then draw out both the perceived perspective of leadership as well as the possible underlying moral and ethical value assumptions in those events.

Possible semi-structured interview protocol therefore could include questions such as:

- "Looking back over the years, can you identify significant events when you saw acts of leadership being exercised?"
- "Why would you call those events acts of leadership?"
- "What in you view were the ethical and moral values that guided those particular acts of leadership?"
- "What in you view were the values created by those particular acts of leadership?"
- "How do you think those particular acts of leadership were perceived by the public?"

Weaknesses of Methodology and Possible Remedies

It could be argued that, in comparison to quantitative and scientific research, a purely qualitative and interpretive piece of research is open to subjective bias in analysis. Quantitative research versus qualitative research is a classical distinction of research strategy. However, it is not necessarily a simple dichotomy. It is not always that we have to pitch the two approaches from two bipolar opposites against each other (Layder 1993). It is possible to foster a more rounded understanding of the issues and the subject matters in this research by supplementing the qualitative research with a subsequent piece of quantitative research.

Indeed, for any construct of theories based on observation to be deemed sound, it is often necessary to anchor the interpretation of observed reality through some empirical studies.

The significant events analysis taken above examines only the perspectives of the public service leaders. While it does ascertain the subjective first person view of why certain acts taken by the individuals in question were classified (by themselves) as acts of leadership, the interviews would not be able to solicit information that would provide an objective assessment of the effectiveness of those acts. In the context of public service leaders, the notion of 'following' is slightly vague, as democracy in particular dictates that public service leaders must lead even those who opposed them, those who did not vote for them or those who played no parts in their appointments as leaders. The risk in this context is that there could well be acts of so-called 'leadership' with no 'follower-ship'. In other words, there could be self-proclaimed public service leaders but with no real followers – the public would merely comply until either the next election or the next re-shuffling of public appointments because there are no alternatives.

The proposal is therefore that for a follow-up piece of research, a quantitative research will be taken from the perspective of the public followers, assessing the public's perceptions of the acts of leadership and to compare and contrast the perception and the interpretation of ethics and moral values from both the leaders' and the followers' perspectives.

It is therefore the proposal that the conceptual framework, and the hypotheses on which the conceptual framework is based, would be substantially tested by means of both a qualitative piece of interpretive research and a quantitative survey. It is hoped that these two pieces of research in tandem would provide a sound basis for further and more extensive analysis of what makes an outstanding public service leader.

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Document Three

A Qualitative Analysis of Leadership Values in the Irish Public Services

April 2008

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Appendices

1 Introduction

This is an interpretive piece of qualitative research, researching into leadership perspectives. Leadership could be classified as either behaviour or a social process. For some researchers, they see the study of behaviour or the study of social processes as the study of something very complex – far too complex in their view to be tackled with explicit conceptual frames. Their preferred approach would be emergent, inductive and grounded in nature. In other words, their perspective is that for this type of qualitative research, any conceptual framework should emerge from the course of the research, rather than having the research pre-framed by any framework.

The debate concerning whether a pre-existent conceptual framework should bound qualitative research of this nature is a recurring one. On the one hand, the argument is that, prior bounding of interpretive research increases the risk of either blinding the researcher to emerging perspectives or causing the researcher to be partially led towards particular interpretations. On the other hand, the opposing argument is that a lack of bounding and a lack of focus could easily lead to indiscriminate data collection and data overload (Miles and Huberman 1994).

A foundational proposition, however, is that no matter how inductive or how unstructured the preferred research approach might be, anyone approaching any research inquiry has to come with some initial guiding thoughts, albeit that the initial guiding thoughts could be very broadly based. Indeed, especially for researches that seek to extend the understanding of an already well-researched phenomenon, there could be some merit to having a more explicit research focus or a focus that is based on constructs that are more delineated.

It is with this argument that we return to the rudimentary conceptual framework developed in previous documents and to use it as the initial guiding frame for our interpretive research.

1.1 Conceptual Context of this Research

Previous documents had explored the general definitions and the broad nature of leadership in various contexts. The notion of what might constitute 'good' leadership was also discussed and, in particular, the notion of what might be viewed as 'ethical' or 'moral' leadership in a public service context was debated.

The proposition proposed hitherto was that outstanding public service leaders need to be both technically effective as well as ethically moral before followers and observers alike would consider them as 'good leaders'. The conceptual framework proposed could be graphically illustrated, as in Figure III-1.1.

Figure III-1.1 A Conceptual Framework
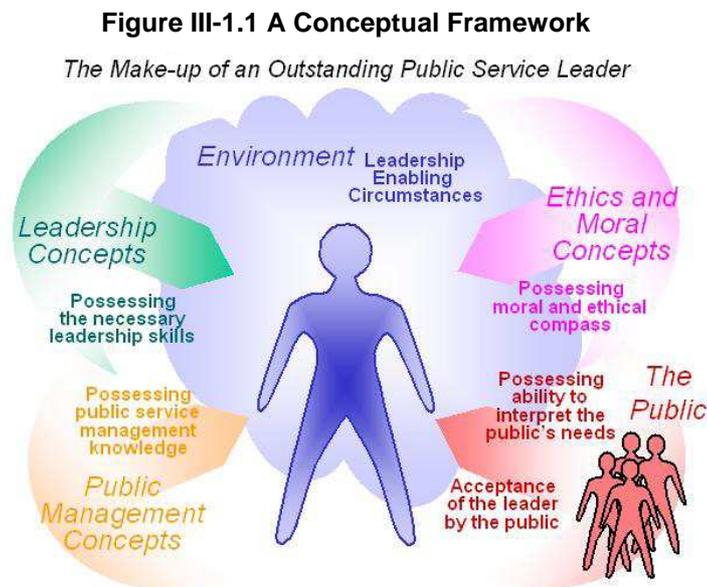
The proposed conceptual framework advocated that the public followers should perceive certain behavioural aspects from an individual before that individual would be deemed by the followers as an outstanding public service leader.

It was proposed that enabling circumstances must first exist in order to provide a context within which the various acts of leadership can be exercised. Then, within the enabling circumstances, the proposition was that, not only must the outstanding public service leader demonstrate leadership by overtly demonstrating specific public service management knowledge and skills; he or she must also build a perception through

which he or she is perceived to possess certain accepted morality. Moreover, as leaders require followers, leaders in the public services need to gain the acceptance or the endorsement by the public. Thus the conceptual framework drew from three distinct management disciplines, namely the study of leadership, the study of ethics and morality, and the study of public service management. The suggestion was that each of these disciplines has significant contributions to the development of outstanding public service leaders.

1.2 The Bounding and Focusing of this Research.

Within this framework, one noteworthy element is the element concerning the moral and ethical compass of the leaders. The suggestion is that this compass is what guides the leader in determining his or her personal perspective of what is acceptable leadership behaviour. The proposition here is that, in the context of understanding behaviour from the first-person perspective, a leader determining what is or is not acceptable as leadership behaviour is arguably also determining what is or is not in his or her perspective the essence of leadership. As such, it could be argued that this compass ultimately is the leader's personal guide to leadership. Thus if the leader's compass perspective differs significantly from the perspectives of the followers, the leader will find it difficult to effectively interpret the needs of the followers, and the leader will in turn find it difficult to win the followers' acceptance of his or her leadership role.

The argument is that winning the followers' acceptance plays a significant part in building leadership effectiveness, especially within a public sector management context. In a democratic environment where public leaders are democratically elected, failure to win the followers' acceptance will invariably result in the leader forfeiting his or her leadership position at the next election and severely curtail the ability of the leader to continue to influence the followers. In an autocratic environment where leaders are unilaterally appointed, failure to win the followers' acceptance may result in the leader having to revert to coercive power or to lead by enforcement. In a bureaucratic context, if coercive enforcement is ineffective, then the leader may risk simply ceasing to be influential altogether.

The purpose of this research is to explore the perspectives of the ethical and moral compass of leadership by seeking to interpret the possible perspectives of what is or is not perceived by the leaders themselves as effective public leadership.

This piece of research forms one part of the overall suite of DBA documents.

The broad initial hypothesis proposed in the previous documents were that:

H1:   There is an internalised set of values from the perspective of the public service leaders that guides the leadership behaviour of the public service leader.

H2   There is an internalised set of values from the perspective of the public being served by the public service leaders, the internalised set of values being influenced by the cultural perception and the value systems of the people group that makes up the public population.

H3:   The public's assessment of ethical public values is not based on whether public leadership behaviour conforms to any objective list of behavioural guidelines.

H4   The public's assessment of ethical public values is based on whether the behaviour of the public leader is perceived to match the internalised set of values held by the public themselves.

The intention is to align this and the subsequent documents to these four hypotheses. The hope is that this current piece of interpretive qualitative research might develop findings that could address hypothesis H1; while the next document, Document 4 reporting on a piece of quantitative research, would have findings that could address hypothesis H2. Subsequently, depending on the combined findings of this and the next document, hypothesis H3 and hypothesis H4 could then be explored though the major research associated with Document 5.

1.3 Document Outline

This document commences with a brief review of some additional perspectives of leadership specifically relating to the context of this research. The research focus is then framed. The research methodology applicable to this research is then critically

appraised. Next, the research process is described, and the qualitative data interpreted. The interpretation and analysis is then discussed and summarised. And then, finally a proposal for the continuation onto the next document is presented.

2   Public Service Leadership Context

2.1 Introduction

Previous documents had already reviewed some of the mainstream discussions of leadership theories and concepts. In particular, it was noted that leadership, as a behavioural act, had existed long before the notion of leadership became a defined subject of interests in academia. As a research proposition, the basic notion of leadership, therefore, is *a priori* in proposition.

However, although the notion of leadership is *a priori* in proposition, it could be seen that the observable acts of leadership are contingent in essence. Academic theories on what constitute 'leadership' established through research invariably lead to attempts to apply those theories to create and to foster new behavioural models. Observation of the new behaviours and their consequences in turn leads to new variations in the interpretation of what constitute 'leadership'. Thus the evolution of our understanding of leadership is in reality *a posteriori* in proposition.

Such process of evolution of thinking is very much prevalent in the arena of public service leadership, given the raft of public management reform agendas worldwide in the recent decades.

2.2 Public Leadership

Throughout history and across civilisations, legendary heroes and heroines were largely those who served their tribes or their nations. The Greek classic *Iliad* by Homer (written circa. 800 B.C.) emphasised the honourable role of public leaders – "He serves me most, who serves his country best" (*Iliad* Book X, Line 297*).* In *The Republic* circa. 360 B.C. (English translation, Grube 1992), fellow Greek philosopher Plato (427 BC – 347 BC) explicitly described his vision of the ideal state, and exemplified philosophers (the philosopher kings) as the only people fit to rule. To Plato, the public service leader was to be the most important element of good government.

The Greeks were not the earliest in encapsulating the notion of public service leadership. Centuries earlier, the exploits of Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt ca. 1400 B.C. and organised them into a system of theocratic government could be considered one of the earliest example of a formal system of jurisprudence (Alter 2004). The oral history of ancient China went even further back in history to claim that as early as ca. 2000 B.C., Chinese society was already formed into an organised State, namely that of the Xia (夏) Dynasty (Nivison 1993).

As such, there appears to be evidents to suggest that the earliest discourse on leadership referred largely to public service leadership.

2.2.1 Public Leaders as Servants

Of the numerous perspectives of leadership, it could be argued that Servant leadership would be the most appropriate paradigm for describing public service leadership. Servant leadership is supposed to put the primary emphasis on the needs and the desires of the followers before the needs of the leader (Greenleaf 1977). In Greenleaf's view, a great leader is seen as servant first, and that being a servant to the followers is the key to the servant leader's greatness. It could be argued that the relevance of the servant leadership model to public service leadership is because of its altruism, simplicity, and self-awareness (Johnson 2001). Servant leadership is supposed to emphasize the moral sense of concern for others, thereby reducing the complexity engendered by putting the personal desires of the leader in conflict with those of the followers (Whetstone 2002).

However, in the context of civil and public services management, the typical functioning of government and the normal management of the affairs of the State is not merely a simple altruistic process. To expect government institutions, politicians, civil servants and public services organisations to function merely as simple charities would be both naïve and unrealistic. The suggestion that the servant leader should first abandon his or her own preconceptions of how best to serve, then wait and listen until others define and clearly state their own needs may be criticised for being

unrealistic – given the modern cultural preference for egocentricity and assertiveness as well as the nature and role of power and politics within the public service arena. Cynicism may suggest that altruism and compassion always has a price to exact in return, and that Servant leadership is merely Transactional leadership in a subtler disguise. Casual analysis may also conclude that in situations where the general public possess neither adequate knowledge, nor adequate information, nor the simple facts of reality, and if at the same time urgent decisions are needed within a short time frame, the engagement for dialogue that is the essence of Servant leadership does seem a little out-of-place.

2.2.2 Administrative Leadership

To describe the governing institutions and the public service organisations only as altruistic and charitable organisations is unrealistic. Much closer to reality is the understanding that public service organisations are more like bureaucratic organisations that require significant and complex administration.

But to what ends is the purpose of these bureaucratic and administrative endeavours? The purpose of government seemed to have changed over time. Civilised society has been evolving largely away from military rules towards citizen democracies. Modern public management and leadership are therefore concerned more with economic and social development than military conquests. Economies in this modern knowledge based era are economies characterised by intense globalisation and decentralisation. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) had reported that the governments of many of their member countries had begun to develop new public sector leadership models to reshape their own public sector leadership to cope with the new challenges presented by this new era. These new environments require new roles for public sector leaders. The modern public leaders have become at the same time change agents, promoters of enhanced performance, co-ordinators of government policies, and keepers of public service values (OECD, 2001). Thus, in the modern era of public management, there is a requirement for an implementation role. The requirement is for a civil servant cohort whose role is to implement policies alongside the political leaders who had created, formulated and persuaded the public to accept the policies in the first place. This is in essence a role associated with policy

implementation as suppose to the more political and visionary role of policy formulation.

Indeed, separating policy formulation from policy implementation had traditionally been the distinction that separates political leadership from administrative leadership. The classical view of public governance structure was that the dichotomy between the political world of policy making and the neutral world of technical implementation presents the ideal structure for the balanced management of the State. It is recognised that the primary role of politicians was to create strategic vision and to encapsulate those visions into policies, and the primary role of the civil servants was to creatively lead the implementation of the policies and to foster the values established by the vision (Joyce 2003). As such, the debate amongst the civil service is whether the civil servants, as public servants, are required to perform acts of leadership, or are they merely required to follow the lead of their political leaders and merely to execute the implementation of policies efficiently and effectively. The latter argument is that administration and implementation are but pseudo-leadership functions.

However, the suggestion is that the increased sophistication and increased globalisation meant that such a simple dichotomy between policy formulation and policy implementation could no longer cope with the increasing complex environment of the State. Administrators can no longer operate focusing only on technical decisions while referring any and all policy decisions to their 'political masters'. The suggestion is that discretions are now called for and can no longer be ignored or downplayed. Indeed, recent thinking has it that even administrative responsibilities require the modest use of significant discretion. Many New Public Management Agenda now assert that "creative and robust uses of discretion" is to be encouraged (Van Wart 2003:223). This, then, appears to be the basic leadership foundation for the role of Administrative leaders.

2.2.3 The Administrator as Conservator

However, regardless of the scope for discretion, the fundamental issue is still the debate concerning whether the public servants exist to primarily serve the citizenship, or whether their role is to serve the institutions of States within which they function.

The latter is the notion of *administrative conservatorship* proposed by Larry Terry (2003). In essence, administrative conservatorship is governance with a disposition to preserve. From an institutional perspective, while there may be scope for discretion, administrative conservatorship is in essence a focus to strengthen and to preserve the institution's special capabilities, its proficiency and its integrity to perform its stated function.

2.2.4 Leadership and Conservatorship – Never the Twain shall Meet?

'Twain' is a classical English word derived from the Old English word *twegen*, meaning two. The phrase "Never the Twain shall Meet", from Rudyard Kipling's (1892) *Barrack-room ballads*, suggests that there may be dichotomies representing such opposing poles that it may be futile to attempt to search for any meeting or common ground in the middle. On the one hand, administrative conservatorship conjures up images of bureaucracy, of fervent defence of the *status quo*, and of hardy resistance to change. On the diametrically opposing hand, leadership suggests visions of newer things to come, of innovation and change, of challenging the *status quo* in favour of a better something else. Is the term 'administrative leadership' then an oxymoron in the context of civil and public service management?

In practice, however, it could be argued that effective administrative conservators do need to possess qualities akin to those associated with leadership in the classical understanding. It could be argued that administrative conservatorship is not without challenges, in that preserving the integrity of public bureaucracies and preserving institutional processes is often filled with risks. Moreover, the process of preservation of the institutions is not incompatible with change and innovation. Administrative leaders can be seen as leaders and statesmen guided by a moral conviction and a moral commitment to the very institutions that, in their beliefs, preserves and protect their democratic way of life.

Theoretically, such a notion is consistent with Tushman's (1988) categorisation of strategic change. Tushman analytically classified strategic change into *frame breaking* and *frame bending*. Frame breaking changes require radical departure from the institution's established customs and culture. They are revolutionary in nature and are

inherently shattering to the institutions. Frame bending changes, on the other hand, do not require a drastic departure from the *status quo*. According to Nadler (1988), such changes emphasise continuity with the past, particularly with the values of the past. Friedrich (1961) also proposed a leadership description called *protecting leadership*, which seeks to provide institutional security and to preserve the institution's particular way of life, its culture, its values, beliefs and interests.

The subtle paradox emerges from this could well be a leadership process where the leaders innovatively and creatively act to foster either small incremental or even zero changes. In the award winning and hugely popular British television series *Yes, Minister* and *Yes, Prime Minister*, written by Anthony Jay and Jonathan Lynn and broadcasted by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) between 1980 and 1988, the fictitious character Sir Humphrey Appleby, played by the late Sir Nigel Barnard Hawthorne CBE (1929 – 2001), was a satirical illustration of just such a paradox. It is perhaps intriguing to note that, according to Cockerell (1988) and Cornell et al (1993) the *Yes, Minister* television series was the favourite television programme of the then British Prime Minister, Baroness Margaret Thatcher, who herself was considered by many to be one of the most formidable public leaders in modern British history. Interviewed by Robin Stringer, the TV and Radio Correspondent for the Daily Telegraph (Daily Telegraph, January 21, 1984), Baroness Thatcher was quoted as saying that the television series was a "closely observed portrayal of what goes on in the corridors of power" and that she "spent part of one Christmas break at Chequers revelling in a whole series of *Yes Ministers* on video".

3.   Research Methodology

3.1 The Research Inquiry

If the notion of administrative leadership presents a leadership value proposition where the tendency is towards governance with a disposition to preserve; if the analysis of administrative conservatorship conjures up images of bureaucracy, of fervent defence of the *status quo*, and of hardy resistance to change; and crucially for this piece of interpretive research, if the proposition is that Irish public and civil services in the main are administratively managed and led, then the suggestion is that when the observed behaviour of Irish public service leaders are interpreted, there will be indications of values and behaviour akin or similar to those typically associated with administrative conservatorship.

3.2 Epistemological and Ontological Positioning

This research in essence, is therefore behaviourally focused. It has been previously argued that the research into human behaviour in general, and leadership behaviour in particular, does not belong to the realm of the natural sciences. The general observation is that human behaviour is not rigidly prescriptive in nature. Regardless of the extent to which human behaviours can be objectively conditioned or influenced by the external environment, the process of self-determination in the unique individual person always plays a significant role. The general observation is that these individual behaviours very rarely conform to singular rationalities, and therefore cannot be ascribed any common 'law' in the scientific sense. Therefore, constructionism would be the preferred ontological position, rather than that of objectivism.

If human behaviour does not belong to the realm of the natural sciences, then it would be doubtful that the study of human behaviour can and should follow the same principles, procedures and ethos for the study of the natural sciences. At best, even critical realism would be considered more appropriate than the straightforward positivism. Indeed, It can be argued that effective leadership relies on the

management of subjective interpretations and on the ability to dynamically shape and re-shape the thinking of others rather than being defined or restrained by them (Grint 2001). As such, the preferred epistemological positioning would be that of interpretivism, which requires the researcher to research into the subjective interpretation of social actions.

3.3 Research Methodology & Research Methods

The notion of having a perspective implies that an abstraction of the perceived reality exists – that it is possible to attempt to construct a theory or an explanation based on some observed phenomenon. Bryman and Bell (2003) suggested that research methods are not neutral tools, but are closely linked to the ways in which the researcher envision the connection between the various perspectives of the nature of social reality and how they can be examined. The classical divide in terms of how the perspectives can be examined is the divide between quantitative research and qualitative research.

While a causal relationship between research methods on the one hand, and epistemology and ontology on the other hand, is generally acknowledged, Bryman (2004) did also suggest that the connections between the two are not wholly deterministic, and that research methods are more autonomous in relation to epistemological commitments than is often appreciated.

Nevertheless, it appears that a qualitative approach does tie in well with the previous discussions on the epistemological stance and the ontological position of this research. Moreover, Mason (2002) holds that qualitative research is grounded in a philosophical position which is interpretivist in essence, and thus providing further support for the argument that a qualitative approach is a more appropriate choice for this research.

3.3.1 Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research

Qualitative research differs fundamentally from quantitative research. Bryman and Bell (2003) suggested that qualitative research predominantly emphasis an inductive approach and facilitate the view that social reality is an emergent and constantly

changing construct. Qualitative research is therefore interested in meanings, perspectives and understandings. The aim of qualitative research is to seek to discover the meanings behind the participants' behaviour, to explore their interpretation of situations, and to discern their perspectives on particular issues (Woods 1996). In other words, qualitative research is more concerned with understanding why people behave as they do – to understand their knowledge, their attitudes, their beliefs, or their feelings. The suggestion is that the purpose of qualitative research is to attempt to seek deeper truths by seeking to study things in their natural setting and by seeking to make sense of phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denkin and Lincoln 1994).

In contrast, quantitative research is more concerned with numerical analysis. Quantitative research often begins with a proposition. The proposition is usually articulated as a hypothesis. The quantitative research is then carried out through the generation of numerical data, and a conclusion drawn through deduction. Qualitative research, on the other hand, often begins with merely an expressed intention to explore a particular area. Information or data is then gathered through observations and interviews, and only then are ideas and hypotheses generated from these information and data through inductive reasoning (Mays and Pope 1996).

As such the strength of the quantitative approach to research appears to lie in its reliability, meaning that the research can be repeated, that the same measurements should yield the same results time after time. The parallel argument is that the strength of qualitative research lies in validity, meaning that the discovery from the research is closer to the truth. The implication is that good qualitative research really should explore the core of what is going on rather than just discursively skim at the surface. Often the validity of qualitative methods can be greatly improved by combining a number of research methods through the process of triangulation, or by independent analysis of the data by more than one researcher (Woods 1996).

3.3.2 Critical Evaluation of Qualitative Research

However, the qualitative research approach is not without its critics. A number of criticisms can be levelled at the qualitative research approach.

An obvious criticism that can be directed at qualitative research is that the research approach is overly subjective and that the research is too impressionistic. The criticism is that firstly, qualitative researchers could easily become overly influenced by the close relationships formed with the research subjects, which would result in a biased interpretation of the findings. The risk is that the researcher would become too close to the subjects, and thus become blinkered. Consequently the researchers would then offer explanations only in terms of the situation or the people under observation, and become oblivious to more powerful influences operating on the situation from the outside. Secondly, even in the absence of an influential relationship, there would still be the risk that qualitative researchers could draw conclusions from the findings based on their own idiosyncratic and unsystematic views concerning what is significant and important (Atkinson 1990).

The criticism that qualitative research is overly subjective is paralleled by the concern that qualitative research lacks transparency. Whereas sampling procedures and data analysis are sometimes laboriously defended in quantitative research, it is often difficult to establish just what the qualitative researcher actually did, how subjects were chosen for interviews or observation and how the researchers arrive at the conclusions. Bryman and Burgess (1994) suggested that even the process of qualitative data analysis is frequently unclear.

Another criticism is the issue of generalisation. The criticism is that singular qualitative studies cannot provide grounds for generalisation across cases. The argument is that when participation observation are held or when unstructured interviews are conducted with a limited sample and within a specific local context, it is almost impossible to determine how the findings can be generalised to other settings (Bryman 2004).

The problem of generalisation is often compounded by the difficulty in replicating qualitative research for the purpose of verifying or confirming reliability. By definition, it is impossible to conduct a true replication of any unstructured event where behaviour is observed or is interpreted within the context of a specific time and location setting.

3.3.3 Qualitative Research Methods

According to Bryman (2004) the two main research methods associated with qualitative research are ethnographic or participant observation and qualitative interviews.

3.3.4 Ethnographic / Participant Observation

Ethnography and participant observation entails an extended involvement of the researcher in the event under study – a kind of 'fly-on-the-wall' approach. The involvement can go beyond mere observing. In essence, the researcher aims to become immersed in or become part of the population being studied, so that he or she can develop a detailed understanding of the values and beliefs held by members of the population. A wider range of methods of data collection and source may also be utilised, including interviews, social interactions and review of documentation.

However, due to the requirement for significant time and participation, and due to the difficulties associated with access in the context of a research project associated with activities of the State and of the civil and public services, this method is deemed inappropriate to this research.

3.3.5 Qualitative interviews

Qualitative interviews can be either unstructured or semi-structured. Unlike structured interviews, which are often used for quantitative research, interviews in qualitative research are usually wide ranging, probing issues in details. They seldom involve asking a set of predetermined questions, as would be the case in quantitative surveys. Instead they encourage subjects to express their views in depth.

Unstructured or semi-structured interviews are where the interviewers would have more latitude to qualitatively explore the various perspectives in response to what could be seen as significant replies. Unstructured interviews tend to be very similar to conversations (Burgess 1984). Semi-structure interview is where a somewhat guided

framing is available in order to provide some guidance to the line of discussions. While the interviewee would still have a great deal of leeway in how to reply, the interviewer in a semi-structured interview nevertheless has a list of questions or fairly specific topics to be used as an interview guide.

One particularly useful technique is the critical or significant incident study, in which subjects are asked to comment on real events rather than giving generalisations. This can reveal more about beliefs and attitudes and behaviour.

A semi-structured interview is the qualitative method proposed for this research.

3.3.6 Sampling

This piece of research is an interpretive piece of qualitative research. Qualitative sampling differs from quantitative sampling in that usually, qualitative sample sizes are smaller, nested in their context and interpreted in greater depth than quantitative samples. In contrast, quantitative samples are usually larger in size and with a preference for facilitating context-neutral but statistical significance analysis.

It could be argued that sampling in qualitative research is much less transparent than statistical sampling for quantitative research.

However, in qualitative research, often samples are selected through convenience or opportunities because of the difficulties of population availability, or because of restrictions often placed by the targeted sub-groups. This is particularly applicable to research involving senior public service leaders. Because of their job demand and because of their political associations, some senior public service leaders are often not available or not willing to participate in certain types of social research, or they may select and nominate participants for interviews, rather than allowing the researcher free reins to select.

Thus the argument is that qualitative sampling tends to be purposive rather than statistically random (Kuzel 1992; Morse 1989). Indeed, Bryman (2004) suggested that most writers on sampling in qualitative research based on interviews recommend that

purposive sampling is conducted. The rationale is that purposive sampling is essentially strategic in approach, seeking specifically to establish a good correlation between the research questions and the sampling. In essence, it is to sample on the basis of seeking to interview individuals who are deemed by the researcher to be relevant to the research questions.

In other words, the suggestion is that qualitative sampling involves not only deciding who to observe or interview, but also about settings, events and social process.

3.3.7 Purposive Sampling

The aim of this particular research is to explore the interpretation of public sector leadership from the perspective of public sector leaders. It could be argued that ultimately all acts of public service will eventually affect the general public in a direct way. Thus it could be argued that assessing the interaction between a public service provider and the general public is the best way to assess public sector leadership. In considering an appropriate sample, the question is which public service interaction with the public should become the sample target for this research.

We can taking a cue from the well known American writer and scientist, Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790), whom as a diplomat and politician was himself a well known public servant, and whom many considered one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. One of his better known quotes may provide a somewhat light-hearted pointer. In one of his letters to Jean Baptiste Le Roy dated 13 November 1789, Franklin wrote "But in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes" (Smyth 1907:69).

Focusing on death and taxes, the light-hearted inference is therefore that the Department of Health, with its association of life and death, and the Revenue Commissioners under the Department of Finance, with its tax management functions, are the two government departments that interface most constantly with the general public. By that rationale, they became the primary targets for our purposeful sample selection.

Another area of constant interaction with the general public is in the arena of law and order. The application of justice and jurisprudence has two separate façades – that of crime prevention and law enforcement on the one façade, and that of judiciary review, legal interpretation and law making on the other façades. Thus, it could be equally argued that within the Department of Justice, the national police force, the *An Garda Síochána* in the Republic of Ireland, with their responsibilities over crime prevention and law enforcement; and an independent judiciary agency such as the Equality Tribunal, with their responsibility to make legal judgement and to establish legal precedence in the interpretation of laws that affect the daily lives of the citizens, would also be prime targets for our purposeful sample selection.

The research aims to explore the interpretation of public sector leadership from the perspective of *top* public sector leaders. Hence it is proposed that the samples should be drawn from either the highest or the second highest level within the targeted organisation.

Accordingly then, the samples for this research comprise:

- The Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, the highest-ranking civil servant at the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.
- The Director of the Equality Tribunal, the executive head of the independent judiciary agency.
- The Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána* with responsibility over Strategy and Resource Management, the second highest ranking officer in the national police force.
- The Assistant Secretary with special responsibilities over Acute Hospitals and Associated Services, the second highest ranking civil servant in the Department of Health and Children.

There is no doubt that these sampled individuals hold powerful positions of direct leadership and influence over the lives of the majority of, if not every citizen in Ireland. Hence the proposition is that these are valid samples for the purpose of this research.

3.3.8 Possible Framing – Significant Event Analysis

A possible framing for the interpretive interviews could focus on the subject's leadership related significant events. Significant event analysis is a learning methodology popular amongst medical and healthcare professionals, but arguably has its roots in leadership research. It was suggested that the systematic approach of significant event analysis dates back to the U.S. Air Force development of Critical Incident Review in the Second World War, which sought to examine effective and ineffective examples of leadership in combat in order to analyse the leadership actions so that training needs could be identified (Ashmore and Johnson 2006). This method has been effectively used in social research on a number of occasions (Bryman and Bell, 2003).

The suggestion proposed here is that if a leadership incident is classified as 'significant' by the interviewee, the assumption would be that the interviewee would have interpreted the event as significant through his or her own perspective of what constitute leadership. Discussions and analysis of these perspectives would then draw out both the perceived perspective of leadership as well as the possible underlying moral and ethical value assumptions in those events.

3.4 The Research Question.

Returning to our research proposition, we suggested that interpreting the leadership behaviour of the sampled Irish public service leaders would provide a glimpse of their perspective of what is acceptable leadership in the context of public service – a glimpse of their moral and ethical compass, to use the terminology of our initial conceptual framework. The interpretation may also provide some indication of the general value perspectives associated with public services in Ireland.

Therefore the framing of the interviews would be around the broad discussion on "what, in your view, does leadership look like in your division, or in the public service at large?" Possible questions framing the discussions during the semi-structured interview could include question such as:

- In thinking about what leadership looks like – can the interviewee provide some instances where he/she have seen/not seen leadership being exercised within his/her organisation?

- What are the challenges within the interviewee's organisation that need leadership? Why does he/she think these challenges require the exercise of leadership?

- What competencies are required for effective leadership in his/her area of the public sector, at the different levels?

- What is the current capacity within the organisational system for leadership, and in what ways does the system currently support or constrain the exercise of leadership?

- What may need to change about the way the organisational system operates to better support the exercise of leadership?

- How should development interventions/courses be designed to nurture and develop leadership behaviour?

Utilising significant incidences, the motive is to seek describe perceived acts of leadership and seek to interpret:

- Why would the interviewee call those events acts of leadership?

- What in the interviewee's view were the ethical and moral values that guided those particular acts of leadership?

- What in his/her view were the values created by those particular acts of leadership

- How does he/she think those particular acts of leadership were perceived by the public?

4.   Interpretive Analysis: Situational Context

The four interviews conducted for this research were: the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners at the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Director of the Equality Tribunal at the Office of the Equality Tribunal, the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána* with responsibility over Strategy and Resource Management at *An Garda Síochána* Headquarters and the Assistant Secretary with special responsibilities over Acute Hospitals and Associated Services at the Department of Health and Children.

The average duration of the interviews was fifty-five minutes. All the interviews were fully transcribed. For the purpose of meeting research ethics guidelines, the actual names of the interviewees are not disclosed. However, their job positions and ranks are known – the reason being that the explanation of their job positions and ranks provides a basis for the contextual interpretation of their leadership behaviour. An interesting quantitative analysis here is that while the average duration of the interviews was fifty-five minutes, with a variation of less than five minutes (representing a 9% variation) between the longest and the shortest interview, yet the transcripts showed that the number of words spoken by each interviewee were 7,199 words, 11,423 words, 7,973 words and 8,380 words respectively, a variation of 4,224 words (or a 59% variation) between the most and the least words used.

It is often very difficult to analyse the transcripts of qualitative interviews because of the limitation of analysing mere written words on paper. The lack of contextual background means that the transcripts may not reflect the richness of the actual exchange between the interviewer and the interviewee. Often it is the non-verbal messages that provide greater meanings than mere words – the paralinguistic, the facial expressions, the laughter, the body language, the posture and mannerism all adds to the overall message being communicated.

It is for this purpose of adding to the interpretation that this section provides a discussion of the interviews' situational context. Thus in this section, we describe for each of the four interviews:

- The situation and the circumstance in which the interview took place.
- An analysis of what the situation and the circumstance might reveal concerning the nature of the leadership being exercised.

4.1 Interview 1: Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners.

This interview was with the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners of Ireland. The interview was requested through his personal assistant, and an Informed Consent form together with some initial briefing notes explaining the purpose and the intent of the interview were forwarded to his office prior to the interview.

4.1.1 Ethnographic Interpretation – the Situational Context of the Interviews.

The Office of the Revenue Commissioners, in every nation, is arguably the most influential of all public sector organisations. It is often given a great deal of kudos, and is perhaps a public organisation feared by many more people that most other law enforcement agencies.

One of the reasons for the high position perceived is perhaps because the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, in particularly in the case of Ireland, is charged with raising the entire public expenditure income of the State, and thus carry more political, legal and economic influence than any other public departments or agencies. As for the fear, there is anecdotal evidence that business organisations in particular fear a tax audit from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners more than a visit by the Fraud Squad or any other law enforcement agencies, perhaps because the former is much more likely to happen and, when happened, much more likely to develop into negative consequences. This perception of the power of the Revenue Commissioners was amplified by historical events such as the conviction of the notorious gangster Al Capone (Aphonse Gabriel Capone, 1899-1947) in the United States in 1931. Al Capone was considered 'untouchable' by Federal law enforcement agencies until he was brought down by the Internal Revenue Services (IRS) for tax evasion.

Unique amongst the Irish civil service in its organisational structure, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners was established by Government Order back in 1923, which provided for a Board of Commissioners that only comprises a Chairman and two Commissioners, all of whom carry the rank of Secretary General. The Chairman of the Board is also the Accounting Officer for Revenue. The Office is managed through a Management Board, and reporting to the Management Board are currently in excess of 100 Revenue offices nationwide, with a staff compliment of over 7,000. The stated Mission Statement of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners is "To serve the community by fairly and efficiently collecting taxes and duties and implementing import and export controls." The budget for the fiscal year 2007 calls for at least €52 billion in tax income for the year.

The location as well as the décor of the Office of the Revenue Commissioners befits the perceived high standing of the Office. The Office was located within the buildings of Dublin Castle. Dublin Castle is the historical seat of Dublin, the origins of which can be dated back to Viking occupation in the tenth century. Most of the important Presidential and State functions are normally held in Dublin Castle. Classic and antique oak panels decorate the walls and the corridors leading to the office of the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners. The waiting room was decorated with classically styled leather armchairs and sideboards; and the outer office where four executive assistants are based are similarly decorated. The Chairman's own office was a spacious carpeted room with high ceiling and wall-to-wall wood panels. There was a solid wood classic executive desk with armchairs on one side of the room and a ten-seat solid wood conference table with armchairs on the other side.

An executive assistant conducted us into the Chairman's office, and at the commencement of the interview, an intercom was used to summon the executive assistant to take the order for tea or coffee. Tea and coffee was then brought in and served using fine china by the executive assistant, and at the end of the interview, the executive assistant was called in to take us back down to the main Castle gate.

4.1.2 Contextual Interpretation – Leadership Behaviour Analysis.

Within such a situational context, and given the perceived and real high position of the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, the behaviour and mannerism of the interviewee reflects a sophistication corresponding to his position of prominence. The atmosphere created was one of hallowed sacredness; almost creating the impression that when entering the Office of the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, one has entered into the inner sanctum of some sacred domain. The neatly pressed custom shirt, the silk tie with the gold tie-clip and the cuff-links, framed by the classical décor of the large and well appointed office begs to command prim and proper decorum from anyone privileged enough to be granted an audience. In this context, it would be hard to expect a leadership atmosphere of participation or of low power-distance. The image projected instead was one of an organisation that is tightly controlled and tightly managed, perhaps following a professionally bureaucratic, but nevertheless highly hierarchical in structure.

4.2 Interview 2: Director of the Equality Tribunal.

This interview was with the Director of the Equality Tribunal. The interview was requested through her executive assistant, and an Informed Consent form together with some initial briefing notes explaining the purpose and the intent of the interview were forwarded to her office prior to the interview.

4.2.1 Ethnographic Interpretation – the Situational Context of the Interviews.

The Equality Tribunal is an independent state body in Ireland vested with the power to investigate or mediate complaints of discrimination. The tribunal is empowered to issue legally binding decisions, with its statutory authority framed by both the Equal Status Act 2000 and 2004, outlawing cases of discrimination outside the work place, and the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004, outlawing cases of discrimination at work. The Tribunal's decisions would include not only binding directives to re-establish equality in cases of continual discriminatory policies and practices, but also binding direction for compensation to redress loss as a result of acts of discrimination.

All Tribunal decisions can be appealed to the Circuit Courts for equal status cases or to the Labour Court for employment equality cases.

In line with the classical *Trias Politica* model of democratic governance where the power of the State is divided into the *Executive*, the *Legislative*, and the *Judicial*, the Equality Tribunal's role is purely Judicial in nature. The Tribunal is bounded by existing legislations, and will only act in response to complaints lodged with them in writing. It will not proactively initiate cases of alleged discrimination, not does it have the executive authority to act to enforce the implementation of the decisions once they are made. It is the Courts of Law, specifically the Circuit Court, which has the power to enforced compliance to the Tribunal's decisions. But at the same time, upon appeal, the Circuit Court also has the power to overturn the Equality Tribunal's original decisions.

It has to be in this context of frustrated power and vacuum of acknowledgement that we view the leadership of the Tribunal. Indeed, examining the physical environment of the office of the Equality Tribunal provides evidence that supports the proposition of a lack of regards. The office is housed in a small building tucked away at the end of a cul-de-sac, meaning that very few people would even stumble across it by chance as a passer-by. The plain exterior would add to its anonymity, that unless specifically sought, even the occasional few that do pass by the building might not be aware of the legal authorities that in reality are held in the building. The receptionist explained that it is not unusual for visitors to be mistakenly brought to the Equality Authority by the taxi drivers, rather than to them – the anecdotal evidence suggest that the average citizen is aware of the Equality Authority, and not the Equality Tribunal, despite the fact that the Equality Authority is only a statutory body for promoting equality and for providing information and advice while the Equality Tribunal is in contrast the body with the legal power to decide on cases.

The décor of the actual office for the Director of the Equality Tribunal looked tired and in need of updating. The unassuming décor of the office betrayed the position and the legal power vested in the occupant, and the office furniture was of the type readily available from catalogue mail-order houses. The corridor leading to the Director's

office was bare and without distinctive characteristics, and there were no outer office adjoining the Director's Office.

At the commencement of the interview, the Director made the tea and coffee herself from items on a trolley brought in previously, and at the end of the interview, accompanied her guests all the way back down to the main entrance.

4.2.2 Contextual Interpretation – Leadership Behaviour Analysis.

Within such a situational context, despite the actual authority vested in the Director and her office to pass judgements that could affect the fundamental values of the entire Irish society, the behaviour and mannerism of the interviewee could be described as very down-to-earth. The atmosphere created was non-assuming and the mannerism portrayed was one that did not suggest hierarchy or ranks.

In this context, the image projected was one reflecting a participative leadership style, and reflecting an environment of very low power-distance. The image projected was one of an organisation structure that is relatively flat, with a high degree of autonomy and independence.

4.3 Interview 3: Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána*.

This interview was with the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána*. The interview was requested through the official command channel, and facilitated through the request of the office of the Director General of the interviewer's own Institution. An Informed Consent form together with some initial briefing notes explaining the purpose and the intent of the interview were forwarded to his office prior to the interview.

4.3.1 Ethnographic Interpretation – the Situational Context of the Interviews.

An Garda Síochána (meaning in English, 'The Guardians of the Peace') is Ireland's national police service. Headed by a Commissioner and assisted by two Deputy Commissioners, the *Garda* organisation comprises some 13,000 sworn officers

(approximately 11,000 in uniform, and around 2,000 detectives who always operate in civilian attire) and about 3,500 civilian support staff.

Compared to other neighbouring national police forces in Europe, *An Garda Síochána* is unique in that not only is it responsible for fulfilling the crime prevention and law enforcement role, it is also responsible for the State security services as well as the border control immigration services. Arguably then, this is one public service where without exception, every citizen and every visitor to the State will directly or indirectly interact with at some point of their life.

Uniformed members of *An Garda Síochána* do not carry firearms. It is a proud tradition of the service that standard policing is carried out by uniformed officers unarmed, although firearms are carried by detectives and special tactical units. To quote Commissioner Michael Staines (1885-1955), the First Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána,* at the 1922 inauguration of the force, *"An Garda Síochána* will succeed, not by force of arms or numbers, but by their moral authority as servants of the people" (O'Mahony 2002:486)

The Office of the Deputy Commissioner is based in the *An Garda Síochána* Headquarters, located in the Phoenix Park in central Dublin, alongside *Áras an Uachtaráin* (the 18th Century stately home that is the official residence of the President of Ireland), *Farmleigh*, (another 18th Century mansion that is the State Guesthouse which provides premier accommodation and facilities to visiting dignitaries), and an imposing 19th century complex that is the Headquarters of the Irish Defence Forces. The *An Garda Síochána* Headquarters itself is a 19th Century barracks style compound, with the main buildings front on to a large parade ground. The main buildings have survived to this day virtually unchanged from their original build.

The Deputy Commissioner's actual office was serviced by an outer office, which was staffed by a Superintendent, an Inspector, a Sergeant and two civilian staff. While waiting for the interview, we were offered tea and coffee, promptly provided by the Sergeant in a side pantry. It is interesting to note that the rank of Sergeant is usually the uniformed supervisory rank in the average *Garda* station – but in the context of

the Deputy Commissioner's support office, he is the most junior rank, consigned to being the one having to make the tea and coffee.

The décor of the Deputy Commissioner's office was neat and regimental, traditional in accord with the classical architecture of the building yet with evidence of possessing cutting edge technology and communication facilities. It was worth noting also that despite the numerous overseas assignments throughout the career of this Deputy Commissioner, there were no photographs, mementos or evidence keepsakes on display. It was perhaps an indication of preference for practical functionality over sentimentality.

4.3.2 Contextual Interpretation – Leadership Behaviour Analysis.

Deputy Commissioners are normally in uniform, and the atmosphere of the interview was one of discipline and control. His conversation and his mannerism were controlled, and his response to questions rehearsed; his choice of words was deliberate and prepared, and he made no efforts to hide the fact that it was so. It was behaviour not unexpected from an individual who throughout his life had only known a single career in a regimental uniformed service, and who came up the ranks from the most junior to the apex. In essence an individual whose personal behavioural style and personal culture and values has become so thoroughly at one with the inherent corporate culture and values of the organisation in which he served.

In this context, the image projected was a leadership style that was equally military and regimental, exercised through ranks and hierarchy, emphasising obedience and compliance with little scope for autonomy.

4.4 Interview 4: Assistant Secretary in the Department of Health and Children.

This interview was with the Assistant Secretary in the Department of Health and Children. This interview, unique amongst the four interviews, was the only one arranged directly with the interviewee, despite him being the second highest-ranking civil servant in the largest department in the State. Even though the request was agreed to by himself directly, the Informed Consent form together with some initial

briefing notes explaining the purpose and the intent of the interview were nevertheless still forwarded to him prior to the interview.

4.4.1 Ethnographic Interpretation – the Situational Context of the Interviews.

The Department of Health and Children in Ireland is the largest and most diverse department within the Irish public and civil service sector. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in the Republic of Ireland reported in its 2007 Quarterly National Survey that of the 2,095,400 total number of persons in employment in the Republic of Ireland during the second quarter of 2007, 110,400 or 5.3 percent were employed in the Health Sector. This is quite a low figure comparatively. In 2004, the Centre for Health Workforce Studies at the School of Public Health, State University of New York indicated that health care occupations as a proportion of total workforce in the United States were expected to grow from 8 percent to 9 percent between 2002 and 2012. In the United Kingdom, figure published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for the year 2005 indicated that of the 28.61 million people in employment in the United Kingdom in 2005, just over 2 million or 7% were employed in the health sector.

Given the nature of the works of the department, the Department of Health and Children has many offices located around the country. The main 'head office', however, is housed in a large office block in the middle of the commercial section of the Capital city. The office block was built in the 1970s, and there has been minimal internal upgrading since. The fixtures and the décor appear tired and aged. Typically laid out in the architectural style of that era, the building was a maze of corridors with individual offices on either side. The office of the Assistant Secretary was neat and tidy, but the décor was consistent with the rest of the building.

The busy-ness of the building reflect the busy-ness of a Department of this size, but perhaps also reflect the bureaucracy of a Department of this nature, with staff seen moving from place to place with armloads of files and paperwork. That notwithstanding, the outer office of the Assistant Secretary was vacant, despite evidence of occupancy in the three desk stations. We were later informed that all his administrative and secretarial staffs were on leave that day. The Assistant Secretary

came down personally to the main reception to collect us and conduct us back up to his office, and personally saw us back down to the main reception afterwards. Despite evidence of fully functional tea-making facilities in the outer office, no tea and coffee were offered during the interview, presumably because all the administrative and secretarial staffs were on leave that day.

4.4.2 Contextual Interpretation – Leadership Behaviour Analysis.

The Department of Health and Children is large and functionally oriented. Despite the tendency for bureaucracy, the high level of activities at the functional level (the traditionally referred 'blue collar' level) may imply a culture reflecting a high degree of social equality, especially where trade unionism is prevalent. The direct and hands-on approach of the Assistant Secretary, who is in rank the second highest-ranking civil servant in the department, may be evident to that.

The image projected was certainly a leadership style reflecting participation and a high degree of consultation, as well as reflecting an emphasis on partnership and communication.

5.   Interpretive Analysis: Analysing the Individual Transcripts

Focusing on the analysis of the individual interviews, the proposal is to frame the analysis using a number of themes to build up the interpretation of leadership behaviour and leadership values. The interpretation of leadership behaviour and leadership values is the essence of this research.

The attempt is to interpret the mindset of the interviewees who are acknowledged leaders in appointed senior position of public service leadership. The interpretation of their views and their perspectives of leadership in the context of public service might provide some indication of the broad value perspectives associated with public services in Ireland.

The suggestion is that the following theme would be seen as appropriate to the analysis:

- *Overall leadership style* – from the interviews, how did the interviewees reflect their own style of leadership?
- *Leadership behavioural elements* – from the interviews, what were the behaviour aspects alluded to by the interviewees as behaviour essential to effective leadership? The analysis would be framed by common leadership behavioural attributes such as vision, communication, risks, politics and flexibility (Méndez-Morse 1992).
- *Critical incidents* – what were the reflections of the interviewees with regards to the example(s) of what they saw as effective leadership?
- *Critical incidents* – what were the reflections of the interviewees with regards to the example(s) of what they saw as ineffective leadership?

5.1 Interview 1: The Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners at the Office of the Revenue Commissioners.

5.1.1 Overall leadership style

The Chairman's view of leadership appeared to reflect a charismatic perspective. There was liberal admiration for innovation and creativity, yet paradoxically at the

same time saw leadership to be bounded by the status quo. Perhaps that was a reflection of the politics associated with the high position he held, and reflecting the delicate balance between conflicting demands from the various stakeholders. As such, his description of leadership approach was sometimes seemingly paradoxical and contradictory.

For example, a sense of conflict could be detected between his view of leadership as an intuitive behaviour and his view of leadership as being driven by foresight and vision:

> "… talking about leadership I think a lot is intuitive on the day …"

> "… I suppose the word that comes to mind straight away would be that you have the vision for what the organisation is all about … that you have the vision maybe where you want the organisation to go during your time as the head or as a leader within the organisation …"

Nevertheless, the description he used to describe leadership reflected a preference for a directive style of leadership influenced by personality and charisma – the sense that his ideal leader would be an almost larger than life character:

> " … that you would regard yourself as somebody who is there to show absolute commitment to the goals of the organisation, that you would regard yourself as somebody who, with that in mind, wants to and has the ability to inspire others to work towards the same goals …"

The sense of hierarchy came across very strong – that the charismatic influence was top-down:

> "… Well, I think there is room for that [type of behaviour] at different parts of the organisation, but very heavily influenced by message that comes from the top. If you have somebody at the top who is totally risk averse and who makes it very clear that the driving ethos of the organisation is never take chance,

never make mistake, then down the line … certainly by and large it won't happen …"

"…But [things] won't be shaped or changed in the organisation unless there is somebody or some group of people at the head of the organisation … who have the vision or a view of how things could be done more excitedly or more differently … in our own case, I think the ability of the Board and the MAC [Management Advisory Committee] in here to change the way we do business is quite extensive …"

"… So the organisation can change, but I think the organisation will only change if there is somebody or … who wants to change it …"

Indeed, this perspective of charismatic yet hierarchical leadership style was reflected in the Chairman's view of himself as a leader:

"… I am grounding a lot of that in my own experience of leading Revenue through a period where we went from being an organisation that had maybe a reputation of blandness – we had problems … where we got out of that and where we now have our standing – I shouldn't be the one to say that but we generally have feedback that our standing is pretty positive …"

"… So that you have people out there who think, okay, that our Chairman, he gives the right message; he descends the organisation he won't let us down, etc., etc. …"

5.1.2 Leadership behavioural elements

5.1.2.1 Vision

The Chairman was strong on the concept of leadership vision, and saw that having a vision was a core element of leadership behaviour:

"… I suppose the word that comes to mind straight away would be that you have the vision for what the organisation is all about … that you have the vision maybe where you want the organisation to go during your time as the head or as a leader within the organisation …"

"… I am not sure it is the same. I suppose, you know, if somebody had said that Chairman or the Commissioner leadership is much more in terms of the sort of vision, broad objectives – the view of getting from place A and having a view of what place B might actually look like in fairly general terms …"

5.1.2.2 Communication

The perception put forward by the Chairman seemed to be that for leaders to have a vision, the vision needed to be communicated to the followers. Although the actual claim was that the communication should not be 'dictatorial' in style, the tone did suggest unilateral communication, rather than bilateral communication – this interpretation appeared to support the earlier analysis of the Chairman's preference for a more directive approach to leadership:

"… That out of it all you feel you can communicate with people in such a way that you are articulating your vision, you are giving them a clear sense of the direction in which you think the organisation should go, and that you are doing all of that not in a dictatorial sort of a style, but in a style that is inclusive, that involves your other managers with you, in a collaborative sort of working style …"

5.1.2.3 Risk adversity

The Chairman appeared quite keen to raise the theme of risk in leadership. On this there seemed to be a paradoxical conflict – that on the one hand there was an acknowledgement that taking risk is inevitable in leadership:

"… that you are somebody who appreciates the risks that are associated with the works of the organisation, and who wants to manage those risks, but who

is also prepared to take risks, reasonable risks, in furtherance of the goals of the organisation …"

But on the other hand, simultaneously acknowledged a system where risk averse behaviours were encouraged and even rewarded:

"… Some of the national functions we do are impact extraordinary degree on individuals. So there isn't really a culture there. And then unfortunately from time to time that risk averse culture is reinforced when you have one or two sort of fiascos or events – like the recent learner permits, recent Shannon, back to Travers, the PPARs, all of that …"

(The "learner permit" situation referred to a recent announcement by the Minister for Transport on a Thursday that effective the following Tuesday, learner drivers were no longer permitted to drive without being accompanied by someone with a full licence. Mass confusion and panic ensued amongst some 425,000 Provisional Licence holders, all of whom were given only four days over a Bank Holiday weekend to scramble for alternative travel arrangements to school or to work. The "Shannon" incident was when the national airline *Aer Lingus* made the announcement to withdraw the direct service from Heathrow to Shannon, which is Ireland second largest airport, and switch the Heathrow service to Belfast, which is outside the Republic; that the Minister of Transport was found to be unaware of the decision prior to the announcement, because he had not been briefed by the his Secretary General. "Travers" referred to the 2005 Travers Report that investigated the illegal charging of nursing home patients and questioned why senior civil servants never brought the controversial issue to the attention of the then Minister for Health. The Secretary General of the Department of Health was later unceremoniously transferred to another public office position. PPARs was the failed HR and payroll system for the Health Services Executive, which had cost over €130 million beforeit was completely abandoned as a result of non-performance.)

It seemed to be the Chairman's suggestion that, compounded by high profiled project failures like the ones mentioned above, it was inherent in the system to encourage risk adversity in the public service leaders:

"… None of that would encourage senior public service leaders, I think, to take risks. Your encouragement will, it will apply probably in the opposite direction, that you would go into your bunker and you will make sure that you don't expose yourself to it in that way, and the consequence is of course that it slows down the whole process of change and all of that …"

5.1.2.4 Political constraint

The link between the nature of the system and how the system encourages risk adversity was ascribed by the Chairman to the political system:

"… we operate for example in a political system, so the extent to which you can change an organisation in Ireland in the civil service certainly has to have regards to political direction …"

There was certainly frustration expressed towards the constraints placed by the political system on innovation and entrepreneurial thinking:

"… And I would think also that the whole process of the Public Accounts Committee, that accountability is, I mean in some ways it strikes me that those *Oireachtas* Committees on the one hand they want the public service to be innovative, they want the public service to emulate the private sector, on the other hand they are the quickest bodies, if some small mistakes were made to say you shouldn't have done that. So I am not sure that there is enough freedom there yet, to allow, it is really to let public servants become more entrepreneurial, if I can put it that way …"

5.1.2.5 Flexibility

That's not to say we cannot detect any sense of a desire for innovation and flexibility from the Chairman. There appeared to be an understanding that there needs to be flexibility in the approach to leadership:

"… I am not sure there is any sort of single answer to that because you have different types of organisations – organisations will operate in different situations will operate differently …"

"… that you don't have a closed mind about anything, that you are prepared to learn, you are prepared to show people I suppose a better way …"

"… Now, that said, for Revenue, we are an independent body – we have a mandate from Government to administer the tax and customs and we have a degree of independence. At the same time I am answerable to the Minister so I can't go bananas altogether. But in terms of not so much what we do, at the end of the day we have to administer the tax system and there are certain statutory requirements there and there are certain equality requirements, consistency requirements, but beyond that in the way we do it and how efficiently we do it and whether we use new methods, whether we use new thinking about tax collection and tax compliance, that certain is something that can be changed by the organisation …"

5.1.3 Critical incidents of effective leadership

The Chairman specifically identified three individuals as Irish public service leaders whom he greatly admired – Thomas Whitaker, Paul Haran and Dermot McCathy.

"…go back to thinking about individual public servants who kind of, who stood out from time to time. And you are talking about the Whitaker, the Paul Haran's of this world who exercised leadership …"

"… So Haran, Whitaker and I think also … when the whole Strategic Management process started in the Department of the Taoiseach, again I think people like Dermot McCarthy were quite visionary there.

Thomas (T.K.) Whitaker was the youngest ever person to be appointed Secretary General at the Department of Finance, when he was only thirty-nine in 1956. It was at a time when Ireland was in deep depression. Whitaker proposed an economic plan

promoting free trade, increased competition and the end of protectionism. The plan aimed to shift the fundamental economy in Ireland from agriculturally based to industry and services based. His plan became known as the Programme for Economic Expansion, which became a landmark in Irish economic history, primarily for its bold new ideas.

Paul Haran was a former Secretary General at the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. In the words of the Chairman,

> "… he went to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, who took initiatives in terms of opening up the whole agenda about Ireland's regime for encouraging foreign direct investment, who opened the agenda for education, and that of science skills and tax agenda, and who really I suppose, I think took that Department to a new level in terms of thinking about the future and trying to get create some sort of a vision of where we are going."

The Chairman also described Haran in terms of his persistence in the face of risks and resistance:

> "… Paul Haran whose view, for example, the vision of the 12.5% Corporation Tax, and all of that implied in terms of bottom line tax revenues and our relationships with the EU was quite brave and was resisted definitely around the system … it was very much against the perceived views, and very much seeing that there was a vacuum in policy taking, and deciding to fill that vacuum rather than just stand back and complaint about the fact that the vacuum was there in the first place … he has a very definite belief in that he was very much in touch with what industry will be thinking and what the US multinationals in particular would be thinking, so he saw that this was a hugely significant factor – and all sorts of things have been credited for the Celtic Tiger, and I think that was significant. And I know other people claim credit for the 12.5%, as politicians do, but little doubt that the idea came initially from him …"

Dermot McCarthy is the current Secretary General to the Government and Secretary General at the Department of the *Taoiseach* (Office of the Irish Prime Minister). He is also the Chairman of the National Economic and Social Council. McCarty is acknowledged to have played an enormous role in steering the Social Partnership process in Ireland, which many credited as a key factor in the economic success of the country since 1987. Initiated in 1987, Social Partnership (*Pairtíocht sóisialta* in Irish) is a triennial process of national tripartite negotiation involving the Government, employers and trade unions. It has been credited as a key process for turning Ireland from an economy of high inflation and weak growth with increased emigration, unsustainable government borrowing and high national debt in 1987; to the current standing as the faster growing economy in Europe with the highest GDP per capita.

Other citing from the Chairman for effective leadership included the Department of Agriculture and Food during the Foot and Mouth crisis and the Health Services Executive in its attempt to reform the health services:

> "… I think for example the leadership shown at the Department of Agriculture and Food some years ago during the whole Foot and Mouth crisis was extraordinary feat, very, very good, strong leadership and a fusion of leadership and management dealing with the crisis …"

> "… I think where there is leadership, and you might violently disagree with me going on at the moment, is to watch Brendan Drumm [Head of the Health Services Executive], an effective man in an extraordinary difficult situation, very political, but going back to your point about a conviction that it will work in the end, he must have it. Because certainly if he doesn't, if he hasn't I think he would be gone, so he must have conviction not alone that it will work in the end, but also an absolute conviction that, probably because he comes from a medical background, that it is the best way. I think there is really very strong visionary leadership being displayed there in terms of absolute conviction where he is headed, absolute consistency in delivering that message, and adopting a reasonable if combative approach to those who want to sidetrack him …"

Interpreting the Chairman's descriptions of effective leadership in the public services, leadership concepts that emerged very strongly were concepts of vision, innovation and perseverance in the face of resistance.

5.1.4 Critical incidents of ineffective leadership

The Chairman was however, much less forthcoming in his description of ineffective leadership, perhaps reflecting his political experiences which might have taught him to be careful about making statements of criticism during a recorded interview.

His frustration was directed towards the Department of Finance, which was the Department he was directly reporting to. Contrasting what Paul Haran had accomplished through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment:

> "… I contrast that with the may be less than visionary role at the same time in the Department of Finance where would have been – would have expected that this whole debate would have been taking place about Ireland's future, and the structure of our tax system and our incentives for foreign direct investment all of that …"

And also, contrasting what Dermot McCarthy had accomplished through the Department of the *Taoiseach*:

> "… you know, it stands out for me because it contrast again – I am sorry if I am hitting on the Department of Finance – but the Department of Finance was responsible for the Irish public service, albeit nominally, and yet this role has to be taken in the Department of the Taoiseach, probably because there is somebody in there who was really interested in that. So those are the sort of things that kind of stand out for me …"

Interpreting the Chairman's somewhat limited descriptions of ineffective leadership in the public services, the lack of vision seemed to be the only leadership concepts that emerged.

5.1.5 Leadership Behaviour Interpreted

Interpreting the perspective put across by the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, and reflecting the rank and the position that he held in the Irish public and civil service, it appeared that his ideal description of a public service leader was one that has vision and perseverance within a hierarchical structure, one that inspired other by being presented as a larger-than-life personality, sufficiently innovative and flexible, yet able to navigate political constraints against risks taking.

5.2 Interview 2: The Director of the Equality Tribunal at the Office of the Equality Tribunal.

5.2.1 Overall leadership style

The Director's perception of leadership has to be interpreted in the context of the leadership position she felt she found herself in. The perception was that there was a sense of frustration associated with her leadership. Despite the fact that she was the pioneer in setting up the Tribunal eight years ago, she appeared to have lost her leadership drive for a period of time:

> "… I think, being on leadership … the setting up was great, I enjoyed that bit, it was great fun, the first two or three years not managing around as it were. And then I am actually enjoying this bit, that's the challenge as well, the bit in the middle I got a bit bored to be absolutely frankly I took my eyes off the ball. That's why I think part of the problem is you shouldn't be anywhere for more than five years – I have been here eight years at this stage. I have been here too long, that's one of the problems. But I can work out where to go next, so I haven't gone.

Her frustration seemed to have partly stemmed from non-recognition from the hierarchy above – that her role has not been properly recognised and not adequately supported:

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"… The other problem is actually the Department of Justice, I mean there is lip service but they don't really like equality … The *Garda* and the security and that kind of thing, that is their approach. We are the kind of fluffy side of the Department … the Minister McDowell got up once and unfortunately it was during the EU Presidency discrimination conference, equality conference in Limerick, and he was in the paper that morning, horror, saying inequality is good for business! …"

There was also evidence of a view that leadership was being restrained by the nature of the tasks and by the tribunal's own organisational structure.

"… I mean think about their background, they are coming from HEO [Higher Executive Officer] and middle management, lower middle management of the civil service, and they have to be able to, within a very short space of time to be able to be strong enough personally to deal with sometimes quite difficult senior legal teams, senior counsels … from both sides, they have to have a lot of personal sort of clouts. So they get, I hesitate to use the word, *prima donna*, but they get fairly robust in their views pretty quickly, and I found that leadership in generally exercise can be negative, it's the backward leadership, the resistance stuff …"

There was a definite sense of frustration that the nature of the task and the role positions within the organisation restricted the Director's ability to exercise her leadership influence:

"… It is not a disaster but in fact these key people here at the sort of mediation and investigation teams are also independent under the Act, which puts its own difficulties for management, because they are, and they are very well aware of it. For instance, if they here were deciding a case – they hear a case and they would give me a draft decision with one of the issues out here, to make sure everything come to the same conclusion, the same roughly passed Acts, and I may disagree with their view, but I can't overrule them …"

When put across to her that there might be resistance to leadership, and that there might be resistance amongst her staff against being led, the Director's reply appeared to again reflect her deep frustration:

> "… Yes. In fact it's like herding cats. I mean, really, really it is difficult …"

5.2.2 Leadership behavioural elements

5.2.2.1 Vision

There was no doubt that the Director understood the need for leaders to have visions. After all, she was a pioneer in that she was the person accredited with starting up the Tribunal in the first place. However, she did acknowledge the difficulties in maintaining the vision in the context of the Tribunal – that the tendency is to shift the focus away from the broad vision towards the small details:

> "… I think, I mean speaking generally at my level, the difficulty about leadership is that, leadership does mean stepping back at bit, in my view. And not getting involved with the clutter. But the kind of way of accountability in the Civil Service is, is that you have to know the detail, and if you have to know the detail you cannot step back, you got to stand in there …"

The Director seemed to suggest that the nature of her organisation, being a functionally oriented organisation, greatly limited the role of vision:

> "… I suppose the key challenge we have here, I mean it's the same in the overall civil service, but it's just in a different context, it's to deal with people being compartmentalised, and so forth, is to try to get at a broader horizon and a longer focus …"

> "… The other thing, I think, we were quite isolated here, and it has been a huge challenge to me to try to get myself frankly and everyone else to see outside, to see where the political system, to make sure we know what the Equality Authority is doing, it is very easy to be tunnel vision, just looking at,

and as soon as we get it wrong, we end up getting in all the papers because we made a decision which generally people think it's mad. Some of them it's going to happen anyway because the legislation is actually ahead of people's thinking. But sometimes it's just that we have made a mistake …"

5.2.2.2 Communication

The independent nature of the way tasks were carried out in the Tribunal suggested that communication mostly concerned lateral discussions, rather than either vertical instructions or reports. Thus the impression was that communication was for learning how jobs should be carried out – that there would be certain amount of mentoring and job training, but that once the skills had been acquired, the individuals would be required to carry out the tasks independently:

"… We do, we have reflective practice meetings, which is what we called them. Particularly on the mediation side where people get together and discuss cases that have gone wrong, or right, in fact, they can't talk about cases that have gone wrong because they will go back in a different form, we all have team meetings, and we also have a legal adviser and myself, who do spend a lot of time coaching … and getting training in across all the traditional skills … And we also have mentoring program, it is informal but it is actually when somebody arrives here, as an equality officer, they get formally …. looked after …"

The sense of independence was very strong – that once a case is assigned, staff preferred a hands-off approach from management:

"… but people here have a very peculiar relationship. It just otherwise I wouldn't have given the case, once I have given the case, I cannot get it back. I can't say to them, 'you are making a bags of that, give it back to me' … So in that sense, it is an area which is different from the civil service in all my years …"

5.2.2.3 Risk adversity

The sense of risk adversity came across very strongly from the perspective of the Director:

> "…people are very risk averse … people try to avoid risk, I mean if you are Assistant Secretary in a Government Department, as we have seen, and you don't pass on some information, or you made a wrong call, you could be hung out to dry by the PAC [Public Accounts Committee]. I think that's why the fact the numbers seeking promotion have dropped, partly because you know at AP [Assistant Principal], PO [Principal Officer] levels you have enough money anyway to live in lifestyle, and is a lifestyle choice, but partly that the extra money for being up there in front of in front of the PAC is just not worth it …"

A very interesting reflection here is that, from the perspective of the Director, risk averse behaviour is what the system now prefers. And in contrast to the analysis of another interviewees for this research, in which Paul Haran was cited as an effective leader with vision and innovation, the Director instead cited Haran as one who advanced by being risk averse:

> "… there was a thought, in the old days the civil servant was there to give good advice … That's gone. In my view, I see people now they don't dare to give independent advice. They, whatever they give, straight advice, not what the Minister want to hear, the Minister would go to another adviser, and will by pass you, basically … There are two guys in the Department of Employment, Seamus O Morain who was the old fashion guy and Paul Haran, who got the Secretary General office, was the new guy. And Seamus was going on with the … these are all the policy option to decide, Paul was saying what the minister like and giving the minister just two or three shades of the one option, and he got the kudos, so he got applauded, and the other guy the sideline …."

The suggestion here was that in order to advance in the Irish public service, one has to "play safe".

5.2.2.4 Political constraint

The Tribunal is supposed to be independent from political interference:

> "… under the statues says we are actually independent by law, so no political interference, no political context really basically, the context is discussion I meet with the Minister once a year to give him an annual report, and all the questions … are with a lot of day to day matters …"

However, the Director appeared to give the impression that political behaviour and political constraints were nevertheless rampant at the operational level:

> "… there is one particular office, which shall remain nameless, where the canteen is a very interesting exercise, and you see that there are the wannabes, sucking up to the perceived powerful, it was just extraordinary. And they will go and drink … there are two pubs, one for those who got there and one for those trying to get there, and you can sort of see them, you know, quite interesting …"

The perspective seemed to be that while external political interference is absent at the operational level of the Tribunal, the Tribunal itself nevertheless possessed an internal political arena, and that civil servants who wanted to progress within the system need to be politically wise enough to position themselves on the same side of the tracks as decision holders – once again the notion of "playing safe" as suppose to being seen to be innovative and different:

> "… Well, clones pick clones. TLAC [Top Level Appointments Committee] picks clones. People like the people who do the same things they do. I mean that old mantra, "If you always do what you've always done, you will get what you always got". I think what you are getting is, and I have been at TLAC, and I realise half way through that I didn't want to be Assistant Secretary … it was

just a particular question that I was being asked, and my God, that's what it is about. But it's … I mean the TLAC big question quite clearly there was what I didn't want to do, was how to protect the Minister. And that I see myself as delivering a service, or trying to deliver it as suppose to protecting the Minister, and I don't want to go back into that protecting the Minister kind of game. And that's what it is about. So you pick the person …. so you get the same kind of you know, more clones …"

5.2.2.5 Flexibility

The Director's view seemed to be that, in an environment of "clones", restricted by tight procedures and legal constraints, there did not seem to be much room for flexibility:

"… the challenge here is to move, to increase delivery without compromising quality. At the moment … essentially it takes about a week to take a look at, to do a case, to read it often before hand, in the average case, to have the hearing, and to kind of, come to a conclusion afterwards and write it up. So you have got two days, a day and two days, more or less. But, … if you shortened it up at all, and we have tried umptheen different ways of doing it, then things go wrong …"

Again the risk averse mentality of not wanting to risk things going wrong would add to the rigidity.

5.2.3 Critical incidents of effective leadership

Perhaps out of a higher degree of leadership frustration, compared to all the other interviews, this one interview appeared to comprise very limited citation of effective leadership. Nevertheless, the one citation of effective leadership provided a glimpse of the Director's perspective of what constitute an outstanding leader:

"… I think Sean is not bad as a Secretary General, he is able to, he can be a very good problem solver. He has a number of visions in his head about where

he is going to go in the Department in terms of leading people. He is fantastic at fixing things that goes wrong, he is fantastic at fixing problems and so forth, and he will certainly take a risk and all that kind of stuff, and I think he has a long term view, both for his own career and also for his staff, which is great …"

The characteristics highlighted include "vision", "problem solving" and "fixing things that goes wrong", "risk taking", and a measure of concern for the staff.

5.2.4 Critical incidents of ineffective leadership

And in the same way, perhaps out of the higher degree of leadership frustration, this one interview appeared to comprise more citation of ineffective leadership than all the other interviews.

The Director appeared to associate the failure of leadership with the inability to accomplish certain leadership behavioural tasks. For example, her first citation related to a failure to consult those affected by the leadership decisions:

> "… the consultation processes in the local authorities, they have you know, big, big projects like Dockland projects, they have a caravan permanently on site, with people just taking ideas from the public, and a hugely structured consultation process; not just at the beginning and not relying, like Dublin Corporation, on the post, which doesn't always work, but also on actually active intervention, as supposed to reactive one …"

The second citation related to the failure to coordinate "joint-up" thinking:

> "… they had separated policy and execution completely, rigidly, and they had a whole bundle of people in the health sector who were doing the various little bits of – somebody who had the money, somebody else monitor the standard, somebody would do the transaction – contradicting things, but you ended up with, if you like, a policy sort of elite who has no idea what is happening on the ground, and a delivery sort of bureaucracy which couldn't understand the

strategic points of view, and couldn't see more than sort of the two years contract that they have, to be their whole focus …"

Certainly there appeared to be a perspective that failure of leadership would lead to low morale and low motivation:

> "… I think one of the problems is, well the background is, decentralisation. And with the demoralisation based on that and people … they have been let down by the system, and like, means a hundred percent turnover in the next two years … but the people who are here – they are still doing their jobs but I cannot get them to retch up their performance because they don't see why they should. They may be going shortly, and they are paranoid about it. So there is a kind of morale problem there … It's endemic …"

5.2.5 Leadership Behaviour Interpreted

The Director's criticism of the failure of leadership in the Irish civil service reflected her views of how an effective leader should behave. Her view seemed to suggest that vision, broad but joint-up thinking, and a robust approach to task accomplishment would be the marks of outstanding leaders in the Irish public service context:

> "… it's to try to get at a broader horizon and a longer focus, its the becoming agile rather than a complacent or a static organisation. Overall I think doesn't apply here because what we do is deliver, overall I think that the civil service does not value delivery as much as policy …"

5.3 Interview 3: The Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána* with responsibility over Strategy and Resource Management at *An Garda Síochána* Headquarters.

5.3.1 Overall leadership style

The perspective of leadership offered by the Deputy Commissioner seemed to be hierarchical in nature. His perspective of the leadership structure within his organisation seemed to be functionally coordinated, sectioned into district commands,

divisional commands, station commands and unit commands. This is not unexpected from a uniformed organisation such as police force.

> "… We have performance measurement at district, divisional level, at station level, and indeed even down to unit level …"

His view was that the job of every individual police officer was a "leadership" job – thus every police office was a leader:

> "… I suppose it is fair to say that, we like to believe at least, that from the day that we take in our students into our training college and from that day forward, we try to instil in them a sense of leadership, and the sort of skills of leadership …"

That in itself was an interesting perspective, since his description of the job of a police office reflected a tendency to "direct". The implication is that the Deputy Commissioner's perspective of leadership was autocratic and directive in nature:

> "… they suddenly have to make decisions in relations to diverting traffic, to evacuating buildings, to closing down shopping centres … and they have to be, we like to think, be able to take the lead in a lot of these sort of areas and show leadership in the manner which they manage the situation and show the others how they do it. That would be the general sort of, our ethos within the organisation …"

He defended the right to be directive by claiming a "moral authority", which was also understandable given his understanding that they were the law enforcement organisation:

> "But the whole function of a policing organisation, I suppose, it operates and it succeeds on its moral authority, and on the trust of the people that one serves.

The Deputy Commissioner defended his authoritative perspective with the argument that credibility and integrity were two of the top qualities required in leadership

within *An Garda Síochána*. His argument was that because his officers had credibility and integrity, they have the moral high-grounds to command authority.

> "… I think the leader has to have credibility. I think that without that credibility it is very hard to lead. I think, and I suppose these qualities aren't really confined to leaders. One would expect to find them at all levels of any organisation, but credibility certainly would be one, I think integrity would certainly be very, very high on my list …"

Nevertheless, the perception was that since the police held very high positional power over the public, the exercise of leadership in the context of a police force would inevitably be associated with power and authority.

> "… what one would call the awesome power and authority that goes with the job, in that you can deprive the citizen of his or her liberty. You know, that is an extraordinary power, and I think it is reasonable to expect higher standards from a police officer than from a worker that might be working in the general area outside of any police service, simply because of that …"

5.3.2 Leadership behavioural elements

5.3.2.1 Vision

Unique amongst the four interviews, this was the one interview where the word 'vision' was not used at all by the interviewee throughout the entire interview, and throughout the entire discussion on leadership.

There was, however, mention of strategy, and structured implementation of strategies:

> "… in our last corporate strategy document, we put down six strategies, and behind those six strategies, we have six strategic imperatives, and behind those six strategic imperatives in turn, we have about forty initiatives, that in order to succeed, we must achieve these initiatives …"

The picture presented by the Deputy Commissioner concerning leadership in *An Garda Síochána* seemed to be more about operations and implementation. Even at the Deputy Commissioner level, which is the second highest rank in the organisation, his own description of his role reflected the focus on implementation:

> "… based on the corporate strategy document, and that corporate strategy document sets out the vision for the Garda organisation, and sets out our Mission Statement and our values, and within that document then, it says that we are aiming to be the best police service in the world. That's our objective, to be the best. How are we going to be the best? The Deputy Commissioner that would be responsible for strategy would have to determine how he or she can put a framework in place to make sure that the Guards are going to be the best police force available …"

5.3.2.2 Communication

From the perspective of the Deputy Commissioner, communication in *An Garda Síochána* was strictly hierarchical, with upwards reporting and top-down instructions:

> "… what we have done is we put in place at station level on a daily basis, the Superintendent will meet with his junior ranks, the Guards and the Sergeants, and indeed the Inspectors if that are there, each morning, … and in that meeting, he will get a report based on the six strategic goals of the organisation, and he, will be told under those six strategic goals, what's going on, what's happening, the number of incidents that happened or that occurred in the last 24 hours, what's coming up in the next 24 hours, and generally get a briefing on what's happening in his or her district over that period. Once a week, the Chief Superintendent … will meet his or her Superintendents, and again within that same framework of the six strategic goals, the Superintendents will report to the Chief Superintendent on what's happening, where we are with the targets set out in our Corporate Strategy and in our … Policing Plan, which is our business plan, where we are in relations to those strategies, where we are in relations to the goals. And then on a fortnightly basis, the Chief Superintendents … will meet the Regional Commissioner ….

And then on a monthly basis, we have the Commissioners Management Meeting, upstairs here, where the Commissioner calls in the two Deputies and the ten Assistant Commissioners …"

It appeared that the strict communication structure was the "accountability framework", and communication served only to ensure compliance to strategies and policies.

"… So that although there is not an actual individual performance it is quite easy for the supervisor to recognise that people that are working and those that are not working. And therefore it is easy to see how within the sort of framework that we have how individuals are performing and at what sort of a level, what sort of a standard they are performing …"

5.3.2.3 Risk adversity

Despite the strict hierarchy of control, the Deputy Commissioner did accept the courage of someone risking errors:

"… and it's a hierarchy organisation, and we tend to almost wait until we are told. Leaders don't wait to be told, leaders just get up and do it, until somebody calls halt or until somebody says stop. And you know, if we wait to be told, well nothing happens … where they are now, they will say, look, let's do it. And okay, so you don't succeed all the time, but there is no shame in not succeeding. You know the shame is in not trying. And they are taking on more responsibility. They are pushing the boat out a little bit more than they did. But we do have the constraint of rank and rank structure, which does, to some extent, reduce the capacity to push the boat out …"

"… I think risk taking is essential. I think if you don't chance your arm a lot of the time, you are not going to … One does have to take risks, of course, but the risk has to be measured, and it has to be proportionate …"

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5.3.2.4 Political constraint

In terms of *An Garda Síochána* operating within political constraint, the Deputy Commissioner on the one hand appeared to acknowledge the need to comply with external and political interference:

> "… we absolutely welcome the Ombudsman and we cooperate fully with the Ombudsman Commission, and we have no hang-ups about this at all. As I mentioned earlier, of course we must be accountable for what we do … At the moment we have 26 Joint Policing Boards – 29 I think it is … and we are in the process of developing a framework in conjunction with the local authorities and those involved …"

But on the other hand showed frustration at how the political process interfered with the ability of his officers to perform:

> "… Equally, I don't want to see my Superintendents going into these things and being harassed by public servants or by public representatives …"

5.3.2.5 Flexibility

From the perspective of the Deputy Commissioner, flexibility was job related – that functional flexibility was required as part of the basic job of the police:

> "… within the first hour of being out on the street, they might find themselves in a situation where there is a major incident, there's a major fire or whatever, and they suddenly have to make decisions in relations to diverting traffic, to evacuating buildings, to closing down shopping centres in the event, for example, of bomb threats, and major sporting events depending on how serious it was, and they have to be, we like to think, be able to take the lead in a lot of these sort of areas and show leadership in the manner which they manage the situation and show the others how they do it …"

Aside from functional flexibility, it was acknowledged that there was also regional flexibility:

"… we draw divisional ones and district ones, which follow the framework of the national one, but not precisely, because in each area there are different things that require attention. There are problems peculiar to one area that wouldn't be in another area, so there you have to adjust the plan to provide the policing service that the community of any particular area wants, not the one that we want to give them, but what they want, we must provide that service to them …"

But the impression given was that despite functional and regional flexibility, performance should be standardised and consistent across the entire force:

"… that we can get a framework, that we will all be marking to the same tune, that I don't want, for example, the Chief Superintendent in Waterford going in and doing something totally different from the Chief Superintendent in Donegal …"

5.3.3 Critical incidents of effective leadership

It was interesting that the Deputy Commissioner cited himself as an critical example for effective leadership. His description of effective leadership describes an initiative to introduce formal education qualifications to his officers.

"… in recognising that, say, well, what needs to be done? So, a number of years ago, I introduced a Degree in Police Studies and Police Management, and this was aimed at Superintendents and Chief Superintendents. This was introduced about seven years ago … I introduced the BA in Police Management, and it is done down in our College … and the Degree is awarded by HETAC … And again in order to provide the sort of leadership that our organisation, which is an 1.6 billion industry, requires that we need to do something about it. And I succeeded last year in introducing an Executive Leadership Programme. And this Executive Leadership Programme is a joint

venture between the Smurfit Business School and Harvard … So, against the odds, and I hesitate to say that when I looked for funding for this, I was refused. But I persisted and I got the funding …"

The perspective projected was that, to the Deputy Commissioner, leadership was about task accomplishments.

5.3.4 Critical incidents of ineffective leadership

The Deputy Commissioner was not forthcoming in terms of providing critical incident of ineffective leadership. However, as a counter-argument in his discussion of effective leadership, there was a glimpse of frustration in seeing the failure of the organisation to put in place effective career development. An incident was cited concerning two of his senior officers, who were considered well qualified in the Irish context, but were considered under-qualified when competing with officers across the border:

> "… Three years ago, there was an ad in the paper, from the PSNI [Police Service of Northern Ireland] inviting applicants to apply for a job as Assistant Chief Constable in the PSNI in Northern Ireland. And the requirement was, the qualifying requirement was that the person applying must have done the Bramshill Command Course or the equivalent … Two of our officers applied for the job. One of them, he had the Senior Command Course done in Tulliallan in Scotland. And the same officer had a law degree. And they came back that neither of them were qualified to apply for the job …"

The perspective projected seemed to be that the Deputy Commissioner equated the failure to fulfil a task responsibility with a failure of leadership – for example, that the leadership of the organisation had failed because certain career promotion safe-guards were not put in place by them

5.3.5 Leadership Behaviour Interpreted

The Deputy Commissioner's own definition of leadership was comparatively transparent:

> "… What is leadership? I suppose leadership really is being able to get your team to work with you and to work for you and to motivate them to set objectives and to ensure that the structures are in place to achieve the objectives you are trying to achieve. And in doing that, to make sure that the team are working with you. I am a firm believer that you can't lead unless you have followers …"

It reflected an autocratic and directive style of leadership, with phases like "to work for you" or "to motivate them …" or "to make sure that the team …" Indeed, it is all about "leading from the front" and "bringing your people with you in doing what you are doing":

> "… So, basically, I suppose, leadership is about knowing your business, making sure that you lead from the front, that you are seen to be, that you are seen to have the sort of qualities that one would expect from a leader and that you bring your people with you in doing what you are doing …"

The perspective projected by the Deputy Commissioner was that leadership was pragmatic; it was to command, to execute orders, and to get the job done.

5.4 Interview 4: The Assistant Secretary with special responsibility over Acute Hospitals and Associated Service at the Department of Health and Children.

5.4.1 Overall leadership style

The perception of leadership portrayed by the Assistant Secretary seemed to be less dependent on hierarchy, despite the bureaucratic nature of his department, but more achievement focused. Trust and respect fostered by past accomplishments had been raised numerous times as important elements of effective leadership.

"… my perception of leadership in most incidences is that it is respect for somebody's track record … I think that the leaders who attract the most following in the sense that people are prepared to do what they are proposing, are people who have a track record in a particular area and people you can trust …"

"… but building trust, one of the reasons that we have failed in this area is because each time we said, well of course, you know, we will down-scale this so we will move service from A to B and of course we will give you other things, there will be other things in your local area, we have failed to do that part. We might have scaled down what they were doing and transferred the services but we gave them nothing else. So their reaction is "I don't trust you" And trust in all of this is such a critical component, and if we don't achieve that, we will make little progress on this …"

Indeed, his example of ineffective leadership was one about leadership inaction and non-performance.

The apparent distain for the sheer exercise of positional power through hierarchy was also illustrated by the Assistant Secretary's description of the success of Professor Tom Keane:

"…even the first couple of months Professor Keane I think has achieved some very significant progress just in relation to agreement to certain surgeons not carrying out certain types of cancer surgery anymore … If you try to do that in different ways, if you try to impose that by simply a departmental circular or something like that – we do a lot of things by departmental circular many years ago, fortunately that's long gone, but if you try to do it that way, you'll do nothing …"

5.4.2 Leadership behavioural elements

5.4.2.1 Vision

The Assistant Secretary seemed to suggest that to have vision is the leading or the primary element of effective leadership behaviour:

"… To me, I think leadership involves number one, vision, a sense of where do want to go, i.e. the ability to set the agenda, rather than reacting to it. And leaders in my experience are those who are confident enough to set the agenda, to understand what the variables required are, to deal with those variables, and actually to work to address them …"

And it appeared that the Assistant Secretary's understanding of vision was more than just seeing the vision in terms of seeing the destination. To him, having a vision was also to be able to see how the vision can be accomplished:

"… for me, leadership is about knowing where you want to go, and just as importantly, how to get there, because there is no point in simply setting out a grand vision which is utterly unachievable for practical factors, be they political, be they resources, be they opposition to change or lack of understanding about the nature of change …"

This appeared to be a very pragmatic view of practical leadership behaviour, not just pointing to the future direction, but also able to guide the followers in how to get there.

5.4.2.2 Communication

There seemed to be an understanding that "getting there" required change, and that fear was a key driver behind the resistance to change. The issue of communication for the Assistant Secretary was, in his view, a means to address the fear of change.

"… I think one of the thing is an extraordinary fear of change, understandably in one sense, but an extraordinary fear of change, if anything of substance in the public system is announced as changing, particularly if it involves reconfiguring something … if you say that you want to reconfigure or move services from A to B, that is immediately interpreted as a cut-back in A rather than a genuine improvement for both A and B. And that creates difficulties …"

To him, part of the leadership responsibilities was to ensure a proper communication of the intent of the vision – to explain why we have to go where we are going:

> "… They don't like the idea of change which they don't understand, or which they feel is going to directly affect them and they are quite fearful of it …"

This appeared to support the earlier analysis that the overall leadership style of the Assistant Secretary was less to do with hierarchical power, but more about the substance of visible performance and accomplishment.

5.4.2.3 Risk adversity

The Assistance Secretary's view on risk adversity appeared to be that it was something fostered by the system – that natural behaviour in the public services was risk averse:

> "… In the public service we are very careful, and unfortunately we are trained to be careful in one sense, now that is understandable, I mean you don't want people going off doing things that risk huge amount of public resources – they are not our resources, they are the taxpayers resources …"

> "…And when things do go wrong, inevitably, we are very heavily criticised, if you take the PPARs in the health system, if you take any of the sort of experiments that haven't worked, you might argue that in a private sector firm if they didn't work, they would put it down to experience, they put it down to a loss, they learn from it and move on. In the public system it's seen as some sort of a major failure that wouldn't have happened elsewhere, which may or may not be the case. So yes, we are conditioned, unfortunately, to be somewhat risk averse …"

His view seemed to be that the preference for risk adversity in the public service is self-perpetuated:

"… It is possible that those who come up through the public sector are people, given that they have been selected by other senior public servants, that they will be of a particular kind. They would be of a particular training, of a particular outlook …"

5.4.2.4 Political constraint

Despite the risk adversity and the implication for a preference for the status quo, there appeared to be a level of frustration concerning the challenge to implement the vision. The frustration appeared to be as a result of the perceived political constraints:

"… We run into particular difficulties, I think, when we attempt to proceed to implementation. And that implementation phase, there are many reasons as to why that run into difficulty, but key to it is perhaps, in the public service context, a conflict between political imperatives, often short term political imperatives, and longer term planning and a realisation that improvement in many areas is going to take much longer period of time, and that create its own challenges.

The Assistant Secretary's view appeared to be that politics usually had its focus on short-term gains, which then constraint longer term planning. Another characteristic of Irish politics, in his view, was that interests were usually localised, which make broader visions a greater challenge to implement.

"…Irish politics are very local type of politics, people take their public representatives seriously in the sense that they expect local action and immediate local action …"

"… unfortunately, political capital is inevitably made of this sort of areas, and they become local election issues, and unfortunately its become very, very difficult to make the progress that you like to make in some of these areas …"

Nevertheless, on the positive side, the Assistant Secretary did see the positive side of the Irish political system, in that he enjoyed a great deal more job security in comparison to the American system:

> "… The other things for example I am conscious of the American system, the leaders in the American system would be noticeably different in the sense that, for example, at my level upwards, they would change when the Government changes, so they are politically involved and that must have significant impact on the way they do their business …"

5.4.2.5 Flexibility

The perspective on flexibility was also a pragmatic one in that flexibility was "useful" to bring about accomplishment. This interpretation seemed to be consistent with the previous analysis that the Assistant Secretary saw achievement and accomplishment as a mean to gaining the respect and the trust of the followers:

> "…I mean genuinely there is no point in being absolutely wedded and clear that your particular approach is the right one, if when you look around you, you can't bring anybody with you, or if you can't bring some of the key players with you …"

> "… In other words not being so utterly rigid as to say well, I have decided how I am doing it, I am not doing it any other way …"

> "… And it's knowing what to be flexible about … and you have got to be flexible in knowing what you absolutely have to hold firm on and what you can change …"

There was however a reservation in the extent to which flexibility can be employed – that there is a limit to flexibility:

> "… the paradox is flexible versus vision, flexible versus holding firm, but the flexibility has to be a major judgement call on what can you be flexible about

and what you have to say sorry, but this is absolutely the direct requirement and nothing else …"

5.4.3 Critical incidents of effective leadership

The Assistant Secretary's perspective was that developing visions was what Irish public service leaders seemed to excel in:

"… I think that in the Irish public service we are quite good at identifying in overall terms where we want to go, I am thinking in particular of the health system, where we are not so good is on the implementation side, so the vision in terms of, or the leadership in terms of vision, leadership in terms of planning, in terms of identifying solutions to problems and so on, I think we are quite good at that …"

The primary example cited by the Assistant Secretary as an example of effective leadership related to the implementation of the new cancer control and treatment strategy. The new cancer control strategy involved a major change in the way cancer services were to be delivered, in terms of concentrating services in a smaller number of locations.

"… where the exercise in leadership has been, is number one strategy itself, and number two the steps that the HSE [Health Services Executive] … There is a new cancer Director, a guy called Professor Tom Keane, whose job it is to pull all these together, and to achieve agreement on local hospitals and other care providers to ensure that effectively service are concentrated …"

And he had indeed attributed the effectiveness largely to having an overall vision and to communicating that vision effectively to those affected:

"…I think that message, in terms of communication, is now getting through, because whereas before people would march to retain their local services, now women are voting with their feet. And they are actually going to the service which has been designated as a specialist centre. Now, that was politically

extremely difficult to do. It was a very, very difficult message to sell. Because the perception is that you are downgrading hospitals, you are taking away services from local communities, and to use it as its most emotive terminology, that people would die as a result … I think that is a major exercise in leadership … the approach that has been taken by the HSE, particular by Professor Tom Keane, is a very good example of setting the vision, recognising that people will be afraid of change, confronting that change in a positive way by communicating a reason for why things need to be done differently, working with the people who need to make the change, working with them very closely, securing their agreements, and implementing change over time."

Additionally, the Assistant Secretary cited Professor Brendan Drumm, Head of the Health Services Executive, as an example of an effective leader. Again the theme of vision came up at the forefront:

"… if you take another leader like Professor Brendan Drumm, Chief Executive, who again I think is particularly strong on what George Bush senior used to call "the Vision thing", and he has a very clear view of where he wants to go and how he would propose to get there … he has articulated that view and that vision very clearly. And he will certainly get the full support from the officials in the Department …"

5.4.4 Critical incidents of ineffective leadership

The citation that the Assistant Secretary gave as the example of ineffective leadership appeared to be concerned with inaction on the part of the leaders.

"…it's one that has dragged on for many, many years, and its on how we organise our acute hospitals, and the number of our acute hospitals. 1968, there was a report called the Fitzgerald Report which talked about the organisation of hospital services, and which effective said we have too many little hospitals trying to do too many things … everybody in the public system, everybody in the direct set up within Government and so on, has accepted in

principle that this is the right way to go. Yet forty years later, we have made relatively little progress. And that to me is not only an act of leadership at government level, it is an act of leadership at local level …"

It was the view of the Assistant Secretary that despite the agreement forty years ago, leadership at all levels failed to take the lead by acting:

"… we still have, we have five hospital in the North Eastern region of the country, we probably need at most two, two major hospitals, may be even one. Similarly in Cork, I won't go around the country, so many different areas. We simply have too many hospitals attempting to do too many things …"

His analysis appeared to be that again the fear of change was the cause for the lack of leadership action:

"… that all of the forces who are afraid of change, afraid of losing their local hospital have in many incidences successfully exerted enough influence to counter any suggestion of proper reorganisation …"

5.4.5 Leadership Behaviour Interpreted

The Assistant Secretary's description of Professor Tom Keane could well be interpreted as epitomising his perspective of what constitute an outstanding public service leader:

"… Well, number one, he is respected in his community because he has a long history of delivering in this area, now he also has to be a cancer specialist which in this instance is really quite important because the other cancer specialists in Ireland will listen to him. Secondly he has a strong gift of communication. He has a very good ability to communicate a clear message both to the professionals and to the non-professionals, to the lay people, to you or I, or to the people in the streets explain why things have to be done. Thirdly I think he has a very, very clear vision of what needs to be done. And that was set out in a strategy, the cancer control strategy that I mentioned earlier, but he

has a very, very clear vision. He has a very clear sense of purpose as to how he is going to go about doing that, but perhaps something I didn't mention in the context of leadership up to now is also flexibility. In other words not being so utterly rigid as to say well, I have decided how I am doing it, I am not doing it any other way. He is prepared to be flexible in terms of saying I know where I want to get, I may encounter a couple of obstacles along the way, I may need to bypass certain things, I may need to do things slightly differently, but I am still very, very clear of my final destination. I think they are the sort of critical components, the sense of clear mindedness, the sense of purpose, the idea of holding steady, the ability to communicate, the vision, and the flexibility to get it done …"

It appeared that, in his words, "vision", "purpose", "holding steady", "communication" and "flexibility" mark the key behavioural elements of his ideal public service leader.

6.   Interpretive Analysis: Cross Analysis of Themes

Despite the spread of diversity represented by the four-interviewees, analysis of the themes showed some remarkable consistency across the samples.

6.1 Overall leadership style

Despite the clear differences in terms of the functional role of the four interviewees, there appeared to be some consistency in the style of leadership presented.

The Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána* seemed to function in an authoritative and high power-distance environment, both enjoying a high degree of role authority associated with their rank and position. The Director of the Equality Tribunal, while appeared to bemoan the lack of positional control, appeared to lament its loss and did suggest the usefulness of hierarchical control. While the Assistant Secretary in the Department of Health and Children exhibited a much higher degree of participative leadership, he nevertheless appeared to defer to a preference for direct control when it comes to implementation and task accomplishments.

The suggestion might be that in the Irish public service, which is still largely bureaucratic in structure, hierarchical leadership is still the most preferred.

Certainly, the interpretation did support the suggestion that from the perspective of the Irish public leaders themselves, structured and bureaucratic leadership was much valued.

6.2 Leadership behavioural elements

In terms of the Leadership behavioural elements, value was definitely and unequivocally placed on the concept of having visions. Even in a highly functional organisation such as *An Garda Síochána*, it appeared that there was a vision for where the organistaion should end up. Moreover, there was remarkable consistency that the

preference was more that just having a vision of seeing simply where they want to go, but also the vision of seeing how to get there.

Regarding communication within the organisation, communication within the hierarchy and between the ranks and communication concerning how the tasks should be accomplished, all these types of internal communication appeared to be much valued by all four interviewees. This is despite the fact that there were significant differences in the structure of the organisations represented by the interviewees – the Office of the Revenue Commissioners and the Equality Tribunal were professionally structured and *An Garda Síochána* and the Department of Health and Children were functionally structured. However, less was mentioned concerning communication with the external public. There appeared to be a sense that the responsibility to communicate with the public laid with the political leaders who were the faces of the departments. Internally, the civil servants seemed to value more the means to ensure that the tasks were properly accomplished.

There were across-the-board agreement in the perception that there existed a very strong political constraint to innovation and risk taking, thereby limiting the scope for flexibility and innovation. This however, seemed at odds with the consensus that there was a preference for vision and innovative thinking in terms of where the public services were heading. It seemed that while value was placed on the creation of innovative visions, the preference was still for trying to make things work within the existing political and bureaucratic framework, rather than attempting to implement the new visions by challenging the existing system and the existing framework. There did not appear to have a strong value preference for shaking things up. But significant values were placed on system stability.

6.3 Critical incidents of effective and ineffective leadership

Analysis of the heroes and the villains from the description of critical incidents of effective and ineffective leadership shed much light on what these interviewees saw as valuable leadership elements. "*Vision*", "*innovation*" "*persistent in the face of opposition*", "*respect*" and "*achievements*" were common themes. Indeed there was consistency in that the same individuals were cited in the different interviews.

The only discrepancy was a reference related to a particular individual, whom the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners praised as being visionary, innovative, and persistent in the face of opposition; while the Director of the Equality Tribunal saw that same individual as rather risk averse in his political dealings. The context and the background of the interviewees may help to shed some light on this discrepancy. The individual concerned was very successful in regenerating inward direct investment and industrial development, and thereby helping to swell the state treasury; as such, it would not be surprised that his achievement was seen in a positive light from the perspective of the Revenue Commissioners. On the other hand, the works of the Equality Tribunal, as a functional organisation, faced significant challenges in negotiating the political obstacles – given such experience, it was not unexpected that the Director may have views concerning how others had seeming succeeded where her organisation was still trying to breakthrough. In that sense, both perspectives were valid in their own context.

Overall, there appears to be consistency in the leadership perspectives and the leadership values across the four interviewees.

7. Synthesis of Analysis – A Conclusion of Sorts

7.1 Making sense of the Observations.

The notion of administrative leadership and the notion of administrative conservatorship were initially discussed in this document. The proposition was that public and civil servants involved in policy implementation may exhibit certain behavioural characteristics with the tendency to defend the *status quo*. The proposition was that while administrative leadership does encompass a degree of innovation and creativity, the focus of the innovation and creativity is towards fostering stability, rather than towards the promotion of change. The idea is that administrative conservatorship describes a leadership process where the leaders innovatively and creatively act to foster either small incremental or even zero changes.

From the interpretation of the values and the leadership behaviour of the sample of Irish public leaders, was there evidence to support that administrative leadership or administrative conservatorship existed in a great way in the Irish public and civil service?

The evidence seemed to suggest so. The value perspectives from the sample leaders' leadership behaviour revealed a tendency to be risk averse and to not stepping too far out of steps with the norm. While there was an understanding of the role that vision and innovation play in effective leadership, the actual implementation towards the vision and the exercise of innovation was always subject to the constraint of the existing political system.

At the institutional level, the ultimate value seemed to be towards the protection and the preservation of the institutional security – that the Office of the Revenue Commissioner was there to collect the revenues, as they have always done so; *An Garda Síochána* was there to provide crime prevention and law enforcement, as they have always done so; Tribunals under the Department of Justice was there to correctly interpret and apply the law, as they have always done so; and the Department of Health and Children was there to foster the health of the nation, as they have always

done so. At the political level where policies were created, vision and innovation were much more valued. However, the research evidence appeared to suggest that, at the administrative or implementation level, while innovation and flexibility were also valued to an extent, the focus were on strengthening and preserving existing capabilities, and to maintain the proficiency and the integrity to perform the existing and well-established function. In other words, the focus was on administrative conservatorship.

7.2 Limitation and Future Research

This is a qualitative piece of interpretive research based on a purposive sample. There could be scope for additional interviews from additional samples. Even if the sampling approach were to be defended with reference to the theoretical sampling approach (Strauss and Corbin 1998), it is arguable whether theoretical saturation has been achieved, despite the remarkable consistency shown in the interpretation so far.

However, given that this research is part of the suite of a series of inquiries, it may suffice to adopt a *satisficing* approach as suppose to striving for further incremental improvement. It may suffice to accept the adequacy of these finding, imperfect they may be, and to proceed with the next phase of the research.

In line with the previously proposed hypothesis for the overall DBA research, the next phase would be to attempt a quantitative survey, exploring the values from the perspective of the public being served by the public service leaders. The suggestion is to explore the internalised set of values that are influenced by the cultural perception and by the value systems of the people groups that make up the public population. The hope is that this next research will provide the 'flip-side' to this current research, enabling a direct comparison where the interpretation of the values seen by the leaders can be analysed alongside a survey of the values sought by the public.

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WHITAKER SCHOOL
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NOTTINGHAM
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ADMINISTRATION

Appendix III-A: Informed consent to participate in Research

> This form will provide you with information about the research.
> Please read through all the details carefully.

My name is Cedric Chau and I am conducting research as part of a Research Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) at Nottingham Trent University. The Whitaker School of Government and Management at the Institute of Public Administration, Republic of Ireland, is the sponsor of this Research.

I am researching into the nature of leadership behaviour in the context of public services management. I am particularly interested in developing further understandings of the linkage between perceived public service values and public service leadership behaviour.

I would like to invite you to participate in an interview at your office, because you are an acknowledged senior public servant. My interest is to explore your perception of public service values and public service leadership, from the perspective of a senior public servant.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation at any time for whatever reason. This includes your right to withdraw your interview from the research after it has taken place.

If you decide to take part in the interview, you will be given this information sheet to keep. If you exercise your right to withdraw your participation, you will not be asked to give your reasons.

I would like to ask for your written permission to tape the interview, to ensure that the information you give me is accurately recorded. The signing of this form by you will be taken as written permission given by you. The tape of your interview will be transcribed, and once transcribed, the tape of your interview will be destroyed. You will not be named or otherwise identified in any publication arising from this research, and no unpublished opinions or information will be attributed to you, either by name or position. All possible care will be taken to ensure that you and your department / agency / organisation cannot be identified by the way the research findings are written up.

Please feel free to contact myself or to contact any of the contact person associated with this research at the addresses below.

Agreement to consent.

I have read and I understand the purpose of this research and my part in it; I understand my rights to withdraw my participation at any point during or after the interview and all materials will be withdrawn. I hereby voluntarily agree to take part in this research.

Signature of participant: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's contact details:
Cedric Chau, Lecturer,
Whitaker School of Government & Management
Institute of Public Administration,
57-61 Lansdowne Road,
Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland.

Research Supervisor's contact details:
Professor Colin Fisher,
School of Business, Law and Social Science,
Nottingham Trent University
Burton Street,
Nottingham NG1 4BU, England, U.K.

Sponsor's contact details:
Dr. Michael Mulreany,
Assistant Director General,
Institute of Public Administration,
57-61 Lansdowne Road,
Dublin 4, Republic of Ireland.

Appendix III-B: Research Interview Participant Briefing

Mr. F. D., 8 November 2007.
Chairman,
Office of the Revenue Commissioners,
Dublin Castle,
Dublin 1.

Dear Mr D.,

Thank you for granting us an interview at your office on Tuesday 13th November, and thank you for granting us your informed consent to participate in this research. As this research seeks to explore the role and perception of leadership and the capacity of leadership within the senior Irish public service, and given the key leadership role you hold in the Irish public service, we are delighted that you have agreed to participate in the interview.

In the interview, we are interested to collect your views on:
- What do you think are the key challenges facing the Irish public service (and specifically facing the Office of the Revenue Commissioners) that require the exercise of leadership?
- How do you assess the current capacity to exercise leadership within the system? What might be some of the areas of constraints?

More specifically, we would like to perhaps discuss your views on:
- What are the challenges within the Office of the Revenue Commissioners that need leadership? Why do you think these challenges require the exercise of leadership?
- In your view, what does leadership look like – can you provide some instances where you have seen/not seen leadership being exercised within your Office?
- What competencies are required for effective leadership in your area of the public sector, at the different levels?
- What is the current capacity within the system for leadership, and in what ways does the system currently support or constrain the exercise of leadership?
- What may need to change about the way the system operates to better support the exercise of leadership?
- How should development interventions/courses be designed to nurture and develop leadership behaviour?

As indicated in the Informed Consent to Participate in Research form, we would be taping and transcribing our interview with you, to ensure that the information you give is accurately recorded. Of course, as your participation is entirely voluntary, you are free to withhold discussions in any of the intended areas or even withdraw your participation completely at any time for whatever reason, or to request the withholding of any information so discussed.

Please feel free to contact me here at the Institute of Public Administration, should you wish to discuss anything prior to the interview.

Thank you in anticipation of the interview.

Yours sincerely,
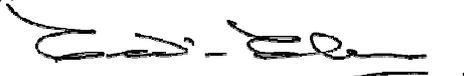
Cedric Chau
Institute of Public Administration / Nottingham Trent University.

Document Four

A Quantitative Analysis of Public Service Delivery Perspectives in Ireland

January 2009

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Appendices

1.   Document Overview

The democratic process for the election and the appointment of public leaders in the Republic of Ireland implies that public service leaders will only be elected and appointed if a majority of the public can be persuaded to vote for them. Voting is an indication of acceptance, and generally speaking, the public will only vote for a public service leader if they have a positive perception that the leader they are voting for can and will lead them towards an improved quality of life. The conventional wisdom is that improved quality of life reflects the effectiveness of public service leaders in their delivery of public services to meet the needs of the public. The suggestion is that the more the public service leaders are able to actually meet the needs of the public, the better the quality of life will be for the public, and the more the public will accept the leadership of the public service leaders.

However, the research presented in this document is that, at least in the context of public service leadership in Ireland, it may not be necessarily so. The evidence presented by this document suggested that while the people had experienced the effective delivery of public services, while arguably they did experience an improvement in their quality of life and indeed had acknowledged as much themselves, the people nevertheless had appeared to have adopted a negative perception towards the public service leadership, resulting in their expression of non-acceptance of the leaders. This research had shown that, in the context of the Republic of Ireland, there is not necessarily a positive correlation between the effective delivery of public services that leads to improved qualify of life and the positive perception towards the public service leadership that drove the delivery of those public services.

This research also highlighted the role perception and attribution play in the assessment of the actual performance of the public service leaders. Perception is a complex concept, and it would take more than one research document to examine and to validate all the factors that contributes to either a positive perception or a negative perception towards the performance of the public service leaders; but it was the intention of this research to contribute a small piece to a big jigsaw puzzle, so to speak.

The contribution to knowledge and practice is that by further understanding the dynamic relationship between leadership delivery and leadership acceptance, it will help to inform public servants in their policy making to ensure that future public service policies would maximise not only their effectiveness of meeting the needs of the people, but would also maximise the acceptance by the people of the policies and of the leadership of the policy makers.

The rationale for how this document is presented is a simple one. Firstly, the context of the research had to be established. Thus this document commences with a review of the conceptual framework already proposed in previous documents, which suggested that for a public service leader to become an *outstanding* public service leader, a number of elements need to be in place. The discussions then proceeds to identify the part of the overall conceptual framework within which this research lies. In other words, the proposition is that finding the balance between actual public service delivery and creating the positive perspectives for leadership acceptance is one part of a bigger conceptual framework that helps to understand overall outstanding public service leadership.

Having established the context within the conceptual framework, the document then proceeds to further review the literatures on leadership theories, adding to that already presented in some depth in Document 2. In particular, this document would discuss the purpose and the role of public service leaders in the context of Government – and would suggest that meeting the needs of the people and securing their quality of life is a fundamental moral obligation of public service leaders.

Following the discussion on leadership theories, the discussions turn to the topics of performance assessment – of how to measure and assess the effective fulfillment of the public service leaders' moral obligation to meet the needs of the people. The suggestion is that if the effective provision of public services to meet the needs of the people is a fundamental role of the public service leaders, then the effective provisions of public services require assessment and verification. The question, however, is whether the meeting of needs of the people in the context of public services provisions can be quantitatively and objectively assessed. The difficulties

while attempting to objectively assess public service performance and public service delivery are acknowledged and a suggestion put forward that assessment by the public of effective public services delivery tend to be mostly subjective in nature.

There is a suggestion that the cognitive processes of perception and attribution also play a significant role in the formation of the subjective assessment. Thus perception and attribution and their influence on the assessment of effective fulfillment are also discussed. The proposition here is that the understanding of the role perception and attribution both play in an individual's subjective assessment will contribute to the understanding of how subjective assessments are formed, which in turns helps to determine the boundary of validity when it comes to the interpretation of subjective assessments.

The document then outlines the research methodology and the research methods. It is noted that there is a risk of a methodological mismatch, in that the research attempts to present a quantitative survey that assesses perception and attribution, which are in essence subjective in nature. The notion is that attempting to quantitatively analyse subjective and qualitative judgement runs the risk of generating analysis and conclusions that are meaningless at best, misleading at worst. This is unless the purpose is precisely to surmise an overall picture of the degree and the level of subjective judgement. However, such a deliberate mixing of methodology requires a concise construct and the adoption of robust methods. A brief defence for the mixing of the methodologies and a clearer explanation of the research method adopted is also presented.

The suggestion is that quantitative assessments of subjective views are not uncommon. And in the context of public service deliveries, a commonly used method, adopted internationally, is to quantitatively and objectively construct a set of Quality of Life measures for the purpose of assessing whether the needs of the people are met. The validity of such an approach is discussed, and the hypothesis put forward is that attempting to quantitative analyse assessments that are influenced by complex but qualitative cognitive processes such as perceptions and attributions may provide for some interesting findings.

The actual research and the subsequent analysis presented an attempt to quantitatively analyse the public's perception of public services delivery. In essence, it is an attempt to quantitatively analyse how performance assessments are influenced by the cognitive process of perception and attribution. And the conclusions following the analysis and discussions of the secondary and primary research suggest that there is indeed evidence to support the notion that, in the context of the Republic of Ireland, public service leadership performance and acceptance of public service leadership by the public do not necessarily correlate positively.

However, acknowledging that this is but an exploratory research, part of the recommendations presented towards the end of the document was that that further and more in-depth research would be necessary if a more definitive conclusion is sought. The suggestion is that the further and more in-depth research would be incorporated into the proposal for the subsequent documents in this series of DBA research.

2.   Theories and Concepts

Research Context

Conceptual Framework

Prior research in this series of DBA papers (Chau 2007a, Chau 2007b, Chau 2008) had suggested that to exercise leadership is to exercise influence, whether directly or indirectly. To lead, it was suggested, is to exert influence towards a particular outcome. It is a general assumption that the purpose of public services is to serve for the good of society. Therefore, in the context of public services, the suggestion is that public service leadership is about the exercising of influence for the good of society. If so, then it would imply that public service leaders act to influence outcomes that are perceived to be, and therefore accepted to be for the good of the public.

The Conceptual Model (Figure IV-2.1) previously proposed in this series of DBA papers suggested that a number of contributory concepts can be conceptually linked together to provide for an understanding of what may constitute an outstanding public service leader.

Figure IV-2.1 A Conceptual Framework
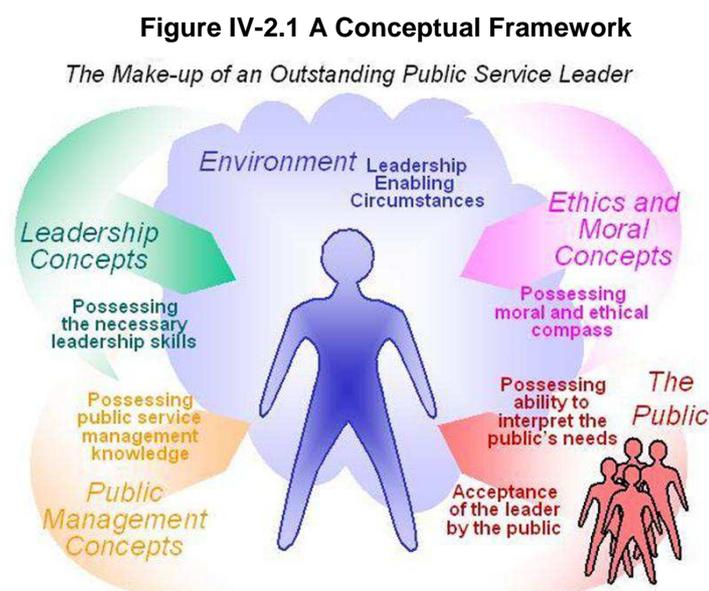
Firstly, enabling circumstances should exist. If leadership is about the exercising of influence that ultimately stimulates the followers to adopt certain behaviour towards

certain objectives, then it is necessary that a set of circumstances exist where their leadership influence is needed. The suggestion is that leaders become leaders only when the circumstances allow them to take on the role of leadership. Otherwise, where the circumstances and the environment exist in a satisfactory and essentially balanced equilibrium, where there exists little or no motivation for change, it would be difficult to see where there is scope for leadership of any sort. In contrast, if the enabling circumstances do exist, not only would there be scope for leadership, the nature of the circumstances might even inform which matching type of leadership would thrive, or even suggest which inappropriate type of leadership might prove ineffective. The further implication is that, where the manipulation of the circumstances is possible, is that some who wish to become leaders might proactively seek or create the necessary circumstances in order to provide scope for the exercising of their own style of leadership.

Secondly, the outstanding public service leader should possess some generic but fundamental leadership traits or abilities. Regardless of the debates on whether leaders are born or bred, whether leadership traits or abilities are ingrained in hereditary genetics or whether they can be developed in later life; or regardless of academic discussions on which particular leadership skill set is appropriate for what particular situations, a common understanding shared by all would be that, given the enabling circumstances, leaders would only be effective leaders if they possess some set of traits and abilities through which they can carry out their acts of leadership.

Thirdly, the outstanding public service leader should possess specific public sector management knowledge. The nature of public management is very different from commercial business management or private sector management. To deliver real results in the public service context, the outstanding public service leader would require specific understanding of how the public sector functions. That would include having an appreciation of how to manage the delicate blend of socio-political influences, having an in-depth understanding of the system of public governance and having the ability to handle and effectively manage the intricacy of the economics of public finances. After all, effective leadership in the public services needs to deliver real and tangible results. Particularly in the context of democratic societies, where sometimes a large minority is made to yield to a small majority and to follow an

elected leader elected by the slightest of margin, the public service leaders so elected would often find themselves leading a public who initially would follow only by compulsion or by coercion. The leaders in those circumstances would initially be accepted as leaders only by name, and the followers would only initially comply because they would have no alternative options. They might even seek to rebel against the leadership at every available opportunity. To create genuine acceptance in these situations, the outstanding leader would need to be able to deliver real results so that what were initially followers by compulsion might eventually become willing followers, convinced by the real and positive outcomes of the leadership. Public service leaders would only achieve such real and positive results if they are knowledgeable in the specific discipline of public management.

Fourthly, the outstanding public service leader should possess the abilities to interpret the needs of the people and then possesses the ability to deliver what is 'for the good of the people'. Public services provision, by definition, has to be altruistic in intent. The suggestion is that possesing a 'moral compass' is necessary for a leader to be classified as an 'outstanding public service leader'. History are dotted with arguably tyrannical public leaders such as Mao Zedong in the People's Republic of China, or Adolf Hitler in Germany or Josef Stalin in Soviet Russia, who were great persuaders, who, given the enabling circumstances, had successfully led their followers towards what was ultimately not 'for the good' of the followers. The argument is that they had been judged by history to lack acceptable 'moral compasses', and as such could not be classified as outstanding public leaders.

Fifthly, while a moral leader may be able to correctly interpret the needs of the followers and successful in actually providing the real solutions to meet their needs, the followers, on the other hand, may not share the same perception. History had recorded many public leaders with good intentions and workable solutions, but whom, due to non-acceptance by the people they seek to lead, were never given the chance to actually exercise their leadership. For example, according to James (1973), Britain's Sir Winston Churchill was seen as an isolated voice warning of the need for Britain to rearm against Germany in the 1930s. Churchill would be seen in hindsight as a moral leader correctly interpreted the needs of the people (*Current Biography* 1942) – yet he did not win the acceptance of the people until after the Second World War had truly

started. Outstanding public service leaders should be able to proactively create and foster a positive perception and to foster acceptance by the followers of their leadership. More so in the context of a democratic, as opposed to an autocratic public management regime, where leaders are elected or appointed by the very people whom they seek to lead. Outstanding leaders often need to convince and persuade the people to accept what is 'for their own good'. Hence, potential public leaders tend to publish their manifestos and conduct canvassing campaigns to persuade the people to elect them. Effective canvassing would lead to those being led having the perception that their leaders are able to correctly interpret their needs and are offering to provide the solutions to meet those needs. Especially in situations where, either due to a lack of information or due to the complexity of the issues at stake, the public being led appear not to know what is best for them, and where the followers are asked to 'trust' their leaders, there should be a positive perception of their public leaders. Such a positive perception would be what might lead to their trust and to their acceptance of the leadership role of the leaders.

In summary, then, this proposed Conceptual Framework therefore suggests that given the necessary enabling circumstances, the outstanding public service leader is not merely an effective leader skilled in the act of influencing behaviour and not merely one who is knowledgeable in the specifics of public service management, but also a perceived moral leader meeting the actual needs of the people as well as a popular leader willingly accepted by the people.

Current Research Focus

The integrated, interrelated and interdependent nature of the various concepts of the above Conceptual Model notwithstanding, this research paper focuses on the part of the model that suggests that the outstanding public service leader needs to be accepted by the followers as their leader.

The proposition is that leaders are more likely to be accepted if they were able to fulfill their moral obligations of meeting the needs of the people; and the more they are perceived to have done so, the more the leadership will be accepted.

The proposition suggested a causal relationship between the leaders meeting the needs of the followers and the followers accepting the leadership. However, the suggestion is that this causal relationship is mitigated by how the followers' perception affects the followers' interpretation of whether the leaders have met their needs. This mitigation would imply that conceptually the causality between the meeting of needs and the acceptance of leadership may not be deterministic in nature, especially considering that perceptions can be easily manipulated, not least within the public management arena. Skilful handling and effective utilisation of multi-media communication would often be required to create the necessary positive perceptions, and in so doing, while the intrinsic moral and ethical compass of moral leaders would prevent them from crossing the line from persuasive yet truthful communication to manipulative or misleading propaganda, unethical and tyrannical leaders might have no hesitation in employing manipulative propaganda as a means of deliberate miscommunication to win followers while not intending to meet their needs.

Therefore, the proposition is that the acceptance of the public service leaders by the people is intricately linked to the people's perception of whether their needs have indeed been met by the leaders, or at least the perception that the leaders had acted to meet their needs. Given that perception can so influence the assessment of the effectiveness of the public service provisions, the proposition implies that where the needs of the people are perceived to have been met, and where it can be demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt to have been so, the scope for misrepresentation caused by perceptual errors would be significantly diminished.

In the context of this proposition, the assumption is that the people inherently understand and accept the notion that meeting their needs is a fundamental role demanded of the public service leaders. In other words, the suggestion is that the meeting of the people's needs is understood and accepted to be one of the fundamental purposes of why the public services exist at all. The argument is that the primary role of the public services in fulfilling the purpose of government is to attempt to meet the needs of the citizens. In turn, linking back to the conceptual framework, the proposition is that the citizens' acceptance of the public service leaders is based on their assessment of whether the leaders have been effective in this role.

This document describes a quantitative research, the aim of which is to offers some further insight into this causal relationship between leaders meeting the needs of the followers and the followers accepting the leadership, and may provide a basis for the research for the next document, which could lead to a contribution of new knowledge that could be utilized to enhance effective public sector leadership. In essence, this research attempts to explore the right-hand side of the conceptual model illustrated in Figure IV-2.1 above.

Public Service Leadership

Nature of Public Sector Leadership

Leadership is a complex, multifaceted concept that had led to much diversity in research. Some leadership theories had focused primarily on characteristics inherent in individuals, and in particular the personal traits and behaviours that are identified with leadership. Others have been more concerned with the actual process of leadership in general. Indeed, much had been written and published concerning leadership. Gill and Edwards (2000) suggested that there were at least forty published theories of leadership, and Bass (1990) compiled over 1,500 different definitions of leadership. However, a consistent feature in the leadership literature has been the notion that leadership involves an influencing process (Bryman 1996, Yukl 2002). Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that leadership involves a social influence process whereby intentional influence is exerted (Yukl 2002). Rost (1993) suggested that leadership is essentially an influence relationship amongst leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purpose.

Krause (1997:8) in particular suggested that "the main goal of leadership is to accomplish useful and desirable things that benefit the people being led". In the context of public service leadership, this would be an apt description. In the public sector context, it could be argued that the followers and those benefited by the leadership are one and the same. As such, the concept of Servant leadership (Greenleaf 1977) is arguably the most appropriate paradigm for describing public service leadership. According to Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership is supposed to

put the primary emphasis on the needs and the desires of the followers before the needs of the leaders. In Greenleaf's view, a great leader is seen as servant first, and that notion is the key to the servant leader's greatness. It could be argued that the relevance of the Servant leadership model to public service leadership is because of its altruism, simplicity, and self-awareness (Johnson 2001). Servant leadership is supposed to emphasizes the moral sense of concern for others, reducing the complexity engendered by putting the personal desires of the leader in conflict with those of the followers (Whetstone 2002). The primary objective of servant leaders, it was suggested, is to meet the needs of followers.

Framed by these understandings, this research inquiry seeks to examine aspects of the causal relationship between public service leaders in the Republic of Ireland meeting the needs of the public and the acceptance by the public of the public service leadership. The overall proposition is that public service leaders are more likely to be positively perceived if they were actually able to fulfill their moral obligations of meeting the needs of the people; and that the more they are able to do so, the more their leadership will be accepted.

There are two areas of conceptual understanding underpinning the proposition, namely the role of public leaders in meeting the needs of the people and the role perception and attribution play in determining or assessing whether the public leaders had succeeded in meeting the needs of the people.

Regarding the role of public leaders in meeting the needs of the people, the suggestion is that the public expects the public service leaders to deliver solutions to meet their needs – in a democratically governed society, that would have been the primary reason behind the decision to vote them or to appoint them into office in the first place. The assumption here is that meeting the needs of the public as a moral duty of the public service leaders is well accepted and would not require further validation.

As for the role of perception and attribution, the suggestion is that in a democratically governed society the public voting for and entrusting the public service leadership to meet their needs is a reflection that the public is at least willing to accept the leadership. The acceptance of the public service leaders by the public often relies on

the assessment that they have been effective in their performance to date. The argument is that the cognitive processes of perception and attribution play a significant role in the assessment of public service performance. From the leadership's perspective, in order to understand how to foster the desired perceptions, it may be necessary to first understand the process through which people in general develop their perceptions.

These two broad areas of conceptual understanding require further discussion.

Role of Public Services within Government

The proposition that public service leaders are there to serve the public and to work to meet their needs is a concept that is consistent with the classical understanding of the purpose of Government. From Plato's *Republic* (c. 380 B.C.) to Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), to John Locke's *Two Treatise of Government* (1690) and to Thomas Jefferson's *American Declaration of Independence* (1776), the fundamental notion has been that Governments exist to serve the people. Indeed, the preamble of the *American Declaration of Independence* commenced with the statement that "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. *That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men*, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed" (Jefferson 1776 [*italics* added]), which was meant to support the notion that Governments were instituted for serving the people. This sentiment was further echoed by Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address that Government should be "of the people, by the people, for the people" (Lincoln 1863). In the context of the Republic of Ireland, the preamble to the Constitution of Ireland (1937) stated that the purpose of adopting and enacting the Constitution is for "seeking to promote the common good", reflecting the same notion that the purpose of Government is to serve the people and to meet their needs.

History did not identify the precise moment or the exact location where the phenomenon of what we now call Government took place for the first time. But archaeologists and anthropologist have found evidence of very early governments.

There was already evidence of small city states prior to 5,000 B.C., such as amongst the Sumer civilisation in ancient Mesopotamia (Hallo and Simpson 1971). Certainly by 3,000 B.C., larger governed areas already existed. Amongst the earliest were the Nile Delta civilisation in Egypt (Billard 1978), the Indus Valley civilization in India (Ching et al 2006) and the Yellow River civilization in China (Peterson 2002).

The conjecture from historical evidence appears to support the suggestion that governments were initially formed to serve the needs of the people, in particular as societies became larger and more complex. Historical evidence suggested that in prehistoric times, humans were hunter-gatherers and small scale farmers, living in small but self-sufficient groups. But the human ability to form and to sustain meaningful relationships, possibly due to the presence of emotional and social intelligence unique to humankind (Thorndike 1920), allowed for ever increasing size of the social groups, and for ever increasing population densities, to the extend that the social groups would have found it increasingly difficult to maintain a non-hierarchical, mutually adjusting social structure (Christian 2004).

While humans are social animals, the observation would be that each individual is nevertheless unique and each possesses individual personalities and characteristics. Communities therefore inevitably consist of diverse people with a variety of needs and beliefs. The larger the size of the community, the more complex would be the diversity. Oldfield (1990) suggested that each of the various communities then required some way to organize the interactions among their citizens, so that they might live without the constant threat to their individual existence or the risks that their disagreements would permanently divide their community. The suggestion was that it was for this purpose that the individual community created a government to meet the needs of the citizens, whatever those needs may be, while providing order to the community so that it and its members might not only survive but thrive (Oldfield 1990). This suggestion would support the proposition that government exists to serve the people and to ensure that their needs are met.

The proposition is therefore that serving the people and meeting their needs is the inherent moral duty of Government. The further proposition is that public service

leaders, as leaders leading an executive arm implementing the policies of the Government, should subscribe to the same overall purpose.

However, the inherent moral duty of Government not withstanding, this further proposition that the purpose of Government can be transposed to become the purpose of the public service leaders requires further discussion.

Political versus Public Service Leadership within Government – the Need for Public Acceptance for Both

There has been much debate as to the contrasting role between the political leadership and the public service leadership within Government. The critical challenge is whether the providers of public services can be identified as one with Government – whether the discussion hitherto on the purpose of Government can be applied verbatim to a discussion on the purpose of the public services. The classical view would differentiate the provision of public services via a cohort of civil and public servants from the political and ruling elements. Classically, the political and ruling elements were seen to be more the Government, while the civil and public servants were more the administrators implementing the will of the Government (Terry 2003). This classical view of public governance structure would see the public service providers as a functionally uniform and hierarchical organisation, staffed by neutrally competent civil servants who deliver their services to the citizens (Weber 1915, Ostrom 1973). The modern perspectives of public governance structures, even in the era of New Public Management (OECD, 2001), are not significantly different. In the modern era of public management, there is still a requirement for a civil servant cohort whose role is to implement policies alongside the political leaders who had created, formulated and persuaded the public to accept the policies in the first place. In this view, the role of the public service providers is in essence a role associated with policy implementation as suppose to the more political and visionary role of policy formulation.

This separation of policy formulation from policy implementation is based on the view that separating the political world of policy making from the neutral world of technical implementation is the ideal structure for the balanced management of the

State. It proposed that the primary role of politicians is to create strategic vision and to encapsulate those visions into policies, and the primary role of the civil servants is to creatively lead the implementation of the policies and to foster the values established by the vision (Joyce 2003).

However, in the modern democratic context, political leaders are voted and appointed into Government by the people. Public service leaders are then appointed in turn by the Government, but often also subjected to a confirmation of acceptance by the people. Thus, what was intended as a public service arm with independent accountability and political impartiality is still subjected to a degree of politics that relies on wining the acceptance of the voting public. In particular, in the context of the Republic of Ireland, which is a relatively small nation with a simple governance structure, there appears to be evidence to support the argument that the separation of political (policy formulation) and administrative (policy implementation) functions is much less distinct, with a complex fusion of political and administrative leadership at play. As such, even for public service leadership appointments, the willingness of the people to accept the leadership would be a prerequisite to the people voting for and entrusting the public service leadership with the task of meeting their needs.

Given the suggestion that the public service leaders require the acceptance of the public, the proposition is that the positive assessment by the public of the public service leaders' effectiveness in meeting the needs of the public is an essential element contributing to their being accepted by the public.

Relationship between Effective Fulfilment of Role and Leadership Acceptance

The focus of the research is the causal relationship between public service leaders satisfying the needs of the public and the acceptance by the public of their leadership. The proposition is that, in assessing whether the needs have been met, the assessment is influenced by perception and attribution. In other words, public service performance is assessed not just through an objective measure of actual performance, but a combination of the objective measure of actual performance with a subjective interpretation filtered by perception.

Given that the assessment is based on both actual performance and perception of performance, there is a need to understand the extent to which satisfaction with the services delivered is associated with actual service performance as compared to the extent to which satisfaction with the services delivered is associated with perception. Burton *et al* (2003) had suggested that actual performance is a significant predictor of satisfaction, separate from its indirect association via perceived performance. This seemed to support Oliver and DeSarbo (1988), who examined the effect of actual performance on satisfaction, and found that the actual performance had a significant effect on how those receiving the services evaluated the services. Moreover, Burton *et al* (2003) had found that actual performance appeared to have a significant and positive association with perceived performance, meaning that the better the actual service performance, the more positive would be the affects on perception; and in turn, the more satisfaction expressed by those receiving the services.

In the context of this research, on the assumption that a public satisfied with the provision of public services would accept the leadership of those leading the provision of the services, this positive association between actual service performance and the sense of satisfaction in those receiving the services seemed to provide a warrant for the proposition that there is a causal relationship between public service leaders satisfying the needs of the public and the acceptance by the public of their leadership.

Measure of Effective Fulfilment of Role

However, in the context of public service provisions, the measure of actual performance is not so easily quantified, despite evidence which suggest that much attention, time and finance has been spent by national Governments on public sector performance and evaluation (OECD 1996, Power 1997, Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000). The New Public Management (NPM) approach, in particular, attributes a very high emphasis on assessing and measuring outputs and outcomes – the argument behind the NPM approach is that basing new policies and management activities on outcome information would make policy implementation more efficient and effective (Hood 1994).

Indeed, despite the increasing focus on public sector performance measurement, there is also evidence to suggest that performance assessment and result-based management in the public sector were much less successful than anticipated (OECD 1996, Leeuw 2000). Bouckaert and Balk (1991) identified thirteen different "diseases" of public productivity measurement, and wondered whether it is at all possible, desirable or even necessary to measure public sector performance. Most of the "diseases" Bouckaert and Balk (1991) identified were the result of either incorrect assumptions underlying the measurements, or measurement errors or problems concerning the content, position and amount of measures.

Amongst the various problems identified as posing difficulties for public sector performance measurement, two aspects could be highlighted as most relevant to the context of this research.

Firstly, public service policy objectives are often elusive and even contradictory. Wilson (1989) suggested that public policies often have conflicting and contradictory goals, which makes the evaluation of effectiveness very complicated since it is difficult to determine which goals holds the priority over the others. Indeed, McGuire (2001) suggested that public services performance indicators are rarely neutral, but are contested measures used by political and public service leaders alike for the purpose of political debates. The necessity for compromise where there are conflicting goals would mean that some public services might even be deliberately pitched at less than optimum performance level. The suggestion is that to judge a public service leader purely on the performance of the public service in such a scenario would not be reasonable.

Secondly, and perhaps much more relevant to this research, is that public service policy objectives are often non-quantifiable and difficult to be measured objectively (Van Thiel and Leeuw 2002). Even where the measurements themselves are quantifiable in that discrete scales can be assigned to the measurement, substantial level of qualitative assessment is necessary to arrive at the measurement. Where qualitative assessments are called for, cognitive processes such as perception and attribution come into significance in influencing the assessment outcome. It could even be argued that these measurement problems would make it difficult to support a

proposition that public service performance can be measured and assessed quantitatively.

In particular, the suggestion here is that the cognitive process of perception and attribution are two qualitative mental processes that play a significant role in the process of performance assessment. As such, it warrants a much greater depth of discussion here.

Influence of Perception on Assessing Effective Fulfilment of Role

The influence of perception on performance assessment is complex and in itself difficult to quantify. While hitherto discussion had suggested that the effect perception has on performance assessment is less prominent that the effect actual performance has on performance assessment, the proposition is that the influence of perception is nevertheless significant, and worthy of discussion.

Perception is in general understood to be the active process through which people take in the sensory stimuli from the environment around them and organise or interpret these sensory impressions into meaningful views and understandings, so that they can give meaning to the environment around them (Lindsay and Norman 1977). In other words, it is how people view and interpret the events and situations in the world around them, and how they make sense of their reality.

The understanding of people's perception is considered important since their perceptive interpretation of the environment plays a significant role in guiding their behaviour and influencing the decisions that they make. Robbins (2005) even made the point that people's behaviour are based on their perception of reality, not reality itself. Applied to the research proposition at hand, it may suggest that leadership acceptance or rejection is as much based on perception as it is based on reality itself.

The study of perception had its roots in philosophy as early as the seventeenth century (Descartes 1641), but had since been expanded to behavioural and social science. The fundamental concept proposes that the operational principle of the human brain is holistic, with self-organizing tendencies (Koffka 1935). It suggested that the creative

human mind can sense a simple collection of stimuli and add to or subtract from them in an attempt to make sense of the stimuli. Thus people's minds may end up perceiving what is not there or not seeing what is. One could call it an illusion, but perception theorists would explain that what one is seeing is a perceptual effect where the mind attempts to make sense of the reality by adding to it (Wertheimer 1923).

The building of perception is not done randomly. The fundamental principle of perception plays on the tendency of the human mind to order our experience in a manner that is regular, orderly, symmetric, and simple. The suggestion is that people's minds interpret incoming stimulus by following fairly predictable patterns (Wertheimer 1923, Ehrenstein 1930). Thus the suggestion is that human perception is rarely impartial or objective and that most human perception suffers from some inaccuracy and distortion. For example, Thorndike's (1920) discovery of the Halo Effect which might lead people to the overlooking of faults or failures in their leaders, or Lippmann's (1922) Stereotype Effect which might lead people to either reject effective leaders or accept leaders who had substantial failure.

The discussions hitherto suggest that perceptions are thus based on the interpretation of reality and not necessarily based on what reality might be. Selective attention also implies that people do not absorb all of the stimuli in the environment (Robbins 2005). Thus they may only notice things when they pay specific attention to them. They would also only pay specific attention if they have an idea where to look – either with ideas coming from previous experiences or given the idea when being directed by others. The perception filter might even add to the reality to help them make sense. Thus people tend to see or hear what their experiences or their circumstances prepare them to see or hear. As a consequence, people may fail to see or hear things that are there, as well as sometimes seeing or hearing things that are not there in reality.

Applied to the research proposition at hand, perceptual effect may suggest that what the public 'see' as what their public service leaders have achieved may not correlate totally to the 'reality' of what the public service leaders have actually delivered. In other words, the public may see a perspective that may not reflect any reality. Such errors in perception can affect the accuracy of the judgements that people make about their public service leaders.

The implication of this on the analysis of public service leadership acceptance could be profound. The suggestion is the acceptance or rejection of public service leaders could be facilitated by creating the appropriate perception in the minds of the public followers, regardless of any reality of whether the leaders themselves had or had not fulfil their moral obligations to meet the needs of the people. This is unless the specific needs of the people are actually and where it can be objectively or clearly demonstrated to have been so; in which case, the scope for misrepresentation caused by perceptual errors would be significantly diminished.

Influence of Attribution on Assessing Effective Fulfilment of Role

Moreover, the argument is that the cognitive process of attribution also plays a crucial role in the link between actual public service performance and the people's assessment of the public service performance.

Acceptance or rejection is a behavioural act, and is by implication value judgement based. The notion is that when a perspective has been created by perception, an individual will then attempt to decide upon a set of responding behaviour based on the value judgement placed on that perspective. The suggestion is that after utilising their perception filters and having completed their assessment of the actual performance of the public service leaders, the resultant behaviour in the people would either be acceptance or rejection of the leadership. In other words, the suggestion is that when the perception of a leader leads to a positive perspective of the leader, the resulting behaviour reflects an acceptance of the leader. Likewise, when perception of a leader leads to a negative perspective of the leader, the resulting behaviour would reflect a rejection of the leader.

Kelly's (1967) Co-variation Model is a useful attribution theory in the context of our discussion. The model attempts to explain the cognitive process by which individuals generate internal or external explanations to their assessment. This would help to understand the extent of bias inherent in the perception filter of the individuals. Babcock and Loewenstein (1977) suggested that individuals have a tendency to attribute successes to their own behaviour and failures to factors outside of their

control. This would help to understand the extent the public ascribes the success or the failure of the public services either to themselves or to the public service leaders. For example, Nisbett and Ross (1980) and Pettigrew (1979) suggested that the tendency is to attribute success to internal factors when it is achieve by in-group members, and to external causes for out-group members, and vice-versa for undesirable behaviours. Also, Merton (1948), Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) and Babad, Inbar, and Rosenthal (1982) proposed the Pygmalion and Golem effects suggesting that individuals with negative perceptions might autonomously alter their behaviour to match a presumptuous judgement.

Thus attribution theories could be utilised to provide a further conceptual links between perception and behaviour, in that attribution theories attempt to explain the cognitive reasons behind the individual's behaviour. As such, in the context of a research into leadership acceptance, attribution theories might provide some understanding of the rationale behind the individual's acceptance or rejection of a leader.

The proposition of this research is that acceptance of public service leaders is intricately tied to whether the leaders are judged to have fulfilled their moral obligation of meeting the needs of the people. The discussion hitherto suggested that the 'reality' of whether the leaders actually succeeded in meeting the needs of the people is in many ways the basis upon which the 'perception' of whether the leaders succeeded in meeting the needs of the people. But there should be some tangible outcomes that can be used to assess that reality. The suggestion here is that one way of assessing the reality of the effective delivery of public services is to evaluate the enhancement to the public's quality of life.

It needs to be noted, however, that in an open economy where free market commercial providers operate alongside public service providers, there may be no direct correlation between the failures of a particular public service provisions and the reduction in the related quality of life for particular individuals. In a free economy where there exists a vibrant, effective and accessible private sector providing parallel services to those provided by the public service agencies, the failure of either one would not necessarily cause the related quality of life of the particular individuals to

deteriorate. This is why once again, the examination of attribution might be important. In the context of this research, where the proposition proposed a causal relationship between public service performance and acceptance of public service leadership, it is important to provide the correct conceptual link, one that would ensure that the assessment of perception is appropriately directed or attributed to the assessment of the relevant performance.

In other words, the examination of attribution may give an indication of whether the acceptance of the leaders is based on actual success or actual failure of leadership, as opposed to being based on perceived success or perceived failure of leadership. This is particularly relevant in scenarios where perception and expectation may lead to actual behaviours that in turn generate self-fulfilment.

For example, if an individual experienced a deterioration in a particular aspect of his or her quality of life, and subsequently judged the relevant public service leaders as having failed in their duties; yet at the same time acknowledged that success in that aspect of quality of life is actually internally attributed, then possibly the rejection of the leaders was based on perception, rather than on any reality of leadership failure. In the same way, an individual who was experiencing an improvement in his or her quality of life, and had attributed his or her success internally, he or she may not think that there is any failure in the external provision of services – yet it could be that the actual leadership of the service provision was ineffective. The provision of public education would provide good illustration. A student in a poorly managed public school but who attributes education success internally, and behaved in a diligent and hardworking manner such as committing to a high intensity of self study, who then self-fulfils his or her own educational success, he or she may not judge the School Board as having failed in their leadership. In the same way, A student in a public school deemed excellent by many, but who attributed education success externally, and thus did not make any effort or attempt to either study or learn, and who failed his or her examinations at the end of the course, he or she may perceive that the school had failed him or her, regardless that the school might be of a reasonably high standard.

Thus it can be argued that the analysis of attribution can contribute substantially to the assessment of perception against reality.

Quality of Life Surveys as a Means of Measuring Effectiveness of Public Service Provision

The proposition of this research is that acceptance of public service leaders is intricately tied to whether the leaders are perceived to have fulfilled their moral obligation of meeting the needs of the people. Discussion hitherto suggested that actual performance of public services delivery plays a significant part in the forming of the people's judgement. The suggestion is that in the perception of the people, the actually performance of the public service delivery reflects the leadership of the public service leaders. This assumption is supported by Girishankar (2001), who concluded that the direct accountability of public service leaders for the delivery of the public services is the core principle of many public sector reform programs globally in the last number of decades.

Basic Constructs of Quality of Life Surveys

In assessing the effectiveness of public services, a well-establish method is to examine the factors that make up quality of life (Michalos and Zumbo 1999). Indeed, the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) database from 1982 – 2005 indicates over 55,000 academic citations utilizing the term 'quality of life', spanning a large range of academic disciplines (Costanza et al 2008).

Quality of life is not something that can be quantified easily, and countries worldwide adopt slightly different measures in their assessment of national quality of living standards. Indeed, Cummins (1996) in a research exercise recorded well over 100 instruments which purport to measure life quality in some form. Quality of Life measures attempt to assess the extent to which objectively defined human needs are fulfilled, but invariably the assessment relates to the perception of subjective well being. The mixing of objectivity and subjectivity is controversial, but there has been some research evidence to suggest that subjective indicators assessing the importance of various objective life domains (such as life expectancy, material good or economic

productions) can be valid measures of what people perceive to be important to their happiness and well-being (Diener and Suh 1999).

Thus, Quality of Life appears to be a multi-dimensional construct built on the multiple needs of the individuals, and the assessment of Quality of Life is the combined objective and subjective assessment of whether those needs are met.

Comparison of International Usage of Quality of Life Surveys

The difficulties in reconciling the objective and the subjective assessments not withstanding, Quality of Life measures has been a major explicit life-style and policy goal for many nations, and even adopted by the United Nations in their global human development programme (UNDP 1998).

In Australia, the development of a comprehensive adult quality of life scale by Australia's Deakin University suggested seven domains which together were intended to be inclusive of all quality of life components. They suggested material well-being, health, productivity, intimacy, safety, place in community, and emotional well-being to be the seven domains (Cummins et al 1997). In Scotland, the Centre for Cultural Policy Research (CCPR) was commissioned by the Scottish Executive to undertake research to define quality of life (Galloway 2005), part of their discussion quoted Hagerty et al (2001) with the seven domains of Family and Friends, Emotional Well-Being, Material Well-Being, Health, Work and Productive Acts, Local Community and Personal Safety. In Canada, Atlas of Canada, a Government supported organisation, developed a quality of life model comprising thirteen domains in three environmental categories: the "physical" environment assessing environmental quality, personal security housing and accessibility to services; the "social" environment assessing leisure and recreation, social opportunity and mobility, participation in democratic process, social stability, education, access to health services and health status; and the "economic" environment assessing household finances and employment / paid work. (The model was published on the Canadian Government related website http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/site/english/maps/peopleandsociety/QOL/1)

The above noted global diversity notwithstanding, broad categories can be developed. In general, it can be suggested that quality of living falls into the broad categories of Economy, Environment, Security, Health, Education, Society and Freedom. In practice these are the categories upon which Government departments in most countries are structured.

Mixing of Methodology – Critical Evaluation of using the Quality of Life Surveys Approach to Assessing effective Public Services.

The proposal is to attempt to use Quality of Life measure to reflect performance in public service provision. In order to measure Quality of Life, one must have a theory of what makes up a good life. The dominant and preferred philosophy underpinning the construct of a 'good life' is the theory of utilitarianism, which treats preferences, choices or tastes as private and arbitrary, and that they are formed inside each individual. Accordingly, the theory is that Quality of Life involves the satisfaction of the desires of the individuals, with maximum satisfaction being the ultimate objective (Rawls 1974). The difficulty present by this theory is that quality assessment is seen as subjective by nature. The argument is that quality could never be quantified, for if quality can be quantified, it would cease to be quality – it would instead be quantity (Cobb 2000)

Moreover, the analysis of Quality of Life is further complicated by the understanding that of the multi-dimensions that make up the measures, each is assumed to contribute to different degree at different time to the overall Quality of Life. The suggestion is that the importance and the degree of contribution of each of these dimension changes over time. As such, Quality of Life measures represent a snapshot in time – and at any point in time, the assessment is a function of the extent to which each individual judge the meeting of their needs (which is a mix of quantitative measure and qualitative perception) and the judgement of how important the particular needs are in their contribution to the overall Quality of Life.

Thus there is firstly, an argument that, given the different dimensions, the contrasting qualitative and quantitative measures cannot be merged in any reasonable way to provide for an aggregate assessment of the overall Quality of Life. And secondly, that

even if it is possible to aggregate the measures, the assessment is still only a snap-shot in time. The argument is that if the importance and the degree of contribution of each of the Quality of Life dimension can change over time even if the actual performance of the public service delivery remain constant, then it is no basis to directly correlate the Quality of Life measures to the effectiveness of the actual public service performance.

The proposition is to examine the effectiveness of the actual public service delivery, and the suggestion is that the basis of the assessment should remain consistent for the assessment to be meaningful. If the basis of the assessment, namely the perception and the value judgement of the various constituent elements that make up the assessment of the overall Quality of Life, is subjected to change over time even while the level of actual performance being examined remained constant and unchanged, the conclusions may risk being deemed as invalid or meaningless. Such would be the risk associated with the approach suggested by this research.

The conflicts between qualitative and quantitative analysis and the discussion on whether objective and subjective measures can be effectively mixed will be further discussed in a later section on methodological discussion.

3.   Research Framework

The research inquiry concerns the causal relationship between the people's perception of whether the public service leaders had effectively fulfilled the needs of the people and the people's acceptance of the leadership of the public service leaders.

Conventional wisdom seemed to suggest a positive correlation between these two aspects – that the higher the perception that the leaders have met the needs of the people, the more likely the leaders will be accepted by the people.

Research Hypothesis

However, the hypothesis of the research in this document is that in the Irish context, a negative correlation could exist, where either the public accepts the public service leaders despite clear evidence indicating that the leaders had failed in their moral obligation to act in the interests of the people, or the public being very critical of the leaders despite the ability of the leaders to meet their needs.

The specific hypothesis raised for this research is therefore that:

"In the context of the Republic of Ireland, the perception of the performance of the public service leaders did not always match the reality of the performance of the public service leaders, and in particular, the dissatisfaction and the rejection of the leadership could be founded on misplaced attributions."

Secondary Research Support

The case of the Lisbon Referendum in Ireland in June 2008 provides for some secondary quantitative analysis to support the current discussion.

All the major political parties in Ireland over the last three decades and the successive Governments in Ireland during that period had consistently and deliberately drew support from Europe. From one political perspective, it could be argued that as a

direct consequence, the successive Irish Governments in the last decade were able to deliver to the people of Ireland a consistent and significant improvement in the Quality of Life.

Improvement in the Quality of Life in Ireland is a well supported notion, and the contribution from Europe is also well documented. GDP growth in Ireland averaged 6% per annum between 1995 and 2007. GDP growth in 2006 was the highest in Europe, growing at well over twice the average rate of the rest of Europe (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2007). In monetary terms, GDP per capita in Ireland grew from US$4,636 in 1979 to US$47,800 in 2008, at Purchasing Power Parity. That was a ten fold increase over the period. In 2006, Ireland had the second highest per capita income in the European Union (EU), and sixth highest in the world. (International Monetary Fund, 2007). By 2007, Ireland had received over €17 billion in EU Structural and Cohesion Funds support (Irish Regions Office 2007). From the economic perspective, there could be an argument that by aligning Ireland to Europe, the successive Irish Governments had substantially raised the standard and the quality of living in Ireland.

Yet the outcome of the Lisbon Referendum in Ireland in June 2008 was such that, despite the overwhelming support for the proposed European Treaty by all the major political parties in Ireland, the people of Ireland voted overwhelmingly to reject its adoption, thereby signally their non-acceptance of the leadership of the Government.

The Republic of Ireland practices a parliamentary form of Representative Democracy. What that means is that parliamentary representatives (*Teachta Dála*) are directly elected by the people to the Irish Parliament (*Dáil Éireann*) via a system of proportional representation, and the government is then appointed by the parliamentary representatives. The basic implication is therefore that since the Government has been entrusted by the people through parliament to govern them for their benefits, the people would in turn 'trust' the Government's decisions in matters of State. In the case of the Lisbon Referendum, the people of Ireland overwhelmingly rejected not just the guidance of the Government, but even rejected the guidance of non-government opposition parties.

The current Government in Ireland is a coalition comprising *Fine Fail*, the Progressive Democrats and the Green Party. *Fine Fail* is the party with the largest number of elected parliamentary members. The three significant opposition parties are *Fine Gael*, the Labour Party and *Sinn Fein*. *Fine Gael* being the largest opposition party. Of these six major political parties, only Sinn Fein campaigned for a rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. The other five parties all joined force to campaign for the acceptance of the Treaty.

In the 2007 General Election, the three governing parties combined held 18 of the 43 electorate constituencies, securing an average of 56% of the first preference votes in these 18 constituencies (see Appendix A). The five parties that joined forces to campaign for the acceptance of the Treaty together claimed majority in all 43 constituencies, securing an overwhelming total of 86% of the first preference votes.

Yet in the Lisbon referendum (see Appendix B), the electorates overwhelmingly rejected the Treaty with a margin of 54% over 46% - a margin of 8 percentage points. The turnout for the voting was also significantly high at 53.1% (the turnout for the previous Nice Treaty Referendum in 2001 was only 35%). The rejection was comprehensive in that of the 43 constituencies, 33 returned a rejection with an average margin of 14 percentage points, while only 10 returned a 'Yes' votes, but with a narrower average margin of 11 percentage points. The rejection was consistent throughout the country. When analysed by provinces, all four provinces of Leinster, Munster, Connacht and Ulster returned a rejection (Figure IV-3.1).

The analysis of the voting data presented some interesting perspectives. For example,

- In the two constituencies of Cork North-West and Limerick West, the five parties that joined forces to campaign for the acceptance of the Treaty won 100% of the first preference votes in either constituency in the 2007 General Election. But when it came to the Lisbon Referendum, the electorates in Cork North-West rejected the Treaty by a 54% to 46% margin, and the electorates Limerick West rejected the Treaty by a 55% to 45% margin.

- Of the 18 constituencies that the three Government parties held majorities in during the 2007 General Election, only six returned a 'Yes' vote for the Lisbon Referendum. 12 constituencies reversed their majority support for the Government parties. In the 2007 general Election, the Government parties had a majority of an average 12 percentage points for the 18 majority constituencies. The average margin for winning the 'Yes' vote for the six constituencies was 10 percentage points while the average margin for losing to the 'No' vote in the other 12 constituencies was a higher 15 percentage points.

Figure IV-3.1 How the Regions Voted in the Lisbon Referendum 2008

	Voting Turnout	"Yes" Vote	"No" Vote
Leinster	54%	49%	51%
Munster	53%	45%	55%
Connacht	52%	44%	56%
Ulster	50%	40%	60%

A further interesting point is that, according to the *Post-referendum survey in Ireland* published by the European Commission (2008), the main explanation (30%) as to why the people rejected the Treaty was that they did so because they "don't know what [they are] voting for / don't understand it" (Figure IV-3.2). Moreover, 17% of those responded indicated that they voted no because they "did not like being told to vote" a particular way – an inference of rebellion regardless of the nature of the treaty they were voting on. This is on top of the 5% who specifically stated that they voted no to "protest against the government".

In other words, the people took these stands despite the Government and the opposition parties expressing their support for the treaty and despite the recommendation and the guidance of the Government and the opposition parties to the electorate to vote 'yes'. By either voting 'no' on the basis of ignorance, or voting 'no' on the basis of rebellion, or voting 'no' as a protest vote, the electorates had simply declared that they did not trust the leadership or trust the advice of the Government, and will not want to follow their leadership – despite overwhelming voted them into office in the first place.

Figure IV-3.2 Analysis of Reasons behind Rejection

Why did you decide to vote NO to the Lisbon Treaty?

Reason	%
I don't know what I'm voting for / don't understand it	30%
To keep Ireland's power and identity	24%
To safeguard Ireland's neutrality	22%
Don't like being told what to do / forced into voting yes	17%
Eastern European / bigger countries will have too much power	12%
To help Irish farmers in the World Trade talks	11%
To prevent too much immigration to Ireland	8%
EU is too big already	6%
To safeguard Ireland's low corporate tax rate	5%
To protest against the Government	5%
Other	18%
No opinions	3%

Source: European Commission 2008

The analysis seem to suggest that, having brought the Irish economy through a decade of unprecedented economic success – where the Irish Government had outperformed the rest of Europe economically and had raised the standard of living in Ireland to a level previously unseen, the Irish Government had found themselves on the receiving end of a negative perception by the people, despite their economic successes.

Returning to the proposition for this document that in the Irish context, the perception of the performance of the public service leaders did not necessarily match the reality of the actual performance of the public service leaders, there appears to be evidence to support the view that the public leaders actually meeting the needs of the people does not necessarily correlate positively to the acceptance of public leadership by the people.

Research Methodology Discussion

Despite earlier discussion concerning the limitation and the weaknesses of Quality of Life measures as a primary research method to assess the effectiveness of public service deliver, the approach is still being proposed for this research, given that it is a commonly adopted method of public services evaluation (Schuessler and Fisher 1985).

Nevertheless, the conflicts between qualitative and quantitative analysis and the discussion on whether objective and subjective measures can be effectively mixed need further discussion and analysis. The fundamental issue here is whether a quantitative analysis approach can be applied to the assessment of qualitative responses.

The general understanding is that the fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research lie at the level of the epistemological and ontological assumptions about research. As such it could be argued that the quantitative-qualitative debate is philosophical in nature, not methodological.

In the context of contrasting research philosophies, the positivist and the interpretivist paradigms are based on different assumptions about the nature of the world. As such, there is an argument that they require different instruments and procedures to carry out the type of research desired. The suggestion is that different approaches allow us to know and understand different things about the world (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the quantitative axioms about the positivist paradigm would describe the nature of reality as tangible and fragmentable, and that causal linkage is possible because there are real causes precedent to their effects; while the qualitative axioms about the interpretivistic paradigm would describe the nature of realities as constructed and holistic, and that they are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects.

Indeed, epistemologically, qualitative inquiries operate under very different assumptions when compared to quantitative inquiries. Qualitative researchers believe that the best way to understand any phenomenon is to view it in its context. They would see all quantification as limited in nature. Many qualitative researchers tend not to accept the notion that one should approach measurement with the idea of constructing a fixed instrument or set of questions; rather they would tend to allow flexibility in their inquiry and allow the research questions to emerge and to even change.

Ontologically, qualitative researchers also operate under very different ontological assumptions about the world. They don't assume that there is a separate unitary reality apart from our perceptions. Consequently, their assumption that each individual experiences a different reality would lead them to reject methods that attempt to aggregate across individual perspectives. Some might even argue that since each researcher is an unique individual and that all research is essentially biased by each researcher's individual perceptions, there is no point in even trying to establish 'validity' in any external or objective sense.

Purists on both sides would explicitly advocate that qualitative and quantitative researches are mutually incompatible. An Incompatibility Thesis (Howe 1988) was even proposed which posits that qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, including their associated methods, cannot and should not be mixed (Lincoln and Guba 1985). Guba (1990, p. 81) even contended that "accommodation between paradigms is impossible … we are led to vastly diverse, disparate, and totally antithetical ends"

On the other hand, there are some (Niglas 2000, Rocco et al 2003, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004) who believes that skilled researcher can successfully combine approaches. Their suggestion is that a mixed method approach presents a third way, simultaneously gaining the benefits of both the qualitative and the quantitative discipline. It is in this vain that this research is taken, that an essentially quantitative survey and analysis is taken to assess essentially qualitative assessment of Quality of Life values and perspectives. The intension is also that, with such a mixed methodological approach, findings will be brought forth leading to a more substantive research in the next document in this DBA series of research.

Research Methods

Survey Methodology

The research inquiry concerns the causal relationship between the public's perception of whether the public service leaders had effectively fulfilled their needs and the public's expressed acceptance of their leadership. The proposal is therefore to conduct

an attitudinal survey of the Irish public. An appropriate sample across the nation will be surveyed, and the results codified and quantitatively analysed.

Surveying of public attitudes through the face-to-face administering of a short questionnaire on the streets is a common approach (Bryman 2001). The strategy for this research is that the street surveys will be conducted under the profile of the Institute of Public Administration in Ireland, an institute known and respected by the majority of the general public – with many of them having themselves previously gone through various education and training programmes offered by the Institute. It is hope that such a profile will attract and secure active participation by the general public, in particular when the general public see that the questions relates to public service issues and administered by the Institute of Public Administration personnel.

A short questionnaire was designed and piloted on a small cohort of individuals within the Institute of Public Administration before amending and going 'live' across the country. As with most public street surveys, where the aim is to approach a member of the public on the streets to solicit participation, a critical objective in the design of the questionnaire is to ensure that the questionnaire is as short as possible – and in any case one that will not require the public respondent to be held up for too long a period of time.

Sampling Design

Given that the population for this research is the entire adult population of the Republic of Ireland, it is obvious that taking a complete census is not feasible for the purpose of this research. The question, however, is whether the samples represent the characteristics of the whole population. The validity of the sample depends on the accuracy of the sample as well as the precision of the sample (Emory and Cooper 1991). Accuracy is defined as the degree to which bias is absent from the sample, and precision measures how representative the sample is to the population.

The nature of this research supports representation probability sampling. A probability sample is based on the concept of random selection, and is one in which each population element is given a known or non-zero probability of selection. To

reduce systemic bias, a stratified probability sampling approach is adopted, subdividing the stratified sample along the line of geographic regions, within which each population elements have the same non-zero probability of selection.

The rationale of stratifying along geography regions is simply that as the attitudinal survey relates to the national perception of the public services country-wide, the sample should be proportional to the population geographical spread. According to the National Census of 2006 (Central Statistics Office 2007), which was the most recent national census held in the Republic of Ireland, the population of Ireland stood at 4,239,848 in 2006, of which 2,577,828 (60.8%) were from the urban population (areas with >1,500 people) and 1,662,020 (39.2%) were from the rural population. The overall population was also disproportionately skewed towards the capital, in that 1,045,769 (24.7%) were from the Dublin city and county district. It was felt that the sample constituency should reflect similar spread.

As public service impact all sections of society and crossing all political convictions, the suggestion is that therefore further stratification along the lines of political, social and economic status, although useful for the purpose of additional analysis, would not be necessary for a research that explore a broad national perspective. The systemic bias generated by positive views would assumed to be balanced by the systemic bias generated by negative views – an assumption integrated into the basic formula for calculating sample size in probability sampling by adjusting the response distribution variable to variation at 0.5 (50%).

Sampling Size

Regarding the sample size, given the total population size of 4,239,848, what would the appropriate sample size? It could be argued that the relevant population should not be the total population, as the opinions of children regarding the impact of the public services on them might not be considered relevant. The 2006 National Census returned 864,449 (20.4%) under the age of 15. They would now be under the age of 17 in 2008. A more relevant population size for the purpose of this research could be 4,239,848 (the entire population of the country in 2006) less 864,449 (the number of young people under 15 years of age in 2006), which would be 3,375,399.

However, as we shall see later, as the basic formula for calculating sample size in probability sampling assumes an infinite population, a sample of, say, 300 drawn from a population of 3.4 million has almost the same estimating precision as 300 drawn from a population of 4.2 million.

Emory and Cooper (1991) suggested that the common belief that a sample must be large or else it is not representative is in fact not always correct, as sample size is only one aspect of the degree of representation. It is also not necessarily true that a sample should bear some proportional relationship to the size of the population from which it is drawn. Instead, according to Emory and Cooper (1991), how large a sample should be is a function of the variation in the population parameters under consideration and the estimating precision needed for the purpose of the research.

The suggestion is indeed that the appropriate sample size is a function of the size of the population of interest, the desired confidence level, and the level of precision. The confidence level refers to the degree of certainty of conclusion and level of precision refers to the margin of error. Much referenced is Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) recommendations for a probabilistic sample size – although Krejcie and Morgan (1970) themselves cited a 1960 NEA Research Bulletin as the original source of the formula they used. Their formula was:

$$S = \frac{X^2 \, NP \, (1-P)}{d^2 \, (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where:

S	=	required sample size
N	=	the population size
X^2	=	the table value of chi-square for one degree of freedom at the desired confidence level
d	=	the degree of accuracy or level of precision expressed as a proportion
P	=	the population proportion (or response distribution – assumed to be 0.5 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

Krejcie and Morgan (1970) produced a table showing the sample size needed at 95% confidence level and a level of precision of +/– 5 percentage point. The mathematics

of the formula showed that the smaller the population, the higher the proportion of the population will be needed for the sample. For example, if the population was 300, the sample size needed for a confidence level of 95% would be 169 – just over half the total population. If the population was 900, the required sample size would be 269 – just under a third. If the population is larger than 100,000, the required sample size would only be 385, which would be a much smaller fraction. This is consistent with the mathematic principle that in probability sampling a population approaching a very large number will approximate an infinite population, and that population size and sample size are not linear correlated.

Using the same formula, a summary of sample sizes for very large populations (those of 1 million or larger) can be illustrated (Figure IV-3.3).

Figure IV-3.3 Sampling Sizes for Large Populations

Precision margin of error, ± %	Confidence Level		
	99%	95%	90%
± 1%	16,576	9,604	6,765
± 2%	4,144	2,401	1,691
± 3%	1,848	1,067	752
± 5%	666	385	271

For a population of 4.2 million, a sample size of 300 would therefore be well within validity. In general, the level of ±5% precision at 90% confidence is considered acceptable for a public survey of opinions. For example, in the United States, a key element of the U.S. Census Bureau's revised Decennial Census program – the American Community Survey (ACS) employed only a 90% confidence level for their survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2005). The actual sample size of this research is 304. This sample size would provide for a confident level higher than 90%. This sample size would provide for a confidence level of 92% at the same ±5% precision.

Overall Questionnaire Design

The complete questionnaire is attached as Appendix IV-D.

In line with the proposition hypothesis, the aim is to inquire into the perception and the attitudes of the Irish public towards the public services. The research will then hope to examine the correlation between the public's perception and attitude on the one hand, and on the other hand, their sense of whether they felt they have received significant or notable public service values, as translated into quality of life measures.

A further line of inquiry is to examine the correlation between their satisfaction with the public services on the one hand, and on the other hand their sense of whether they held themselves responsible for attaining those quality of life factors or whether they hold the public services as largely responsible for providing for their needs. This is the exploration of their attribution.

Specifically, the first two sections of the questionnaire were designed to solicit the perspectives of the public on what they think about the Irish public service. The third section was design to then direct their thoughts away from the service providers and guide them to assess when they feel the various aspects of their quality of life have been improved or not. The fourth and final section was designed to then assess where they feel the responsibilities for success lies – in a sense designed to try to tease out from their answers their perceptual link between their prior responses.

In terms of the scales used to provide the data, a range of scales were used (Berenson et al 2002).

In the assessment of the perception of the public service, a nominal scale was used. Nominal scale classifies data into distinct categories (in this case, a simple judgement of presence or absence of a particular perception) in which ordering is not implied. Where the inquiry was into a simple assessment of whether a certain perception exists or not, a simple True / False or No Opinion response was solicited.

In inviting the respondents to describe the public service, again a nominal scale was appropriate. The issue here was a simple selection of descriptions from a given list – items within the list are not directly related to each other in a value measurement sense and therefore can be considered as independent items.

However, for the evaluation of the individual components within the public service, an ordinal scale was employed. Ordinal scale also classifies data into distinct categories (in this case, a simple value judgement), but with ordering implied. A simple choice was offered assessing whether the respondents perceived the individual components to be Bad, Average or Good.

A little more information was solicited from the quality of life assessment. A ratio scale was employed. A ratio scale is an ordered scale in which the difference between measurement is meaningful and involves a true zero point. The scale employed went from –3 to +3, with the point zero implying a specific meaning of quality of life conditions being unchanged.

The section asking the respondents to assess responsibilities employed an ordinal scale – ordering is implied, but the differences between measurements were not assessed.

Questionnaire Section A: Perception of the Public Service

The public service is defined as the set of services directly provided by the State. Public servants are the people who work for the public service and include civil servants who work in various government departments as well as the likes of teachers, nurses and *Gardai* (the Irish Police Force). Semi state bodies such as the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), Córas Iompair Éireann (CIÉ), the state transport company and *An Post*, the Irish Post Office are not actually part of the public service.

The intention was to examine the public's perception of the Public Service in Ireland. The questionnaire provided for a list of words, and asked the respondents whether in their perspective those words described their perception of the Public Service.

The words presented were "Capable", "Conservative", "Effective", "Efficient", "In Touch with Society", "Innovative", "Lazy", "Overpaid", "Powerful", "Proactive", "Secretive", "Successful", and "Wasteful".

These words were selected to provide for some measure of cross verification. For example, the words "Conservative" and "Innovative" should evoke mutually exclusive responses. Likewise the words "Efficient" and "Wasteful" should also evoke opposite responses. In contrast the words "Capable", "Effective" and "Successful" should evoke responses that provide a degree of positive correlations.

Respondents were asked to provide a nominal scale discrete response – False, No Opinion and True. The intension is to limit subjectivity by soliciting a discrete assessment rather than a scale of feelings.

Questionnaire Section B: Describing the Public Service

Here we wished to obtain from the respondent their foremost perception of the Irish public service. They were presented with a list of descriptions and were asked to select up to three of the descriptions that they considered best describing the public service.

The key to analysis this set of data was to see that for the items not selected, it did not imply a vote against those items. Rather, the implication was that the items selected were the 'prominent' perceptions of the respondents.

The list of descriptions includes:

- The Irish public service delivers value for money.
- The Irish public service performs well but very expensive.
- The Irish public service is talented and effective.
- The Irish public service lives in its own world.
- The Irish public service is not relevant to my life.
- The Irish public service is expensive and achieves little.
- The Irish public service does nothing for me.
- The Irish public service is an innovative, cutting edge organisation.

Again the selection of the descriptions allowed for cross verification. Moreover, it also allows for verification against the responses in the previous section. For example,

in theory response to the description "The Irish public service is expensive and achieves little" should correlate with the previous responses to the word "Wasteful".

The next part of the questionnaire aimed to be even more specific. The purpose was to consider individual components within the Irish public service. Respondents were asked to convey their impression of how well the Irish public service performed within each of the following areas it manages.

- Department of Justice
- Department of Education
- Department of Health
- Department of Transport
- Department of Social Welfare
- Department of Finance
- Department of the Environment

Again, respondents were asked to provide a discrete response – Good, Average and Bad for each department. The intention once again was to limit subjectivity by soliciting a discrete assessment rather than a scale of feelings.

Questionnaire Section C: Quality of Living

This section aimed to examine the respondents' perspective of living today by comparison with their past experiences. For the list of criteria, respondents were asked to rank their life today by comparison with their overall impressions of the past. As a possible reference point, they were guided to compare now to their situation five years ago.

The quality of living criteria includes "Health", "Family Life", "Community Life", "Financial Wellbeing", "Job Security", "Freedom to Express Yourself", "Personal Safety".

For this section, respondents were asked to score along a seven point ratio scale, ranging from Much Worse (–3) to Much Better (+3).

Questionnaire Section D: Responsibility for Quality of Living

Most commentators feel that responsibility for quality of living can be allocated in different measures to the individual and to society. This final section sought to assess that very perception. For a list of quality of living aspects, respondents were asked simply to express their perception of where they felt the responsibility lies.

Response options include:

(a)   Fully the responsibility of the individual.

(b)   Mainly the responsibility of the individual with some help from the State.

(c)   More the responsibility of the State than of the individual.

(d)   Fully the responsibility of the State.

The list of quality of living aspects includes:

- The health of the individual
- Good family life
- Good community spirit
- Personal financial security
- Obtaining an education
- Personal safety

Questionnaire Section E: Interviewee Data – To be filled in by the Researcher

The final section, to be filled in by the Researcher immediately after each individual interview, identified the specific interview locations and the gender of the respondents to facilitate more detailed breakdown of analysis by either geography or gender.

The Administering of the Survey

A pilot survey of ten individuals was conducted internally within the Institute of Public Administration to confirm and validate the effectiveness of the questionnaire design. A number of ambiguities in the wordings of some of the questions were subsequently addressed prior to bringing the survey to the streets.

The street research was conducted over a period of three weeks during September 2008, following a strict Researcher Guideline, intended as a guide or a code of conduct towards effective street interviews. The guidelines are attached as Appendix C. In line with the purpose of this research, respondents were asked to confirm on approach that they were residing in Ireland and were over 18 years of age.

To reduce interviewing bias and attempts to influence response by leading the questions, substantial analysis of the data did not commence until over 75% of the samples were returned, and full analysis did not take place until all the samples had been returned.

4.   Research Analysis

Analysis Methodology

This research is a quantitative research, and as such, statistical analysis of the data from the street survey is proposed.

Aside from the standard tabulation and cross tabulation summaries of discrete variables, this analysis will also attempt hypothesis testing and tests of statistical significance. The theoretical probability distribution employed to support these analysis is the Chi-square (χ^2) distribution.

In probability theory and statistics, and specifically in inferential statistics, it is often found that, under reasonable assumptions and under the assumption that the null hypothesis (that there is significance) is true, the test statistics can be shown to have distributions that approximate to the Chi-square distribution. In particular, the Chi-square distribution aptly describes the distribution of the variance of a sample taken from a normal distributed population. It is therefore useful for the purpose of making inferences about the population variance on the basis of the sample variance.

There are a number of tests of statistical significance whose results are evaluated by reference to the Chi-square distribution (known as Chi-square tests), such as Yates' Chi-square test of correction for continuity (Yates 1934) or the Mantel-Haenszel Chi-square test for linear association (Mantel and Haenszel 1959). However, Pearson's Chi-square test of association (Pearson 1900) is probably the best-known and most widely used (Plackett 1983)

The Pearson's Chi-square test was developed to test a null hypothesis that the frequency distribution of certain events observed in a sample is consistent with a comparison distribution through cross tabulation. The events considered need to be mutually exclusive and have total probability of 1, and preferably where each of the events represents an outcome of a categorical variable.

In this test, the Chi-square statistic is first calculated. The Chi-square statistic is calculated by first finding for each possible outcome the square of the differences between each observed and theoretical frequency divided by the theoretical frequency, and then summing the findings. Mathematically, it is represented by the equation:

$$X^2 = \sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

Where:

X^2 = the test statistic that asymptotically approaches a $\chi 2$ distribution.
O_i = an observed frequency;
E_i = an expected (theoretical) frequency, asserted by the null hypothesis;
N = the number of possible outcomes of each event.

The Chi-square statistic is then used to calculate the Chi-square probability (P-value) by comparing the value of the statistic to a Chi-square distribution. The Chi-square distribution has one parameter, namely its degrees of freedom. The number of degrees of freedom is equal to the number of possible outcomes, minus one. The Chi-square distribution has a positive skew; the skew becoming less with increasing degrees of freedom.

The Pearson's Chi-square test provides support for analysis in two aspects. Firstly, a test of goodness of fit can be inferred. The test of goodness of fit infers whether or not an observed frequency distribution varies from a theoretical distribution. Secondly, a test of independence can be inferred. The test of independence examines whether paired data on two variables, tabulated in a contingency table, can be interpreted as being independent of each other.

A Chi-square probability (P-value) of 0.05 is the commonly adopted threshold determining whether to accept or reject the null hypothesis, meaning to determine whether the variables have significant association or whether the variables are only randomly related to each other.

To validate the Pearson's Chi-square test, statisticians often also conduct the Likelihood Ratio Chi-square test (also known as the G test) in parallel (Greenwood and Nikulin 1996). This test tests the hypothesis of non-association. Although computed differently, the Likelihood Ratio Chi-square is interpreted the same way as the Pearson's Chi-square test. Both tests should produce similar results, and as such the Likelihood Ratio Chi-square test is useful to confirm and validate the inferences offered by the Pearson's Chi-square test.

Aside from Ch-square tests, analysis of variance will also be used to support the analysis of statistical significance. The technique used for the analysis of variance (with the acronym ANOVA) employed the Fisher's F-distribution (Howie 2002). For tests for differences among two or more independent groups, the One-way ANOVA procedure is used. For test for differences among only two groups, in terms of the partitioning of observed variance into components due to different explanatory variables, the Fisher's analysis of variance (the F-test) is similar in principal to the Students T-tests (Gosset 1908 Mankiewicz 2000). When there are only two means to compare, the T-test and the F-test are equivalent; the relation between ANOVA and T-test is given by $F = t^2$.

The actual statistical calculations were carried out using the Minitab Statistical Software. Analysis discussions will be presented below, but the statistical analysis tables and matrices will be attached as Appendices.

Analysis of Findings

Democratic Patterns

The gender representation from the data returned matched the demographic profile of the country as reported by the last National Census in 2006 (Central Statistics Office 2007). The National Census 2006 reported a population of 4,239,848 in 2006, of which 2,121.171 (50.03%) were male and 2,118,677 (49.97%) were female. In our survey, 51% of the respondents were male and 49% female (Figure IV-4.1), a less than 1% variance from the national statistics.

Figure IV-4.1 Survey Findings – Gender Distribution of Samples
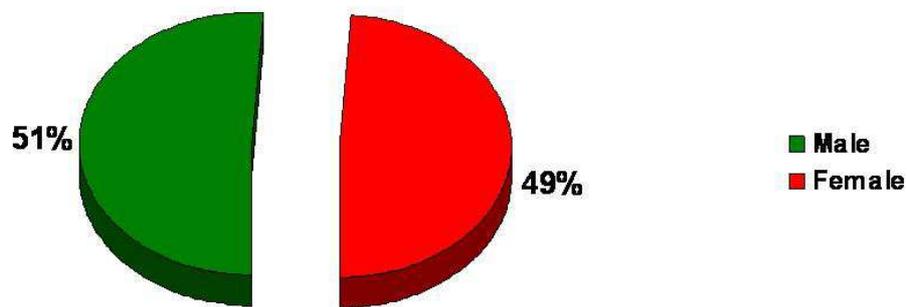
Likewise, the geographical spread of the samples also reflects the population demographics (Figure IV-4.2).

Figure IV-4.2 Survey Findings – Geographical Distribution of Samples
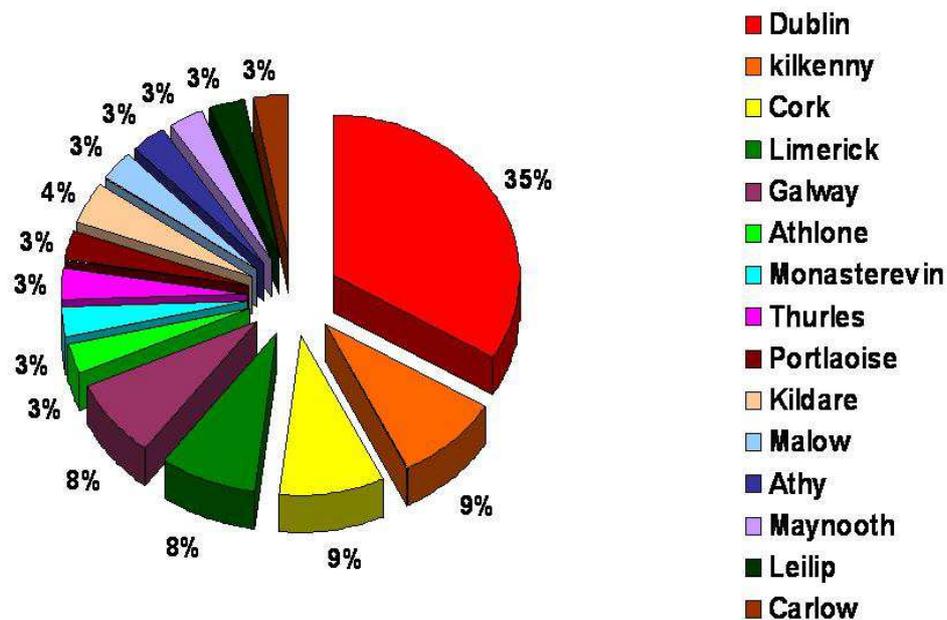
According to the National Census of 2006 (Central Statistics Office 2007), of the population of 4,239,848 in 2006, 2,577,828 (60.8%) were from the urban population (areas with >1,500 people) and 1,662,020 (39.2%) were from the rural population. The overall population was disproportionately skewed towards the capital, in that 1,045,769 (24.7%) were from the Dublin city and county district, and a further 371,036 (8.8%) from the commuter belt in the immediately hinterland around the

Dublin city and county districts (Wicklow, Kildare, Meath and Louth). Our sample population reflected similar population spread (Figure IV-4.2)

Perception of the Irish Public Services

In terms of the perception of the Irish public services, certain perceptions stood out as clear majorities (Figure IV-4.3). 61% of the respondents felt that the public services were capable, but at the same time, 62% though them inefficient. 61% felt that the public services were not innovative, 53% felt that they were not proactive, and a marginal 51% felt that they were wasteful.

Figure IV-4.3 Survey Findings – Perception of Public Service

Your perception of the Irish Public Services as a whole is that they are:

	Agree	No Opinions	Disagree
	0%	50%	0%
Capable	61%		34%
Effective	43%		47%
Efficient	29%		62%
Successful	45%		42%
In Touch	45%		39%
Proactive	34%		53%
Innovative	22%		61%
Powerful	57%		31%
Conservative	55%		27%
Secretive	41%		40%
Lazy	32%		54%
Overpaid	30%		54%
Wasteful	51%		37%
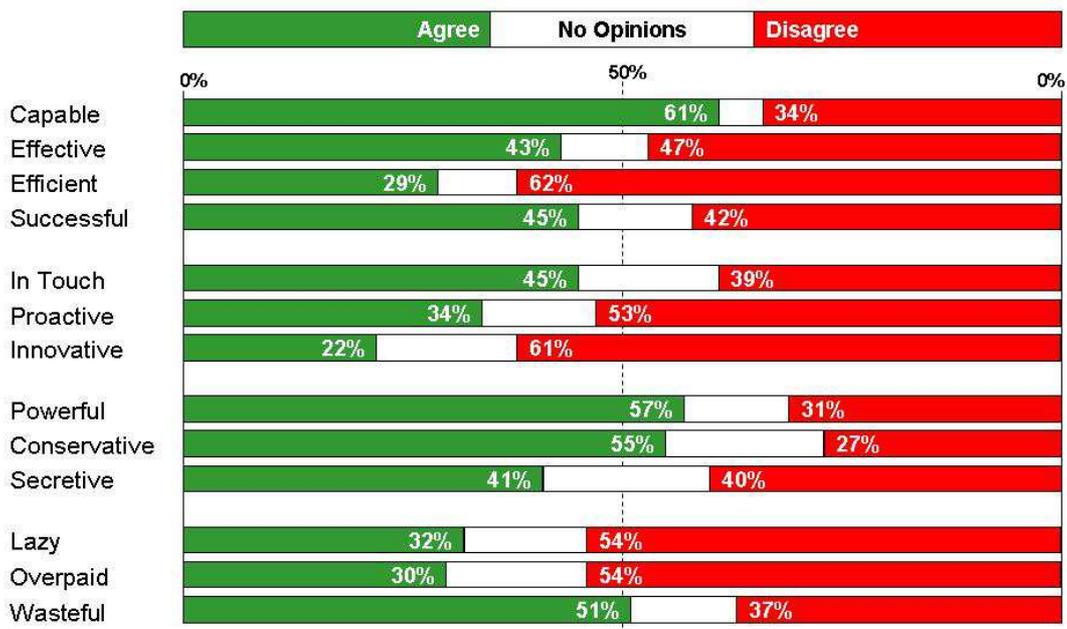
On the positive perspectives, a marginal 54% of the respondents felt that the public services were neither lazy nor overpaid; although slight less of the others whose perception was that the public servants were overpaid (30%) than those who felt that they were lazy (32%).

In the administration of the questionnaire, the perception categories were randomly mixed to minimise grouping of either positive or negative trigger words, but when

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collated into groups of categories contrasting positive concepts against negative concepts, it can be seen that the perceptions were marginally leaning towards the negatives.

Over the four definitively positive categories of "capable", "effective", "efficient" and "successful", the average of the affirmative responses were 44.50% while the average of the rejection responses was a higher 46.25%.

When merged with the three secondary positive categories of "in touch", "proactive" and innovative", the indication became more prominent. The affirmative responses averaged only 29.86%, against the rejection responses average of 48.29%.

The interpretation from this appears to be that the perceptions of public services failures were much more evident than the perceptions of public services successes.

This interpretation is further supported by examining the negative categories. Although the affirmative responses averaged only 37.67% over the three definitively negative categories of "lazy", "overpaid" and "wasteful", against the rejection responses average of 46.25%, but when merged with the three secondary negative categories of "powerful", "conservative" and "secretive", the affirmative responses averaged 44.33%, against the rejection responses average of only 40.5%.

The interpretation from this therefore appears to reinforce the earlier analysis that the general perceptions of the public services failure were much more prominent than the perceptions of public services successes.

To confirm the validity of the individual responses, Chi-square tests on the categories were carried out. The Pearson Chi-square tests of association, when applied to response categories, showed a very high correlation between the positive categories (Figure IV-4.4). Between the negative categories, the correlation was less prominent but nevertheless significant (Figure IV-4.5). From the tabulated statistics tables (Appendix IV-E1), it can be seen that the correlations were all positively associated.

Figure IV-4.4 χ^2 and P-value Comparisons for Positive Categories

	Capable	Effective	Successful
Capable		χ^2 = 126.029 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 85.406 P-value = 0.000
Effective	χ^2 = 126.029 P-value = 0.000		χ^2 = 127.242 P-value = 0.000
Successful	χ^2 = 85.406 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 127.242 P-value = 0.000	

Figure IV-4.5 χ^2 and P-value Comparisons for Negative Categories

	Lazy	Overpaid	Wasteful
Lazy		χ^2 = 24.116 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 53.666 P-value = 0.000
Overpaid	χ^2 = 24.116 P-value = 0.000		χ^2 = 24.819 P-value = 0.000
Wasteful	χ^2 = 53.666 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 24.819 P-value = 0.000	

On the other hand, when the positive categories were correlated against the negative categories, the Pearson Chi-square tests showed a definitive significance of association (Figure IV-4.6), but the correlations can be seen to be of a negative association (Appendix IV-E1).

In other words, the Chi-square tests seemed to confirm the validity of responses in identifying a distinguishable judgement of perceptions.

Figure IV-4.6 χ^2 and P-value Comparisons for Cross Categories

	Lazy	Overpaid	Wasteful
Capable	χ^2 = 47.837 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 37.126 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 42.905 P-value = 0.000
Effective	χ^2 = 53.130 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 20.263 P-value = 0.000	χ^2 = 57.987 P-value = 0.000

This apparent negative perception of the public services is further evident in the comments selected by the respondents describing their description of the public service provisions (Figure IV-4.7).

Figure IV-4.7 Survey Findings – Views of Public Services

Your description of the Irish Public Services as a whole is that they:

Percentage of Respondents who said

54%	Living in Their Own World
42%	Doing Nothing for Us
37%	Expensive and Achieving Little
18%	Not Relevant to Our Lives
49%	Performing Well but very Expensive
30%	Talented and Effective
27%	Delivering Value for Money
16%	Innovative, Cutting Edge Organisation
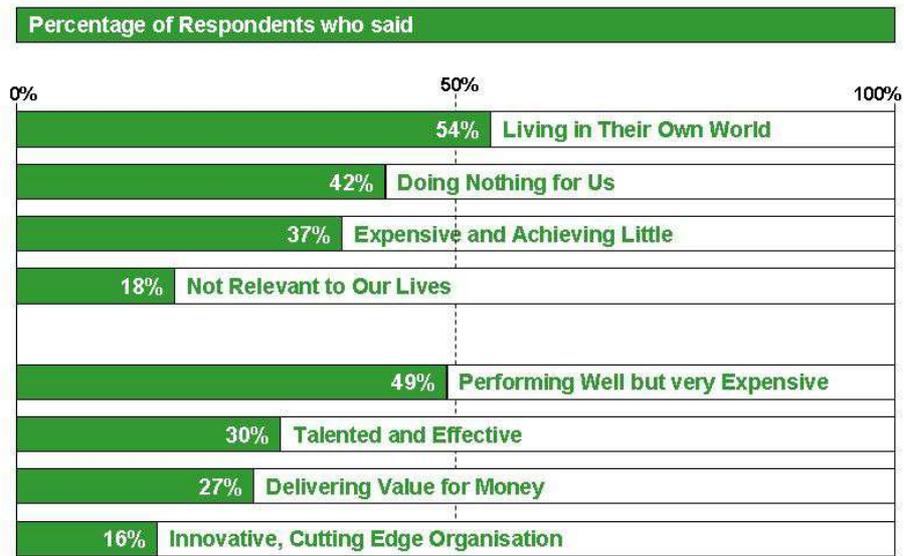
In terms of the discrete statements, again while the statements in the questionnaire were listed in no particular order to minimise the effects of leading the respondents to a particular bias, but when collated into groups of categories contrasting positive statements against negative statements, it can be seen that the assessments were marginally leaning towards the negatives.

The data for the selection of the four negative statements indicated an overall average (the average over the four statements) of 37.7% of the respondents selecting at least one of the four negative statements to describe their perception of the public services, while only an average of 30.50% of the respondents selecting at least one of the four positive statements to describe their perception of the public services

A sample of Pearson's Chi-square tests of association also validated the categories in that for example, the Chi-square test of association between responses in the same category – say, between the positive category responses of "Talented and Effective"

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and "Delivering value for money" showed a very high positive correlation (χ^2 = 94.517, P-value = 0.000), and between the negative category responses of "Expensive and Achieving Little" and "Does Nothing for Me" showed a marginal, yet definitely positive correlation (χ^2 = 7.889, P-value = 0.005) while the Chi-square test of association between responses in the opposite categories – say, between the positive category of "Performing Well but Expensive" and the negative category of "Expensive and Achieving Little" showed a very definitely negative correlation (χ^2 = 37.701, P-value = 0.000). (Appendix IV-E2)

Figure IV-4.8 Survey Findings – Perception of the Departments

Your perception of the various individual Public Service providers is that they are:
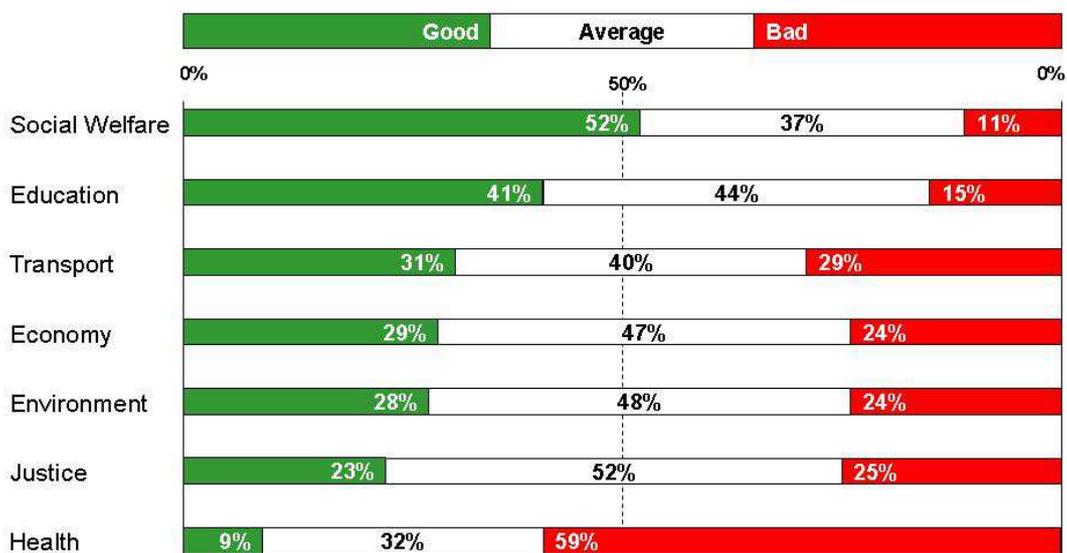
The next assessment respondents were asked to consider was the assessment of the performance of individual public service sectors (Figure IV-4.8).

It appears that for most sectors, the score of "average" out-score either a positive or a negative score, except for Social Welfare and Health. Social welfare had a majority positive assessment (52%), while Health had an overwhelmingly negative assessment (59%). In terms of the margin of positive assessment against negative assessment, the first of the anomalies was noted here in that despite the negative perception expressed about the public service, the actual overall assessment of the various individual sectors actually returned a marginally positive score, in that an average 30.42%

returned positive scores for the various departments, 42.87% returned an averaged score, and only 26.71% returned a negative scores.

Quality of Life Changes

Figure IV-4.9 Survey Findings – Quality of Life Changes

Changes to Quality of Life aspects when compared to the past:

| Much Worst | Worst | Little Worst | Same | Little Better | Better | Much Better |

Worse ← → Better

Health

| 19% | 13% | 18% | 22% | 12% | 7% | 9% |

Family Life

| 3 | 3 | 11% | 33% | 24% | 13% | 13% |

Community Life

| 10% | 11% | 23% | 27% | 14% | 10% | 9% |

Financial Wellbeing

| 6% | 5% | 12% | 21% | 25% | 18% | 13% |

Job Security

| 27% | 13% | 19% | 22% | 8% | 6% | 5% |

Freedom of Expression

| 2 | 3 | 4 | 42% | 15% | 15% | 19% |

Personal Safety

| 19% | 17% | 21% | 26% | 6% | 6% | 5% |
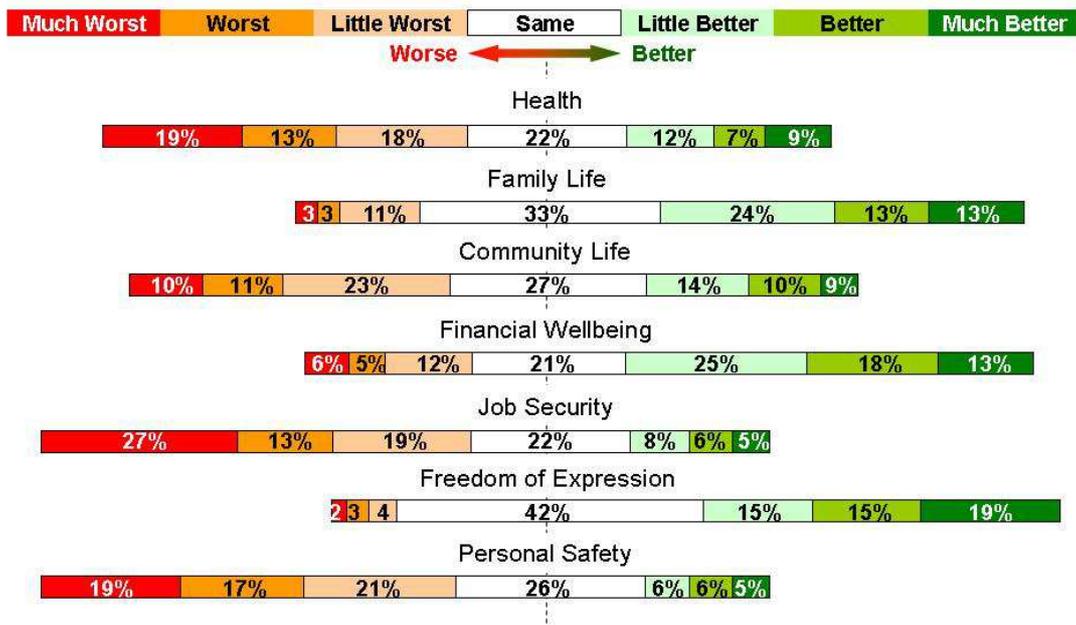
In terms of assessing how quality of life is compared to the past, the analysis of the discrete categories already provides some indication of an overall improvement of quality of life (Figure IV-4.9). One category ("Community Life") returned a marginal deterioration (Mean = –0.2632), three categories ("Health" and "Personal Safety") returned significant deterioration (Means = –0.5200 and –0.7829 respectively), one category ("Job Security") returned substantial deterioration (Mean = –0.9180), two categories ("Family Life" and "Financial Wellbeing") returned significant improvement (Means = 0.6063 and 0.5855 respectively) and one category ("Freedom of Expression") returned substantial improvement (Mean = –0.8553) (Figure 4.10).

In other words, people felt that they now have much better family life, are much wealthier financially, and have substantially greater freedom of expression, although

community life is worst, they are less healthy, are more fearful for their personal safety, and severely fearful for their job securities.

Overall statistically, the average percentage of people feeling that the combined overall quality of life has improved (36%) is marginally higher than the average percentage of people feeling that the combined overall quality of life has deteriorated (35%).

Figure IV-4.10 Statistical Analysis of Quality of Life Changes

	Mean	Stand Deviation
Health	− 0.52	1.83
Family Life	+ 0.60	1.42
Community Life	− 0.26	1.58
Financial Wellbeing	+ 0.59	1.64
Job Security	− 0.92	1.76
Freedom of Expression	+ 0.86	1.42
Personal Safety	− 0.78	1.65

Already from the initial data, it is feasible to suggest the support of our proposition hypothesis that while in general the Irish public services suffer from a bad perception image, the self assessment by the public on their changing quality of life paradoxically showed an improvement, albeit a marginal improvement only.

Attribution of Responsibility

The above conclusion could be seen to be further supported by the attribution analysis (Figure IV-4.11). In terms of responsibilities, in all categories, there was a clear majority who felt that the responsibility for success rests fully or mainly with the individual. Most significant was the responsibility for family life where 94% of those responded indicated that family life was a matter of personal responsibility rather than the responsibility of the State. This was the one category that scored substantial improvement in the Quality of Life survey. The same analysis appeared, though to a

lesser extend, for achieving financial wellbeing. This seems to support an interpretation that, if the end result is positive, then the *perception* of the means to that end could be where the problem lies, as opposed to the *actual performance* of the means to that end. This, in turn, would seem to support the hypothesis that although their perception of the public services may be negative, the people's quality of life had by their own assessment improved noticeably.

Figure IV-4.11 Survey Findings – Attribution of Responsibilities

Responsibility for success lies with:

	Ourselves	No Comments	The State

	0%	50%	0%
Individual's Health	75%	8%	17%
Good Family Life	94%	4%	2%
Community Spirit	54%	4%	43%
Financial Security	79%	5%	16%
Obtaining an Education	65%	4%	31%
Personal Safety	55%	4%	41%
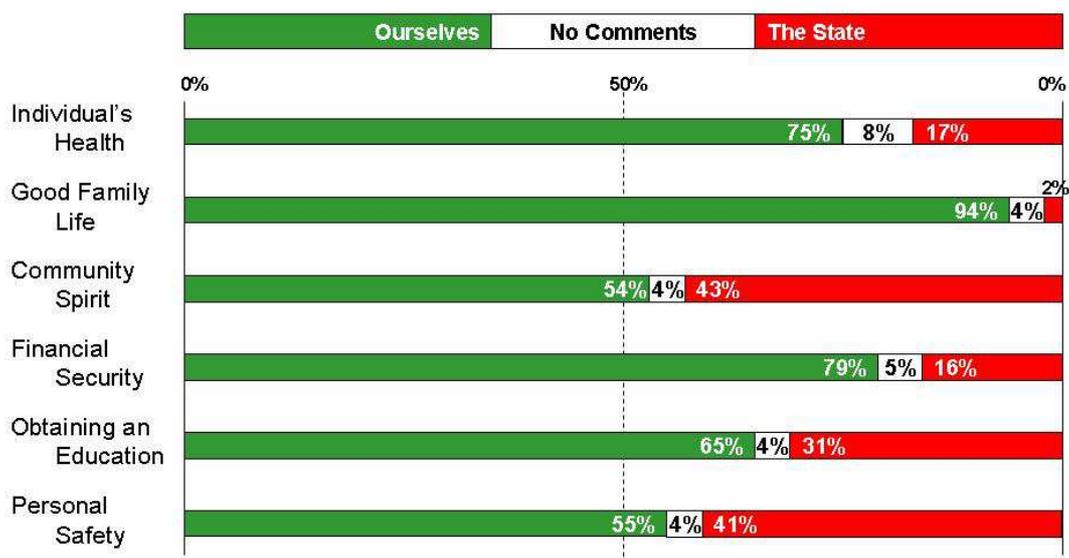
It has to be noted that a further anomaly seem to appear from this set of data, where health scored poorly in terms of the perception of public service performance and in terms of judging deterioration in the actual health. The paradox appeared to be that while the deterioration of health could have been attributed to a poor provision of public health services, yet a substantial majority (75%) of the respondents indicated that health was their own personal responsibility to maintain, and not the responsibility of the State.

A further analysis of each of these responsibility factors against the gender categories (analysis of one-way ANOVA) showed that the attribution of responsibility is very consistent even between the genders, with hardly any significant differences between

the two gender categories when tabulated against each of the responsibility category (Appendix E3).

Cross Analysis of Perception, Quality of Life and Attribution

The strongest support for the hypothesis is provided by a cross analysis of the perception of the public services against the change in the quality of life, given that the attribution of responsibility was largely directed towards the individuals.

Figure IV-4.12 Survey Findings – Combined Assessment of All Departments
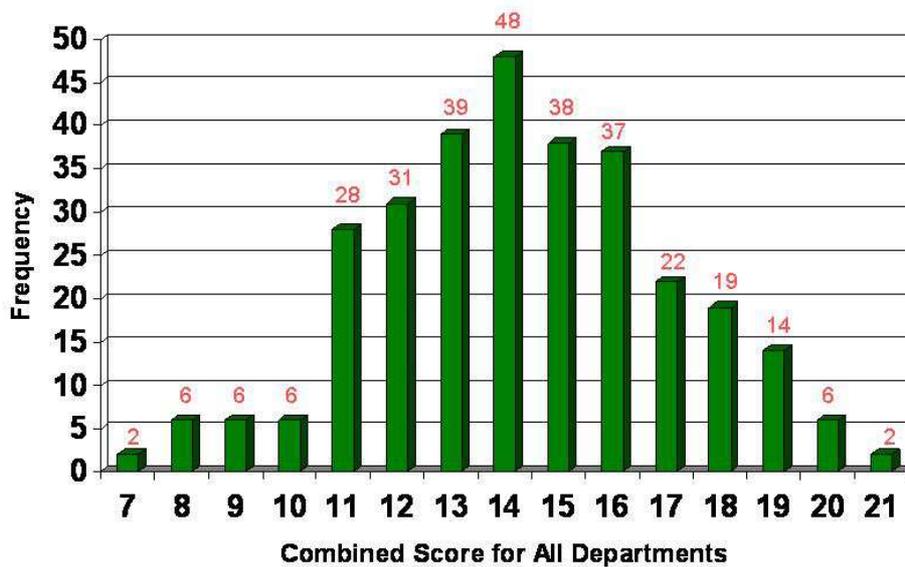
Figure IV-4.12 showed the distribution of respondents in terms of their assessment of the seven public service departments. In the survey response, the return of a score of 1 indicated a bad assessment, a score of 2 indicated an average assessment, and a return of a score of 3 indicated a good assessment. Thus for any respondent, a total score of 7 for the seven departments would indicate a complete dissatisfaction with the public services while in contrast, a total score of 21 for the seven departments would indicate a complete satisfaction with the public services. The distribution of overall assessment scores showed an almost normal distribution pattern, with the Mean at 14.28, almost at the mid-point of the scale. With a standard deviation of 2.76, the data suggested no significant dissatisfaction with the public services as a whole. This finding, in contrast

to the earlier finding that the respondents seemed to have expressed a marginally negative perception of the public services, suggested that, once again, the *actual* assessment of the individual performance of the various departments did not support the overall negative *perception*. When the actually public service provisions were assessed through examining the performance of each individual department, the respondents in fact returned an assessment slight skewed towards the positive.

Figure IV-4.13 Survey Findings – Cumulative Assessment of All Departments
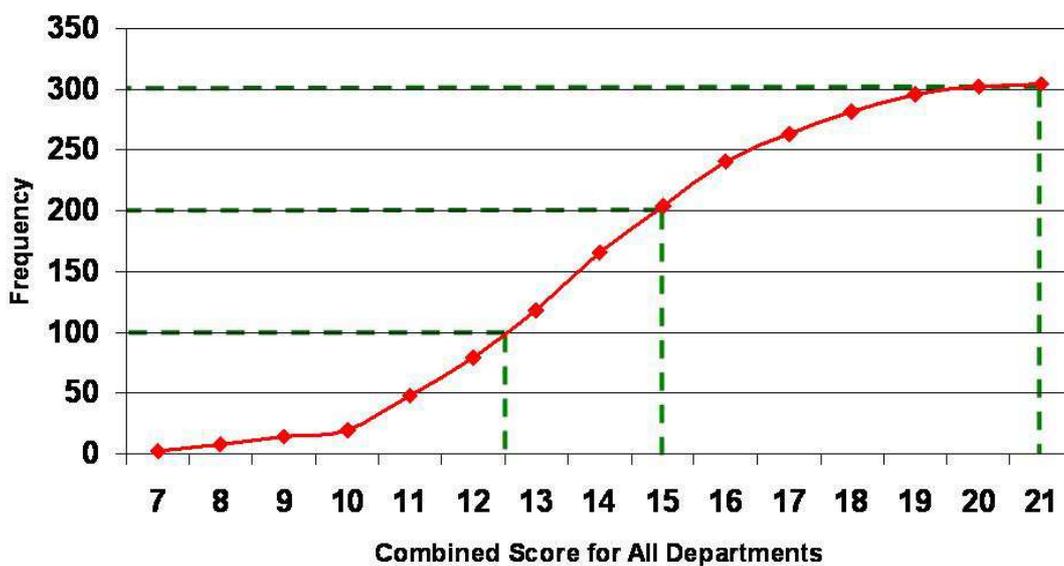
This analysis could be further supported by analysing the response of those returning a low assessment score for the public services against those returning a high assessment score. Figure IV-4.13 showed the cumulative statistics of the performance assessment. The distribution showed that the one-third of the respondents (101 out of 304) scored below 13, while another third scored above 15.

Cross tabulation of the respondents who expressed low satisfaction with the public services (those returning an overall score below 13 in the assessment of the performance of individual public service sectors) against those who expressed a higher degree of satisfaction with the public services (those returning an overall score above 15 in the assessment of the performance of individual public service sectors)

appeared to show no significant differences in their assessment of their quality of life changes.

Figure IV-4.14 Performance Score versus Quality of Life

	Pearson's χ^2	Degree of Freedom	P-value
Health	11.028	12	0.527
Family Life	23.951	12	0.021
Community Life	24.828	12	0.016
Financial Wellbeing	58.519	12	0.004
Job Security	21.461	12	0.044
Freedom of Expression	31.741	12	0.009
Personal Safety	12.598	12	0.399

From the Pearson's Chi-Square test of association tabulation (Appendix IV-E4), it can be seen that both groups expressed similar patterns of improved quality of life. Although the actual statistics showed marginal results (with the statistics skewed by having a number of cells with expected counts less than 5), the results were nevertheless significant, in that all of them return P-values greater than 0.000 (Figure IV-4.14), with the P-value for health the most significant at 0.527 followed by personal safety at 0.399. Visual analysis of the cross tabulation table in Appendix IV-E4 showed clearly the similar patterns regardless of the performance score.

Figure IV-4.15 Performance Score versus Attribution

	Pearson's χ^2	Degree of Freedom	P-value
Health	16.790	8	0.032
Family Life	9.823	8	0.350
Community Spirit	13.536	8	0.095
Financial Security	6.793	8	0.559
Obtaining Education	16.007	8	0.042
Personal Safety	11.705	8	0.165

Cross tabulation also showed no significant differences in their attribution of responsibilities for success (Appendix IV-E5), with the lowest P-value at 0.032 (Figure IV-4.15).

5. Conclusion

Conclusions

The overarching thrust of this series of DBA research is to attempt to further develop the understanding of effective leadership in the context of the Irish public services. Thus, the fundamental research question underpinning this series of inquiry is simply "What makes an individual an outstanding public service leader in Ireland?" The findings from the research presented in this Document appeared to have added to this understanding.

The potential contributions of these findings to public management knowledge and to public service practices should not be underestimated. Why is it important to foster further understandings of how to become outstanding and successful public service leaders? For national or public leaders in a totalitarian society, knowledge and understandings concerning effective leadership is perhaps less important to them than for them to simply possess the ability to maintain power and to exercise control; they are not necessarily concerned about whether their leadership are effective in delivering what their citizens really need. But in a democratic society, such as Ireland, where the citizens themselves have a significant role both in the appointment of the public service leaders as well as in the development and the implementation of public service policies, national or public leaders, if they were to seek to remain in their leadership appointments, must be able, or at the least perceived to be able to deliver to the citizens what they really need. The fundamental proposition here is that, for public service leaders in a democratic society such as Ireland, furthering their understanding of 'what makes an individual an outstanding public service leader' will contribute to the increased effectiveness in their leadership and their ability to deliver, or at the least perceived to be able to deliver, to the citizens what they seek.

What is it that the citizens or the general public seek from their national and public leaders? It has been suggested that improvements in the quality of life is the ultimate 'deliverable' that citizens seek from their national governments (ESRC 2008; Weale 2007). And the delivery of public services is a key channel for the delivery of quality

of life. The role of the public service leaders in this process of meeting the needs of the citizens is therefore crucial, since public service deliveries are governed by public policies, which are developed, implemented and maintained by the public service leaders. As such, unless the public service leaders are informed concerning how to be outstanding and effective in their leadership, they cannot facilitate the effective provision of improved quality of life to the general public.

For the purpose of exploring the fundamental research question, 'What makes an individual an outstanding public service leader', a conceptual framework had been proposed and already presented in previous documents in this series of DBA research.

The conceptual framework suggested that for public service leaders to be outstanding, a number of constituent elements must come together. Firstly, the necessary enabling circumstances must exist to enable leadership to come to the fore. Secondly, the outstanding public service leader is one who is not merely an effective leader skilled in the generic act of leadership, but one who is specifically knowledgeable in the specifics of public service management. Thirdly, the outstanding public service leader must be seen as a moral leader behaving with reference to perceived positive moral values – which includes the value of seeking to understand and to deliver solutions to meet the actual needs of the citizens being led. Fourth and finally, in an Irish democratic context, the outstanding public service leader needs to be a popular leader willingly accepted by the public followers.

This proposed conceptual framework needs to be validated by research, and complex relationships between the various constituent elements explored. The research presented in this Document appeared to have contributed to that validation. In particular, it is the relationship between the third and fourth aspects of the aforementioned conception framework that is the basis of the specific hypothesis of this research. The commonly assumed causal relationship is that the leaders meeting the followers' needs and acceptance of the leaders would be positively correlated – meaning that success in meeting the followers' needs would lead to a positive acceptance of the leaders; and failure in meeting the followers' needs would lead to a rejection of the leaders. The findings of this research suggested, however, that the

causal relationship may not be so direct, and that perception plays a significant role in determining the dynamic relationship between the two.

In particular, the specific hypothesis for the research presented in this Document is that, in the context of the Republic of Ireland, the perception of the performance of the public service leaders did not necessarily correlate with the reality of the actual performance of the public service leaders, that the dissatisfaction and the rejection of the leadership could be founded on misplaced attributions. The significance of the findings, if the findings can be shown to support the hypothesis, is that by identifying the significant role perception plays in determining leadership acceptance, public service leaders can then be better informed in the way they formulate and implement public service policies, so as to avoid the pitfall of being inappropriately rejected as a result of misaligned perceptions negatively influencing the judgement of the actual effective public service deliveries.

The findings from the research here did appear to support the hypothesis. Secondary evidence pointed to an event where the leadership was rejected despite the leaders arguably having actually successfully met the needs of the people.

The findings from the primary research here, in the context of the Republic of Ireland, also provided a degree of support to the hypothesis. Indication from the analysis in this research suggested that while a marginally greater number of the Irish population (36% against 35%) felt an improvement in their overall quality of life and with no significant indication of actual dissatisfaction of the overall public service provisions (with a mean distribution score of 14.28 against the Normal distribution mean of 14.00) and with the attribution of the responsibility of every aspects of their quality of living to themselves rather than to the State, yet significantly more of the population nevertheless were critical of the effectiveness of the public service provision (29.86%, against 48.29% for positive attributes and 44.33% against 40.5% for negative attributes).

The findings indeed suggested that, in the context of the Republic of Ireland, the *perception* by the population that public service leaders were ineffective in meeting their needs, and hence their non-acceptance of the public service leadership, was not

based on an *actual* ineffectiveness of the public services. The public's own interpretation of their quality of life having improved had arguably vindicated the actual effectiveness of the public service leadership.

Thus, relating back to the overall fundamental research question of 'What makes an individual an outstanding public service leader in Ireland?', and also specifically relating to the hypothesis that the perception of the performance of an outstanding public service leader does not necessarily correlate with the reality of the performance of the outstanding public service leader, the affirmative findings here could possibly give rise to a further argument that outstanding public service leaders need to be acknowledged on the basis of their actually performance rather than on the basis of popular perception. The conclusions from the findings here could well lead to a further proposition that public service leadership in the context of the Republic of Ireland should be more paternalistic in nature, based on their ability to actually deliver the public service deliverables, rather than more participative in nature, involving acceptance of leadership based on popular perceptions.

Limitation and Further Research

It is acknowledged that the research presented in this Document is a very limited research, designed to be of an exploratory and indicative nature. The research approach based on a mixing of qualitative and quantitative methodologies were also controversial. It is also acknowledged that, while the research design and the sampling approach were designed to provide an adequate level of confidence, a greater depth of interview and a higher level of confidence is needed to provide for a more definitive conclusion.

Nevertheless, this research should serve the purpose of laying the foundation for a more in-depth study for the next Document.

On the back of this research, the proposal is for the next Document to explore more conclusively the dynamic tripartite relationship between outstanding public service leadership, the effectiveness of meeting the needs of the public, and the public's acceptance of the leaders.

Ultimately, the contribution to knowledge in the next Document would be to provide pointers to inform public servants in their policy making to ensure that future public service policies would maximise not only their effectiveness of meeting the needs of the public, but also would maximise the acceptance by the public of the policies and of the leadership of the policy makers.

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Appendix IV-A   **2007 General Election first preference votes by constituency**

Constituencies	FF	FG	Lab	PD	Greens	SF	Others	Govt Majority	Govt Majority Margin	Govt Minority	Govt Minority Margin	Yes Campaigner Combined	Yes Campaigner Combined Margin
1 Carlow-Kilkenny	47.70%	29.61%	9.35%	1.59%	7.96%	3.80%	0.00%	57.25%	14.50%			96.21%	92.42%
2 Cavan-Monaghan	37.77%	31.20%	1.21%	0.00%	3.62%	20.01%	6.18%			41.39%	17.22%	73.80%	47.60%
3 Clare	44.03%	35.21%	1.58%	1.44%	5.07%	3.42%	9.25%	50.54%	1.08%			87.33%	74.66%
4 Cork East	37.97%	30.85%	20.91%	0.00%	2.92%	6.82%	0.52%			40.89%	18.22%	92.65%	85.30%
5 Cork North-Central	35.74%	27.57%	12.33%	0.00%	3.55%	8.16%	12.65%			39.29%	21.42%	79.19%	58.38%
6 Cork North-West	53.05%	38.42%	4.91%	0.00%	3.62%	0.00%	0.00%	56.67%	13.34%			100.00%	100.00%
7 Cork South-Central	44.28%	28.41%	9.25%	2.70%	8.37%	5.11%	1.87%	55.35%	10.70%			93.01%	86.02%
8 Cork South-West	42.57%	36.00%	9.64%	0.00%	6.73%	5.06%	0.00%			49.30%	1.40%	94.94%	89.88%
9 Donegal North-East	50.26%	22.60%	1.82%	0.00%	1.35%	17.47%	6.50%	51.61%	3.22%			76.03%	52.06%
10 Donegal South-West	50.53%	23.00%	2.79%	0.00%	1.48%	21.23%	0.97%	52.01%	4.02%			77.80%	55.60%
11 Dublin Central	44.45%	9.53%	12.57%	0.56%	5.76%	9.19%	17.95%	50.77%	1.54%			72.87%	45.74%
12 Dublin Mid-West	33.00%	12.00%	10.91%	12.49%	10.83%	9.27%	11.50%	56.32%	12.64%			79.23%	58.46%
13 Dublin North	42.09%	14.03%	9.62%	2.55%	16.67%	2.66%	12.38%	61.31%	22.62%			84.96%	69.92%
14 Dublin North-Central	44.02%	25.55%	7.27%	0.00%	5.19%	3.78%	14.19%			49.21%	1.58%	82.03%	64.06%
15 Dublin North-East	39.69%	22.94%	15.16%	2.14%	6.73%	13.34%	0.00%			48.56%	2.88%	86.66%	73.32%
16 Dublin North-West	48.84%	9.96%	20.30%	0.00%	2.75%	15.74%	2.41%	51.59%	3.18%			81.85%	63.70%
17 Dublin South	41.33%	27.26%	10.43%	6.61%	11.06%	3.11%	0.29%	59.00%	18.00%			96.69%	93.38%
18 Dublin South-Central	33.08%	14.39%	21.13%	1.92%	5.80%	10.15%	13.54%			40.80%	18.40%	76.32%	52.64%
19 Dublin South-East	28.72%	18.65%	16.65%	13.15%	13.84%	4.72%	4.26%	55.71%	11.42%			91.01%	82.02%
20 Dublin South-West	39.27%	20.04%	19.99%	0.00%	3.71%	12.16%	4.84%			42.98%	14.04%	83.01%	66.02%
21 Dublin West	37.45%	20.39%	17.06%	1.63%	3.78%	4.78%	14.91%			42.86%	14.28%	80.31%	60.62%
22 Dun Laoghaire	34.87%	23.56%	16.00%	6.74%	7.72%	2.20%	8.91%			49.33%	1.34%	88.89%	77.78%
23 Galway East	39.68%	39.13%	3.13%	5.95%	1.89%	3.21%	7.01%			47.52%	4.96%	89.78%	79.56%
24 Galway West	37.15%	20.39%	11.05%	16.10%	5.49%	2.96%	6.87%	58.74%	17.48%			90.18%	80.36%
25 Kerry North	31.30%	32.30%	10.90%	0.00%	1.90%	20.43%	3.17%			33.20%	33.60%	76.40%	52.80%
26 Kerry South	40.65%	25.09%	13.48%	0.00%	1.89%	3.52%	15.35%			42.54%	14.92%	81.11%	62.22%
27 Kildare North	39.50%	21.22%	17.44%	2.18%	4.90%	2.44%	12.32%			46.58%	6.84%	85.24%	70.48%
28 Kildare South	50.37%	17.17%	20.68%	4.37%	6.18%	0.00%	1.23%	60.92%	21.84%			98.77%	97.54%
29 Laois-Offaly	56.38%	27.36%	2.38%	5.92%	1.14%	5.11%	1.71%	63.44%	26.88%			93.18%	86.36%
30 Limerick East	48.69%	25.52%	10.33%	6.79%	2.62%	4.21%	1.83%	58.10%	16.20%			93.95%	87.90%
31 Limerick West	47.23%	39.95%	5.63%	4.79%	2.40%	0.00%	0.00%	54.42%	8.84%			100.00%	100.00%
32 Longford-Westmeath	41.15%	30.95%	17.65%	4.18%	1.75%	3.89%	0.42%			47.08%	5.84%	95.68%	91.36%
33 Louth	42.14%	29.37%	4.98%	0.00%	7.58%	15.04%	0.89%			49.72%	0.56%	84.07%	68.14%
34 Mayo	24.46%	53.83%	1.16%	0.41%	0.81%	5.05%	14.27%			25.68%	48.64%	80.67%	61.34%
35 Meath East	43.56%	25.88%	11.94%	2.23%	3.09%	3.94%	9.36%			48.88%	2.24%	86.70%	73.40%
36 Meath West	51.59%	29.03%	4.04%	0.00%	2.50%	11.29%	1.56%	54.09%	8.18%			87.16%	74.32%
37 Roscommon-South Leitrim	38.84%	39.13%	1.81%	0.00%	1.81%	8.41%	9.99%			40.65%	18.70%	81.59%	63.18%
38 Sligo-North Leitrim	40.97%	39.27%	3.89%	0.00%	3.03%	11.73%	1.11%			44.00%	12.00%	87.16%	74.32%
39 Tipperary North	34.31%	15.89%	10.27%	1.43%	1.11%	3.76%	33.23%			36.85%	26.30%	63.01%	26.02%
40 Tipperary South	46.42%	21.14%	8.77%	1.39%	1.52%	3.09%	17.66%			49.33%	1.34%	79.24%	58.48%
41 Waterford	46.49%	27.36%	11.33%	0.00%	2.12%	6.72%	5.99%			48.61%	2.78%	87.30%	74.60%
42 Wexford	42.19%	31.56%	13.77%	3.15%	1.17%	7.39%	0.78%			46.51%	6.98%	91.84%	83.68%
43 Wicklow	38.05%	23.15%	16.34%	1.39%	7.38%	4.98%	8.70%			46.82%	6.36%	86.31%	72.62%
Count	43	43	43	43	43	43	43	18	18	25	25	43	43
Average	41.67%	26.42%	10.51%	2.65%	4.67%	7.19%	6.90%	55.99%	11.98%	43.94%	12.11%	85.91%	71.82%
STDEV	0.066925	0.090521	0.061341	0.038032	0.035584	0.05595	0.069905	0.03829	0.0765801	0.058499	0.116999	0.080963225	0.16192645

Appendix IV-B **2008 Lisbon Referendum votes**

Constituencies	Yes Vote	No Vote	Yes Margin	No Margin	Comply with Govt Majority	Comply with Govt Majority Margin	Rebel against Govt Majority	Rebel against Govt Majority Margin
1 Carlow-Kilkenny	50.01%	49.99%	0.02%		50.01%	0.02%		
2 Cavan-Monaghan	45.18%	54.82%		9.64%				
3 Clare	51.84%	48.16%	3.68%		51.84%	3.68%		
4 Cork East	43.04%	56.96%		13.92%				
5 Cork North-Central	35.56%	64.44%		28.88%				
6 Cork North-West	46.12%	53.88%		7.76%			53.88%	7.76%
7 Cork South-Central	44.87%	55.13%		10.26%			55.13%	10.26%
8 Cork South-West	44.43%	55.57%		11.14%				
9 Donegal North-East	35.30%	64.70%		29.40%			64.70%	29.40%
10 Donegal South-West	36.55%	63.45%		26.90%			63.45%	26.90%
11 Dublin Central	43.80%	56.20%		12.40%			56.20%	12.40%
12 Dublin Mid-West	39.60%	60.40%		20.80%			60.40%	20.80%
13 Dublin North	50.56%	49.44%	1.12%		50.56%	1.12%		
14 Dublin North-Central	50.60%	49.40%	1.20%					
15 Dublin North-East	43.22%	56.78%		13.56%				
16 Dublin North-West	36.38%	63.62%		27.24%			63.62%	27.24%
17 Dublin South	62.88%	37.12%	25.76%		62.88%	25.76%		
18 Dublin South-Central	39.04%	60.96%		21.92%				
19 Dublin South-East	61.65%	38.35%	23.30%		61.65%	23.30%		
20 Dublin South-West	34.95%	65.05%		30.10%				
21 Dublin West	47.92%	52.08%		4.16%				
22 Dun Laoghaire	63.46%	36.54%	26.92%					
23 Galway East	46.87%	53.13%		6.26%				
24 Galway West	46.05%	53.95%		7.90%			53.95%	7.90%
25 Kerry North	40.37%	59.63%		19.26%				
26 Kerry South	42.63%	57.37%		14.74%				
27 Kildare North	54.62%	45.38%	9.24%					
28 Kildare South	48.49%	51.51%		3.02%			51.51%	3.02%
29 Laois-Offaly	56.01%	43.99%	12.02%		56.01%	12.02%		
30 Limerick East	46.05%	53.95%		7.90%			53.95%	7.90%
31 Limerick West	44.65%	55.35%		10.70%			55.35%	10.70%
32 Longford-Westmeath	46.26%	53.74%		7.48%				
33 Louth	41.86%	58.14%		16.28%				
34 Mayo	38.30%	61.70%		23.40%				
35 Meath East	50.94%	49.06%	1.88%					
36 Meath West	44.48%	55.52%		11.04%			55.52%	11.04%
37 Roscommon-South Leitrim	45.61%	54.39%		8.78%				
38 Sligo-North Leitrim	43.31%	56.69%		13.38%				
39 Tipperary North	49.80%	50.20%		0.40%				
40 Tipperary South	46.79%	53.21%		6.42%				
41 Waterford	45.68%	54.32%		8.64%				
42 Wexford	43.96%	56.04%		12.08%				
43 Wicklow	49.81%	50.19%		0.38%				
Count	43	43	10	33	6	6	12	12
Average	46.03%	53.97%	10.51%	13.52%	55.49%	10.98%	57.31%	14.61%
STDEV	0.068031	0.068031	0.109308	0.084175	0.05665437	0.11330874	0.044993929	0.089987858

Appendix IV-C Guidelines for Conducting Street Interviews

WHITAKER SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND MANAGEMENT

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Guidelines for Conducting Street Interviews

✓ Dress conservatively and appropriately – neatness in appearance and basic personal grooming is essential for not putting people off participating.

✓ Always have the formal picture identification clearly visible, with the photograph and supervisor contact details available so that people can check if needed.

✓ Identify people who are obviously not in a hurry en-route elsewhere.

✓ Approach people with confidence, but be polite. Show your ID and have the front cover of the survey with the IPA Logo clearly visible so that people can see the IPA identity.

✓ Explain that the interview is conducted for the Institute of Public Administration. For example,
    "Excuse me, I am conducting a survey for the Institute of Public Administration about the Irish Public Service. I was wondering if I could have about 5 minutes of your time to ask your opinion about this topic?"

✓ Speak clearly and politely when speaking to people. Pay attention to manners, exercise patience in answering their questions, if they have any.

✓ Move on to the next person if someone says he/she is not interested. Thank them anyway, but do not persist or harass.

✓ If entering into private premises, or premises that are managed, (e.g. shopping centers), always inform the management / security office and seek for permission to be there, explaining the purpose of the interviews, and showing them the formal letter of authorization to conduct the interviews. Thank them politely but politely go elsewhere if permission is refused.

✓ Watch the time. Expedite the interviews; do the utmost to keep to the 5 minute allocation per interview. The interview should not take longer than 10 minutes. If stuck with explaining a particular question, simply skip it and move on to the next question. Do not be afraid to politely end the interview mid-point. But always thank the person before moving off.

✓ At the end of the interview, always thank people for their help. If people request to receive feedback about the survey, take their name and address on a separate sheet from their responses (to ensure confidentiality).

September 2008

Appendix IV-D Survey Questionnaire

Irish Public Sector Research

In conjunction with

Section A: Perception of the Public Service

The Public Service comprises the set of services directly provided by the state for people in this country. Public servants are people who work for the Public Service and include civil servants who work in various government departments. Other public servants include teachers, nurses and Gardai. Semi state bodies such as ESB, CIE and An Post are not actually part of the Public Service.

We wish to examine your perception of the Public Service in Ireland today. For each word or phrase given, please circle the response that best describes your perception of the Public Service.

Please circle the response that best describes your perception of the Public Service

1. **Capable**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
2. **Conservative**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
3. **Effective**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
4. **Efficient**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
5. **In Touch with Society**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
6. **Innovative**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
7. **Lazy**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
8. **Overpaid**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
9. **Powerful**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
10. **Proactive**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
11. **Secretive**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
12. **Successful**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**
13. **Wasteful**	**False**	**No Opinion**	**True**

Section B Describing the Public Service

Please consider the following phrases in relation to how well each of them describes your opinion of the Public Service in Ireland today. Please select the three phrases that best describe the Public Service.

Phrase:

Please tick the three phrases that best describe the Public Service

14. **Delivers Value for Money** ☐

15. **Performs Well but Very Expensive** ☐

16. **Talented and Effective** ☐

17. **Lives in its Own World** ☐

18. **Not Relevant to My Life** ☐

19. **Expensive and Achieves Little** ☐

20. **Does Nothing for Me** ☐

21. **Innovative, Cutting Edge Organisation** ☐

We wish now to consider individual components within the Public Service. Please convey your impression of how well the public service performs within each of the following areas it manages. You are asked to simply choose between Good, Average and Bad for each department.

Choose between Good, Average and Bad for each department.

22. **Justice**	Bad	Average	Good
23. **Education**	Bad	Average	Good
24. **Health**	Bad	Average	Good
25. **Transport**	Bad	Average	Good
26. **Social Welfare**	Bad	Average	Good
27. **The Economy**	Bad	Average	Good
28. **The Environment**	Bad	Average	Good

Section C: Quality of Living

We wish to examine your perspective of living today by comparison with your past experiences. For each of the following criteria please rank your life today by comparison with your overall impressions of the past. As a possible reference point you might compare to your situation five years ago.

29. **Health**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

30. **Family Life**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

31. **Community Life**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

32. **Financial Wellbeing**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

33. **Job Security**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

34. **Freedom to Express Yourself**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

35. **Personal Safety**

-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
Much Worse			Same as Past			Much Better

Section D   Responsibility for Quality of Living

Most commentators feel that responsibility for quality of living can be allocated in different measures to the individual and to society. For each quality of living aspect below, please circle the letter corresponding to the statement that best reflects your opinion.

Response options:
  (a)   Fully the responsibility of the individual.
  (b)   Mainly the responsibility of the individual with some help from the State.
  (c)   More the responsibility of the State than of the individual.
  (d)   Fully the responsibility of the State.

36. Health of the Individual

  (a)   **Fully the responsibility of the individual.**
  (b)   **Mainly the responsibility of the individual with some help from the State.**
  (c)   **More the responsibility of the State than of the individual.**
  (d)   **Fully the responsibility of the State.**

37. Good Family Life

  (a)   **(b)**   **(c)**   **(d)**

38. Good Community Spirit

  (a)   **(b)**   **(c)**   **(d)**

39. Personal Financial Security

  (a)   **(b)**   **(c)**   **(d)**

40. Obtaining an Education

  (a)   **(b)**   **(c)**   **(d)**

41. Personal Safety

  (a)   **(b)**   **(c)**   **(d)**

Section E	Interviewee Data – To be filled in by the Researcher

This section is to be filled in by the Researcher immediately after each individual interview.

42. **Interview location:**

Tick one

Dublin	☐
Kilkenny	☐
Cork	☐
Limerick	☐
Galway	☐
Athlone	☐
Monasterevin	☐
Thurles	☐
Portlaoise	☐
Kildare	☐
Mallow	☐
Athy	☐
Cork	☐
Maynooth	☐
Leixlip	☐
Carlow	☐

43. **Interviewee gender:**

Tick one

Male	☐
Female	☐

Appendix IV-E Data Statistical Analysis (Minitab)

Appendix IV-E1 Tabulated Statistics, Perception Factors

Tabulated statistics: Capable, Effective

```
Rows: Capable    Columns: Effective

          1    2    3   All

1        92    4    6   102
2         8    3    3    14
3        43   22  123   188
All     143   29  132   304

Cell Contents:      Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 126.029, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 140.248, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Capable, Successful

```
Rows: Capable    Columns: Successful

          1    2    3   All

1        78    7   17   102
2         8    4    2    14
3        43   28  117   188
All     129   39  136   304

Cell Contents:      Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 85.406, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 88.599, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Effective, Successful

```
Rows: Effective   Columns: Successful

          1    2    3   All

1       104   13   26   143
2         8   11   10    29
3        17   15  100   132
All     129   39  136   304

Cell Contents:      Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 127.242, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 129.209, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

275

Appendix IV-E1 (Continued)

Tabulated statistics: Lazy, Overpaid

```
Rows: Lazy    Columns: Overpaid

          1    2    3   All

1       105   20   38   163
2        20   13   10    43
3        38   17   43    98
All     163   50   91   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 24.116, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 22.968, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Lazy, Wasteful

```
Rows: Lazy    Columns: Wasteful

          1    2    3   All

1        86   15   62   163
2        11   12   20    43
3        14   10   74    98
All     111   37  156   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 53.666, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 53.316, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Overpaid, Wasteful

```
Rows: Overpaid   Columns: Wasteful

          1    2    3   All

1        74   17   72   163
2        15   13   22    50
3        22    7   62    91
All     111   37  156   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 24.819, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 23.053, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Appendix IV-E1 (Continued)

Tabulated statistics: Capable, Lazy

```
Rows: Capable    Columns: Lazy

          1    2    3   All

1        35   10   57   102
2         4    5    5    14
3       124   28   36   188
All     163   43   98   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 47.837, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 46.143, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Capable, Overpaid

```
Rows: Capable    Columns: Overpaid

          1    2    3   All

1        36   17   49   102
2         3    5    6    14
3       124   28   36   188
All     163   50   91   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 37.126, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 36.896, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Capable, Wasteful

```
Rows: Capable    Columns: Wasteful

           1    2    3   All

1         21    7   74   102
2          0    5    9    14
3         90   25   73   188
All      111   37  156   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 42.905, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 46.459, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Appendix IV-E1 (Continued)

Tabulated statistics: Effective, Lazy

```
Rows: Effective    Columns: Lazy

          1    2    3   All

1        53   16   74   143
2        14    7    8    29
3        96   20   16   132
All     163   43   98   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 53.130, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 55.427, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Effective, Overpaid

```
Rows: Effective    Columns: Overpaid

          1    2    3   All

1        63   20   60   143
2        15    6    8    29
3        85   24   23   132
All     163   50   91   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 20.263, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 20.704, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: Effective, Wasteful

```
Rows: Effective    Columns: Wasteful

          1    2    3    All

1        27   11  105   143
2        10    6   13    29
3        74   20   38   132
All     111   37  156   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 57.987, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 59.527, DF = 4, P-Value = 0.000
```

278

Appendix IV-E2 Tabulated Statistics, Assessment Response

Tabulated statistics: VfM, T&E

```
Rows: VfM   Columns: T&E

        0   1  All

0     190  32  222
1      23  59   82
All   213  91  304

Cell Contents:      Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 94.517, DF = 1, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 90.634, DF = 1, P-Value = 0.000
```

Tabulated statistics: E&AL, DNFM

```
Rows: E&AL   Columns: DNFM

        0    1  All

0     124   69  193
1      53   58  111
All   177  127  304

Cell Contents:      Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 7.889, DF = 1, P-Value = 0.005
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 7.857, DF = 1, P-Value = 0.005
```

Tabulated statistics: PWBVE, E&AL

```
Rows: PWBVE   Columns: E&AL

        0    1  All

0      72   82  154
1     121   29  150
All   193  111  304

Cell Contents:      Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 37.701, DF = 1, P-Value = 0.000
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 38.893, DF = 1, P-Value = 0.000
```

Appendix IV-E3 One-Way ANOVA, Responsibility versus Gender

One-way ANOVA: R for H versus Gender

```
Source   DF       SS     MS      F     P
Gender    1    0.282  0.282   0.35  0.557
Error   302  246.244  0.815
Total   303  246.526

S = 0.9030   R-Sq = 0.11%   R-Sq(adj) = 0.00%


                              Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on
                              Pooled StDev
Level    N    Mean   StDev  ---------+---------+---------+---------+
1      155  1.8194  0.9430           (-------------*-------------)
2      149  1.7584  0.8594  (--------------*-------------)
                            ---------+---------+---------+---------+
                               1.70      1.80      1.90      2.00

Pooled StDev = 0.9030
```
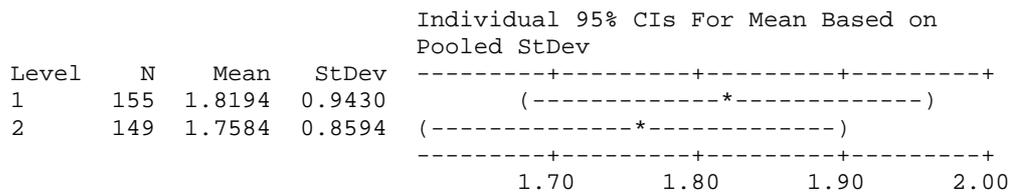
One-way ANOVA: R for GFL versus Gender

```
Source   DF       SS     MS      F     P
Gender    1    0.032  0.032   0.08  0.771
Error   302  113.307  0.375
Total   303  113.339

S = 0.6125   R-Sq = 0.03%   R-Sq(adj) = 0.00%


                              Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on
                              Pooled StDev
Level    N    Mean   StDev  --+---------+---------+---------+-------
1      155  1.3419  0.6491  (---------------*---------------)
2      149  1.3624  0.5720     (---------------*----------------)
                            --+---------+---------+---------+-------
                            1.260     1.320     1.380     1.440

Pooled StDev = 0.6125
```
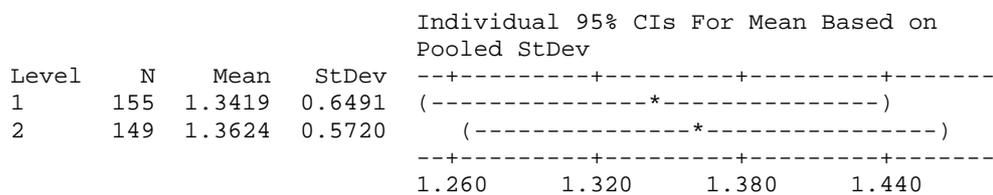
One-way ANOVA: R for GCS versus Gender

```
Source   DF      SS     MS      F     P
Gender    1    0.28   0.28   0.28  0.598
Error   302  307.82   1.02
Total   303  308.10

S = 1.010   R-Sq = 0.09%   R-Sq(adj) = 0.00%


                              Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on
                              Pooled StDev
Level    N    Mean   StDev   -+---------+---------+---------+--------
1      155  2.316   1.030           (---------------*---------------)
2      149  2.255   0.987  (---------------*---------------)
                            -+---------+---------+---------+--------
                            2.10      2.20      2.30      2.40

Pooled StDev = 1.010
```
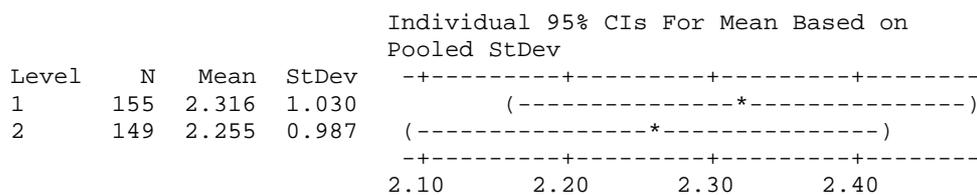
280

Appendix IV-E3 (Continued)

One-way ANOVA: R for PFS versus Gender

```
Source   DF        SS     MS     F     P
Gender    1     0.326  0.326  0.43  0.512
Error   302   228.095  0.755
Total   303   228.421

S = 0.8691   R-Sq = 0.14%   R-Sq(adj) = 0.00%


                              Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on
                              Pooled StDev
Level    N    Mean   StDev   -+---------+---------+---------+--------
1      155  1.6258  0.8463   (-------------*------------)
2      149  1.6913  0.8922        (-------------*-------------)
                              -+---------+---------+---------+--------
                              1.50      1.60      1.70      1.80

Pooled StDev = 0.8691
```

One-way ANOVA: R for Ed versus Gender

```
Source   DF        SS     MS     F     P
Gender    1     1.685  1.685  1.74  0.188
Error   302   292.128  0.967
Total   303   293.813

S = 0.9835   R-Sq = 0.57%   R-Sq(adj) = 0.24%


                              Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on
                              Pooled StDev
Level    N    Mean   StDev   --------+---------+---------+---------+-
1      155  2.1355  1.0070           (------------*------------)
2      149  1.9866  0.9585   (-------------*------------)
                              --------+---------+---------+---------+-
                                   1.92      2.04      2.16      2.28

Pooled StDev = 0.9835
```

One-way ANOVA: R for S versus Gender

```
Source   DF        SS     MS     F     P
Gender    1     7.351  7.351  7.90  0.005
Error   302   281.175  0.931
Total   303   288.526

S = 0.9649   R-Sq = 2.55%   R-Sq(adj) = 2.23%


                              Individual 95% CIs For Mean Based on
                              Pooled StDev
Level    N    Mean   StDev   -+---------+---------+---------+--------
1      155  2.0581  0.9134   (---------*--------)
2      149  2.3691  1.0157                  (---------*---------)
                              -+---------+---------+---------+--------
                              1.92      2.08      2.24      2.40

Pooled StDev = 0.9649
```

Appendix IV-E4 Tabulated Statistics, Performance Categories versus Quality of Life

Tabulated statistics: Categories, Health

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: Health

        -3  -2  -1   0   1   2   3   All

1       18  14  12  18   7   3   7    79
2       27  13  25  28  16  10   6   125
3       14  13  18  21  14   8  12   100
All     59  40  55  67  37  21  25   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 11.028, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.527
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 11.461, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.490
```

Tabulated statistics: Categories, Family

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: Family

        -3  -2  -1   0   1   2   3   All

1        5   6  14   21  17   8   8    79
2        3   4  14   45  31  17  11   125
3        0   1   7   34  25  14  19   100
All      8  11  35  100  73  39  38   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 23.951, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.021
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 25.070, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.014

* NOTE * 6 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Tabulated statistics: Categorise, Community

```
Rows: Categorise    Columns: Community

        -3  -2  -1   0   1   2   3   All

1       15  11  20  16   8   6   3    79
2       14  14  26  39  17  12   3   125
3        2   8  24  27  17  13   9   100
All     31  33  70  82  42  31  15   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 24.828, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.016
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 26.756, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.008

* NOTE * 2 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Appendix IV-E4 (Continued)

Tabulated statistics: Categories, Community

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: Community

        -3  -2  -1   0   1   2   3  All

1       15  11  20  16   8   6   3   79
2       14  14  26  39  17  12   3  125
3        2   8  24  27  17  13   9  100
All     31  33  70  82  42  31  15  304

Cell Contents:        Count
```

Pearson Chi-Square = 24.828, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.016
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 26.756, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.008

* NOTE * 2 cells with expected counts less than 5

Tabulated statistics: Categories, Finances

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: Finances

        -3  -2  -1   0   1   2   3  All

1       12   8   9  18  16  13   3   79
2        7   6  18  34  32  20   8  125
3        0   2   8  13  27  22  28  100
All     19  16  35  65  75  55  39  304

Cell Contents:        Count
```

Pearson Chi-Square = 58.519, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.004
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 60.453, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.000

* NOTE * 2 cells with expected counts less than 5

Tabulated statistics: Categories, Job Security

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: Job Security

        -3  -2  -1   0   1   2   3  All

1       28  12   9  18   4   4   4   79
2       38  17  29  21   9   4   7  125
3       17  10  20  28  10  11   4  100
All     83  39  58  67  23  19  15  304

Cell Contents:        Count
```

Pearson Chi-Square = 21.461, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.044
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 22.046, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.037

* NOTE * 3 cells with expected counts less than 5

Appendix IV-E4 (Continued)

Tabulated statistics: Categories, FTEY

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: FTEY

        -3  -2  -1    0    1    2    3   All

1        4   3   6   30    7   15   14    79
2        2   4   6   55   26   20   12   125
3        0   1   1   43   14   11   30   100
All      6   8  13  128   47   46   56   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 31.741, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.002
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 33.773, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.001

* NOTE * 8 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Tabulated statistics: Categories, Safety

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: Safety

        -3  -2  -1   0    1    2    3   All

1       18  17  11  22    2    6    3    79
2       25  19  28  35    8    6    4   125
3       14  15  26  23    7    7    8   100
All     57  51  65  80   17   19   15   304

Cell Contents:        Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 12.598, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.399
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 12.985, DF = 12, P-Value = 0.370

* NOTE * 4 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Appendix IV-E5 Tabulated Statistics, Performance Categories versus Attribution

Tabulated statistics: Categories, R for H

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: R for H

         0    1     2    3    4   All

1        5   19    41   11    3    79
2       13   29    68   10    5   125
3        6   32    37   23    2   100
All     24   80   146   44   10   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 16.790, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.032
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 16.877, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.031

* NOTE * 3 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Tabulated statistics: Categories, R for GFL

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: R for GFL

         0    1     2   3   4   All

1        3   41    31   3   1    79
2        8   78    37   2   0   125
3        2   60    37   1   0   100
All     13  179   105   6   1   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 9.823, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.350
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 9.666, DF = 8, p-Value = 0.375

* WARNING * 3 cells with expected counts less than 1
* WARNING * Chi-Square approximation probably invalid
* NOTE * 8 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Tabulated statistics: Categories, R for GCS

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: R for GCS

         0    1     2    3    4   All

1        3   15    36   22    3    79
2        8   19    43   36   19   125
3        1   18    33   35   13   100
All     12   52   112   93   35   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 13.536, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.095
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 15.374, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.052

* NOTE * 3 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Appendix IV-E5 (Continued)

Tabulated statistics: Categories, R for PFS

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: R for PFS

         0    1     2    3   4   All

1        4   33    28   11   3    79
2        8   59    44   13   1   125
3        3   39    37   17   4   100
All     15  131   109   41   8   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 6.793, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.559
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 7.330, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.501

* NOTE * 5 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Tabulated statistics: Categories, R for Ed

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: R for Ed

         0    1     2    3    4   All

1        4   15    27   22   11    79
2        6   28    57   25    9   125
3        1   36    36   21    6   100
All     11   79   120   68   26   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 16.007, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.042
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 16.040, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.042

* NOTE * 3 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Tabulated statistics: Categories, R for S

```
Rows: Categories    Columns: R for S

         0    1     2     3    4   All

1        4   21    20    25    9    79
2        6   21    46    41   11   125
3        1   20    41    34    4   100
All     11   62   107   100   24   304

Cell Contents:       Count


Pearson Chi-Square = 11.705, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.165
Likelihood Ratio Chi-Square = 12.764, DF = 8, P-Value = 0.120

* NOTE * 3 cells with expected counts less than 5
```

Document Five

Making Sense of Public Administrative Leadership in the Republic of Ireland

An Interpretive Research Project

October 2012

Contents:

1.   Abstract

This research is a research into the perceptions of senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland regarding their own leadership at the time when Ireland was facing a significant socio-economic crisis. The research examines the senior Irish administrative leaders' own perspectives on how leadership should be exercised, and explores how they perceived the environment they were in and on how they made sense of their own leadership responses to the perceived environment.

The research takes the Republic of Ireland as a national case study, and focuses on the public administrative leadership, which is the leadership of the implementation of public policies, rather than on the political leadership, which is the leadership of the selection of public policies (Montesquieu 1748, Ostrom 1973, Osborne and Plastrik 1997, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2003, Van Wart and Dicke 2008). The research interviews were conducted amongst the top two echelons of public administrative leaders, with participation drawn from the Secretary General or Assistant Secretary levels of the Irish civil service, or their equivalent amongst the State Agencies.

The research employs an interpretivist approach (Mason 2002, Willis 2007), exploring how these senior Irish public administrative leaders made sense of their own leadership during the crisis period. In particular, the interpretive approach explores how the leaders perceived their own leadership, explores how they interpreted the environment they perceived themselves to be in, and explores how they made sense of their own leadership in response to the perceived environment.

The findings of the research reveal evidence pointing towards a social construction process (Berger and Luckmann 1966) through which the senior Irish public administrative leaders constructed their realities of leadership. The finding reveals that in their constructed realities, which were constructed through their dialectic social interactions, the senior Irish public administrative leaders considered that they made appropriate responses to the socio-economic crisis. The approach which they considered appropriate could be described as a heroic (Ford et al 2008) approach, with

particular emphasis on a number of positivistic leadership traits (Stogdill 1974, Gardner 1989, Méndez-Morse 1992, Spears 2000). Further, the findings indicate that in their constructed reality, the senior Irish administrative leaders had interpreted their environment as a significant crisis one, and had internalised a need to implement significant changes in response. However, the findings reveal that despite the perception of a crisis and despite the acknowledgement of a need for change, the leadership response seen as the appropriate response by the leaders themselves was one that reflects a degree of conservatorship (Selznick 1984, Terry 1995) – which is a leadership perspective that emphasises the conserving of various values and institutions (Scott 1995, Terry 2003), and is therefore a perspective that sees activating incremental change (Nadler 1988, Tushman 1988, Dunphy and Stace 1993, Senior 2002, Burnes 2004), even in the face of a perceived crisis of magnitude, as making more sense than pursuing disruptive reform or radical change (Grundy 1993, Kotter 1996). The findings therefore had revealed the existence of multiple constructed realities, some of them even appear to contradict each other.

The contribution of this research to knowledge within public sector leadership and management is the contribution to the understanding of how leadership realities could be constructed, and to understand the extent to which, in a particular constructed leadership reality, the driving of disruptive change should be balanced by the maintaining of unwavering continuity even when faced with significant national socio-economic crises. The contribution to practice is to have fostered a less positivistic view of what Irish public administrative leadership should look like, and with a constructionist perspective, to suggest a viable construct of a public administrative leadership perspective that reflects a preference for responding to a significant crisis with a degree of conservatorship rather than responding only with a bias for radical reform.

2.   Introduction

The intention of this research is to explore the perceptions of senior public administrative leaders regarding their own leadership in the context of a perceived crisis environment. In other words, within the context of a perceived crisis

environment, this research aims to explore how senior public administrative leaders interpret and understand the world they perceived themselves to be in. The aim of the research is to examine their perspectives of how leadership should be exercised, as well as to understand how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it.

Firstly, this research is about public administrative leadership perspectives, but it is about public administrative leadership perspectives in a crisis environment. The Republic of Ireland is the ideal environment for this research given that Ireland is in the midst of an intense social and economic crisis. Within a decade of either side of the turn of the Millennium, the Republic of Ireland went through a rapid shift from economic boom to economic bust, the speed and the extent of which was not only unrivalled by other countries, but also unprecedented in Irish history (Ó Gráda 2009, European Commission 2009a). The economic recession lingered well into the second decade of the third Millennium (European Commission 2011). The volatile environment in rapidly declining circumstances, especially in the latter part of this period was an ideal context to explore the dynamics of public administrative leadership. The adoption of what is in essence a case study methodology to explore leadership perspectives, which is a social phenomenon (Bennis and Manus 1985, Bass 1998, Parry 1998, Yukl 2006, Northouse 2010), is a well established research approach (Simons 1980, Patton 1987, Merriam 1988, Feagin et al 1991, Anderson 1993, Yin 1993, Stake 1995).

Secondly, this research aims to explore how senior public administrative leaders perceived and understood the environment they perceived themselves in. Thus the research is about understanding the interpretations and the meanings through which the leaders made sense of the world around them – and how they attempt to socially deconstruct and reconstruct the reality around them in order to make sense (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Moreover, this research also aims to explore the senior public administrative leaders' perception of what they saw as the appropriate leadership responses to the constructed realities they perceive themselves to be in. As such, the interpretivist approach (Mason 2002, Willis 2007) within the qualitative genre (Bryman and Burgess 1994, Guba and Lincoln 1994) is the most appropriate approach for this research (Smircich and Morgan 1982).

Thirdly, the focus of this research is concerned with leadership perspectives in a perceived crisis environment. Therefore it is not solely to understand the senior Irish public administrative leaders' generic perspectives of what leadership might look like, but especially to understand their leadership perspectives in the crisis world they perceived themselves to be in. At the generic level, there are already a variety of published perspectives of how leadership might look like in general. These perspectives are useful references from which the general leadership perspectives of the senior Irish public administrative leaders can be explored. These perspectives range from the classical Great-man perspective (Carlyle 1843, Cowley 1928) through the Trait perspective (Bird 1940, Jenkins 1947), the Behavioural perspective (Likert 1959, Blake and Mouton 1964), the Situational perspective (Hersey and Blanchard 1969, Vroom and Yetton 1973), the Transformational perspective (Greenleaf 1977, Bass 1985) and the Ethical-Normative perspective (Spears 1995, Van Wart and Dicke 2008) to the more recent Critical perspective (Ford et al 2008, Currie et al 2010). Beyond the generic perspectives of leadership, since the focus of the research is specifically on public leadership rather than on private sector leadership, contrasting public sector leadership perspectives against private sector leadership perspectives (Goodsell 1994, Terry 2003, Grint 2010) is also helpful to inform this research. Likewise, given that the specific focus is on public administrative leadership rather than public political leadership, dissecting the contrasting leadership perspectives between the political and the administrative realm within the public sector (Osborne and Plastrik 1997, Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2003, Van Wart and Dicke 2008) would also be informative. And in the context of the crisis environment, there are also different perspectives of what leadership might look like in dynamic, uncertain or crisis environments (Daft et al 1988, Kotter 1996, Kanter 2001, Bridge 2009). All of these many and varied perspectives of what leadership might look like – in a generic or in a public sector context, relating to the political or to the administrative, within a crisis or a stable environment – all of these perspectives help to provide the conceptual framings within which the senior Irish public administrative leaders' perspectives of what leadership might look like in a crisis environment can be explored.

The placing of this research in a crisis socio-economic environment, the adoption of a interpretive approach in the context of a social constructionist paradigm, and the robust reference to a comprehensive range of acknowledged leadership perspectives combine to provide for a rich research that stands to add to the overall understanding of public administrative leadership in a dynamic context, which in turn can contribute to public management knowledge and practice.

Integration with Previous DBA Research Documents

This document is the fifth document in a series of Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) research documents (Chau 2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2009). The overall theme of this series of research is about leadership in general and public sector leadership in the Republic of Ireland in particular. The research described in this document has added substantially to the understanding of leadership, and has extended the contribution to knowledge and practice in a number of aspects.

Foremost, this research adopts an interpretivistic approach – a qualitative approach that provides for much greater insights, discoveries and understandings (Merriam 1988) than the positivistic stance adopted in the previous researches. This is particularly so given that the overall theme is leadership, and leadership is acknowledged as a social phenomenon (Bennis and Manus 1985, Bass 1998, Parry 1998, Yukl 2006, Northouse 2010), and thus should not be seen as something that can be researched into as if it is an independent objective reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Smircich and Morgan 1982, Burr 1995, Ford et al 2008). The richer and more in-depth findings provided by this research thus brought significant enhancement to the entire series of the DBA documents, and enable the combined series of DBA research to provide a more comprehensive contribution to knowledge and practice.

The enhancements of understanding provided by this research relate to a number of specific areas. In particular, this research provides a greater insight into these administrative leaders' own perspectives of the *how* and the *why* of their leadership.

From the *how* perspective, there is an enhancement of understanding relating to the how leadership is viewed by the leaders themselves. This research, being interpretive

in approach, provides a deeper understanding of how administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland made sense of their leadership within the context of a public sector facing a significant socio-economic crisis. The interpretive approach adopted provides for a depth of understanding of how these leaders interpreted the world they were in – a world that is socially constructed by these leaders themselves, and then provides for a greater awareness of how they then saw their own leadership in that context. This research therefore substantially adds to the previous research (Chau 2008, Chau 2009), which had only provided suggestions that the leaders saw themselves as effective leaders because they believed they possessed adequate knowledge of what leadership is and adequate understanding concerning leadership in their own sector. The previous research held a somewhat positivistic assumption that leadership was something that could be packaged and objectively transferred to individuals for adoption – it was an assumption that the individuals would become leaders once they possess and utilise that objective leadership *package*. The additional contribution of this research to the overall DBA research is a re-affirmation that the process of leadership or the process of becoming a leader is a much more complex process, one that is socially constructed and individually interpreted (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Burr 1995).

From the *why* perspective, there is an enhancement of understanding over the previous research relating to how leaders justify and make sense of their leadership. This research explores and examines how the senior Irish administrative leaders interpreted their environment and made sense of what they felt they needed to do. The exploration of how these leaders interpreted their realities and, based on their interpretation, how they then constructed their leadership allows this research to substantially add to the somewhat uncritical observations provided by the previous research (Chau 2007b, Chau 2008, Chau 2009). The previous research had suggested that leaders became leaders because they were somehow driven by some sense of inner conviction or by some strong belief in what they are doing. The additional contribution of this research to the overall DBA research is a re-affirmation that the interpretation of the exercising of leadership, in particular the interpretation of the exercising of leadership in public administration, should be undertaken more critically (Ford et al 2008, Currie et al 2010)

A further enhancement to the overall DBA research provided by this research comes from the research being posited within a crisis context. The findings of this research suggest a viable public administrative leadership approach which reflects a preference for responding to the perception of a significant crisis with a degree of conservatorship (Selznick 1984, Terry 1995) rather than responding only with a bias for radical reform (Grundy 1993, Kotter 1996). This finding adds to the previous discussions (Chau 2007b) where it had been suggested, albeit positivistically, that the appropriate leadership response in any context may be contingent on varying approaches. While there is a perspective that radical change is the appropriate response to significant crisis (Duncan 972, Taylor 1995), the contribution of this research is the proposition of a viable contingency leadership response to a significant crisis based on a degree of conservatism.

The overall proposition is, therefore, that the research presented in this current document stands to supplement and enhance the previous research that had already been presented (Chau 2007b, Chau 2008, Chau 2009) in this series of DBA research. Given the enhancement provided by this research, the entire series of DBA documents combined stands to bring rich contribution to both knowledge and practice in the field of public sector leadership in general and in the field of public administrative leadership in particular.

Research Setting – Public Administration in the Republic of Ireland

The research is set in the Republic of Ireland, conducted amongst the top two echelons of the public administrative leadership, and carried out between September 2009 and April 2011, which was a twenty-month period of intense changes and uncertainties in the socio-economic environment in the Republic of Ireland. The rationale behind this deliberate setting was that the volatile social and economic environment at the time of the research and the somewhat distinctive public administration structure in the Republic of Ireland provided an ideal context for a research into the leadership sense making of public administrative leaders in crisis situations.

The selection of the Republic of Ireland as a case study for this research is defended as appropriate because of the similarity between the Republic of Ireland and most other European nations. In terms of the public management structure, the Republic of Ireland also has a tripartite structure of Government derived from the classical Montesquieu (1748) structure. In terms of the economy, the Republic of Ireland is similar in size to many of the other Northern European nations (Economist Intelligence Unit 2009). In terms of the society and culture, there are many similarities in terms of their cultural outlooks, given their shared Celtic roots (Harbinson 1994, Cunliffe 2000) and the shared historical Viking influences (Ó'Cuiv 1975, Ó'Corráin 2001). Aside from the similarities, there are also two other contextual factors that made the Republic of Ireland an appropriate case study for the research described in this document.

Firstly, the Republic of Ireland is in the midst of a significant socio-economic crisis. The intention of this research was not merely to explore the leadership perceptions of senior public administrative leaders in a generic context. The intention of this research is to explore the leadership perceptions of senior public administrative leaders particularly in the context of a perceived crisis environment. The Republic of Ireland was in the midst of a crisis during the research period, and it was a crisis more momentous, at least in political and economic terms, than what was faced by the majority of the rest of Europe, if not the rest of the world. A detailed chronology of the meteoric rise and the subsequent spectacular fall of the Irish economy have been presented in Appendix V-A. A research exploring the leadership perceptions of senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland during such a crisis would yield a great deal of rich findings to contribute to knowledge and practice.

Secondly, the Republic of Ireland has a somewhat unique public governance structure, one that had fostered a somewhat greater prominence to the public administrative leadership role. Similar to many of the modern Western democratic States, the Republic of Ireland's public governance structure was based on the tripartite system of public governance derived from the classical writings of Locke (1690) and Montesquieu (1748). Within this classical system, the Executive branch of government would comprise both the political element and the administrative element (Van Wart 2003). However, there are some unique variations in the implementation of

the Republic of Ireland's public administrative elements, resulting in a more prominent role for the Irish public administrative leaders. A discussion of the uniqueness of the Irish public governance structure has been presented in Appendix V-B. The greater prominence of the administrative leadership role, in particular during times of crisis, would allow for a greater scope to explore the sense making of the leaders, and thereby bringing additional richness to this research.

3.   Literature Review

This is a research that explores the perceptions of senior Irish administrative leaders regarding their own leadership in what could be deemed as a crisis environment. In other words, this research sought to explore how these senior Irish civil servants interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to analyse how they made sense of their own leadership response to their constructed world as they saw it.

The purpose of this section of the document is to present and to discuss a number of perspectives from the relevant bodies of knowledge relating to this research. The relevant bodies of knowledge include that of leadership, that of public administration and that of crisis management. From the leadership body of knowledge, the specific focuses are on the various perspectives of what leadership might be and on the contrasting views of what leadership might look like; the specific focus within the public administration body of knowledge is on administrative leadership as distinct from political leadership; and from the crisis management body of knowledge, the specific focus is on the balance between activating radical change and the maintaining of continuity in the leadership response to crisis situations. Overarching these three sets of discussions is the understanding of how people make sense of their environment and how they develop their perceptions.

Sense Making and Perception

This is a research that explores how senior Irish administrative leaders interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to understand how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it. The research approach

adopted is interpretivist in nature. Interpretation and sense making emerge from perception, and therefore the notion of perception provides the back-drop to all the discussions on each of the three knowledge focuses. In particular, the understanding is that the inter-play between on the one hand the perception of the research subjects in their interpretation and sense making, and on the other hand the perception or the mind-frame of the researcher in the process of analysis is the essence of what interpretive research is about.

The notion of perception refers to an active process through which people attempt to give meaning to the environment around them. Perception is the process through which people take in information or impressions from the environment around them, and attempt to organise and interpret these information or impressions into meaningful views and understandings in order to give meanings (Weick 1995). In other words, perception is how people view and interpret the events and situations in the world around them, and how they make sense of their reality. As this research is an interpretive research, having a clear appreciation of this notion of perception is crucial. It is crucial because at the root of the interpretivist paradigm is the proposition that it is people's perceptive interpretation of the environment that guides their behaviour or influences the decisions that they make (Guba and Lincoln 1994). From the interpretivist perspective, reality has no meaning and no real existence independent of interpretation. And thus when it comes to behavioural responses or leadership responses, these responses would be based on a person's perception of reality, not on any reality itself (Robbins 2005).

Perception can be described as a cognitive process (Insel and Fernald 2004). The cognitive process of perception formation starts with an encountering of some salient stimuli, and then followed by active categorisation, organisation and interpretation of those stimuli through schemata (Rumelhart 1980), so that it makes sense to the individuals concerned. Schemata are cognitive frameworks, which is employed to group information and help the individuals to understand the stimuli presented to them. Rummel (1975) suggested that an individual's schemata is based on the individual's culture, in that they are learned and developed as a result of repetitive individual social interactions, and are therefore unique to each individual. According to Crick and Dodge (1994), the development of an individual's schemata is more

prominent in particular in the formative years of the individual, but would also be significantly affected either by a traumatic and intense exposure to a particular social event in later life, or by repeated exposure to the same social event over a period of time.

The importance of understanding this cognitive process must not be down-played if the essence and the intent of this research were to explore and analyse interpretations and sense making. The schema employed in this cognitive process is in essence the individual's perceptive filter, unique to the individual. It assigns meanings, values, significance and purpose to the otherwise neutral stimuli. For example, seeing a coloured cloth is meaningless and aroused no emotions, unless the schemata of the individual interpret that colour cloth as an Irish Tricolour flag. And dependent on the makeup of that individual's schemata, the resultant perception and behavioural reaction could be a patriotic cheer arose from a sense of pride (say, if the individual was a staunch Republican from West Belfast), or the resultant perception and behavioural reaction could be a growl of disdain arose from a sense of hatred (say, if the individual was a staunch Loyalist from North Antrim). In the same way, the proposition is that the individual and the corporate schemata of the senior public administrative leaders in this research would determine how they interpret the world they saw themselves in, and would influence how they made sense of their own leadership response (Drath and Palus 1994).

The discourse on perception hitherto would suggest that perception is at the core of an individual's sense making. Applied at the individual level, it determines how an individual views various social concepts, such as leadership. Indeed, because of the different perceptions, even the mere mention of the word 'leadership' already conjures up different images and different interpretation of what the word might imply to different individuals. For the public administrative leaders in this research, perception was therefore at play as they attempted to interpret the environment they were in, and as they tried to make sense of their own leadership responses. The schemata they employed would have reflected a number of leadership perspectives, or a number of ways from which leadership could be seen or understood.

Relating to this process of sense making and perception development are the notions of social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979, Haslam 2004) and social construction (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Burr 1995). The understanding is that sense making and perception development within the individuals rarely take place without the context of socialisation. The notion of social identity suggested that individuals made sense of themselves by identifying themselves with groups, and as members of a group, tend to "conform to, and thus are influenced by, the prototype" of the group (Hogg 2001:189) Hogg (2001) had suggested a social identity theory of leadership wherein he argued that the leadership process is a group process that arises from the self categorisation (Turner 1985, Turner et al 1987) and prototype-based depersonalisation processes associated with social identity, which allows for individuals to be empowered as leaders. In the context of this research, it is possible that the senior public administrative leaders would make sense of their own leadership with reference to their self categorisation and to their perception of a prototypical public administrative leader. The notion of social construction suggests that there are multiple ways of seeing any given situation, that different people use different lenses and perspectives to see the same 'reality' Meaning can only be derived through one's relationships and dialogues with others, and language and conversation do not describe reality but serve to create reality and give meaning (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Gergen 1999). Perception of leadership from such a social constructionist perspective would see leadership as a continuous social process (Barker 2001), and that as social tradition changes, so should the constructs that give meaning to leadership (Collinson 2005). In the context of this research which is posited in a dynamic crisis environment, the changes in the social context as a result of the socio-economic crisis could lead to an evolving reconstruction of the public administrative leadership perspectives (Drath 2001).

Leadership Perspectives

The intention of this research is to explore how senior Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to analyse how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it. Thus this research was about public administration, but it was also about leadership. It is

therefore helpful to first explore some of the perspectives on how leadership could be interpreted as well as to discuss leadership in the context of public administration.

A trawl of literatures, both academic and popular, would reveal that there had been substantial study of the notion of leadership and of what leadership might be. Yet despite the extensive studies, the quest for the understanding of how leadership could be seen remained far from exhaustive. Northouse (2010:1) had suggested that this is because leadership is a "complex process having multiple dimensions". Indeed, a number of writers (Bass 1990, Rost 1991, Hickman 1998, Edwards 2000, Antonakis, Cianciolo and Sternberg 2004, Mumford 2006, Northouse 2010) over the last decade or so had extensively reviewed scholarly studies of leadership in different context, and had shown that the complexity of the leadership process could be explained by a wide variety of different theoretical framework. Bass (1990) had noted over 1,500 different definitions of leadership, and Edwards (2000) reported over forty published theories of leadership. Yet such extensive review notwithstanding, Collinson and Grint (2005) suggested that there was still very little consensus on what counted as leadership. Indeed, nearly three decades before them, it had already been claimed that leadership was "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns 1978:2) – and there would have been an even greater deluge of additional research and publication in the interim three decades since.

A significant part of the intention of this research is to explore how leadership might be viewed from different perspectives. As suggested above, there had been a variety of perspectives developed over the years of what leadership might be, and it is these various and varying perspectives that make the further exploration of leadership interesting. To illustrate the contrasting complexity, take the classic perspective which saw the leaders 'in front' of the followers, and which therefore suggested a somewhat uni-directional and linear perspective of the leader-follower relationship. But even with such a linear perspective, the nature of the relationship between the leaders and the followers could still be interpreted differently. For example, does the leader being 'in front' suggest that it was the followers who made the leader, or whether it was the leader who drew the followers? Burns' slightly irreverent story of a man sitting at a café window, who upon hearing and seeing a disturbance run outside with the cry, "There goes the mob. I am their leader. I must follow them!" (Burns 1978:265)

illustrated that paradox in such a linear interpretation of the role of leaders. Similarly, Tolstoy introduced the metaphor of a ship's bow-wave (Tolstoy 1991). Tolstoy's argument was that, regardless of the ship's direction, while the bow-waves were always in front of the ship as a matter of fact, it does not imply that the wave has any role in either the steering or the propelling of the movement of the ship.

If taking the perspective of leadership as an objective human behavioural phenomenon – in other words, taking the perspective that human behaviour could be objectively and independently observed, it could be argued that this human behavioural phenomenon called leadership had existed, in various guises and forms, for as long as human being had been in existence. Smith and Krueger (1933) noted from the various anthropological researches that even in primitive groups around the globe, there were evidence of acts that we would now readily interpret as acts of leadership, even though at that time, the notion of leadership had not yet been conceptualised. To adopt a positivistic perspective to view leadership, the suggestion would have been that leadership, as an objective human behaviour, had existed long before the theoretical conceptualisation of leadership became a defined subject of interests in academia.

But the suggestion that leadership is a behavioural phenomenon would imply that leadership can also be considered a social phenomenon, since the behaviour is manifested in an inter-personal social context. In this perspective, leadership could be seen as exertions of influence. The notion of influence had been defined by Lussier and Achua (2004) as the process of affecting other's attitudes and behaviour in order to achieve defined objectives. The recognition that leadership is a social influence process seems to have been quite widespread (e.g. Bennis and Nanus 1985, Bass 1998, Parry 1998, Yukl 2006). Even in very early studies of leadership, the notion of influence as a key function of leadership had been quite prominent. For example Tead (1935) described leadership as influencing people to cooperate towards some goal which they come to find desirable. Stogdill (1950) defined leadership as a process of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts towards goal setting and goal achievement; and Shartle (1951) described the leader as one who exercised important acts of influence more than any other member of the group or organisation. Much more recently, Northouse (2010:3) had even suggested that "influence is the

sine qua non of leadership" and that "without influence, leadership does not exist". If leadership is seen as a social phenomenon, then it would not be appropriate to adopt a positivistic perspective to consider leadership, or to consider leadership as human behaviour that can be objectively and independently observed. As a social phenomenon, it would be more appropriate to adopt a constructionist (Ford et al 2008) perspective to view leadership.

Indeed, there had been a variety of other perspectives through which leadership had been studied. Leadership had been described as both a science and an art (Gill 2006; Grint 2001); it had been studied from the perspective of leadership being an expression of the leaders' personality (Fiedler 1967, House and Mitchell 1974, Drath and Palus 1994); it had been studied from the perspective of leadership being a manifestation of deliberate behaviours (Halpin and Winer 1957, Hemphill and Coons 1957), it had been studied from the perspective of leadership being an adaptive behaviour adapting to particular situational context (Fiedler 1967, Saal and Knight 1988), it had been studied from the perspective of leadership being an adaptive behaviour adapting to the characteristics of the followers and to the work settings (Evans 1970, House and Mitchell 1974), and it had been studies from the perspective of leadership being a dyadic relationship between leaders and followers (Greenleaf 1977, Burns 1978, Bass 1985, Bryman 1993, Spears 1995, Elmore 2000, Grint 2001, Heifetz and Linsky 2002 etc.)

Much of the current perspectives on leadership had been developed over an extensive period of time. It would be useful, for the purpose of presenting the various and varying perspective of what leadership might look like, to explore how these perspectives had been developed over time.

Perspectives of leadership in earlier historical times tended to be more positivistic and tended to be more heroic in description. Early leadership theories tended to also describe leadership as more autocratic in nature, and tended to relate to leadership in the military or in matters of national affairs. Folklores and legends of heroes across ancient civilisations were often national leaders who served the interests of the nations or the people – the Patriarchs of the ancient Middle East, the Pharaohs of ancient

Egypt, the Divine Emperors of ancient China, the God-Kings of the Incas in South America, to name but a few.

Indeed, such heroic and positivistic perspectives drove and underpinned the first wave of leadership studies in the modern era, circa the nineteenth century. The first wave saw the dominant leadership perspective rooted in the notion of the Great-man thesis (Carlyle 1843). Great-man theories essentially implied that the success of any leader was to be attributed solely to the individual without regard to the situation context (Cowley 1928). The assumption of this Great-man thesis was that great men were the ones that changed the shape and direction of the circumstances they were in, rather than allowing the circumstances to dictate their destiny. The problem with this theory was that it could only be affirmed retrospectively and as such was irrefutable in nature. Thus while it was useful as a historical descriptive tool, it was probably unhelpful as a construct for a social science behavioural model.

The early twentieth century saw the emergence of scientific thinking and scientific methodologies as the main research mode in academia. Thus there was a swell in the focus on the definition of roles and the assignment of skills and competencies to these roles – and leadership was seen as one such roles. This perspective was scientific in approach, and thus also positivistic in essence. The underlying assumption was that these roles and skills and competencies can be observed independently and objectively. This led to the development of Trait leadership theories (Bird 1940, Jenkins 1947), where the emphasis was on the objective traits the leaders brought to a definable leadership role. These Traits theories were not substantially different from the Great-man thesis – the assumption that people possessed certain identifiable and observable quality and traits that made them better suited to leadership. The one variation to the Great-man thesis was the proposition that those personality traits were not necessarily inherited genetically, but that they could be fostered through life experiences. Subsequently long lists of leadership traits emerged from numerous psychologically oriented researches (for example, Bird 1940 and Jenkins 1947). But the problem with this approach was that while the list of traits became more and more massive, very few of the listed traits and characteristics were universal and generic in nature across all situations (Stogdill 1948), and thereby making them impractical. Alongside the Trait theories were the Skills theories. Pioneered by Katz (1955), the

Skills theories attempted to further transcend the problems of associating personality traits with innate genetics by describing leadership as a set of skills that everyone can develop. Despite its early origin, there had been recent attempts to re-birth this skills approach with popular contemporary skill-based models of leadership (e.g. Mumford et al 2000). However, presented as a positivistic approach, the problem of the lack of universal application remained unresolved.

Tracing the different perspectives from which leadership can be seen or interpreted, and tracking the changes from the Great-man perspective through the Trait perspective and to the Skills perspective, there could be a suggestion that these changing perspectives seemed to reflect the evolving social emphasis over time (Doyle and Smith 2001, Van Maurik 2001) from the emphasis of the heroic to the emphasis of the scientific. Of course, the focus of the scientific seemed to still be on the innate traits and skills of the heroic leader, but at least it was an evolution from considering the heroic leader as a pre-destined given entity to considering the possibility of developing or creating a heroic leader.

And this tenuous association between evolving social changes and changing perspectives of leadership did seem apparent in the continual evolution of perspective. After the Traits and the Skills theories, the next wave of theories appeared to have been driven by the consideration of the situational context in tandem with the emergence of behavioural science and the societal emphasis on behaviour (Doyle and Smith 2001). The emerged perspective attempted to prescribe different leadership style or contingent leadership behaviour to different situations. Termed Contingency theories or Situational theories (Hersey and Blanchard 1969) from the perspective of the environment or termed Behavioual theories (Tannenbaum and Schmidt 1973) from the perspective of the leaders themselves, these theories usually emphasised the situation variables that the leaders must overcome, and shifting the focus from the traits and skills to the behaviour of the leaders. These theories proposed that no leadership style is best in all situations, and that a leader must choose the best course of action based upon situational variables. This shift coincided with the period when academia elsewhere saw an emergence in theories associated with humanist, human relations and behavioural science as well as the emergence of psychologically based small group experiments (e.g. Blake and Mouton 1964, Hersey and Blanchard 1969,

Vroom and Yetton 1973). Because these theories focused on the actions of the leaders and not on their mental qualities or internal states, the assumption of these theories was that people could learn to become leaders through training. While a number of quite useful theories (Hemphill 1950, Likert 1959, Fiedler 1967, Blake and Mouton 1964, Hersey and Blanchard 1969 and Vroom and Yetton 1973) had been developed through this perspective, in particular from the Ohio State Leadership Studies (Fleishman 1953, Halpin and Winer 1957, Hemphill and Coons 1957) and the University of Michigan leadership studies (Katz, Maccoby and Morse 1950, Katz et al 1951, Katz and Kahn 1952); this approach had been criticised for being too simplistic because the nature of the models had been largely bimodal in construct and had remained positivistic is essence. And even as a positivistic proposition, there had been limited empirical evidence to conclusively support this proposition that, if demanded by the contingent situation, individual behaviour could change at will to any significant extent.

Much of the leadership perspectives thus far had been either about the leaders only (i.e. the perspective that it was the leaders that enable leadership), about the followers (i.e. the perspective that it was the followers who dictate the nature of leadership), or about the context (i.e. the perspective that it was the contexts that determine the style of leadership). All the while these perspectives were based on the assumption that acts of leadership are something that can be independently observed and objectively measured or assessment.

Beginning circa 1970, there appeared to be a shift in how leadership could be viewed. While still comparatively positivistic in approach, the perspectives began to emphasise the nature of the relationships involved in the leadership process – in essence the beginning of the foray into the social constructionist perspective. The new emphasis began to emphasise the dynamics of the dyadic relationship between the leaders and the followers. For example, there was the notion of transforming versus transactional leadership (Burns 1978, Bass 1985). The Transactional Leadership perspective has an emphasis on the roles of organisation, supervision and group performance and saw effective leadership as based on a system of reward and punishment (Popper and Zakkai 1994), while the Transformational Leadership perspective has an emphasis on vision and overarching organisational change, and

saw leadership as leaders adjusting the values, beliefs and needs of the followers (Peters and Austin 1985). Similarly, there was the concept of Servant Leadership (Greenleaf 1977, Burns 1978, Spears 1995), a perspective that introduced elements of an ethical dimension and attempting to apply leadership to situations involving normative issues. Van Wart and Dicke (2008:7) termed this the "ethical-normative perspective" approach. The was also the concept of Inspirational or Charismatic Leadership (House 1977, Bryman 1993) which has a focus on the influence processes of the leader–follower interaction and saw leadership as creating inspiration and fostering higher level actions in the followers.

Much more recently, there has been a host of newer perspectives of how leadership can be seen, including Distributive Leadership (Elmore 2000, Gronn 2002), Constitutive Leadership (Grint 2001), Adaptive Leadership (Heifetz and Linsky 2002), Authentic Leadership (Luthan and Avolio 2003), Primal or Emotional Leadership (Goleman et al 2004), to name but a few. These newer perspectives of leadership would focused on specific aspects of the relationship dynamics between the leaders and the followers, together bringing about a more "integrative" perspective of the understanding of leadership (Van Wart and Dicke 2008:7).

It could be argued that each of these views adds to the already rich and diverse perspectives of how leadership can be seen or interpreted. And despite the centuries of exploration, the expectation would be that newer perspectives of leadership will continue to emerge. This is because if leadership is deemed a social phenomenon, then, as a social phenomenon, it would constantly evolve with every societal change. The argument presented was that the evolving and changing perspectives of leadership to date had been evolving and changing in tandem with the evolution of societal values. For example, Doyle and Smith (2001) had suggested that over the last 80 years or so, development of leadership perspectives could be classified in terms of evolving generations, and they had classified the four main sequential generations of leadership perspectives (Trait, Behavioural, Situational and Transformational) as sequential generations. Van Maurik (2001), however, while supporting the same system of classification, had added that, while sequential to an extent, none of these four generations was mutually exclusive or totally time-bound. Rather, he suggested

that each generation added to the overall analysis of leadership, and as such it reflected a development and a progression of evolving thoughts.

An alternative perspective was offered by Fairholm (2002), who suggested that the four generations reflected four complimentary perspectives, each addressing a different inquiry, and together providing a holistic but timeless perspective of the *who*, *what*, *when* and *why* of leadership. Fairholm's (2002) suggestion was that the Trait theories look at leadership from the *who* perspective, through which leadership would be deemed visible when the leaders exhibited certain personal qualities, personalities and characters common to other acknowledged leaders. From this perspective, leadership is a visible reflection of the personalities of the leader. Likewise, the Behavioural theories look at leadership from the *what* perspective, through which leadership would be deemed visible when the leaders were seen to exhibit to some extent the two important behaviours of getting things done and relating well to the followers. From this perspective, leadership was a visible reflection of what the leader did. From the *when* perspective of the Situational theories, leadership would emerge and would be deemed visible only in the context of the specific situations. And from the *why* perspective of the values-based Transformational theories, leadership would be deemed visible where there were significant value changes seen amongst the followers.

The contextual relevance of this discussion concerning the various and varying perspectives of how leadership could be seen or interpreted is that the intention of the research described in this document is to explore how senior Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to understand how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it. The proposition is therefore that while it might not be possible to interpret or to make sense of the existence or otherwise of leadership by reference to a singularly definitive list of descriptions, acts of leadership could nevertheless be interpreted, and leadership could be perceived to be in existence, by reference to any or a combination of some of these perspectives.

However, given the earlier proposition that leadership is a social phenomenon, one that exists in the context of social behaviour, and that leadership perspectives would

evolve as societal values evolve and change, there is an argument that the hitherto discussions had presented an overly positivistic picture of what leadership is. Indeed, most of the above perspectives seem to be based on an underlying assumption that the leadership phenomenon could be independently observed, objectively assessed, and clinically adopted. The argument is that to make better sense of a social phenomenon such as leadership, a less positivistic and a more critical approach is necessary. There seem to be much support for this argument from more recent writers on leadership perspectives. Currie et al (2010), for example, had argued that main stream discussions such as those above on leadership tend to be overly positivistic and overly descriptive rather than analytical. In the same vein, Ford et al (2008) had suggested that the notion of leadership or the notion of a leader do not exist as independent, homogeneous entities to be observed, learned and adopted by individuals through simple transfer mechanisms. Her view was that the discussions on leadership to date had been largely "uncritical" and tended to be "descriptive rather than analytical" (Ford et al 2008:86). Likewise, Learmonth (2005) had suggested that terms such as 'leadership' or 'leader' had a performative effect, meaning that instead of the terms describing some positivistic external sets of social behaviour, the terms would construct the identity it had sought to describe.

These more critical perspectives would seem to suggest that leaders are not leaders because they had somehow learned and now able to exhibit some observable leadership set of behaviour. Their argument seemd to be that to become leaders, people were required to change, to be constructed and through complex social processes to become a different being altogether (Ford et al 2008). They would go so far as to suggest that the positivistic and idealised model of the leader as suggested by the conventional body of literatures for the aspiring leader to become was a model "impossible to achieve" (Ford et al 2008:167). The contribution of such critical perspective to this research would be that if the conventional leadership models were only theoretically possible, and unattainable in practice, then to look for their existence to provide indication of the presence of leadership would be somewhat futile.

The evolution towards a more critical approach in exploring leadership perspectives is not inconsistent with the proposition that leadership perspectives evolve in tandem

with evolution and changes in societal values. The argument is that the emergence of the critical perspectives of leadership that challenged the prevailing narrow and biased perspectives reflected an increasing acceptance of social diversity. For example, the emergence and the establishment of the feminist perspective in Western societies in recent decades had given rise to the emergence of the feminist perspective in main stream research. This had raised a critical response to the vast majority of literatures which were deemed masculine in bias (Ford 2010). In particular with reference to leadership studies, the argument was that the "understanding of leadership and heroic masculinity have been so closely interwoven as to be both invisible and indivisible" (Ford 2010:161), and that leadership theories in general have "pretended gender neutrality or displayed gender blindness but have inevitably imported male values and characteristics as the norm, and have been 'phallocentric' – viewing the world implicitly from a masculine point of view" (Fulop et al 2004:353). Another example from the critical approach would see leadership as a process whereby the mindfulness of those following were given over those who lead, with the leader given the power to "frame and define the reality" (Smircich and Morgan 1982:258) of the followers. In this perspective, leadership would be seen as deliberate attempts to "alienate and deskill" the followers (Ford et al 2008:25), and see leadership as "intrinsically connected to practice associated with the domination and control of some over others" (Currie and Learmonth 2010:2).

The suggestion is that the adding of such critical perspectives to the earlier conventional perspectives were necessary for this research, given that the intention was to conduct an interpretive study, to explore how senior Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to analyse how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it. The understanding was that the substantive body of knowledge on leadership published and conventionally accepted by academia should not be adopted uncritically, nor should the existence of leadership be objectively assessed only in a positivistic manner. Such understandings were certainly compatible with the preferred epistemological approach to the research at hand.

Public Sector Management and Public Sector Leadership Perspectives

The intention of this research is to explore how senior Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to understand how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it. Thus this research was about leadership, but it was also about public sector management and public sector leadership. It would therefore also be helpful to explore some of the perspectives on public management and public sector leadership.

Much of the perspectives discussed hitherto relate to leadership in a broad and general sense. Indeed, the majority of the discussions above related only to generic leadership in private sector organisations, since most of the research carried out in support of these discussions took place in the context of the private and commercial sector.

It is important to differentiate between the public sector and the private sector because the leadership context is vastly different (Goodsell 1994, Terry 2003). The argument was that loyalty to investors and shareholders was paramount in a private sector commercial profit-maximising environment while, completely differently, what was crucial for a public sector non-profit governmental organisation within a democratic political system was public accountability. Brunner (1997:219) referred to public management as having "contextual complexity", because within the public sector, goals may be more complex, less measurable, or more susceptible to change. Indeed, the suggestion was that unlike those in the private sector who work only for profit, the objectives for the public sector may span diversely from commercial success to social welfare, from efficiency and economy to equity. As such, it could be argued that, unlike within the private sector, public sector leaders faced problems with a larger degree of uncertainty and with potentially no clear relationship between cause and effect (Rittell and Webber 1973). More recently, Clarke and Stewart described such public sector problems as "wicked problems" (Clarke and Stewart 1997:1), problems that might demand a *fuzzy* (Grint 1997) or *clumsy* (Grint 2010) approach to leadership. Estrin (1998) had argued that in the public sector, the handling of frequent changes in managerial objectives caused by changes in government or political priorities, while having to balance a multiplicity of principal-agent relationships, required very different leadership approaches that would not be applicable to the private sector.

Similarly, Heifetz (1994) had suggested that because of the significantly greater complexities, leadership in the public sector might require approaches that were more creative, and more adaptive than those employed in the private sector.

The relevance of this discussion to the research at hand would be that, given the suggested difference between public sector leadership perspectives and private sector leadership perspectives, making sense of and analysing the presence of leadership amongst public administrative leaders would need to be framed quite differently from the making sense of and analysing the presence of leadership amongst the private sector, and as such, some of the perspectives discussed hitherto concerning private sector leaderships may not be applicable without at least some adaptation.

Political Leadership versus Administrative Leadership

The research described in this document specifically concerns public administrative leadership. Therefore for the purpose of consolidating the conceptual framework underpinning this research, aside of contrasting public leadership against private leadership, it would be helpful to also extend the discussion towards discussing the classical divide between leadership in the administrative realm and leadership in the political realm within the public sector. In other words, the discussion needs to be focused not merely on generic leadership in the public sector, but specifically on leadership within public administration rather than leadership within the political arena of government.

The divide between the public administrative realm and the political realm within the public sector is a classical divide evident in the public governance structure of most Western democratic nations. A broader discussion of this classical structure and the evolution over time of the changing emphasis within this structure has been presented in Appendix V-D. The original proposition (Montesquieu 1748, Northcote and Trevelyan 1854) was that in situations when the political elements found themselves to be in the midst of change and uncertainties, such as in times of change of government or in times of a prolonged hung parliament when protracted negotiations were needed to form a coalition government, the administration element of this public governance structure would then be charged with a leading role in maintaining the

continual stability of the public services (Van Wart 2003, Van Wart and Dicke 2008). The contextual relevance to this research at hand was that, given the extraordinary socio-economic situation in the Republic of Ireland, to the extent of even causing a dramatic change of government during the period of this research, the Republic of Ireland would require an administrative leadership response that was no less extraordinary in order to maintain the public services in the midst of the extraordinary flux. In this context, this research concerning how public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland saw their own leadership specifically at this juncture of time would indeed be of significant contribution and would indeed add to the overall knowledge within the field of public administrative leadership.

Further more, the suggestion was that the Irish variant to this classical structure and the somewhat distinctive working relationship between the political elements and the administration elements of the public management structure in the Republic of Ireland had enabled a greater leadership role for the Irish public administrators.

Indeed the observation was that, in contrast to some of the European neighbours, senior civil servants in the Republic of Ireland were functioning in a much more mutually influential relationship with their Ministers, rather than in distinctively separated roles. This might have been partly as a consequence of the unique process of their appointments as per prior discussions. In the classical structure discussed hitherto, the separation of the political and the administrative was to ensure a smooth continuation of public administration irrespective of changes in government, as well as to ensure an administration loyalty to the government of the day to the extent of even working against the government of yesterday – a kind of chameleon-like ability to identify with successive governments of perhaps even contrasting political complexion (Ridley 1983). This traditional perspective of political leaders as policy makers and administrative leaders as policy implementers would suggest that, in practical terms, the senior civil servants, as administrative leaders, would not only advise the Government on policy development and help prepare and draft new legislations on the one hand; but would also on the other hand assist the Government in implementing the policies once they have been passed into legislations by the Parliament. In the neighbouring United Kingdom, this would have indeed been the traditional perspective (Chapman 1970). In the context of the Republic of Ireland,

given the somewhat distinctive governance structure (Appendix V-B), the observation was that the world of political policy decision and the world of administrative policy implementation may have become less discrete and less exclusive in their functioning, with Ministers dependent to a greater extent on their civil servants to provide inputs upon which they can then generate and debate policy options. Equally, once policy decisions are made and passed into legislations, Ministers would call upon their civil servants to then actively lead the implementation of those policy decisions. It was a relationship described as likened to a marriage partnership (Murray 1990), with the boundaries between the roles of politician and administrators in Ireland becoming less distinct, and reflecting an increasing degree of politicisation of the bureaucracy and bureaucratisation of politics (Aberbach et al 1981).

While the argument was not to suggest that civil servants in the Republic of Ireland are anything other than politically neutral and impartial in the professional execution of their roles, and while this apparent lack of strict demarcation between political and administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland was far from unique in the European context (Ridley 1979), it did suggest a greater leadership role, or at the very least a more influential role amongst the Irish public administrators.

Perception of Public Administrators as Leaders

The specific interest of this research is about public administrative leadership perspectives. The question of whether public administrators can be seen as leaders as well as administrators should be discussed.

The suggestion that public administrators had a leadership role was not one taken without references. It had, for example, been stated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation abd Development (OECD) that leadership is "a critical component of good public governance and administration" (OECD 2001:12). Their view was that, in the increasingly complex and increasingly diverse modern societies where there are multiple values and disparate perspectives on public administration matters and where expertise may be widely distributed, public administration could not continue to function where the administrators operate focusing only on administrative decisions while referring any and all policy decisions to their political counterparts. Their view

was that the bipolar distinction between the political elements as 'leaders' and the administrative elements as mere 'implementers' could only become less and less clear as the task of government became more and more complex. The OECD would argue that, if so, administrative discretions would arguably become necessary, and could no longer be ignored or down-played (OECD 2001). Indeed, they had reported that, in the face of increasing complexity of governance, the governments of many of their member countries had begun to develop new public administrative leadership models to cope with the new challenges presented by these new complexities. Their suggestion was that these new environments require new roles for public administrators, requiring them to become at the same time change agents, promoters of enhanced performance, coordinators of government policies, and keepers of public service values (OECD 2001). Their perspective was that all these could be considered leadership roles that required significant leadership inputs, thus transforming the administrators into leaders also. Similarly, Van Wart (2003) had suggested that even uncomplicated administrative responsibilities require the modest use of some discretion, and many NPM agendas had asserted that "creative and robust uses of discretion" (Van Wart 2003:223) was to be encouraged. The argument here would be that this robust use of discretion also described a leadership role in the context of public administration.

As such, the proposition is therefore that, in the context of the modern public management environment, public administrators could also be seen as administrative leaders.

To support the argument that public administrators could be at the same time administrators and leaders, the distinction between the role and functions of administrators and the role and functions of leaders should be discussed. The assumption behind this discussion is that leadership is neither synonymous with merely good administration nor is it just another skill amongst the skill-set of a competent administrator. The assumption is that administrators are essentially managers and the assumption is that while there are some common grounds, leadership and management are two different concepts. Fairholm (2002:34) suggested that "leadership is the art of influencing people to accomplish organisational goals, while management is the science of specifying and implementing means needed to

accomplish the same ends". His perspective was therefore that the pure leader would be a philosopher while a pure manager would be a technologist (Fairholm 2002).

Such a perspective would appear hierarchical, suggesting a view of the organisation as comprising philosophers and strategists at the apex of the organisation who were the leaders focusing on the values and the characters of the organisation and its long-term survival; while comprising functional and operational technologists at the lower levels of the organisation who were the managers or the administrators focusing on efficient and effective productivity and continuity of process. Such a view would indeed fit the classical Montesquieu view of public governance structure that separates policy formulation from policy implementation. But, leadership theorists down the decades such as Greenleaf (1977), Burns (1978), Bennis and Nanus (1985), Fairholm (1991), Senge (1998) and Heifetz and Linsky (2002) had concurred to suggest that organisational structural headship is not always leadership. Separating the idea of structural headship with the philosophy of leadership would allow the concept of leadership to be placed lower in the organisational hierarchy, and as such giving scope to leadership within even the managerial or administrative ranks. It would also support the proposition that, in the context of the modern public management environment, public administrators could also be seen as administrative leaders.

Another perspective pointing to the existence of leadership within the public administrator role comes from seeing the need to exercise significant influence in the execution of the administrator's responsibilities. Prior discussions had suggested that the exercising of influence is a significant element of the act of leadership (Tead 1935, Stogdill 1950, Hollander 1978, Cribbin 1981, Rauch and Behling 1984, Bennis and Nanus 1985, Donelly et al 1985, Bass 1998, Parry 1998, Northouse 2004, Lussier and Achua 2004, Yukl 2006), and that leadership is about stimulating the followers to adopt certain behaviour towards certain goals and objectives. While influence exists in all realms of social behaviour, and thus not all acts of influence can be deemed acts of leaderships, the argument is nevertheless that acts of influence relating to the motivation and the stimulation of followers towards the adoption of organisational goals, towards the organisation's strategic directions or towards the adoption of the organisation's espoused values could qualify as acts of leadership.

However, it has to be acknowledged that this and similar perspectives of fostering leadership amongst the administrator ranks had not been the classical view. In his seminal defense of the politics-administration dichotomy, Finer (1941) had asserted that public administrators were "not to decide their own course" and that they are "to be responsible to the elected representatives of the public, and these are to determine the course of action of the public servants to the most minute degree that is technically feasible" (Finer 1941:336). He even suggested that the contrary would be undemocratic. This perspective was supported by many of that era (e.g. Gulick 1936, Simons 1946) with Gulicks' POSDCORB framework (The acronym stands for steps in the administrative process: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting and Budgeting) becoming a staple in public administration trainings of that era. Other prominent public administration scholars (e.g. Waldo 1948, Urwick 1956), while criticising the POSDCORB framework, nevertheless supported the limitation of the public administration role to one subservient to the politically elected leaders.

This classical perspective was essential one that saw the administrative role only as a functional management role, wherein any discretion are but operational discretion, devoid of any strategic or leadership influence. This argument would have 'administrative leadership' labeled as pseudo-leadership – leaders by name only and devoid of real leadership function. This classical perspective had even re-emerged in relations to the more modern New Public Management (NPM) approach. For example, Pollitt (1993) and Kolthoff et al (2007) had suggested that the first principle of NPM for public administrators was managerialism. In particular, Pollitt described NPM as essentially efforts to increase efficiency through the "clear implementation of the professional management role" (Pollitt 1993:3) involving the use of increasingly sophisticated technologies and human resources refocused towards productivity. The aim of managerialism, Pollitt argues, was to gain more effective control of work practices, but only towards greater efficiency. Kolthoff et al (2007) concurred by suggesting that far from NPM being a rejection of bureaucracy, it is in fact "its fulfillment" (Kolthoff et al 2007:402). In essence, NPM was suggested as a perfecting of bureaucratic implementation and had little to do with leadership.

But while Finer's (1941) and other similar perspectives are arguably still popular as an ideological position, there had also been suggestion that these perspectives had

largely been "invalidated as an accurate description of modern administrative realities" (Van Wart and Dicke 2008:116). The suggestion seemed to be that the changing 'realities' in the modern public management arena had largely changed the role of the public administrators. Indeed, Chapman and O'Toole (2009) had challenged this argument that public administration was merely a management and implementation function devoid of any leadership contribution by suggesting that, in particular within the British Civil Service, continuous changes in the public governance structure and the associated changes in public governance emphasis had changed the notion of leadership within public administrations beyond the traditional understanding of what leadership might be. Chapman and O'Toole (2009) had suggested that public administrators may now have a leadership role, as understood by the perspective that leadership implies "setting examples, inspiring confidence and encouraging loyalty" (Chapman and O'Toole 2009:1).

Chapman and O'Toole's argument was that, at least in the context of the British civil service, "the leadership partnership" between Ministers and their civil servants "has gone" (Chapman and O'Toole 2009:12) as a result of the changing emphasis of public management in the United Kingdom – "gone" not in the sense of the demise of administrative leadership per say, but rather the demise of the traditional role of the civil servant as a mere "counterweight" (Chapman and O'Toole 2009:12) to the Ministers in charge – and instead becoming "real leaders" (Chapman and O'Toole 2009:12) in the contemporary sense of what leadership should be.

But it should also be mentioned, however, that this perspective of public administrators also becoming public administrative leaders has not always been viewed in the positive. From a more critical perspective, Milner and Joyce (2005) had raised the question of whether such 'leadership' should have a place in public administration. In discussing the challenges of modern public administration management in a democratic context, they had suggested that a belief in the need for any leadership in public administration, let alone a belief in the need for strong leadership, could make people uneasy because of the increasing desire for egalitarian and democratic values. Their argument was that in democratic societies, all individuals should be counted as equals, and that reliance on so-called 'leaders' who lay claims to being greater in some aspects should be treated with skepticism. What

was raised here was essentially an argument against a kind of elitist approach to public administration wherein public administrators claimed to alone possess the answers to how policies should be implemented, and then assumed the rights to unilaterally implement what they consider the correct solutions. The assumption behind such elitist perspective, according to Milner and Joyce (2005), appeared to be the belief that the public administrative leaders knew better because they possessed some superior intellect or knowledge. The critical perspective would equate such notion of elitism with power and control. Such a critical perspective would suggest that "management and leadership are intrinsically connected to practice associated with the domination and control of some over others" and that "public service management is not, in the end, about the pursuit of efficiency, but about the pursuit of power" (Currie and Learmonth 2010:2).

However, regardless of whether domination or control were the motives, the debate is whether it would be controversial to suggest that public administrators could also be public administrative leaders because they did hold special knowledge or exclusive insight in the implementation of policies within their areas of executive responsibilities. Mackenzie and Mackenzie (1977) had earlier suggested that this was indeed the approach even amongst some Socialist activists in early 20th century Britain. Their analysis was that, in the context of public administration leadership at that time, public administrative leaders were seen as experts who would apply their specialist expertise to activate public administration on behalf of the people in order to meet the challenges of the prevailing social problems.

This appeared to have countered the suggestion that the exercising of leadership by those who possess special knowledge or exclusive insight invariably equates acting counter to the fundamental tenets of democracy. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) and later Milner and Joyce (2005) themselves had proposed an alternative leadership construct that could allow for the positive spirit of such leadership, but without the notion of elitism. Their notion of adaptive leadership does not assume that solutions could be provided by answers from higher up the decision hierarchy. Instead, in situations where there are no obvious solutions, the leaders' role is to provide encouragement in learning and experimentation, with the positive leadership coming from the leaders possessing not special knowledge and insights regarding the solutions, but special

knowledge and insights regarding the strategic vision with which they can create a sense of direction. The question here was therefore whether the so called administrative leaders claiming a better insight regarding the strategic direction, and standing firm in maintaining that direction in the face of popular opposition, would be deemed autocratic with a negative connotation rather than deemed visionary with a positive connotation.

Administrative Leadership in Crisis and the Leadership of Change

The intention of this research is to explore how senior Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to analyse how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it. The context of the research, however, is a context of a crisis environment. Thus this research is about leadership, and it is about public sector management and public sector leadership, but it is also about leadership in a crisis environment.

In the context of this research, given the above perspective that public administrators could also be seen as leaders, the interest turns to the aspects associated with leaders in a crisis environment. One area of interests to this research is the suggestion that leading change is the primary concern for leaders in dynamic, uncertain or crisis environments (Duncan 1972, Daft et al 1988, Taylor 1995, Sinding et al 1998, Budding 2004). Indeed, there were some (e.g. Peters 1987, Smith 1997, Kanter 2001, Kotter and Cohen 2002 and Bridges 2009) who had suggested that not only should change be highly valued, but that the leadership of change would be a critical aspect of organisational management. Kotter (1990) had even suggested that creating change was what defined a leader. He suggested that "throughout the ages, individuals who have been seen as leaders have created change" (Kotter 1990:4) and that "the function implicit in ['good' or 'effective' leadership] is constructive or adaptive change" (Kotter 1990:5). Field research amongst leader-managers (e.g. Fry and Srivasta 1992, Davis and Davis 2010) had found near obsession of some leaders-managers towards innovation and change.

In a research focusing on the sense making of public administrative leaders, where the idea of administration and the word 'administration' itself conjured up images of

conservation, of bureaucracy and of the fervent defense of the *status quo*, the notion of administrators being leaders, and being leaders of change might be an interesting paradox.

However, there are those whose perspectives are that public administration and the public sector is not devoid of change. Research carried out by Schofield and Pegg (2010) with public service managers in the United Kingdom had reflected a perception that there seemed to have been "constant change following change" within the British public sector, and that complex change had become a "standard feature" (Schofield and Pegg 2010:203). Elsewhere in Canada, in a large scale research in a large Canadian public hospital, Denis et al (1996) had concluded that substantive strategic change is essential in the leadership of complex public organisations where goals were unclear and where authority was fluid and ambiguous. There had even been calls for positively embracing change within public administration, with Benington (2000) suggesting that, in public sector management, it would be important to maintain continuity and routine but at the same time to foster and to manage change and reform. And these discussions of change were not even in the context of any significant external crisis

Indeed, there is a perspective that, particularly within the Anglo-Irish-American tripartite, there has been much change amongst the public sector. A discussion on the extent to which change was being experienced in public administration in the United Kingdom, in the Republic of Ireland and in the United States of America had been presented in Appendix V-D. Given the historical evidence, suffice it to say that, therefore, change is indeed far from being a rarity within public administration.

However, the discussion relevant to this research is not only on whether public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland experienced change, but whether they saw the active pursue of change in the crisis context they found themselves in as making sense, or whether the pursue of conservation even in a crisis context as making more sense.

Indeed, there were some (e.g. Taylor 2011) who had lamented that while academic literatures had produced a number of seminal models (e.g. Lewin 1951, Kotter 1996),

dealing with activating and managing change, there had not been much notable counterparts arguing and promoting continuity and stability. Mintzberg (1987) had suggested that obsession with change were "bound to harm [the] organisation" (Mintzberg 1987:75) and Bernhard (1990) had suggested that "stability and change must coexist and resilience is needed to balance the two, so that neither becomes over-emphasised" (Bernhard 1990:28).

In the context of this research exploring the perception and sense making of the Irish public administrative leaders, when a crisis environment has been interpreted, would the Irish administrative leaders see the bias for change as making more sense, or would they see the pursue of stability as making more sense?

The perspective that public administrative leaders preferring stability to a bias for change and that public administrative leaders were essentially there to safeguard the institution even in the face of crisis would have been the apparent basis to the notion of administrative conservatorship as proposed by Terry (1995). The suggestion is that administrative conservatorship in essence was governance with a disposition to preserve. In other words, from an institutional perspective, even in the midst of crisis where there may be scope for much leadership discretion, administrative conservatorship is in essence a focus to strengthen and to conserve the institution's special capabilities, its proficiency and its integrity to perform its stated functions.

It needs to be emphasized that this perspective of administrative conservatorship is not the view that administrative leaders should merely preserve a comfortable or a static *status quo* come what may. It is not seen as a blanket resistance to innovation and change. Describing an effective administrative leader, Selznick (1984) had stated that "to the essentially conservative posture of the responsible leader we must add a concern for change and reconstruction" (1984:149). In the same vein, the intention of administrative conservatorship is not necessarily to preserve mere structure and process, but rather, the objective is the preservation of the values and the goals and the integrity of the institution. In the context of public administration facing a crisis, the institution is more than the physical organisation of the State, it would be the entire cooperative social system, embodying the cultural values and moral

commitments of society (Scott 1995). The perspective is that these institutions should be conserved regardless of the pressure of change coming from any crisis.

As such, the proposition is that the idea of administrative conservatorship would neither stand in conflict with the tenets of leadership in crisis, wherein appropriate levels and appropriate focus of innovation and change would not be resisted, nor does it encroach on the classical structure of public governance, wherein the administrative role of public policy implementation took guidance and direction from the policy decisions of the political leaders. The perspective is precisely that inherent in the spirit of the institution's policy decisions are the values that set the distinctiveness of the institution apart from others, and thus it is the administrator's responsibility to conserve and protect the values that help establish and maintain the institution's distinctiveness. Indeed, it has been suggested that institutions were carried along by the "strength of administrative processes, value commitments, and unifying principles" (Terry 2003:27) that determine the institutions' distinctiveness and the institutions' distinctive competencies. The proposition is therefore that administrative conservators should hold it as their priority to conserve the integrity of these aspects. Selznick (1984) had even suggested that to the administrative leader, "the protection of integrity is more than an aesthetic or expressive exercise, more than an attempt to preserve a comfortable, familiar environment. It is a practical concern of the first importance." (Selznick 1984:139).

Returning to the context of this research and the question of whether Irish public administrative leaders would see more sense in driving change or maintaining continuity in the face of a crisis, there may be a perspective that the essence of public administrative conservatorship is not incompatible with change and innovation. Change is not always radical change that required a complete departure form the *status quo*. With reference to Tushman's (1988) categorisation of strategic change, Tushman had classified strategic change into 'frame breaking' changes and 'frame bending' changes. In the context of public administration, 'frame breaking' changes require radical departure from the institution's established customs and culture, and may even challenge the fundament values at hand. 'Frame breaking' changes are revolutionary in nature and are inherently shattering to the institutions. The argument is that in order to conserve and protect the values of the institutions, administrative

conservators should lead to avoid the risk to the institutions poised by any such cataclysmic changes. 'Frame bending' changes, on the other hand, do not require a drastic departure from the status quo. According to Nadler (1988), such changes emphasise continuity with the past, particularly with the values of the past. 'Frame bending' changes do not risk destabilising the institutions. The comparison of 'frame breaking' against 'frame bending' was similar in nature to an earlier analysis by Friedrich (1961) who had proposed a leadership dichotomy contrasting 'initiating' leadership against 'protecting' leadership, with the latter seeking to provide institutional security and to preserve the institution's particular way of life, and to maintain its integrity, its culture, its values, its beliefs and its interests. Another similar dichotomy was Burnes' (2004) differentiation between 'continuous' and 'discontinuous' changes. He classified continuous change as the ability to change continuously through successive, limited, and negotiated shifts. In contrast, discontinuous change had been described as "change which is marked by rapid shifts in either strategy, structure or culture, or in all three" (Grundy 1993:26). In the same vein, both Dunphy and Stace (1993) and Senior (2002) suggested the possibility of activating change through 'incremental adjustment', where discrete changes took place while accepted beliefs, norms and values were maintained, once more suggesting that change is not always radical in nature requiring a complete departure from the *status quo*.

Whether facing a crisis or not, but in particular when faced with a crisis, the perspective is therefore that administrative conservatorship is not necessarily incompatible with the leadership of innovation and change. And given that the act of defending and protecting the integrity of the institution and its fundamental values can be strategic in nature, the proposition is that administrative conservatorship is also not incompatible with the deployment of visions and strategies. Moreover, the conservators may need to assert significant influence on the behaviour of others, especially on the institution's stakeholders, in the execution of their responsibilities. As such, the proposition is that administrative conservatorship could be interpreted as a leadership process – one where the administrative leaders innovatively and creatively act to foster either small incremental or even zero changes with respect to the values and the integrity of the institutions.

Contribution to the Research

The intention of this research is to explore the perceptions of senior Irish administrative leaders regarding their own leadership in what could be deemed as a crisis environment. In other words, this research aims to explore how these senior Irish civil servants interpreted the world they perceived themselves to be in, and to understand how they made sense of their own leadership response to their world as they saw it.

This section of the document had presented a number of perspectives from the relevant bodies of knowledge seen as relevant to the analysis of the interpretation and of the sense making of the public administrative leaders in what could be deemed as a crisis environment. The bodies of knowledge discussed include that of leadership, that of public administration and that of crisis management.

From the leadership body of knowledge various perspectives of what leadership might looks like had been discussed. They ranged from the traditional and classical heroic perspective to the more recent critical perspectives. For the purpose of this research, it would be of interests to see how the Irish public administrative leaders made sense of their own leadership and to explore how some of these perspectives had been reflected in their sense making. In the same way, the discussions on the leadership perspectives with specific reference to the public sector and public administration would contribute to the understanding, since the research is in the context of public administration. And given the context of the research sited in what could be deemed as a crisis environment, the discussions on leadership perspectives in a crisis environment, especially the discussion on the perspective of administrators balancing change and continuity in face of a crisis, would also be helpful in the understanding of how the Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the environment they found themselves in, and in the understanding of how these same administrative leaders made sense of their own leadership responses in that context.

Ultimately, the proposition was that the analysis of the senior Irish administrative leaders' perspectives of their own leadership in the face of a perceived environmental crisis would foster much insight into public administrative leadership at large, and

thereby adding to the wider body of knowledge in the field of public leadership knowledge and understanding, and the proposition is that the above review of perspectives from the literature in context had provided a sound background to support the analysis.

4.   Research Methodology and Methods

The purpose of this section of the document is to present the choice of methodology and to explain the methods adopted for this research. Particular methodology and method is deemed suitable because of their relevance to the objectives and to the nature of the research, as well as because of their relevance to the nature of the social phenomena to be explored (Morgan and Smircich 1980).

The intention of this research was to explore the perceptions of senior Irish administrative leaders regarding their own leadership in what was perceived as a crisis environment. In other words, this research sought to explore how these senior Irish civil servants interpreted the environment they perceived themselves to be in, and to understand how they made sense of their own leadership response to their environment as they saw it. The proposition is that the choice of a case-study approach – using the Republic of Ireland as a case in point of a country in socio-economic crisis – and the adoption of an interpretative approach are the most appropriate methodological choice, given the aim and the intention of this research and given the nature of the social phenomenon, namely leadership, being researched into.

Methodological Considerations

Methodological considerations flow from the ontological and epistemological perspectives relating to the research and to the research topic. Guba and Lincoln (1994:108) had suggested that the determination of the appropriate research paradigm should be with reference to an almost hierarchical worldview construct that firstly questions the form and nature of reality and, therefore, questions what is there that can be known about it (which represents the ontological question), then secondly

questions the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known (which represents the epistemological question), and then thirdly, questions how the inquirer can go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known (which represents the methodological question) (Guba and Lincoln 1994:108). These questions would now be addressed specifically in relation to this research.

This is a research that explores the perceptions of senior Irish administrative leaders regarding their own leadership in what could be deemed as a crisis environment. To address the ontological question, the ontological assumption for this research is that there is neither independent objective reality concerning the leadership of the administrative leaders, nor even independent objective reality concerning a crisis environment. The perspective is that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined – meaning that the reality of the leadership of the administrative leaders, or the reality of a crisis environment, if they exist, were locally and specifically constructed through the administrative leaders' own social actions and interactions. To address the epistemological question, the further assumption is that the research process of interviewing the administrative leaders was a means by which these constructed realities could be revealed and analysed. Thus, the adopted epistemological stance for the research is that the research is about the "appreciation of the different constructions and meanings" (Easterby-Smith et al 1991:24) that the administrative leaders place upon their experience. This would in turn address the methodological question, by positing the research methodologically within the qualitative genre. Conceptually, the qualitative approach is interpretive in nature, with ideas and thoughts typically generated through inductive reasoning from observations and conversations (Mays and Pope 1996). The opposing quantitative approach which places greater emphasis on numerical analysis and conclusions drawn through deductions (Bryman and Bell 2003) is deemed inappropriate for this research concerning the social phenomenon of leadership, especially one where the researcher is interested more in insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing (Merriam 1988).

Adoption of the Qualitative Approach for this Research

More specifically, the qualitative approach is considered the appropriate approach for this research because of the subject matter and because of the context of the research. The subject matter of this research is the leadership phenomenon, and this research is about the exploration of leadership perspectives. Conger (1998) for example, had argued that given the "extreme and enduring complexity of the leadership phenomenon" (Conger 1998:108), the quantitative approach would never be sufficient to produce adequate understanding. His argument was that the phenomenon that is leadership is dynamic in character, multi-faceted in complexity, and includes significant symbolic and intangible behavioural elements; and as such could only be meaningfully researched with a qualitative approach. Similarly, Parry (1998) had suggested that leadership is a social influence process rather than a scientific process. Parry's (1998) argument was that, as with any social process, it would not be possible to successfully theorise the nature of leadership by means of a quantitative approach.

In tandem with the adoption of the qualitative approach is the adoption of the case study methodology. This is considered appropriate because the research is contextual. The intention of this research is to explore not just the leadership perceptions of senior administrative leaders, but to explore their leadership perspectives specifically within what could be deemed as a crisis environment. The case study approach is ideal to provide for an analysis of multiple leadership perspectives within a common crisis. This argument is supported by Yin (1994) who suggested that case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin 1994:23). The appropriateness of using case studies to probe a social phenomenon of interest in depth has been well supported (e.g. Simons 1980, Patton 1987, Merriam 1988, Feagin et al 1991, Anderson 1993, Yin 1993, Stake 1995).

The Adoption of Interpretative Analysis for this Research

This is a research that explores how senior Irish administrative leaders attempted to made sense of their own leadership specifically within the context they perceived

themselves to be in. Thus, it is a specific aim of the research to explore interpretations and meanings. The understanding is that interpretations and meanings are constructed by people as they engage and interpret the world they found themselves in. The assumption is that people's sense making of the world they are in are based on the social perspectives they had built up as a result of their prior life experiences (Weick et al 2005). In other words, the view is that people would first seek to understand the context they find themselves in, and then, to use that understanding to interpret what they encounter, with the interpretation shaped by their own social experiences and backgrounds. Translated to this research, the assumption is that the senior Irish administrative leaders would have tried to make sense of the context they found themselves in, and would then have tried to make sense of their own leadership responses based on their own social experiences and backgrounds. These research perspectives are in essence perspectives of interpretivism (Mason 2002, Willis 2007), which is a qualitative paradigm.

Indeed, according to Willis (2007), such an interpretive approach to research differs fundamentally from the opposing positivist approach. According to him, such interpretive research would seek for an "understanding of a particular context" (Willis 2007:98), instead of looking for some universal knowledge. Thus, the application of the interpretive approach to this research would see the sense making of the particular situation or context by the administrative leaders as of significance, and would see such analysis of the sense making as the objective of the research more so than seeing the discovery of any new-found universal leadership knowledge as the objective of the research.

The application of the interpretive paradigm to a research concerning public administrative leadership perspectives can also be robustly defended when the nature of the subject matter is taken into consideration. The subject matter is leadership and the leadership phenomenon had been considered by many (e.g. Bennis and Nanus 1985, Bass 1998; Parry 1998; Yukl 2006) as a social phenomenon. The perspective is that researches into social phenomena require an interpretive approach because social actions are socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Burr 1995).

This perspective that the leadership phenomenon is a socially constructed phenomenon is in essence a constructivist perspective. Constructivism in general, and the notion of social construction of reality and of knowledge in particular, hold significant credence amongst academia and amongst the broader intellectual community (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Denzin and Lincoln 1995, Potter 1996, Gergen 1999, Boghossian 2006). The essence of social constructionism is the belief in a socially constructed reality – a belief that reality cannot be "independently knowable" (Willis 2007:96). In other words, this notion of social constructionism would suggests that although there may be a real world 'out there', there is no meaning inherent in it, and that meaning is imposed only by people and culture through a group or social process (Crotty 1998, Hacking 1999). As such, 'meaning' and 'understanding' are of crucial importance and would be considered critical to social constructionism (Morrison 1995, Ruggie 1998, Fierke and Jørgensen 2001). The perspective is that without meaning and understanding, reality cannot be deemed in existence. But as meanings and understandings are conferred through the social processes, reality is seen as being constructed. Berger and Luckmann's (1966) treatise *The Social Construction of Reality* provided the underlying concepts to our discussions here.

The essence of Berger and Luckmann's proposition is that it is through socialisation that reality is constructed. They argued that everyday reality does not exist as independent objective reality, but that it is derived from, and maintained by human social interactions. Their proposition is that reality construction takes place in the context of a complex interplay (what Berger and Luckmann (1966:129) termed "dialectic" social interactions) between individuals and other individuals, as well as between individuals and society. The role of language is also emphasised as playing a significant part in such social dialectic interactions, since language communication is largely how human social interactions are facilitated. Through language, typification – the process of constructing standard assumptions, and signification – the process of attaching meanings and values to otherwise neutral objects or acts become key processes in the socialisation process. Berger and Luckmann's proposition is that through these socialisation processes, social institutions are constructed and in turn, through the construction of such institutions, structured society, in its object reality, is constructed. In order to correlate the subjective reality constructed by the social

relationships with the objective social institutional structure, Berger and Luckmann (1966:153) had defined "successful socialisation" as "the establishment of a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality". Thus, in reconciling the objective to the subjective, Berger and Luckmann's simple proposition is that the seemingly objective social world is at the same time a product of human actions and interactions that are driven by subjectivity. Their argument was that the social world "does not acquire an ontological status apart from the human activities that produce it" (Berger and Luckmann 1966:78). By putting forward this argument, Berger and Luckmann attempted to reconcile and juxtapose two hitherto differing sociological perspectives –the structure view of sociology and the action view of sociology, thus placing social interaction on par with social structures in their proposition of social construction.

Reconciling the social with the structural is not simple. The structure perspective refers to the enduring and relatively stable and well defined patterns of social relationships and their resultant retraining social behaviour (Tonnies 1905, Lopez and Scott 2000) while the action perspective, on the other hand, refers to the adapting social acts that are influenced by and which take into account the behaviour of others (Weber 1922, Secher 1962). These two perspectives appear incompatible one with the other at first sight. The structural perspective, as expressed by Durkheim's (1950) statement "the first and most fundamental rule is: consider social facts as things" (Durkheim 1950:14) seems to reflect an objective stance, while the action perspective, as expressed by Weber's (1947) statement "the object of cognition is the subjective meaning-complex of action" (Weber 1947:101) reflects a subjective stance.

However, Berger and Luckmann argued that these two perspectives are not necessarily contradictory or mutually exclusive. They saw the relationship between the structured society, as emphasised by the structure perspective, and the individual, whose adapting behaviour was the emphasis of the action perspective, as operating mutually – that the human individuals continually construct the social world, which then becomes a retraining structural reality to which they must respond. Thus, according to Berger and Luckmann, "*Society is a human product. Society is an object reality. Man is a social product.*" (Berger and Luckmann 1966:79, italics original). They saw the relationship between society and individuals as "dialectic" (Berger and

Luckmann 1966:129) – a relationship that, as it progresses, changes both parties. In other words, they saw socialisation and the social influence on the one hand, and individual actions on the other hand operating in tandem. Berger and Luckmann's proposition was that such a dialectic process reconciles, unites and juxtaposes the structure view of sociology with the action view of sociology. It allows us to consider an individual as both always actively constructing the social world and at the same time always constrained by the societal institutions and frameworks of meaning handed to him or her and internalised through socialisation.

The relevance of such a constructionist perspective to this research is significant. The central aim of the research is to explore the administrative leaders' sense making of the world they saw themselves in, and the assumption is that the administrative leaders, as human beings, could only obtain knowledge about the world around them in a subjective manner, and could only do so using "the filter of human consciousness" (Hacking 1999:41). Indeed, Weber (1977) had earlier proposed that before people can understand and interpret each other's actions, they need to first assign meanings or interpretive understanding (*verstehen*) to actions. Weber went so far as to propose that "subjective understanding is a specific characteristic of social knowledge" (Weber 1977:15). As such, this would further support the argument that the interpretive approach based on such a constructivist perspective is the appropriate approach for this research into public administrative leadership perspectives.

Moreover, the suggestion that the researcher played a central participative role in the research process provided further support to defend the relevance of the interpretive approach and of the constructivist perspective to this research. Indeed, from the constructivist perspective, not only is the subject of the research – the leadership phenomenon the research seeks to explore – seen as a product of social construction, the research undertaking itself would also be considered social construction activities. As such, it places the researcher squarely within that construction process. Willis (2007), accordingly, had suggested that, from the social constructivist perspective, "all research is influenced and shaped by the pre-existing theories and world views of the researchers" (Willis 2007:96). Denzin (1994) had also suggested that the researchers can "neither make sense of nor understand what has been learned until they sit down and write the interpretive text" (Denzin 1994:502). Thus, their view was

that the research process and the social practice being researched into would be intertwined, with both framing and becoming the other. This would mean that, for this research, given that the research interviews involved the researcher and the interviewees in a constructed situation, with both acting in a manner outside of their normal professional and personal context, how the researcher and the interviewees each constructed and exchanged their reality within such a context would be in itself part of the reality construction. Specifically for this research, attention to this would have been of particular relevance. This is because senior public administrative leaders at the highest two echelons of the civil and public service are experienced public servants, and as such, they are likely to be well versed in the art of interviews, and almost certainly skilled in providing interviewers with well rehearsed 'official' answers. How the administrative leaders chose to construct and to project their version of 'reality' and how the researcher chose to frame the analysis based on his version of 'reality' would combine to become part of the overall reality construction process.

Critical Evaluation of the Research Approach

The view that the interpretive approach is the more appropriate approach for this research notwithstanding, the interpretive approach itself has its critics. Criticism of the approach to this research are directed at both the general methodological level as well as at the epistemological level, but in general reflect the contrast of positivism and constructivism as a dichotomy of diametrically opposing paradigms.

The qualitative approach could be criticised for being overly subjective and that qualitative research could be seen as too impressionistic. This criticism relates to the observation that qualitative researchers could easily become overly influenced by the close relationships formed with the research subjects, which would then result in a biased analysis of the findings. This could be of concern to this research, given that the researcher himself is from within the ranks of the senior Irish public service. The concern could be that even in the absence of an influential personal relationship, there was still a risk that the qualitative researcher would draw conclusions from the findings based on their own idiosyncratic and unsystematic views concerning what was significant and important (Atkinson 1990), rather than on what would have been

significant and important to the research subjects. Nevertheless, this criticism notwithstanding, the defense for adopting a qualitative approach to this research would argue that the perspective of the constructivists is precisely that the view of the researcher, no matter how idiosyncratic or how unsystematic, is an essential element of the reality construction.

A second criticism of the qualitative approach relates to the concern that the process of qualitative research might lack transparency. Whereas quantitative sampling procedures and quantitative data analysis could be laboriously defended in quantitative research, arguable it is often difficult to establish just how subjects are chosen for qualitative interviews or observation, and often difficult to even establish what the qualitative researcher actually did. Bryman and Burgess (1994), for example, had even suggested that often, not only was the process of qualitative data analysis unclear, but it was also uncertain just how the researchers arrive at their interpretation or conclusions. Again, the criticism notwithstanding, the defense for adopting a qualitative approach to this research would argue that while such a concern would certainly be a viable concern for a research of a more positivistic persuasion, where very specific findings require repeated confirmation, the qualitative approach, in contrast, provides for a breadth and a depth of insight not attainable through the quantitative approach.

A further criticism centers on the issue of generalisation. In particular for the case study approach adopted for this research, it is a common criticism that its dependency on a single case exploration made it difficult to reach a generalised conclusion (e.g. Hamel et al 1993, Johnson 1994, Tellis 1997). Arguments suggesting problems with generalisation in the qualitative approach or in the case study approach stem from the difficulties in replicating the research for the purpose of verifying or confirming reliability. The argument is that it is impossible to conduct a true replication of any unstructured event within the context of a unique time, in a specific location setting and in a case study where behaviour is observed or where interpretive sense-making is studied. The criticism is therefore that, without replicated confirmation, observations from singular qualitative studies could hardly provide grounds for generalised conclusions across the population (Bryman 2004). However, Yin (1994) had suggested that there is a difference between analytic generalisation and statistical

generalisation, and that, in analytic generalisation, established theories are used as templates against which the empirical results of a case study can be analysed. His argument was that it would be incorrect to see a single-case study as a single respondent when the approach calls for the analysis of multiple perspectives. Moreover, Stake (1995) also argued that case studies can provide for a more naturalistic generalisation based on the harmonious relationship between the reader's experiences and the case study itself. His argument was that the data generated by case studies would often resonate experientially with a broad cross section of readers, thereby facilitating a greater understanding of the phenomenon being researched. As such, the defense is that, criticism notwithstanding, the adoption of the case study methodology and an interpretivist approach is far from inappropriate for this research at hand.

The issue of generalisation is an important issue for a research of this nature where, as a DBA research, generalised contribution to practice is as important as contribution to theoretical and conceptual understanding. The issue of generalisation can be contentious even amongst social constructivists. As alluded to previously, while social constructivists might generally agree that they need to employ interpretive understanding in order to analyse social action, there are variations in the views regarding the extent to which contextual interpretations can be generalised. There are some who would reject utterly and completely the notion that objective truth can exist. For them, they would argue that in social research, there is no absolute 'truth' about the world to be discovered, and there are no 'truth' which can be universally applied across time and place (Gergen 1999, Linklater 1998, Fierke 2001). Critical constructionists or postmodernist would even go so far as arguing that there is no neutral ground where one can decide what is true or not, and that what is generally called 'truth' is always only with respect to some dominant ways of thinking about the world (Der Derian 1987, Tickner 1992, Walker 1993, George 1994, Campbell 1998). To some of these critical constructivists, for example, truth and power cannot be separated and that critical constructivism is about the deconstruction of the core relationship between truth and power, so that those dominant ways of thinking that lay claim to be true for all can be criticised. The adoption of such a perspective would imply that the findings of this particular research on leadership perspectives would only reflect the sense making of the public administrative leaders within the unique

contextual mix of power and influence at the time of the research. The implication would be that the findings would not and could not be made applicable to public administrative leadership in a different context. But on the other hand, there are constructivists who would make 'truth' claims about the subjects they have researching into – albeit that they might always qualify their claims with contingencies arguments and possible variants based on context (Reus-Smit 1997, Adler and Barnett 1998, Wendt 1999, Hopf 2002, Finnemore 2003). The approach taken by this research is more akin to this latter perspective, and thus stands to argue that the findings can in general bring contribution to both theory and practice.

Aside from the general criticism concerning the broader interpretive approach, the specific social constructivism approach to interpretive analysis also has its critics. The traditional criticism leveled at the notion of social constructivism was philosophical in nature (Nagle 1997, Boghossian 2006), Nagle had argued that claiming everything to be subjective would itself have to be either subjective or objective – and for it to be objective, the claim itself would be false; but for it to be subjective, then "it would not rule out any objective claim, including the claim that it is objectively false" (Nagle 1997:15). Similarly, Boghossian (2006) suggested that to justify any argument only relative to a relative epistemic system would merely be "a report of what [the relativist] finds it agreeable to say" (Boghossian 2006:83). Such a philosophical debate might indeed be of interests to debating philosophers and academic theorists, but the criticism leveled at reality constructivism is that it is impractical, despite being philosophically interesting. This criticism parallels the issue of generalisation previously discussed, but now applied to the epistemological level. Adapting the argument from Kukla (2000) to illustrate the point in relations to a research about leadership, suppose that an individual or a society had constructed a reality (say, 'there is leadership'), and the construction is socially contingent, it follows that it would have been entirely possible that some other individual or society could have constructed an opposite reality (that 'there is an absence of leadership'). The two constructed realities are mutually exclusive. Boghossian (2006) termed this paradox "the problem of disagreement" (Boghossian 2006:39), in essence a paradox that would lead to a violation of non-contradiction. In other words, both 'realities' could not co-exist. Those advocating the doctrine of equal validity might find such philosophical contradiction of interests, but for the benefit of practical contributions,

especially for a research leading towards a professional doctorate, a mere philosophical conclusion would be considered inadequate.

Aside from the philosophical criticisms, there are also methodological criticisms, in particular against the approach to social construction as proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1966). Archer (1982), for example, argued that too much emphasis has been placed on the individual's ability to change social structure simply by acting differently. Her argument was that social factors that influence social change are much more complex and their causal relationships much more complicated. Giddens (1979:267) had commented that the social construction theory, particularly Berger and Luckmann's (1966) approach "completely lacks a conception of the critique of ideology", thereby overlooking the inequalities and oppressions that lurk beneath dominant ideological sets of values. And Horrell (2001:150) questioned whether the social construction theory "grasps adequately the relationships between action and structure, reproduction and transformation". Their criticisms seem to suggest that the social construction theory in general, and Berger and Luckmann's (1966) treatise is overly simplistic in its construct.

However, such philosophical and methodological criticisms notwithstanding, the interpretivist approach and the social constructionist perspective had been shown to provide viable insights (Pritchard 2011), in particular when utilised in the research of social phenomena such as the leadership phenomenon (Osborn et al 2002, Grint and Jackson 2009). And specifically regarding Berger and Luckmann (1966), Mouzelis (1991:78), for example, was of the opinion that Berger and Luckmann's theory of externalisation and objectification should be regarded as a theory that subscribes to the notion of a "subject-object dualism at the paradigmatic level", thereby establishing reality construction at a much deeper conceptual level than the surface structure (syntagmatic) level. Similarly, Eberle (1993:5) had concurred with Berger and Luckmann with respect to duality that "society must be grasped in its duality as an objective and a subjective reality". Moreover, critics notwithstanding, the social construction notion proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1966) had succeeded in generating a degree of not unsubstantial interests amongst academia, and can even claim to have been the embryo that spawned a host of related positions and theories. Reviews of broad applications of social constructionism by Stam (1990) and Burr

(1995) suggested that there are numerous related positions and theories that fall broadly within the labelling of social constructionism, but coming from a diverse field of studies, such as social psychology (Potter 1987, Wetherell et al 2001), feminism (West and Zimmerman 1987, Butler 1999), postmodern research methodology (Latour and Woolgar 1979, Knorr-Cetina 1981, Gilbert and Mulkay 1984), semiotics (Kristeva 1980, Eco 1986). The diversity of these positions suggests that Berger and Luckmann's 91966) work was sufficiently influential to have contributed to the development of an entire movement under the broad label of social constructionism that could reach across multiple subject matters. Amongst recent applications of the social construction paradigm to academic research were socio-cultural research into the social construction of gender (Lorber 1994), of sexuality (Thorp 1992), of race (Machery and Faucher 2005), of ethnic identity (Fearon and Laitin 2000) and of knowledge (Mizruchi and Fein 1999); societal research into the social construction of social disorder (Sampson and Raudenbush 2004), of professional non-compliance (Fineman 1991) and of social control (Reinarman 1988); medical research into the social construction of mental illnesses (Walker 2006); education research into the social construction of learning disabilities (Dudley-Marling 2004), business and economic research into the social construction of industrial policies (Dobbin 1993), of strategy (Downing 1993), of marketing (Hackley 2001) and of corporate merger and acquisition (Bahde 2003); political science research into political territorial boundaries (Stemberg 2001); and even scientific and technological research into the social construction of nature and of environmental problems (Bird 1987), of technology (Klein and Kleinman 2002) and of artefacts (Pinch and Bijker 1987).

As such, while there are arguably criticism and acknowledged weaknesses, the adoption of the case study methodology and an interpretive and constructionist approach are nonetheless deemed appropriate for this research, and will foster insights to bring contributions to knowledge and practice.

Research Method

Regarding the method through which the research data was collected, Bryman (2004) had proposed that ethnographic observations and qualitative interviews are the two main research methods associated with the qualitative approach.

Ethnography observation would have entailed an extended involvement of the researcher in the events under study – a kind of 'fly-on-the-wall' approach. The embedded nature of the ethnographic involvement tended to extend beyond mere observing. In essence, in ethnographic research, the researcher aimed to become immersed in or become part of the population being studied, so that he or she could develop a detailed understanding of the values and beliefs held by members of the population under research. A wide range of tools for data collection would also be utilised, including interviews, social interactions and interpretive review of documentation; and a broad range of data source would be accessed. For the specific purpose of this research, however, this method was inappropriate given that the research involved people in governmental services where access and involvement are often highly restricted. It would not have been feasible to request the significant time and participation necessary for such a method of research.

Instead, the conducting of qualitative interviews is a more appropriate method for this research at hand. Qualitative interviews, unlike quantitative surveys, can provide scopes for the research subjects to express their views in greater depth. As such, it is a more suitable tool for an exploring of perspectives. The nature of the data gathered from semi-structured or from unstructured qualitative interviews would also allow the researchers greater scope to explore and to understand the sense making emerging from the interviews.

Unstructured interviews differs from semi-structure interviews in that unstructured interviews would tend to be very similar to free-flow conversations (Burgess 1984), while semi-structure interviews would instead have some pre-determined structure to guide the conversations. For this research at hand, semi-structured interviews would be used, given that semi-structured interviews would still allow for a degree of freedom of expression but retaining a degree of guided focus. Moreover, there is the argument that face-to-face semi-structure interviews are particularly useful in exploring the meanings of central themes within the world-views of those being interviewed (Kvale 1996). A key aim of this piece of interpretive research is to attempt to explore the sense making of the participants, and it is through conversations that the participants expresses their sense making. As such it would be

important that exploring the conversations should be part of the analysis. Indeed, interpretive researchers such as Sandelowski (1991), Kvale (1996), Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Paulus et al (2008) had long argued that the process of constructing language representation in conversations play a significant role in how we shape, transform, and understand our human experiences. Their argument is that the process of trying to articulate what we have experienced helps us to put meaning and order to those experiences and to make sense of them. In other words, putting an experience into words transforms that experience into a language representation embedded with values and meanings, which can then be communicated. This understanding parallels the social construction treatise by Berger and Luckmann (1966). The argument is that the conversations that make up the semi-structure interviews do not describe any experience as if it was an independent objective reality, but that the conversations are socially and culturally constructed devices through which shared understandings are created.

Research Data

The notion of sampling is ambiguous in the context of a qualitative approach to research. This is particularly so within a case study methodology. Qualitative gathering of data differs from quantitative sampling in that qualitative data would not need to be of statistical significance. Qualitative data is also usually nested in their context and is analysed in greater breadth and depth. Qualitative data is not selected to facilitate context-neutral and statistical significance analysis.

Data gathering for qualitative research could be criticised for being much less transparent than statistical sampling for quantitative research, but in qualitative research, the gathering of data is often carried out through convenience or opportunities to overcome the difficulties of population availability or as a result of restrictions often placed by the targeted subjects,. This is particularly applicable for this research, which involved senior public administrative leaders. Because of their job demand and because of possible political sensitivies, some senior public service leaders are often not available or not willing to participate in certain types of social research, or they may prefer to select and nominate participants for interviews, rather than allowing the researcher free reins to select.

And less transparent notwithstanding, data gathering for qualitative research is by no means less systematic. The argument is that qualitative gathering of data tends to be purposive rather than statistically random (Kuzel 1992; Morse 1989). Indeed, Bryman (2004) had suggested that most writers on qualitative data collection would recommend that the purposive approach be adopted. The rationale is that purposive gathering of data is essentially strategic in approach, seeking specifically to establish a good correlation between the research inquiry and the data collected. In essence, purposive gathering of data is to collect data on the basis of seeking out individuals who are deemed by the researcher to be relevant to the research questions.

Data for this particular research into public administrative leadership perspectives were purposively drawn from the Secretary General or Assistant Secretary levels of the Government Departments, or their equivalent at Agencies level. These civil servants represent the very top two tiers of the public administrative leadership in the Republic of Ireland. In total, six Government Departments are involved in this research. These six Departments are by far the largest of all the Government Departments in terms of the level of public services provided. Together they cover the majority of the public services provided to the Irish public. They also span the cultural spectrum in terms of the task culture associated with the type of public services they deliver. In addition, there is also the Department of the *Taoiseach* (the Department of the Prime Minister), which in essence is at the apex of public leadership and governance. As such, the leadership of these Departments provides for a rich source of data for this research.

In addition, the qualitative interviews held for the research in Document 3 (Chau 2008) of this series of DBA research remains a rich source of secondary data, as they contained a great deal of as yet unused qualitative materials that could be analysed anew for the purpose of this research. Overall then, the qualitative data source included:

1.   The Secretary General to the Government, Department of the *Taoiseach* (Department of the Prime Minister).

2.   The Secretary General of the Department of Finance

3.   The Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills

4.   The Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

5.   The Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

6.   The Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs.

7.   The Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children

8.   The Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners.

9.   The Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Siochàna* (the Irish Police Force).

10.   The Director of the Equality Tribunal.

The view is that these individuals represent the apex of the Irish administrative leadership and reflect the core of the Republic of Ireland's public administration at the height of what is publicly acknowledged as a national socio-economic crisis. They are therefore the most appropriate source for an interpretive case study research into the leadership perspectives of senior public administrative leaders in a crisis environment.

The Implementation of the Qualitative Interviews

The primary interviews for this part of the research were conducted between September 2009 and April 2011, a twenty-month period of intense changes and uncertainties in the socio-economic environment in the Republic of Ireland.

Interviewees were first contacted through their respective Departmental Private Secretaries, and requests for formal interviews submitted through their offices. Once the interview appointments were granted, letters of *Informed Consent to Participate in Research* would be forwarded to the interviewees ahead of the appointments, briefing them of the intended discussion topics for the semi-structured interviews, and requesting permission to voice-record the interviews. This procedure was carried out in line with the approved ethical research procedures initially approved for this DBA research project. Interviews were transcribed from the voice-recording within 48 hours of the interviews, and the checked transcripts together with the voice-recordings were then kept secured also in accordance with the prior approved ethical research procedures.

The typed transcripts and the voice-recordings were repeatedly reviewed by the researcher at the data analysis and the write-up stages of the research project. Key benefits of visually reviewing the typed transcripts include the ability to rapidly flip between different parts of the interviews and the ability to see, to cross-examine and to correlate the different sections of the interview at the same visual glance. But the key advantage of reviewing the voice-recordings was the ability to analyse the paralinguistic messages – the emphasis, the tones, the pitch, etc., which would provide additional and essential information for analysis. In the course of reviewing the transcripts, themes and patterns were coded, facilitating thematic analysis (Taylor and Bodgan 1984, Leininger 1985, Aronson 1994) at a later stage of analysis. The repeated review of both the typed transcripts and the voice-recordings over time, the paying of attention to the themes and patterns emerging from the conversations, the paying of attention to the language used, the attempts to decipher the paralinguistic messages, the attempts to construe how the research subjects attempted to make sense of the world they were in, the attempts to unravel how they tried to construct, defend and communicate their 'realities' – these were the analytical processes utilised to analyse the research data. The various conceptual frameworks employed to frame the analysis will be discussed below.

The Analytical Frameworks Employed

This research is about public administrative leadership perspectives. As a qualitative case study with an interpretive approach, the research analysis needed to be carried out against recognised analytical paradigms, methods or strategies. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) had suggested that qualitative researchers do indeed have a "full complement" (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:9) of such paradigms, methods or strategies at their disposal. Willis (2007) had even suggested that for many qualitative researchers, their research framework or paradigm is "most important" to them (Willis 2007:147). The challenge, however, is that, the proliferation of qualitative research paradigms can sometimes be confusing or even contradictory (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) had described the proliferation as ranging from what they termed the "loose, inductively oriented designs" to the "tight, more deductively approached ones" (Miles and Huberman 1994:431) – in essence a range

spanning a post-modernist perspective at one end of the spectrum to the post-positivist perspective at the opposing end.

Specifically for this research at hand, a number of analytical paradigms are utilised, all of which are rooted in the interpretivist perspective. The interpretivist perspective recognises that all observations are to an extent fallible and are subject to error and that as such, all theories are revisable. In other words, the paradigms are critical of our ability to know reality with certainty. The paradigms employed in this research include Eisner's (1998) Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry, Altheide and Johnson's (1994) Analytic Realism perspective, as well as Pollner's (1987) concepts of Mundane Reasoning and Reality Disjuncture; and Potter's (1996) discussions on Interest Management and Category Entitlement, the latter two coming from within the fields of ethnomethodology pioneered by Sacks (1963) and Garfinkel (1967).

Eisner's (1998) Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry proposed that connoisseurship and criticism comprised the essence of interpretive research inquiry. Eisner suggested that a connoisseur in research is someone who has the experience and skills to understand the subtle aspects of a situation. To Eisner, connoisseurship "is the means through which we come to know the complexities, nuances, and subtleties of aspects of the world in which we have a special interest" (Eisner 1998: 68). At the same time, Eisner suggested that as soon as the connoisseur communicates his or her view to others, it immediately became criticism – criticism that encompasses the purpose of evaluation and the illumination of broad or general themes. Eisner's notion of evaluation was with reference to coherence and consensus within the data, rather than with reference to any notion of validity and reliability in a positivistic sense. The implication for this leadership research at hand would therefore be that the evaluation of the data would be on the basis of "believability" rather than "validity", and of "stability" rather than "reliability" (Willis 2007:165). Moreover, Eisner's notion of connoisseurship is arguably applicable in this research because the researcher, whose own perspectives is integral to the analysis, is himself from the ranks of those through whom this research was carried out.

With regards to the evaluation of believability, Altheide and Johnson (1994) had suggested that the pragmatic issues that affect the points of view taken when

gathering, analysing, interpreting and reporting the findings must be taken into consideration. This is compatible with the hitherto discussed interpretivist perspectives (Denzin and Lincoln 1995, Willis 2007). However, Altheide and Johnson (1994) had particularly suggested that interpretive data analysis would invariably reflect significant sensitivity to how the particular social situation was interpreted, or to the way the particular social situation was made sense of from the particular background of the researcher. They had suggested that qualitative data cannot be made sense of by basing simply on the situation itself. Their perspective is the Analytical Realism perspective – an interpretive perspective which sees that while the 'reality' of the social world may be interpreted and socially constructed, the construction would not be assumption-free. Their argument was that even if objective reality exists, humans can only relate to it through particular encounters; and therefore general intellectual understanding can only be possible through the researcher's own conceptual schemes and theories. In other words, the notion is that "a fact is a statement about experience in terms of a conceptual scheme." (Parson 1977:27).

Thus, Eisner's (1998) Connoisseurship Model of Inquiry and Altheide and Johnson's (1994) Analytic Realism perspective would combine to suggest that, for the research at hand, findings and understandings are emergent. It means that the research data would not have made any apparent sense until it emerges from the full process of data collection and analysis.

That notwithstanding, as previously discussed, the emergence is not without basis. The process is informed by a number of analytical and interpretive paradigms. These paradigms are largely within the field of ethnomethodology (Sacks 1963, Garfinkel 1967) and included Pollner's (1987) notion of Mundane Reasoning and Reality Disjuncture; and Potter's (1996) discussions on Interest Management and Category Entitlement.

Ethnomethodology is the study of how individuals account for and understand what they perceived to be 'factual' descriptions. The contribution to this research is the notion that the meanings of words being used are dependent on the context of usage – that it is the combining of the actual words used and the appreciation of their context that provides sense and meaning. Interpretive analysis adds to that by applying

ethnomethodology specifically to the context of conversational interactions. Sacks et al (1974) suggested that the usage of words and the manner of their delivery in conversations were never accidental, but purposeful and orderly constructed. The contribution to this particular research at hand is the idea that through analysing the structure and the contents of their conversations, it is possible to understand how the research subjects made sense of the world they were in. For example, Pollner (1987) had proposed the notion of mundane reasons, wherewith people in conversations assume that they share the same underlying reality – in other words, they assume that any neutral and competent individuals would observe the same thing when placed in the same position. Pollner had suggested that individuals would even seek out practical solutions to try to sustain such mundane reasons even in the face of conflicting reality disjuncture. Discussions from Potter (1996) also added to the suite of interpretive paradigms utilised. Potter suggested that the stake or the interests of the individuals were often drawn upon in the construction of conversations to either support or to undermine 'factual' accounts. He also suggested the notion of category entitlement, which was the idea that certain categories of individual would be perceived to be knowledgeable in certain context, and to the extent that their 'factual' accounts were less likely to be challenged.

To support the analysis with the exploration of the language and the words used is also compatible with the social constructionist perspective employed in this research. Berger and Luckmann (1966) had suggested that the process of socialisation that activates reality construction relies largely on the usage of language. They had proposed three stages through which social relationships progress, namely, externalisation, objectification and internalisation. Their proposition is that underlining the feasibility of this mutually influential dialectic process is human being's specific ability to create symbols and language in order to attach meanings to objects. Their proposition was that through attaching meaningful symbols and language to objects, individuals can externalise their subjective thoughts and have them made available to others. Moreover, they suggested that the attachment of meanings to objects would in turn transform the objects into signs, which then allows such objectification of meanings to become detached from the here and now. Berger and Luckmann's proposition is that the proliferation of such objectification would combine to accrue increasing social meanings that would eventually translate into

structured societies. Internalisation then completes the process – when socialisation causes other individuals within the societies to come to understand and to accept the objectified events, artefacts or language in terms of the meanings previously conferred on them. Berger and Luckmann's proposition was thus that such a dialectic process reconciles, unites and juxtaposes the structure view of sociology with the action view of sociology. It allows us to consider an individual as both always actively constructing the social world and at the same time always constrained by the societal institutions and frameworks of meaning handed to him or her and internalised through socialisation.

The contribution of these interpretive paradigms to the research at hand is to provide for a perspective that the conversations in the research data were not passive descriptions, merely mirroring some independent 'reality'. Instead, the perspective is that the conversations were also the means with which the conversers' 'reality' were constructed and justified. In other words, the notion is that not only were the conversational accounts themselves socially constructed, but that the constructed descriptions and accounts in the conversations in turn contributed to the construction and the justification of the social 'reality' (Potter 1996:97) – that in attempting to make sense of 'reality', their very process of sense-making became the means of creating and reinforcing the 'reality' they were seeking to make sense of. It is therefore the interest of this research to not only discover, if possible, the 'reality' constructed by the research subjects, but also to explore their process of construction.

Other additional theoretical and analytical frameworks utilised to assist in the framing of the interpretive analysis included Taylor and Bodgan's (1984) thematic analytical approach, Gardner's (1989), Méndez-Morse's (1992) and Spears' (2000) lists of leadership characteristics (albeit positivistically inclined), Johnson and Scholes's (1992) notion of the Cultural Web, Aberbach et al's (1981) images of the political-administrative dichotomy and Yukl's (1999, 2004) change-oriented perception factors.

5.   Analysis and Findings

This research is about public administrative leadership perspectives in the Republic of Ireland. The specific intention of this research is to explore the sense making of the senior Irish public administrative leaders in the context of a perceived socio-economic crisis in the Republic of Ireland. For this research, one could pursue the exploration of a number of somewhat discrete inquiries, which would then allow for a thematic approach (Taylor and Bodgan 1984, Leininger 1985, Aronson 1994) to the overall analysis. For example, the thematic analysis could pursue separately the question of whether a crisis was perceived by the administrative leaders, or whether leadership could be seen to have taken place, or even what the manifested leadership looked like. But given the interpretive intention of the overall research, the argument is that while the thematic approach would be insightful, the analysis needs to be more than just a simple thematic analysis – the research needs to encompass the sense making integrated across the themes. A much broader framing is therefore necessary. The proposition is that, since the focus of the research was on exploring the sense making of the public administrative leaders in the context of a perceived socio-economic crisis, it is reasonable to frame the exploration around two broad lines of inquiry, namely,

1.   How had the senior administrative leaders interpreted the broader environment they saw themselves in?

2.   How had the senior administrative leaders made sense of their response to the environment they perceived themselves to be in?

The proposition is that the combination of these two lines of inquiry would reveal rich information with which the understanding into how these senior Irish public administrative leaders made sense of their own leadership could be fostered.

The Leaders Interpreting Their Environment

The assumption underpinning this interpretive research is the assumption that, in making sense of their responses to the world they see themselves in, the senior administrative leaders would first of all attempt to interpret and to understand the environment they found themselves in, and then to craft their response based on those understandings. The research found that there was a universal interpretation amongst the senior Irish public administrative leaders of a significant socio-economic crisis facing the country in which they have administrative responsibility. The research into the administrative leaders' perspectives had revealed that, in trying to make sense of their leadership response, they saw considerable challenges posed by the socio-economic crisis – and they were seeing the situation they found themselves in with almost a sense of desperation. This was particularly borne out by the Secretary General of the Department of Finance:

> "… at the time the country most need a very positive, swift reaction to the crisis … we don't have time in a crisis to do a nice gentle negotiation, you don't have the time to take months over it …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

The emphasis of having to take "very" positive and "swift" response, the emphasis that delay is not an acceptable option, and the suggestion that even nicety and pleasantness need to be sacrificed – all of these suggested that the Secretary General of the Department of Finance had interpreted not merely a crisis, but a significant crisis. That portrayal of urgency and desperation was also reflected in the perception of the Secretary General of the Department of Justice and Law Reform:

> "… I have that very strong sense of the clock ticking in my current job … I am working against the clock in the sense that I feel that in the world of public administration there are frequent changes, especially in the current financial and social crisis …" (*Secretary General, Department of Justice and Law Reform*)

The metaphor of time, and particularly of time running out, and the emphasis of a strong sense of time very much against him in a direct reference to the "current financial and social crisis" would certainly support the understanding that this is an administrative leader seeing a crisis of magnitude at hand.

Concerning the finding that the administrative leaders saw considerable challenges posed by the socio-economic crisis, there were some indications that the interpretation of a crisis at hand were based on a sense of hopelessness when faced with specific difficulties – in other words, it seemed that the interpretation by the administrative leaders of the existence of a crisis was not just based on having considerable socio-economic problems *per se*, but that they saw difficulties in overcoming those problems. For example, we saw the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children referring not just to time running out, but also to the running out of resources:

> "… we are now in a crisis, and inevitable we won't be able to do all the things we like to do, and I am not sure that we have necessarily allocated money in the way that we best possibly can …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

A sense of inevitability, a sense that a crisis is not just when there are problems but when there are problems with no means to resolve them, and the sense of their own inability to act appropriately – these were the senses reflected upon by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children in building up his crisis perception. Likewise from the Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs, a similar sense that a crisis exists not just because of having problems, but that a crisis exist because there were difficulties in overcoming the problems.

> "… in the last three or four years there was a huge crisis facing us – there has been a huge crisis facing us and to be honest, the change leaders or the potential change leaders had been so busy dealing with the crisis that they had not really had time to arrange the changes …" (*Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

The Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affair alluded to the association between crisis and change – that in his perception, the crisis required change and the inability to change further compound the crisis. To interpret that a crisis exists because of a perception of a significant requirement for change seemed also to be a view also reflected by others. Both the Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government and the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills referred to the presence of significant change as a contributing factor to the determination of a crisis. The Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government alluded to internal change induced by the economic fallouts, such as the subsequent pressure to restructure, while the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills referred to the change in the wider social and societal environment.

> "… In some respect, yes, at a time of crisis – and I suppose we have been in a crisis for virtually all of my period in leadership so far – because not just in economic terms but we have had very large change for reasons of restructuring …" (*Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government*)

> "… managing change in this current crisis is both harder and easier … the kind of fear factor may well be higher because it's not as if people feel – well – if I am not happy with the new arrangement, I can go off and get a job somewhere else …" (*Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills*)

Thus, the research revealed that, regardless of whether it was on the basis of sensing urgency and time limitation, whether it was on the basis of sensing an inability to resolve problems at hand, or whether it was on the basis of sensing significant change – in other words, regardless of the different perspectives of what might constitute a crisis, there is at least a remarkable consensus amongst the senior Irish public administrative leaders' interpretation that they are in the midst of a crisis; and not just a crisis, but a significant crisis.

Such a finding would seem to provide support to the social construction (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Burr 1995, Gergen 1999) perspective, that there are multiple ways of seeing any given situation, that different people use different lenses and perspectives to see and to construct their own version of 'reality'.

Of course, one could suggest that these were senior public administrative leaders at the highest two echelons of the civil and public service, and as experienced public servants, they were likely to be well versed in the art of interviews, and skilled in providing interviewers with well rehearsed 'official' answers. However, given that the responses were from a number of these public administrative leaders, and given the consistency in them all overtly making reference to a "crisis" despite the variation in their interpretations of what constitute that crisis, if it can be shown that they were all only providing official responses, then it would reflect an extraordinary feat of governmental orchestration and would suggest a remarkable coordination of scripts.

To extend the discussion, a further inquiry could be made into how these senior administrative leaders at the apex of the administration made sense of their own leadership tenure while at the same time expressing such helplessness in the face of the perceived crisis.

Taking, for example, the comment of the Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs already quoted above. The Secretary General appeared to have suggested a very interesting dilemma – that in "busy dealing with the crisis" the leadership was unable to "arrange the change". His suggestion seemed to be that the "busy dealing with the crisis" somehow did not include "arranging the change", even though it could be argued that "arranging the change" should have been the very thing they should be "busy" doing while dealing with the crisis. The Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs seemed to have suggested a separation of the two notions. Perhaps the understanding might well be that, reflecting Potter's (1996) notion of Interests, that in the context of a constructed interview with a researcher, the Secretary General might have adopted such a circular argument to make sense his own leadership role.

The same sense making was also detected from the Secretary to the Government, who was the most senior civil servant of the country. The Secretary to the Government appeared to be much more explicit in his attribution of responsibilities. When acknowledging the seriousness of the crisis, he had firstly portrayed confidence by articulating a solution – a "clear" solution that "works":

> "… a sense that we have a clear comprehensive national plan or we have clear sense of where we are going, how we are going to resolve our various crisis … we have a clear sense of what we want to achieve … we have a clear economic model that works …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

But then, he appeared to have deliberately side-stepped the taking of the responsibility for the success or failure of the plan – with the argument that while the leadership might have had a plan and a perceived solution that might have worked, the followers did not have confidence in them and did not "trust" them to implement:

> "… I think leadership trust levels are very low at the moment, Clearly recent events in our current crisis have caused people to doubt both the competence and the quality I suppose of those in leadership, not just in Government but banks and other aspects of the private economy …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

And in the face of apparent conflicting reality disjuncture (Pollner 1987) – that in his conviction "there is a plan that works" but at the same time externally not seeing the plan delivering result or inspiring confidence, the Secretary to the Government had attempted to make sense of this lack of confidence in their workable solution by explaining an unfair attribution of someone else's failure to the public service leaders:

> "… I think there is a sense of deep unfairness that this catastrophic failure of – if you like – the engine of private enterprise – has seen the woeful incapacities of the banks in particular as our biggest private sector institution – was suddenly interpreted as a failure of the public service …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

It appeared therefore that not only did these senior Irish public administrative leaders interpret their environment as a crisis environment, they were, at the same time attempting to create a 'reality' concerning their leadership response to the perceived crisis.

The Leaders Making Sense of Their Own Leadership Response

It could be argued that since they were all sitting senior public administrators at the two highest echelons of the civil service, appointed through a meritocratic system, the assumption would be that they could be deemed, by virtue of their role and their positional appointments, as leaders. The perception might have been that, by virtue of the position they were in, and that they were influencing their various departments in their entirety by the decisions they made on a daily basis, they would be seen as exercising leadership. However, the interest of this research is not so much about the leadership position these administrative leaders occupied by virtue of their appointments, the interest of this research is to explore and to understand the public administrators' own perspectives, and to see how they had made sense of their own leadership in response to the crisis they had perceive.

It seemed that few of these public administrators had claimed to be leaders simply by referring to the position they occupied. There seems to be common attempts to explain and to make sense of their claim to being leaders by referring to some definitive (and positivistic) characteristics associated with leadership.

Indeed, from the leadership trait theorists, there had been many attempts to create definitive lists of leadership characteristics. For example, there was Gardner's (1989) list of leadership attributes, Méndez-Morse's (1992) list and Spears' (2000) list of leadership characteristics. Common to these lists were trait characteristics such as vision, courage, perseverance, communication, adaptability, innovativeness, or calculated risk taking. Employing an approach not dissimilar to the thematic analytical approach (Taylor and Bodgan 1984, Leininger 1985, Aronson 1994), one could try to reflect on the perspectives of these administrators as they made sense of

their own leadership with reference to these somewhat positivistic or even heroic attributes.

Take the trait of having a vision. The notion of having vision was expressed forthrightly by the Secretary General of the Department of Finance. His notion of vision was one that contrasted conservation and contrasted slow reaction, one with a global rather than just local perspective:

> "… we do need to do things, to do our leadership differently, more quickly, less conservatively, with vision, with a broader view to the national picture rather than institutionally …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

Indeed, regarding this trait of having vision, it seems that many of those interviewed, when trying to make sense of their own leadership role and trying to portray their effective leadership contributions, categorically made claim to having vision, or having visions. What emerged seems to be that in the perspective of these senior administrative leaders, leadership is primarily about having vision.

This perspective was clearly indicated in the metaphor used by the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioner to defend his visionary contribution. The metaphor was that of a helmsman to an organisation that had to "go" somewhere, and that getting there needed to be guided by the helmsman's own vision "as the head or as a leader within the organisation".

> "… I suppose the word that comes to mind straight away would be that you have the vision for what the organisation is all about … that you have the vision maybe where you want the organisation to go during your time as the head, or as a leader within the organisation …" (*Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners*)

That sense of a very personal involvement, almost a great-man leader in the manner of Carlyle (1843) and Cowley (1928) – the sense that the organisation deferred to the personal vision of the leader was also reflected in the perspective of the Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affair:

"… I think it is hugely important that there is vision, and there is an act of visible endorsement of good practice, of priorities, and a degree of very personalised engagement …" (*Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

The sense of "visible endorsement" and "personalised engagement" suggested a perspective of leadership being visible and upfront, that the leader visibly leads, and the followers follow towards the same direction. Likewise from the perspective of the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children, who defined vision as the leader knowing where to go, and setting the agenda to get there:

"… leadership involves number one, vision, a sense of where do we want to go, i.e. the ability to set the agenda, rather than reacting to it … leadership is about knowing where you want to go and just as importantly, how to get there …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

The picture being constructed here reflects how these senior administrative leaders viewed leadership, and reflects how they made sense of their own leadership role. The picture seems to be one reflecting a heroic (Ford et al 2008) or 'come follow me' type of persona. Even where the 'follow me' did not specifically referred to a personalised direction, there appeared to be still the suggestion that the leaders themselves had a better clarity of where the followers should go. For example, the Secretary General of Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government seemed to have this perception that she, more than those whom she perceive as her followers, knew better where they were suppose to go and how to get there:

"… So you do need to use clarity and direction very strongly in some respects You also – I have found particularly again with a very large degree of staff turnover and staff change, you need to have a lot of clarify around direction and performance the vision of quality of performance, and the management expectation in the organisation and what that actually means …" (*Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government*)

The sense projected was that, if left to their own devices, staff could not find the right directions without the leader explaining to them.

What emerged was also a sense that the visions these senior administrator beheld were visions of grandeur, that it made sense for them to lead because the visions they were leading towards are by far better than where they are currently at. For example, the reality perception of the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána* seemed to be that if the leaders' vision was to be followed, the Irish police force could be "the best police service in the world":

> "… based on the corporate strategy document and that corporate strategy document sets out the vision for the Garda organisation, and sets out our Mission Statement and our values … it says what we are aiming to be … the best police service in the world." (*Deputy Commissioner of An Garda Síochána*)

Or in the reality perception of the Secretary to the Government, the Secretary General of the Department of the *Taoiseach*, who was the most senior civil servant of the land, that the leaders have a "clear" model that "works":

> "… a sense that we have a clear, comprehensive national plan or we have clear sense of where we are going, how we are going to resolve our various crisis … we have a clear sense of what we want to achieve … we have a clear economic model that works …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

For the Deputy Commissioner and the Secretary to the Government, how might they have sustained such notions of grandeur given the context that the Republic of Ireland was at the same time acknowledged, even by themselves, to be in such serious socio-economic turmoil that the country had to rely on a bailout by the international communities, and that the Irish police force was an under-resourced, small and reducing police force? It could be suggested that, in line with Potter's (1996) notion of Interests, that in trying to making sense of themselves in a constructed interview with a researcher, these senior leaders had adopted such notions of grandeur to make

sense of and to justify their own leadership. Others might have suggested that, in line with Pollner's (1987) paradigm, these senior public administrators, in facing a conflicting reality disjuncture – that they have enacted leadership, bit not seeing the expected positive results, were merely seeking out a practical solution – that it is a grand vision yet to be fulfilled – to try to sustain mundane reasons. It seems that by suggesting that they have visions, and visions of grandeur at that, these senior public administrators were attempting to make sense of their own leadership, and to provide justifications for how they were leading. At the very least, it suggested that these senior public administrators believed that leaders should have vision.

The same analysis could be taken with respect to the trait of being persistent and having determination. To suggest that there is a needed for persistent and determination is to suggest that they expect difficulties, obstacles or opposition to their leadership. This portrayal of determination and persistency was forcibly put forward by the Secretary to the Government:

> "… I mean if it isn't possible to reach that sort of consensus or whatever if I personally don't have the capacity to require change or compliance – but I know someone who does … to make sure it happens …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

The implication was that even in situations when the Secretary General was facing difficulties and obstacles beyond his own capability to overcome, he could call on a most powerful ally. Presumably he was referring to the *Taoiseach* (the Irish Prime Minister), given that he is the Secretary General to the Department of the *Taoiseach*. The picture he seemed to have painted was one that described himself having the close ear of the *Taoiseach* and that he has the full support of the *Taoiseach* to enable himself to "make sure [things] happen".

The picture of leadership offered by these public administrators – their sense that, as leaders, they needed to be forceful, to take charge, to drive towards their vision, even in the absence of support from those being led, was quite clearly reflected by the Secretary General of the Department of Justice:

> "… you have to be – pretty forceful about priorities … there is still the challenge to set the tone, drive the pace, and set priorities or clarify priorities … whether they are in agreement or not …" (*Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*)

With reference to the importance of the contextual influence on social construction, one might justifiably argue that the culture and the task environments of both the Department of the *Taoiseach* and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform – the latter including the oversight of the armed forces, the police force and the law courts, required such forceful, hierarchical and almost autocratic approach to the exercising of leadership, but a similar perspective was also detected from the Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs, a Department whose culture and task environment were much more people oriented:

> "… I say 'this is what I want done, this is what's required' … and they got the message that I wasn't going to go away, the Minister wasn't going away …" (*Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

Moreover, further analysis could be taken with respect to the trait of being good communicators. The importance of being effective in communication had been emphasised by many of the administrative leaders. To the Assistant Secretary at the Department of Health and Children, for example, part of how he saw his own leadership role was to see that he needed to ensure proper communication to his Department regarding the implementation of the Department's vision – to communicate and to explain why they have to go where they were going:

> "… They don't like the idea of change which they don't understand or which they feel is going to directly affect them, and they are quite fearful of it …" *(Assistant Secretary, department of Health and Children)*

In the same vein, the perception of the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners was also that it was essential for him to communicate the implementation to his followers.

"… That out of it all, you feel you can communicate with people in such a way that you are articulating your vision, you are giving them a clear sense of the direction in which you think the organisation should go and that you are doing all of that not in a dictatorial sort of a style, but in a style that is inclusive, that involves your other managers with you, in a collaborative sort of working style …" (*Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners*)

The Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government was even much more forthcoming and much more descriptive of the extent of the communication called for, and seemed to have even reflected on a number of factors for effective communications as suggested by Yukl (1999, 2004):

"… in terms of communicating the vision, I am getting it done in a manner that – if you like – passes the quality threshold and passes tests in terms of – I suppose you know – political ownership and the capacity to generate political buy-in and political commitment, public credibility, credibility with stakeholders – and a range of things like that …" *(Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government)*

The exploration of the perception of the senior Irish administrative leaders of how they saw their own leadership reviewed a picture of leaders that were heroic and that were great-man leaders; that in the face of perceived crisis, they were the vision holders, with visions of better and greater things to come; and they were to be up-front, powering through obstacles and difficulties – if only the people would follow, communicating their vision, showing the followers the way to go. The picture presented was a cohort of leaders who would save the country from the crisis with their heroic leadership.

To further explore the perception of the senior Irish administrative leaders and to explore how they made sense of their own leadership in the face of crisis, it is possible to analyse not just their expressed views of their own leadership, but also to analyse how they saw the exercising of leadership by others in their own ranks. Such an analytical approach would reflect McGregor's (1960) and Schein's (1985) culture frameworks and Johnson and Scholes' (1992) notion of the Cultural Web. They had

suggested that one could interpret the values and perspectives of the people in an organisation by referring to their story telling and by noting who the heroes and the villains were in their stories, and why.

One of such stories amongst the senior Irish public administrators was a story about the leadership success in the trade and enterprise sector of the introduction of the 12.5% Corporation Tax regime and the effective implementation of that policy across the public systems. It appeared that the description of the hero in this story and the attribution of his heroism supported our analysis of the preference for heroic leaders who not only had vision, but drove the implementation of that vision with bravery and determination despite all round resistance.

> "… I think the best example of that in the ones I have given you is probably Paul Haran (Secretary General of the Department of Trade and Enterprise), whose view – for example – the vision of the 12.5% Corporation Tax, and all of that implied in terms of bottom line tax revenues and our relationships with the EU was quite brave, and was resisted definitely around the system ... who took initiatives in terms of opening up the whole agenda about Ireland's regime for encouraging foreign direct investment, who opened the agenda for education, and that of science skills and tax agenda and who really I suppose – I think took that Department to a new level in terms of thinking about the future …" (*Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners*)

Key words such as "vision", "brave", "initiatives", "resistance" all added up to a heroic picture of that leadership. Another similar story of success, this time from the health sector, described the leadership in the implementation of a significant but unpopular change to the health system, namely the reduction and amalgamation of the overall number of acute cancer care facilities:

> "… I think that is a major exercise in leadership – it certainly is not over – it's only at the beginning but the approach that has been taken by the HSE (Health Services Executive), particular by Professor Tom Keane, was a very good example of setting the vision, what I was talking about earlier, recognising that people will be afraid of change, confronting that change in a positive way by

communicating a reason for why things need to be done differently working with the people who need to make the change – i.e. the health professionals in most cases – and working with them very closely, securing their agreements, and implementing change over time Now the process is only starting, but even the first couple of months Professor Keane I think has achieved some very significant progress just in relation to agreement to certain surgeons not carrying out certain types of cancer surgery anymore Now that's to me a major, major step forward, which would have turn to results …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

Again, the key concepts of "leadership", "setting the vision", "confronting the change" suggesting that this, too, was a story of leadership success amidst obstacles, oppositions and difficulties.

In the finance arena, the successful implementation of the restructuring of the entire Revenue system, including the introduction of on-line revenue services, was also cited as another story of exemplary leadership. In this story, the accolade was directed towards those who job was seen as "to drive the change" in its implementation:

"… I mean I think some people have done this admirably, the Revenue restructuring, for example, internally They actually – not just about their investing in IT but also in their restructuring of their team and their department in revenue They actually had invested, they had a change management team of a significant number of people, whose job it was to drive the change, to implement it …" (*Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills*)

Similarly, the effective implementation of agricultural and health control policies in respond to recent animal health crisis were also held as a story of effective administrative leadership, again praising "strong leadership" in the midst of a crisis:

"… I think for example the leadership shown at the Department of Agriculture and Food some years ago during the whole Foot and Mouth crisis was extraordinary feat, very, very good strong leadership and a fusion of

leadership and management dealing with the crisis …" (*Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners*)

These were stories by the senior Irish administrative leaders themselves spanning the trade and enterprise sector, the health sector, the finance sector and the agriculture sector – a diverse cross section of the public service yet remarkably consistent in the portrayal of what, in their perspective, leadership should look like. And the picture presented was one that reflected a heroic, great-man leader, one who is needed in times of great difficulties to save the situation.

The heroic picture of leadership notwithstanding, the theory of social construction of realities (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Burr 1995, Gergen 1999) would suggest that these pictures do not reflect any independent objective reality, but that they reflect the realities that the public leaders have constructed in the course of their social interactions. Such a perspective would suggest that multiple realities or even conflicting realities could be constructed simultaneously. Indeed, revisiting the previous discussions on the notion of leaders having visions, we saw that there were emphases on seeing things "differently" (Secretary General, Department of Finance),

> "… we do need to do things, to do our leadership differently, more quickly, less conservatively, with vision, with a broader view to the national picture rather than institutionally …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

on "setting the agenda" (Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children),

> "… leadership involves number one, vision, a sense of where do we want to go, i.e. the ability to set the agenda, rather than reacting to it … leadership is about knowing where you want to go and just as importantly, how to get there …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

on "driving the pace" (Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform),

"… you have to be – pretty forceful about priorities … there is still the challenge to set the tone, drive the pace, and set priorities or clarify priorities … whether they are in agreement or not …" (*Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*)

on having "clarity" of vision (Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government),

"… So you do need to use clarity and direction very strongly in some respects You also – I have found particularly again with a very large degree of staff turnover and staff change, you need to have a lot of clarify around direction and performance the vision of quality of performance, and the management expectation in the organisation and what that actually means …" (*Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government*)

and on maintaining "priorities" (Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs):

"… I think it is hugely important that there is vision, and there is an act of visible endorsement of good practice, of priorities, and a degree of very personalised engagement …" (*Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

These emphases were very heroic in description. The leadership reality constructed seems to be one that places the leader as one who is in control because they have clarity of visions, and because their visions point to where their perceived followers must go. Yet, emerged from the very same individuals who constructed that heroic reality were language and notions that directly contradict those notions of heroic vision. There were notions of accepting the "institutional inertia" (Secretary General, Department of Finance),

"… We have some really good people in leadership positions, some of them really excellent people, and yet, they don't seem to be able to create the kind

of change that they want, and this is in part due to some sort of institutional inertia …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

of compromising to "secure agreements" (Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children),

"… working with them … securing their agreements, and implementing change over time …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

of "not having the freedom" to be creative (Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners),

"… So I am not sure that there is enough freedom there yet – to allow – it is really to let public servants become more entrepreneurial, if I can put it that way …" *(Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners)*

of needing to bend to "political buy-in" (Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government),

"… in terms of … I suppose you know – political ownership and the capacity to generate political buy-in and political commitment, public credibility, credibility with stakeholders – and a range of things like that …" *(Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government)*

or having to defer to their Ministers (Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs).

"… because that's the space Ministers like to occupy. So … I think the top civil servants have to be quite careful …" (*Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

It was as if, while these senior Irish public service leaders had socially constructed and internalised a certain perspective of reality concerning their leadership, they at the same time had also created another contrasting reality. Thus, the findings reinforce the

notion that there can be multiple and simultaneous perspectives of realities that exist alongside each other and none could be deemed more objectively real then the others.

However, despite such multiple and conflicting perspectives, each perspective seemed to find a degree of consistency amongst the leaders, with terms such as "vision", "communication", "perseverance", "values" or "change" were amply used throughout the interviews by all of the public administrative leaders. The common language used by the Irish public administrative leaders to portray leadership amongst their own ranks did seem to reflect a shared picture of what these public administrative leaders themselves consider as strong and effective leadership, perhaps reflecting a strong degree of internalisation (Berger and Luckmann 1966). The proposition is that the construction of the leadership realities by the public administrative leaders is a proactive process, and in the context of a constructed research interview with senior public administrative leaders who are seasoned in conducting interviews, it is not unexpected to encounter a purposeful portrayal of a preferred picture of what public administrative leaders might look like. Indeed, it would not be unexpected to encounter the championing and the active portrayal of particular preferred leadership attributes.

It is also possible that the similarities in the accounts of leadership perspectives reflected Tajfel and Turner's (1979) notion of social identity, in which individuals tend to emphasis their similarity with those in their same social group. There is certainly indication of self catergorisation (Turner 1985, Turner et al 1987) when it came to recognising the boundaries of their social group identity – that of administrative leaders.

The Leaders Seeing the Boundary of Their Perceived Leadership

The perspective that had emerged was that not only did the senior Irish public administrative leaders see themselves as leaders, they also clearly perceived their leadership boundaries with respect to the administrative and political divide.

Larson and Coe (1999) had suggested that there is a difference between the role of administrative leadership and the role of political leadership. They had suggested that

administrative leadership distinguished itself from political leadership through their distinctive roles of providing policy advice to the political leaders, of communicating and leading their respective administrative department and of participating in the collective management of the public services. In the same way, Aberbach et al (1981) had provided "images" (Aberbach et al 1981:3) of the political-administrative dichotomy to explain the contrasting focuses between politicians and administrators. They proposed the images of the "policy-administrative" dichotomy (Aberbach et al 1981:4-6) contrasting policy formulation by politicians against policy implementation by administrators, the "facts-interests" dichotomy (Aberbach et al 1981:6-7) contrasting the factual knowledge and technical expertise of the administrators against the values, interests and constituency concerns of the politicians, and the "energy-equilibrium" dichotomy (Aberbach et al 1981:9-16) contrasting the politicians' concern for satisfying broad partisan and ideological interests against the administrator's concerns for balancing the narrower interests of the various pressure groups or departmental clientele.

The research here on the perspectives of the senior Irish public administrative leaders of their own leadership had seemingly revealed a perspective of administration leadership rather than a perspective of politics leadership. For example, the mindset of the Deputy Commissioner had reflected quite aptly Aberbach et al's (1981) descriptions of administrators, with their focus on policy implementation, technical expertise and narrow departmental interests.

> "… in our last corporate strategy document, we put down six strategies and behind those six strategies, we have six strategic imperatives and behind those six strategic imperatives in turn, we have about forty initiatives, that in order to succeed, we must achieve these initiatives …" (*Deputy Commissioner of An Garda Síochána*)

The Deputy Commissioner saw his role as focused on implementation, with the emphasis that the force "must" achieve what was set out for them. Likewise with the Secretary General of the Department of Justice:

> "… I would be conscious of the fact that the public face of the organisation has to be the Minister of the day ... but I manage the mechanics" (*Secretary General, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*)

The picture offered by the Secretary General of the Department of Justice – "I manage the mechanics" reflected an administrative, process driven role, which in turn was very similar to the perspective suggested by the Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and *Gaeltacht* Affairs – that "fundamentally", the administrative leaders' leadership role was one "about the management of the Department and the delivery of the service":

> "… that visibility can become problematic directly with the public because that's the space Ministers like to occupy. So with the public I think the top civil servants have to be quite careful, that his or her role is fundamentally about the management of the Department and the delivery of the service …" (*Secretary General, Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

The senior Irish administrative leaders seemed to be very much aware of the boundaries between the political and the administrative realms, and had deliberately stayed with the limits of those boundaries. Indeed, the Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform had overtly and succinctly expressed that very perspective:

> "I think it is often important to remember that the people who exercise the role of being Secretaries of Departments, are actually accounting figures, oversight figures ... and that is one of the reasons why there is a little creative tension around the level of visibility of such people ... I would be conscious of the fact that the public face of the organisation has to be the Minister of the day ... but I manage the mechanics" (*Secretary General, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*)

That same perspective came across even more unequivocal from the Secretary to the Government, the most senior administrator of the land – the perspective that there

should be a clear understanding and acceptance of the differentiation of the roles of the administrator as distinct from the role of the politicians:

> "… we were asked to engaged in the public square in terms of even public service reform issues but there is a convention that that is for Ministers and we take a very secondary public vote apart from – you know – highly stylised set-piece engagement, that we don't address that wider public …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

The perspective of the senior Irish administrative leaders thus reflected an acute awareness of the differentiation between the leadership role of elected politicians and the leadership role of appointed administrators.

Moreover, the cross analysis of the earlier discussions of the stories of success can also be seen to only refer to the administrative aspects of the leadership. The stories about the exercising of leadership by the senior administrative leaders were overwhelmingly stories of administration, and largely relating only to the implementation of policies.

The Approach of the Leadership Response to the Perceived Crisis

The analysis so far of how the senior Irish administrative leaders had interpreted the environment they found themselves in, and of how they made sense of their leadership response, had revealed that the leaders had indeed interpreted the environment they faced as a crisis environment. The analysis so far had also revealed that the administrative leaders had responded with a style of leadership reflecting the classical heroic approach. The analysis also revealed that the leadership influence had been constrained to within the administrative realm.

The intention of the research, however, is to explore not just whether the administrative leaders perceived a crisis, but to also explore how they viewed their own leadership in the context of the perceived crisis environment. The interest here is to explore the previously mentioned relationship between crisis and change.

The Secretary to the Government, giving the impression that he was speaking for and on behalf of the overall leadership, had indeed explicitly expressed a desire to push "harder and faster" for change, and seemed to have attribute some of the prevailing crisis difficulties to the previous lack of such a push:

> "… And if anything, the biggest frustration and certainly regret that many of us would have is that we didn't push harder and faster for the sorts of change which might have prevented what we came through, or might have mitigated some of the fallouts. …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

Likewise, the Secretary General at the Department of Finance, also alluding to representing the views of many, had also explicitly suggested that change was very much part of what leadership is about, and thus echoing some of the theories discussed hitherto in this document:

> "… Well, from what I can see, there are leaders in the civil service who want to create change it's not that leadership is only about change, but that's a big part …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

The Secretary General at the Department of Education and Skills even expanded on the wider nature of what the leadership of change should be – that it should be proactive and anticipatory, as well as alluding to the suggestion that leadership has a role in "driving" some changes. These perspectives certainly reflected the heroic style of leadership previously discussed as the preferred style of leadership expressed by the senior administrative leaders:

> "…we certainly have a role in anticipating the change, in meeting the change in services, and perhaps it can be rightly said that perhaps too often we are in a situation of reacting to change rather than anticipating change rather than being in a position to manage it, channel it, whatever Are we in the business of driving change I think we are in the business of driving some change where that change is needed …" (*Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills*)

Furthermore, the Secretary General to the Department of Justice and Law Reform even expressed that change for change sake was good for keeping the world of public administration "fresh":

> "… I like to work against the clock in the sense that I feel that it keeps the rather stale world of public administration fresh if there is reasonably frequency changes at the top in the administration side …" (*Secretary General, Department of Justice and Law Reform*)

The perspective of the senior administrative leaders seemed to reflect seemed a remarkable consensus that change is preferred.

However, once again, to provide a deeper and more insightful evaluation of whether there was indeed a preference for change, there was a need to go beyond merely detecting explicit verbal declaration that change was preferred. This is because given the situational context of the interviews, the senior administrative leaders could have provided set answers only. In the face of an acknowledged crisis, Pollner's (1987) notion of mundane reasons and Potter's (1996) suggestion of Interests would combined to construe that even the most skeptical of individuals would still pay lip service to the notion of supporting change. Yukl (1999, 2004) had, however, proposed a somewhat useful set of approaches that would help to detect the presence of change-oriented perceptions, regardless of whether there were explicit verbal declarations. Amongst a number of tendencies, he had suggested that leaders with change orientation would tend to be able to express confidence and optimistism in their vision when proposing a major change, and to express that change would still be preferred even in the face of apparent risks (Yukl 1999, 2004).

From the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners, he had indeed proposed that there should be an appreciation of the risks and a preparedness to face the risks while pursuing the vision:

> "… that you are somebody who appreciates the risks that are associated with change, and who wants to manage those risks, but who was also prepared to

take risks, reasonable risks, in furtherance of making the changes, of attaining the goals of the organisation …" (Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners)

Indeed, even though it could be argued that the perspective of taking risk and driving change would be somewhat out of place within a regimented uniformed organisation such as that of a police force, yet the perspective of the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Síochána*, the Irish Police force, had instead reflected a rather remarkable bias towards risk and change:

"… I think risk taking is essential, I think if you don't chance your arm a lot of the time, you are not going to make changes ... One does have to take risks …" *(Deputy Commissioner, An Garda Síochána)*

Therefore, given the explicit expression for a preference for change, given the presence of visions as previously discussed, given the heroic preference for action, and now supported by an apparent confidence in facing risks, it is possible to propose that the senior Irish administrative leaders have a notable preference towards change.

That notwithstanding, what was the extent of that preference for change? Are there indications of a preference for radical and frame breaking (Nadler 1988) change? There seemed to be a paradox amongst the perception of the senior Irish public administrative leaders that while trumpeting urgent and significant change as necessary in the face of a crisis, that at the same time the senior Irish administrative leaders would be defending a more conservative pace of change.

It could be that in sensing a lack of progress towards change while change was trumpeted as necessary, that the senior Irish administrative leaders would attempt to explain such reality disjuncture (Pollner 1987) through external attribution of causes. Indeed, the analysis had revealed allegations by the leaders of third party resistance to change. The Secretary General to the Department of Finance had alluded to both the political realm (the Ministers) and even his own colleagues within the administrative realm as sources for the resistance:

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"… So we get both Ministers and Department Heads who are protecting their own patch, and resisting change, at the time the country most need a very positive, swift reaction to the crisis …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

The analysis had also revealed significant attitudes towards the systemic inertia to change. There were a number of indications indicating the senior Irish administrative leaders' awareness of an inertia inherent in the Irish civil and public service system. For example, there seemed to be a perspective that the culture and the established process of the public administration system in the Republic of Ireland is in itself a source of inertia. The Secretary General of the Department of Finance had ascribed inertia to the natural dynamics of system development – that the system had "evolved and developed over time" into a self-sustaining system of inertia:

"… We have some really good people in leadership positions, some of them really excellent people, and yet, they don't seem to be able to create the kind of change that they want, and this is in part due to some sort of institutional inertia – but it is not inertia in the sense of an unwillingness to move, but it is that systems evolved, and developed over time, in ways that are self sustaining ... the evolution of the system has found that particular equilibrium that isn't conducive to major and radical change, and that's what systems are – they are self sustaining, complex operations that interact in such a way as to find an equilibrium and that shouldn't be a surprise but nonetheless the real change leaders in the civil service, both at the official level and even amongst politicians, find it difficult enough time achieving the kind of change they want …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

In the same vein, the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners had suggested that it was the inertia inherent in the system, almost unknowingly, that had created and had continuously reinforced a culture of risk adversity:

"…from time to time that risk adverse culture is reinforced when you have one or two sort of fiascos or events ... none of that would encourage senior public service leaders, I think, to take risks ... that you would go into your bunker and

you will make sure that you don't expose yourself to it in that way – and the consequence is of course that it slows down the whole process of change and all of that ... And I would think also that the whole process of the Public Accounts Committee – that accountability is – I mean in some ways it strikes me that those *Oireachtas* (Parliamentary) Committees on the one hand they want the public service to be innovative, they want the public service to emulate the private sector, on the other hand they are the quickest bodies – if some small mistakes were made to say you shouldn't have done that So I am not sure that there is enough freedom there yet – to allow – it is really to let public servants become more entrepreneurial, if I can put it that way …" *(Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners)*

The Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government and the Director of the Equality Tribunal both even suggested that the system was more than just sluggish in resistance, but that it was punitive. And to suggest a punitive effect would imply a somewhat de-motivational effect working against change:

> :… But I suppose again we do have the reality and the difficulty that we are not very encouraging of risk-takers, particularly within the system You can get badly burnt, you know, if your flare and your innovation carries you away ((laughter)) in a certain direction …" *(Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government)*

> "…people are very risk averse ... people try to avoid risk I mean if you are Assistant Secretary in a Government Department – as we have seen – and you don't pass on some information, or you made a wrong call, you could be hung out to dry by the PAC [Public Accounts Committee] …" *(Director, Equality Tribunal)*

From another perspective, there was a view that there was inertia inherent in the personality or in the individual traits of the individual public administrators:

"…there is also a sort of an internal challenge which is to create leaders out of people not every senior manager is a great leader – and some senior managers are innately conservative, which is no harm in some ways – but there is some who are conservative in a sense of wanting to protect all that is best, that's a good thing. There are others who are conservative in the sense merely not wanting to be exposed or to take decisions sometimes, and that is innate within our public system …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

The perspective of the Secretary General of the Department of Finance seemed to be that this inertia was "innate within our public system", and such a perception seemed to have also been echoed both by the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children and by the Director of the Equality Tribunal, with both alluding to the self perpetuating nature of the recruitment process within the Irish public services as a culprit in retaining the inertia:

"… Well innate clones pick clones. TLAC [Top Level Appointments Committee] picks clones. People like the people who do the same things they do ... and that's what it is about. So you pick the person … so you get the same kind of people – you know – more clones …" *(Director, Equality Tribunal)*

And the Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children had alluded to the same notion:

"… It is possible that those who come up through the public sector are people – given that they have been selected by other senior public servants that they will be of a particular kind They would be of a particular training, of a particular outlook …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

The Assistant Secretary of the Department of Health and Children also at the same time alluded to the self-monitoring and self regulating culture of the Irish public services in "conditioning" and maintaining such a conservative culture:

"… In the public service we are very careful, and unfortunately we are trained to be careful in one sense – now that is understandable – I mean you don't want people going off doing things that risk huge amount of public resources – they are not our resources, they are the taxpayers resources ... but when things do go wrong – inevitably, we are very heavily criticised ... if you take any of the sort of experiments that haven't worked, you might argue that in a private sector firm if they didn't work, they would put it down to experience, they put it down to a loss, they learn from it and move on In the public system it's seen as some sort of a major failure ... So yes, we are conditioned – unfortunately – to be somewhat risk averse ... It is possible that those who come up through the public sector are people, given that they have been selected by other senior public servants that they will be of a particular kind They would be of a particular training, of a particular outlook …" *(Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children)*

However, while it may be possible to explain the seeming paradox of trumpeting urgent and significant change in the face of a crisis and at the same time defending a conservative pace of change by making reference to external attribution of causes, but the analysis had reveal an alternative finding. The analysis had revealed that the senior Irish public administrative leaders themselves were expressing more than a mere awareness of the resistance to change or of the systemic inertias, but that they had expressed an overt preference for a conservation of certain values and institutions at the expense of a radical pace of change.

For example, the Secretary to the Government had overtly expressed his view that the momentum of change must not undermine the fundamental values of impartiality within the institutions of the public services:

"… This idea of an impartiality meritocratic civil service ... it is imperative that the civil service came through this period with at least its ambitions and aspirations intact – maybe not with its reputation fully intact but maybe with the idea or the value if you like – of having an independent civil service with meritocratic recruitment and so on That does seem to stand unthreatened at

this stage …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

The resoluteness in maintaining certain values and institutions was also clearly expressed by the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills, with the unequivocal statement "That can never be allowed to happen":

"… If you are talking about our fundamental and core values ... I would worry that there is a value to public service and a commitment to public service that actually could be lost out of the system That can never be allowed to happen …" *(Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills)*

Equally unequivocal were the statements "absolutely insist" and "that is not for negotiation" expressed with emphasis by the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Siochana*, the Irish police force regarding the responsibility for protecting rights and dignity:

"… That they don't overstep the boundary of their authority, that they show people the respect and the dignity they are entitled to. And I think above all, and I absolutely insist on this – and I say it constantly to our people – the safest place any member of the public can be should be within a Garda *(police)* station. There should never be a safer place anywhere. No matter what the reason they are there for, whether it is to make an enquiry about how to get a passport, or whether they are in for murder. They should be the safest there are and therefore, we have a huge responsibility for protecting the human rights and the dignity of individuals – that is not for negotiation." *(Deputy Commissioner, An Garda Siochana)*

Likewise with the statement "we should maintain absolutely and at all cost" from the Secretary General of the Department of Finance concerning honesty and integrity:

"… there are some values that we should maintain absolutely and at all cost. Our value we must maintain absolutely is that we must never be corrupt ... we

must absolutely be honest in our personal and financial dealings on the public behalf …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

What seemed to have emerged is that the values seen as important appeared to be institutionally related – "impartiality", "meritocratic", "commitment to public service", "respect and dignity to the citizens", "never be corrupted". What had also emerged is the apparent strength of conviction. It seemed therefore that, from the perspectives of the senior Irish administrative leaders, there are values and institutions that must be conserved, that no pace of change should be permitted to interfere with the maintenance of these values and institutions.

While the perspective emerged was that these values and institutions are to be protected, such notion of conservatorship (Terry 1995) do not necessarily equate a blanket resistance to all change. The suggestion was that conservatorship could be compatible with a preference for change that emphasised continuity with the past, particularly continuity with the values of the past. This would be Nadler's (1988) notion of frame-bending changes. The Secretary to the Government had alluded to that precise notion when he described his preferred change scenario when discussing the restoration of confidence and competences within the public services. His preference that "one did not need to abandon that tradition":

> "… but what could we do to stop it – only to re-build confidence that one did not need to abandon that tradition (of an impartiality meritocratic civil service) in order to have both an effective public service but also a renewed one you find ways of strengthening the expertise that was lacking, re-focusing efforts where structure needs to be changed, and re-tasking people where new program for government and whatever was in place …" (*Secretary to the Government, Secretary General, Department of the Taoiseach*)

Likewise with the Deputy Commissioner of *An Garda Siochana*, the Irish police force. His preference was that change should take place while at the same time "retain and keep the right culture":

"… the whole management of change itself It has to be managed very, very carefully You have to have very carefully considered change plan in place. You have to set out exactly in that sort of time frames, and targets to meet within the time frames, and accountability frameworks. And the whole area of change – and the planning of that change has to be managed very, very carefully. And I would have a concern about changing the established culture of the organisation. And it is very, very, very important to retain and keep the right culture ... otherwise it does damage to the organisation …" *(Deputy Commissioner, An Garda Siochana)*

This notion of change that emphasised continuity with and protection of existing values – of existing institutional values – was also stressed by the Secretary General of the Department of Finance:

"… We have some hugely important values we need to protect, but actually none of those values is about either refusal to lead or refusal to be led. Those values are about honesty, incorruptibility, fairness and equity in our dealings, understanding our role and our duty to citizens, and about moving forward and all of those values actually should be propelling us towards change – not away from it ... one of the fantastic things about values led civil service and wider public service had been that it had really helped create a proper republic in Ireland ... We need to protect that sort of contributions to our proper republicanism ... And I do see some dangers in some of the changes we might have in mind, that we would go too far in stepping away from those values in the hope of achieving a real change in performance levels …" (*Secretary General, Department of Finance*)

There appears therefore a sense that Nadler's (1988) notion of frame-bending changes – changes that emphasised continuity with the past, particularly continuity with the values of the past – is the approach to change preferred by the senior Irish public administrative leaders.

The Leaders Socially Constructing their Leadership Realities

One of the observations is that the pictures revealed by different administrative leaders concerning their preferred leadership response to the perceived crisis and concerning their leadership perspectives are remarkably consistent between the various leaders. Drawing on the social construction treatise by Berger and Luckmann (1966), Berger and Luckmann had suggested that social institutions (in this case, the Irish administrative leadership) are created in society by individuals who firstly construct the value-attached roles that comprise the institution, and then actively maintaining those roles within the constructed institutions. Their proposition is that those individuals (in this case, the senior public administrators who are at the highest echelons of the Irish civil service) actively construct, influence and safeguard the realities of the institution through their dialectic social interactions (Berger and Luckmann (1966:149). The argument is that the realities and the perspectives that they presented were consistent because the realities and the perspectives were the product of their own social construction – that the realities emerge, evolve, affect and is affected by the actions and the interactions of these administrative leaders amongst themselves.

Evidence of the dyadic and dialectical social relationships can be interpreted from the conversations in the interviews. Particularly, the interviews revealed evidence of the processes of "externalisation, objectification and internalisation" (Berger and Luckmann 1966:149), which are the three stages of the dialectic social interactions proposed by Berger and Luckmann (1966).

With respect to the processes of externalisation and objectification, the analysis revealed that, in the constructed social context of a research interview, these public administrative leaders had used the portrayal of the 'heroic' traits and had actively associated positive values to these traits. In other words, these traits were actively being externalised and objectified. For example, the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners' story telling of visionary Paul Haran (former Secretary General of the Department of Trade and Enterprise), describing him as having taken "brave initiatives" that "took the Department to a new level":

> "… I think the best example of that in the ones I have given you is probably Paul Haran (Secretary General of the Department of Trade and Enterprise), whose view … was quite brave, and was resisted definitely around the system ... who took initiatives in terms of opening up the whole agenda about Ireland's regime for encouraging foreign direct investment … who … I think took that Department to a new level in terms of thinking about the future …" (*Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners*)

By associating vision and perseverance with the story of national economic success, the notion of having vision and being persistent was routinely assigned positive values, and in so doing, they externalised and objectified those phenomena as positive and desirable. In the same manner, with the Assistant Secretary to the Department of Health and Children's story of the leadership of the Health Services Executive, his emphasis of Professor Tom Keane actively "setting" the vision, "confronting" the changes, "securing" agreements and "implementing" changes:

> "… I think … particular by Professor Tom Keane, was a very good example of setting the vision, what I was talking about earlier, recognising that people will be afraid of change, confronting that change in a positive way by communicating a reason for why things need to be done differently … working with them very closely, securing their agreements, and implementing change over time …" (*Assistant Secretary, Department of Health and Children*)

Again activates a process of associating positive values to what could be seen as otherwise neutral acts – this time by the usage of selective vocabulary. Similarly, we see the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills' referring to The Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners "driving" the change,

> "… the Revenue restructuring, … for example, … They actually had invested, they had a change management team of a significant number of people, whose job it was to drive the change, to implement it …" (*Secretary General, Department of Education and Skills*)

Or the Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners' referring to the Secretary General of the Department of Agriculture and Food's "strong" and "extraordinary" leadership:

> "… the leadership shown at the Department of Agriculture and Food some years ago during the whole Foot and Mouth crisis was extraordinary feat, very, very good strong leadership and a fusion of leadership and management dealing with the crisis …" (*Chairman of the Revenue Commissioners*)

We see, too, the central role language plays in the social construction process. We see how language vocabularies can be selected to reflect particular values and how those selected values can then be associated with specific acts in order to externalise and objectify them. The process of internalisation was also evident. Through the social interactions and the mutual story telling amongst the Irish public administrative leaders – as reported in the interviews, and combined with the manner with which they conversed, we can surmise a concerted and dyadic effort to reinforce the values that had been objectified. The consistency in the portrayal of the same values by different individuals supports the inference that there is increasing internalisation of the externalised and objectified values amongst the society in which they belong. For example, the Secretary General of the Department of Finance, the Secretary General to the Department of the Taoiseach, the Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, and the Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs all expressed very similarly positive value of being firm, being persistent and having determination.

> "… we should maintain absolutely at all costs ..." (*Secretary General of the Department of Finance*)
>
> "… to make sure it happens …" (*Secretary General to the Department of the Taoiseach*)
>
> "… pretty forceful about priorities … (*Secretary General of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform*)
>
> "… getting it done ..." (*Secretary General of the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government*)

"… I wasn't going to go away …" (*Secretary General of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*)

The insights gained from recognising how externalisation, objectification and internalisation contribute to the process of social construction amongst the senior Irish administrative leaders provide more than just a support to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) treatise on social construction. The insights provide a perspective with which the Irish public administrative leaders can make sense of how their leadership emerged. The perspective is that it is through the social construction processes of externalisation, objectification and internalisation that a somewhat unique reality of Irish public administrative leadership in a crisis environment emerged – and it is that constructed reality that is being expressed by the administrative leaders in the course of this research.

Summary of the Analysis of Leadership Perspectives

This research is about public administrative leadership perspectives in the Republic of Ireland. The specific intention of this research is to explore how the senior Irish public administrative leaders made sense of their own leadership in the context of a perceived socio-economic crisis in the Republic of Ireland.

The overall analysis seemed to have revealed that the senior Irish administrative leaders had indeed interpreted a crisis environment, and saw it as appropriate and necessary to respond with a heroic style of leadership, albeit constrained to within the administrative realm. And in response to the perceived crisis of significance, the analysis had also revealed a preference amongst the senior Irish administrative leaders for activating change. However, the analysis had revealed that at the same time, there was also a perception amongst the senior Irish public administrative leaders of systemic inertia – inertia originating both from the natural resistance of the system dynamics as well as from a self perpetuation of a punitive culture against innovation and change. The analysis also revealed that the senior Irish administrative leaders had an overt desire to maintain and safeguard various values and institutions, which might have inclined the senior Irish administrative leaders against the thoughts of radical change in favour of a process of change that emphasised continuity with the past.

Thus the overall understanding seems to be that, concerning the leadership response of the senior Irish public administrative leaders in the face of the prevailing socio-economic crisis, there was an expressed preference for change in tandem with a detectable sense of conservatorship.

6.   Conclusions and Reflections

This research is about leadership sense making amongst the public administrative leadership in the Republic of Ireland. The research is specifically about how senior administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland interpreted their environment and made sense of their leadership in the midst of a perceived socio-economic crisis. Two significant findings have emerged from this research, which will make a contribution to knowledge and practice in the field of leadership in public administration.

Firstly, the findings indicate that the leadership perspective of the senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland is a perspective that reflects a degree of heroism (Ford et al 2008). In other words, it is a leadership perspective that sees the leaders as heroes, that sees the role of a leader as that of a helmsman, as one who holds the organisation's vision and whose presence is necessary in order to take the organisation and the followers towards their goals and objectives. In particular in a crisis situation, the leader in this perspective is seen as the one who is able to save the situation. It is a perspective that emphasises the importance of various leadership traits and considers those traits as necessary for leaders to possess (Stogdill 1974, Gardner 1989, Méndez-Morse 1992, Spears 2000). It is in essence quite similar to the Great-man perspective (Carlyle 1843, Cowley 1928) or the Trait perspective (Bird 1940, Jenkins 1947) of leadership. This is a significant finding, given that the prevailing rhetoric concerning leadership and public leaderships (e.g. Manz and Sims 1987, Bennis and Townsend 1997, Van Wart 2003, Srivastava et al 2006) tends to have an unfavourable view of such a leadership perspective. Prevailing research also seemed to suggest that the unilateral leadership behaviour of the individual leaders may not play as much of a role in organisational outcomes as hero perspective might suggest (Meindl et al 1985, Meindl 1995, Pfeffer and Salancik 1978).

Secondly, the findings indicate that despite the senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland expressing awareness that the country was facing a significant socio-economic crisis, and despite the leaders expressing awareness that significant changes were necessary, the preferred leadership approach was nevertheless one that reflected a significant degree of conservatorship (Selznick 1984, Terry 1995). In other words, despite the acknowledged crisis environment, the socially constructed leadership response by the senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland reflects an emphasis on the conserving of various values and institutions (Scott 1995, Terry 2003) through the pursuit of incremental change (Nadler 1988, Tushman 1988, Dunphy and Stace 1993, Senior 2002, Burnes 2004). This is a significant finding, given that the prevailing rhetoric concerning leadership in significant crisis tends to point instead towards a preference for pursuing radical change or disruptive reform (Grundy 1993, Kotter 1996, Kanter 2001).

The contribution of these findings to knowledge and practice can be seen in the context of the acknowledgement and commendations given to the senior public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland with respect to their policy implementations in response to the socio-economic crisis. Consensus amongst international economics observers in general, and in particular the troika of Institutions (the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund) who provided the initial rescue loans, was that the Republic of Ireland's economic recovery policies had been deemed more successful than either of the only other two European countries (Greece and Portugal) requiring external financial assistance to date (IHS 2011, Humphries 2011). And more than just acknowledging the success of the policies in themselves (the selection of which was *not* the responsibility of the public administrative leadership), the view was that the process of leading the implementation of the unpopular policies (which *was* the responsibility of the public administrative leadership) had also been effective (Heydt and McCormick 2010, IMF 2011, Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011).

The contribution of these findings to knowledge and practice in a generalised manner can be defended notwithstanding the research being an interpretive research involving only a singular case study. Fundamentally, generalisation is taken in a broad sense to mean "a general notion or proposition obtained by inference from particular cases"

(Concise Oxford Dictionary 2008). Therefore, although there were researchers such as Guba and Lincoln (1982, 1994) and even Denzin (1983) in his earlier writings who had suggested that generalisation from interpretive research can be problematic, generalisation from an interpretivist research has been shown to be viable, and indeed there are many, such as Hammersley (1990, 1992), Ward-Schofield (1993), Mason (1996) or Williams (2000), who have presented overwhelmingly strong arguments in support. The argument presented here is therefore that the observations and findings from this research can be applied to a wider context to inform the leadership of public administration elsewhere.

Specific Findings

From the earlier discussions, the proposition was that the research should be framed around two broad lines of inquiry, namely,

1.   How had the senior Irish public administrative leaders interpreted the broader environment they saw themselves in?

2.   How had the senior Irish public administrative leaders made sense of their response to the environment they perceived themselves to be in?

A significant finding that emerged from the combination of these two lines of inquiry is the finding concerning how the senior Irish administrative leaders saw their own leadership, especially their leadership in response to the specific crisis environment in the context of this research. The finding reveals that the senior Irish administrative leaders did perceive the broader environment they were in to be a significant crisis environment, and did see themselves as having a leadership role. Moreover, the finding reveals that the senior administrative leaders did see it as necessary to provide a leadership response, and did see responding with a particular leadership approach as making sense.

Regarding the public administrative leaders' interpretation of a crisis in the broader environment they were in, the findings show very little discrepancies amongst the perception of the various leaders. Their interpretation was that the environment they

were in was a crisis environment of a significant magnitude – their acknowledgement of their awareness of the socio-economic crisis was unanimous. However, reflecting the social constructionist paradigm (Berger and Luckmann 1966, Burr 1995, Gergen 1999), the findings do reveal that different administrative leaders had perceived the crisis environment from somewhat different perspectives. In other words, while there was unanimous interpretation that the environment they found themselves in was a crisis environment of significance, there were variations in the sense making and in the explanation of the basis upon which they came to such an interpretation. The variation of reasoning was sufficiently diverse. One perspective saw the situation as a crisis situation because of the magnitude and the extent of the socio-economic problems faced by the country. Another did not see the extent of the problems themselves *per se* as a sufficient reason to call it a crisis, but instead saw it as a crisis because of the urgency and the lack of time to bring resolution to the problems. Another perspective saw the lack of the country's own inability to resolve the problems at hand (rather than the problems themselves being in nature insurmountable), as a reason to determine the environment as a crisis. Another perspective saw a crisis not because of the problems themselves – the problems were merely the triggers – but because of the significant demands the problems place on how the country should respond. Thus, the public administrative leaders held diverse views of what constituted a crisis, to the extent that they were seeing very different things when they were discussing *the* crisis. But while the findings reveal a diverse sense making process amongst the senior Irish public administrative leaders, there were nevertheless convergence towards the same conclusion that the environment they faced was a crisis environment of significance. The findings reveal that not only was there consensus concerning the presence of a significant crisis, there was consensus that significant change is necessary in response to the crisis. The findings reveal a consensus amongst the senior Irish public administrative leaders that leadership action is necessary to resolve the crisis.

In terms of the general leadership perspectives of the senior Irish administrative leaders, there are two significant findings. Firstly, that the leadership approach deemed effective by the administrative leaders themselves reflects a heroic type of leadership, one that not only emphasises the central importance of the leader in the leadership process, but also emphasises positivistic traits which the leader should

possess. Secondly, that while their preferred leadership approach reflects heroic leadership, the senior Irish administrative leaders nevertheless have a degree of clarity concerning the boundary of their leadership – that their leadership influence should be only within the realm of public administration and not infringing into the realm of public politics.

Regarding the leadership approach deemed appropriate by the administrative leaders themselves, the approach deemed appropriate reflects a perspective that sees the role of the leader as the central figure within the leadership process. It is a perspective that sees the leader as the one who holds the organisation's vision, who drives the agenda and the direction, and whose presence is necessary in order to take the organisation and the followers towards their goals and objectives. In particular in a crisis situation, the leader in this perspective is seen as the one who, by his or her leadership, save the situation. It is a perspective that emphasises the importance of various leadership traits, such as vision, confidence, courage, persistence etc., and sees those traits as necessary for leaders to possess. The findings reveal that the senior Irish administrative leaders saw these traits as crucial when describing their own leadership successes as well as when describing other administrative successes. It is in essence a leadership perspective reflecting the Trait perspective (Bird 1940, Jenkins 1947, Stogdill 1974) of leadership. This is an interesting finding given that prevailing discussions on leadership tends to point to an evolution away from such a perspective to one that is more contingent on either the situation or the followers (Doyle and Smith 2001, Van Maurik 2001, Fairholm 2002).

Regarding the boundary of their leadership, the findings reveal a sense that these senior administrative leaders clearly saw themselves as administrative leaders and not political leaders, and that their leadership role was clearly one of leading the implementation of policies rather than being involved in the politics of policy selection. Indeed, the findings reveal that the leadership focus of the senior Irish administrative leaders was overwhelmingly administrative by nature, and that their leadership focus largely related only to the implementation of policies. The findings also reveal that the majority of the senior administrative leaders were acutely aware of the differentiation between the role of elected politicians and their own role as appointed public administrators, and were at pains to maintain that differentiation. At

the most obvious, the finding at least confirms the classical separation between public politics and public administration (Northcote and Trevelyan 1854, Van Wart 2003, Van Wart and Dicke 2008) within Irish public governance, both structurally and culturally. But it can also be seen that the remarkable consensus in conforming to within the administrative leadership boundary reveals the social processes of social identity (Tajfel and Turner 1979) and self categorisation (Turner 1985, Turner et al 1987) being continuously played out amongst the senior Irish public administrative leaders.

In terms of the specific leadership response seen by the senior Irish public administrative leaders as the appropriate response to the perceived crisis, the findings reveal that despite the awareness of a significant crisis environment requiring significant change, there is a preference amongst the senior Irish administrative leaders for a more conservative approach to leadership and to the management of change. The findings reveal that the antipathy towards radical change was not merely because of the leaders' recognition of the existence of a systemic resistance or inertia to change, but that, in the face of the severe crisis, the senior Irish administrative leaders saw it preferable to seek to maintain and to defend the values and the institutions while simultaneously advocating and activating a degree of change. In particular, the findings had revealed that the leaders saw it as important to conserve a number of espoused institutional cultures and values, such as fairness, impartiality, transparency, as well as the democratic institution itself. Thus the findings reveal a balanced perspective amongst the senior Irish administrative leaders in responding to the crisis, where the advocating of significant change in a crisis environment is held in balance by a preference for conserving and safeguarding certain institutions and values, resulting in a preference for incremental rather than radical change.

Thus, in summary, the findings of this research reveal a picture of how the senior Irish public administrative leaders saw themselves as leaders, and how they saw themselves responding to the crisis they were facing. The picture shows a public administrative leader who sees himself or herself as heroic in times of crisis, a leader who sees himself or herself possessing strong leadership traits, such as being visionary and having perseverance, a leader who understands the magnitude of the crisis and sees the need for change, but at the same time a leader determined to conserve various

important institutional cultures and values, such as fairness, impartiality or transparency.

The findings emerged from this research is that the public administrative leaders reflected in these research findings are the ones commended by the various international economic observers for achieving a measure of success in leading the implementation of the Republic of Ireland's socio-economic recovery. The argument is therefore that the insight into their leadership perspectives would serve to inform and to add to wider public administrative leadership knowledge and practice.

Contributions to Knowledge and Practice

The perspective that the Republic of Ireland is currently still facing tremendous socio-economic uncertainties is hard to challenge. Given the extent of the sustained national economic decline and the invariable social fall-outs, the Government in the Republic of Ireland would arguably be facing significant challenges of unprecedented magnitudes as they attempted to restore the nation back to a state of reasonable social and economic well-being. The public administrators, whose classical role was to advise the Government on policy decisions and then to lead in the implementation of those policies once they had been decided upon by the Government, would also face their share of administrative leadership responsibilities and their share of the challenges associated thereof.

In relations to the exercising of the administrative leadership in the face of a crisis, there was the proposition that the essence of leadership involves the fostering of change (Kotter 1990, Kanter 2001, Bridges 2009). There was also the suggestion that a lack of desire for change, or a persistent resistant to change, would be somewhat incompatible with the leadership response to crisis (Smith 1997, Kotter and Cohen 2002). As such, there might be a tendency or a temptation for practitioners to be biased towards change when faced with a significant crisis. The suggestion would be that where maintaining the *status quo* is undesirable, the greater the extent of the undesirability, the greater could be the push for change. Where the *status quo* is deemed a crisis state of affair, the temptation would be to focus exclusively on change to the almost complete exclusion of any thought for conservation.

Thus, in the context of public service management and leadership in the Republic of Ireland, where the prevailing socio-economic environment is considered to be in a significant crisis situation, there might be a tendency to expect both the political leaders and the public administrative leaders to place an emphasis on driving changes.

The findings from this research, however, had revealed an alternative perspective. It is the perspective that a degree of conservatorship (Selznick 1984, Terry 1995) amongst the administrative leadership can be of benefits, regardless of the extent of any crisis at hand. The perspective is that there were institutions and values that are sufficiently important to be conserved, regardless of the extent of the crisis at hand and that administrative leaders acting to conserve those same values should be seen as commendable, even in crisis environments of significance.

Such a perspective does not conflict or does not contradict the established literatures that suggest the driving of changes as an essential element of effective leadership. The contribution of this research does not challenge this established proposition, but rather adds to it by proposing a more balanced approach to public administrative leadership. The more balanced approach incorporates both the driving of change and the conserving of worthwhile institutions and values. The findings and the observations provided by this research have provided indications that the implementation of change and the conservation of values and institutions can be exercised in tandem, and thus support the proposition that the balanced approach is viable.

The proposition that the approach is a viable approach was founded on the perspective that the Republic of Ireland have been acknowledged as being successful in emerging from the social economic crisis (Appendix V-A), and that the success had been partly attributed to the leadership of the senior Irish public administrative leaders leading the difficult implementation of the overall national response to the crisis – the same leaders whose leadership perspectives were the subject of this research.

Contribution to the Changing Practice of the Researcher – a Reflective Analysis

Prior to the undertaking of this series of DBA research, leadership training and leadership development programs were delivered by the researcher in a positivistic manner. The positivistic approach was based on the perspective that 'leadership' exists as an independent external reality – that 'leadership' is a phenomenon independent of the person that is the leader, independent of those who are followers, and independent of the context within which leadership is being exercised. The perspective was that the essence and the expression of leadership can be detached from the existing 'leader' and packaged, and then objectively transferred to other individuals who wish to become leaders. The corollary of such a perspective was the view that 'leaders' are heroic and magnificent individuals who exult in great measures these essence and expressions of leadership. Therefore, justified by equally positivistic theoretical models of leadership with fixed criteria, my approach to leadership training and leadership development programs was to provide participants with an inventory of traits that they must somehow learn to adopt, and a list of behaviours that they must emulate, and participants on the programs were then encouraged to think that they would surely become outstanding leaders if they can succeed in adopting those traits and emulating those behaviours. Such perspective of leadership is not dissimilar to the perspectives of the senior Irish public administrative leaders as revealed by this research. This would not be surprising given that the research is from amongst their ranks.

At the end of this DBA journey, the perspective is now very different. The exercising of leadership is now seen as a relational process between the perceived leaders and the perceived followers. The perspective now is that leadership is a social phenomenon that cannot be detached from the individuals and from their social interactions. Instead of viewing leadership as an external objective reality, the perspective now is that the leader-follower reality is socially constructed through the social interactions between the perceived leaders and the perceived followers. Accordingly, the thrust of leadership training and leadership development now is to try to foster an awareness in the participants of the dyadic exchange between the leaders and the followers, and to try to develop in them insights and understandings – insights into and understandings

of how of the realities as perceived by both the leaders and the followers are constantly being constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed.

The significant shift in the researcher's leadership development practices was the direct result of a fundamental shift from a positivistic perspective of leadership to a social constructionist perspective. A positivistic approach to leadership development espouses a message that leadership is a process that can be captured independent of the individuals being developed, and that can be externally packaged and wholesale transferred to the individuals with no regards for the context. From such a positivist perspective, potential leaders merely need to learn to adopt certain traits and emulate certain types of behaviour in order to become leaders. On the other hand, a social constructionist perspective sees the process of leadership as a dyadic relationship of mutual influence between the leaders and the followers, each continually constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the realities of their relationship in the roles that they each perceives themselves to be in. From the constructionist perspective, potential leaders need to appreciate and have insights into these relational dynamics in order to actuate their leadership.

Reflecting on the research journey that influenced such a shift in perspective, this DBA research has spanned six research documents spread over a six year period of time. The process of research over the entire period can be described as a continuous journey of discovery. Indeed, the findings of this particular thesis should be seen as having emerged from the accumulation of all the discoveries throughout the entire journey. While the constructivists' understanding is that there is no external independent reality to be discovered, a researcher's perspective nevertheless plays a significant role in the framing of what is being discovered. At the commencement of the journey, the researcher's perspective of leadership was most definitely positivistic in orientation. His view at that point was that leadership could be encapsulated and could be acted out by individuals through a prescribed set of behaviours – behaviours that could be externally ascertained and then packaged and transferred wholesale to the individuals. However, as the research journey progressed, revelations from the research findings and insights gained from the on-going research efforts led the researcher to become more aware of the limitations and the inappropriateness of the positivistic stance in the context of leadership and of other social phenomena. What

emerged then was an increasing awareness of the need to adopt a more interpretive and a more constructivist approach to the understanding of leadership. The extent of the change in perspective can be seen in the decision to adopt a completely interpretive approach for this final thesis – the shifting of perspectives had put the researcher's perspective of leadership at the end of the research journey almost diametrically opposite to the initial perspective at the commencement of the journey.

One of the insights gained was the understanding that, as practitioners, not only is our approach to the practices of leadership training and leadership development a reflection of our own perspectives of what leadership is, but that, in turn, our own perspectives of what leadership is invariably influence the views of leadership that we encourage the program participants to adopt. This insight, however, raises a slight dilemma. The dilemma is that the approach to leadership training and leadership development which we now prefer to adopt is not the approach which potential participants (clients) prefer to sign up for. At the commencement of the research journey, reflecting a positivistic perspective of leadership, the core message was that there is an external set of acknowledged leadership behaviours that, when adopted, leadership will be deemed to have been exercised. The thrust of leadership training and leadership development then was therefore to have the potential leaders learn the set of behaviours and then for them to practice the behaviours – albeit with some broad adaption to the situational environment and to the types of followers. In contrast, leadership development is now being viewed not as imparting external packages of behaviours to those who wish to become leaders. Therefore, the thrust of leadership training and leadership development now is to try to foster awareness and try to develop insights into how each leadership reality is constructed. But from the perspective of the program participants, the former positivistic approach to training and development was the approach they prefer. It is understandable that participants attending corporate training and development courses (as compared to individual life-coaching sessions) would prefer to be pointed towards tangible, identifiable and objectified behaviours, ones that can be packaged for them to take away to practice and to imitate. Moreover, it is understandable that, also from the perspective of the participants from the Irish public sector, the latter approach would seem to imply a leadership perspective that is in contradiction to what they are observing in their own

leaders – that the portrayals of leadership by their own administrative leaders are still more positivistic and heroic.

Nevertheless, such perception of dilemma and contradictions may only be of consequence in the short term. In the long term, the aforementioned changes in the practices of leadership development stand to bring direct contributions to knowledge and direct influence to the practices of leadership development in the Republic of Ireland. The view is that a significant means by which public sector management knowledge is disseminated and defused to practice is through the process of continuous professional development amongst the public service personnel. The Institute of Public Administration in the Republic of Ireland is the *de facto* training authority for the public sector in the Republic of Ireland and a significant amount of continuous professional development amongst senior Irish public administrators is carried out through the Institute. Given that this research was carried out by a senior faculty member of the Institute, new understandings derived from this research will find a ready-made channel through which they can be disseminated and defused to practice. As such, through the changing emphasis of the Institute's leadership training and development programs, this shift in perspective of leadership will eventually be diffused even amongst the highest leadership echelons of the Irish civil and public services. The contribution of this research journey to knowledge and practice is therefore significant.

Limitations and Recommendation for Further Research

The overarching purpose of this research was to bring contribution to management practice as part of a Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) research. As such, a significant requirement was that this research could provide tangible contribution to knowledge that can also be practically applied in a generic way. That notwithstanding, given the nature of the topic under research, namely the topic of leadership, and given the research methodology adopted, a number of limitations were recognised and have been acknowledged.

Previous discussion in the literature review section of the document had already alluded to the illusive nature of the notion of leadership. Burns' claim that leadership

was "one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (Burns 1978:2) came to the fore once again. While the suggestion is that this research had added to knowledge and had increased our understanding, it is also possible to argue that there is a limitation to how far this research could claim to have further illuminated the leadership phenomenon in any definitive way. Indeed, since the argument is that leadership was a social phenomenon prone to change, and prone to change as society and societal values change in time, the limitation of this research would be that while the contribution to theoretical knowledge might be of timeless value, the contribution to practice may well be more short live, given the rapidly changing social environment.

In terms of contribution to practice, limitations are also acknowledged with respect to the adopted research methodology. As this research is a piece of interpretive qualitative research within a case study context, the debate concerning the extent to which its findings could be generalised is a debate that should not be under-emphasised. As previously discussed, the argument is that the specific settings, the particular context relating to the singular moment in time, the contextual relationship between the researcher and the research subjects, the distinctive perspective of the researcher and the unique interacting dynamics between the researcher and the interviewees at that moment in time, none of these could be replicated exactly. Therefore, while the interpretive findings could arguably be added to theoretical knowledge with reference to particular contexts, the extent to which the findings could usefully inform general practice remained contentious.

As an interpretive research, the understandings are framed by the perspectives and the mind-set of both the researcher as well as the research subjects (Fink 2000). The approach is for the researcher to attempt to understand the sense making of the research subjects. The dynamic play between the analytical framing of the researcher and the sense making perspectives of the research subjects is the basis of how the findings emerged. While proponents of the Interpretivist approach would argue that such dynamic play is the very essence that constituted an interpretive research, the perceived lack of robustness of this dynamic exchange would compromise the contribution and the acceptance of the findings to professional practice.

Particularly regarding the unique interacting dynamics between the researcher and the interviewees, there is also the argument that the mere fabrication of a constructed setting away from the natural environment would imply that the leadership phenomenon under research could only be described or discussed retrospectively and not observed first hand. Even the argument that the research is about the interpretation or the sense making of the research subject has to take into account the professional experiences of the research subjects, who are career civil and public servants at the highest echelons of the Irish civil and public service, and who would have been very experienced in providing rehearsed and managed responses at interviews. As such, there could be a risk that the interviews would have reflected a scripted response instead, rather than the 'genuine' perspectives of the research subjects.

Regarding recommendations for further research in the light of the discussions hitherto, the addition of other qualitative methods such as action research or ethnography and participant observation will help to deepen the understandings emerged from this research. These methods will also allow for greater access to additional senior administrative leaders, and the additional interviews and conversations would add to the robustness of the research findings. These methods were considered neither practical nor appropriate for this particular DBA research at hand, given the disproportional requirement for significant time and participation, and given the difficulties associated with access in the context of an external academic research project associating with confidential activities of the State and of the senior civil and public services. However, in a different context where it is practical and feasible, where significant time and participation are facilitated, and where access to confidential activities is not an issue, the addition of the other qualitative methods on parallel lines of inquiry will certainly adds to the richness in the understanding of the leadership perspectives and sense making of the senior Irish public administrative leaders.

In Conclusion

The above acknowledged limitations notwithstanding, the proposition is still that the findings of this research are valid and useful.

Given that there is scope for addressing the limitations as well as scope to further substantiate the findings through further research, the proposition is that, if nothing else, this research at the very least would stand valid as a preliminary exploratory research.

But the overall contention is that despite the stated limitations, the findings of this research do provide for valid and substantive suppositions beyond the preliminaries. The proposition is that this research can provide contribution to public sector leadership knowledge in general, as well as to inform the administrative leadership of the Irish civil and public services in particular. The proposition is therefore that this research can and will add to the broader understanding of public management and leadership, as well as stands to contribute to the further development of better public management and leadership in the Republic of Ireland.

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8.   Appendices

Appendix V-A: The Rise and Fall of the Irish Economy.

Given the available economic evidence, there would be few economic observers who would argue against a suggestion that the economy in the Republic of Ireland went through what was a tumultuous and unparalleled economic rollercoaster ride. The meteoric economic rise and the spectacular fall had happened all within a very short generation of three decades. From being one of the poorest economies in Europe in the 1980s, she rose to become one of the wealthiest, but then entered into one of the steepest decline (Ó'Gráda 2009), a decline that arguably is still continuing. Supporting economic statistics (European Commission 2009a, 2011) did seem to show that the Republic of Ireland had hit the recession more abruptly than the rest of Europe. According to the statistics, GDP growth in the Republic of Ireland had nose-dived from a 6% growth to a 9% contraction between 2007 and 2009 while the European average dropped only from a moderate 3% growth to a moderate 4% contraction for the same period. The projection was that by the start of the second decade in the twenty-first century, the Republic of Ireland alone of all European economies would have crossed a psychological threshold of a 10% GDP contraction, transferring the Irish economy from being in an economic recession to being in an economic *depression*, a term made popular by Scott (2003). In a short twelve month period between April 2008 and March 2009, unemployment rate in Ireland more than doubled from 5.2% to 10.6%. By June 2010, unemployment rate had tripled to 16.3%, the highest since 1994 (O'Brien 2010). And the public finance had all but collapsed from a healthy surplus equivalent to 3% of GDP in 2006, to a massive deficit equivalent to 7.1% of GDP in 2010.

The ability of Ireland to recover was also under question. Other major European economies such as Germany, France and Italy all reported a continual return to growth by the end of 2009 (Irish Times, 13th November 2009). By the end of 2010, the European Commission was estimating with some optimism that the 27-member European Union would grow by 1.8% in 2010 (European Commission 2011). Elsewhere in the world, the Peoples' Republic of China, Japan and the United States

of America all reported a return to growth as well in 2010 (International Monetary Fund 2010). But in the Republic of Ireland in the third quarter of 2009, the European Commission had to grant Ireland a one-year deadline extension, from 2013 to 2014, for the recovery of stability in the Irish public finances (European Commission 2009b). The request that Ireland should at the same time raise her annual structural budgetary adjustment to 2.0 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would suggest that in the assessment of the European Commission (European Commission 2009b), the Republic of Ireland's economic recovery would be much longer and much harder to achieve when compared to the rest of Europe.

Indeed, by the end of 2010, the Irish economy had reached a crisis point by all accounts. At the end of November 2010, the Republic of Ireland had to accept a rescue provision of €85bn of financial support, provided jointly by Member States of the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and by bilateral loans from the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark. The European Union (European Commission 2011) also granted the Republic of Ireland a further year – until 2015 – to meet its target of reducing the Irish budgetary deficit to 3%. The cost to the Irish for the financial assistance would be at an interest rate of 5.8%, almost double the rate charged to Greece (Wall Street Journal, 3rd May 2010), and three-quarters higher than the rate charged to Portugal (Wall Street Journal, 5th May 2011), the only other two European country requiring external financial assistance to date. To finance such a loan and to provide for other economic measures, the level of tax increase and expenditure cut sought for in the subsequent Irish National Budget in December 2010 amounted to some €15bn (Irish Government 2010:A.7).

And alongside the economic turmoil, there were political uncertainty as well. The continual economic crisis had led to the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) having to face his own party on a motion of no confidence on the 18th of January 2011. Despite surviving that vote, he then saw in rapid succession the resignation of six of his Cabinet Ministers within the following 48 hours. The withdrawal of the junior coalition partner in Government (the Green Party) on the 23rd of January (Irish Times, 24th January 2011) paved the way for the eventual dissolution of the *Dail* (the Irish Parliament) on the 1st of February and the subsequent General Election on the 25th February 2011. The General Election result saw the outgoing coalition Government

losing 66 (77%) of their 86 parliamentary seats, with the junior coalition partner losing all their seats. For the first time in history, *Fianna Fáil*, the senior coalition partner, was not the largest parliamentary party, whether in government or in opposition. There was even a suggestion (Doyle 2011) that the 2011 General Election saw the worst defeat of a sitting Government since the foundation of the Irish State in 1921.

The first six months of the new Government in the Republic of Ireland and the implementation of their austerity policies seemed to have been well managed and well executed by the public services. Consensus amongst international economics observers seemed to suggest that the Republic of Ireland's economic recovery policies had been deemed more successful than either Greece or Portugal, the only other two European country requiring external financial assistance to date (IHS 2011, Humphries 2011). And more than just the assessment of the policies in themselves (which was the responsibility of the political leadership), the assessment seemed to be that the process of implementation of the unpopular policies (which was the responsibility of the administrative leadership) had also been somewhat effective (Heydt and McCormick 2010, International Monetary Fund 2011, Boyle and MacCarthaigh 2011). More than nine month into the rescue loan, despite continual recession within the Euro single currency zone, the Irish Government continued to receive glowingly positive reports (BBC News, 3rd September 2011; Irish Times, 8th September 2011; Belfast Telegraph, 9th September 2011) from the troika of Institutions (the European Central Bank (ECB), the European Commission (EC) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF)) who provided the initial rescue loans, once more citing the correctness of the policies as well as the effectiveness of their implementation.

The suggestion, in the context of this research, is therefore whether such continual endorsement implied any objective assessment that the acknowledged success in leading the implementation of the austerity measures in response to the economic crisis can in any way be attributed to how the public administrative leadership in the Republic of Ireland had made sense of their own leadership.

Appendix V-B: The Structure of Public Administration and the Role of the Public Administrative Leaders in the Republic of Ireland.

The Republic of Ireland can claim to have a somewhat unique governance structure when compared to its European neighbours. Fundamentally, the Republic of Ireland is governed through a tripartite system of public governance derived from the classical writings of Locke (1690) and Montesquieu (1748). Within this classical tripartite system are the Legislative branch, the Executive branch and the Judiciary branch. The observation was that the constitution of the Executive branch in the Republic of Ireland differed from the classical organisation first suggested by Von Stein (1865) and later refined by Wilson (1887). In particular, the observation was that variations could be found in both the appointment process of senior Irish administrative civil servants and in the permanency of their appointments.

Concerning the process of the appointment of senior administrative civil servants, the intent of the classical organisation was for an independence of appointment in the senior administration, separated from the political influence. The argument was that such a system would provide for a significant degree of non-partisan checks and balances. This was indeed the system employed in the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland's nearest neighbour. In the United Kingdom, while the Secretaries of State (Cabinet Ministers), who were the heads of each of the government departments, were political appointments appointed by the Prime Minister, the Permanent Under Secretaries of State, who were the Accounting Officers and who led the departments' administration, would be career appointments independent of any political influences. Such neutrality of the British civil service still drew much support. In a landmark Parliamentary Answer on the 10th of November 1999, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, the late Dr Mo Mowlam reasserted in no uncertain terms that:

> "The Government are committed to maintaining a permanent and impartial civil service and to upholding the principles of integrity, honesty, impartiality and objectivity set out in the civil service code. That commitment is reinforced in the ministerial code." (Hansard Volume 337 1999:Column 1118)

Indeed, the British Government's efforts in subsequent years to reform and to improve the British civil service (such as the British Government's publication of *Modernising Government* in 1999 and *Civil Service Reform: Delivery and Values* in 2004) did not seek to compromise the essential neutrality of the service (Denton 2006).

In contrast, in the United States of America, the Republic of Ireland's other nearest neighbour, the American system had it purposefully that their top three layers of their administration would be direct political appointees (Milakovich and Gordon 2007). Within the American system, their *Executive Schedule*, which was their top level in their public leadership, would be political appointees (they would be the secretaries of cabinet departments, the equivalent to the British Cabinet Ministers), as would be their assistant secretaries or assistant directors, as well as their second tier *Non-career Senior Executives*, comprising deputy secretaries and agency heads. Moreover, their third tier *Schedule C* employees, which comprised those providing confidential support services to senior appointees in the *Executive Schedule* and to *Non-career Senior Executives*, were also political appointees. Supporters of the American model would argue that it provided strong political support to the smooth functioning of Government (Sanera 1984, Moe 1985). Critics, on the other hand, would suggest that political appointees were amateurs in fields that require expertise knowledge and experiences (Pfiffner 1985, 1987; Cohen 1996).

Concerning the tenure of the appointment of senior administrative civil servants, the classical organisation was for permanent appointments in the Civil Service, buffered from the fluctuation of the changing political circumstances. The argument was that such a system would provide the transient politicians with the benefits of stability and continuity from a permanent Civil Service leadership, and indeed, this is the case for the British Civil Service. In contrast, the American senior civil servants, being political appointees, would be serving at the pleasure of the President, and are normally replaced whenever there is a change in Government. The argument for the American system would be that political alignment with the absence of dissent at the top of the administration can facilitate smoother execution of executive decisions (Milakovich and Gordon 2007).

In the context of the Republic of Ireland, the Irish system for both the appointment of senior civil servants and the nature of their tenure differed from either the British or the American model, and appeared to lie somewhere in between the two. Although Cabinet Ministers heading each Irish Department of State were appointed from the cohort of politicians in similar fashion to their British and American counterparts, the appointments of senior Irish civil servants would be notably different.

Firstly, the observation was that the appointments of senior Irish civil servants would be significantly influenced by the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister) and his Ministers. The head civil servant of each Irish Government department is the Secretary General (*Ard Rúnaí*) of that department, and while it could be argued that the influence on their appointment may not be a direct one, the means to affect indirect influence were nonetheless substantial. While current Irish legislations had legislated that an independent Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) outside of the Government would recommend the candidates to the Government, and the Government would appoint the Secretaries General from those recommended candidates, yet members of TLAC, some on only three-year terms of appointments, were nevertheless themselves directly appointed by the *Taoiseach*, albeit in consultation with his or her Minister for Finance. Thus, it seemed that while in the United Kingdom, the independence of appointment of the various heads of administration without direct or indirect influence by the political leadership could be inferred; and in the United States of America, the political alignment of their heads of administration would be deliberate; the assumption of either could not be implied for the Republic of Ireland. The debate was therefore whether the Irish model could claim success in having adopted the better elements of both the British and the American models, or whether the Irish model failed to reap the benefits of either the British or the American models by being positioned somewhere in between.

Secondly, while the initial appointments of senior Irish civil servants would arguably be influenced by the *Taoiseach* and his Ministers, their appointments were for fixed terms. Although the position of Secretary General of a Department in the Republic of Ireland was almost identical to that of a Permanent Under Secretary of State in the British Civil Service or the Under Secretary in the American Administration, the post of Secretary General of an Irish Government Department was neither a permanent

appointment, nor was it at the pleasure of the head of the Government, but that, since 1984, it carried a limited seven year fixed term of appointment, regardless of any change in Government in the interim. The observation was that in the Republic of Ireland, Governments were elected for five year terms and thus the appointment of Secretaries Generals, while arguably influenced by the incumbent *Taoiseach*, could out-live their appointer and could remain in office spanning a change in Government.

The relevance to the context of this research is therefore that the somewhat unique public management process with regards to the appointment and tenure of the senior Irish public administrative leaders had conferred a somewhat greater prominence on the senior administrative leadership role in the Republic of Ireland.

Appendix V-C: Public Sector Management Structure.

In the context of public governance, leadership and management would normally be exercised from within an overall public governance structure. In earlier and simpler human societies, arguably autocratic political leadership alone would have sufficed in public governance. But the increasing complexity of human societies and the increasing sophisticated demands on public sector leadership and management required that more complex structures and more robust systems of public management had to be developed and adopted. As Western society, in particular, evolved to become more complex and more sophisticated, especially since the start of the twentieth century, what seemingly emerged was a requirement for a substantial cohort of administrative leaders to coordinate and to implement public policies and to act in concert with the political leaders, who would continue to formulate the policies and to persuade the public to accept those policies (Alimo-Metcalfe and Alban-Metcalfe 2003). Thus the classical view was to differentiate the public administration element, via a cohort of civil and public servants, from the political and legislative element. As such it created a clear distinction between political leadership and administrative leadership, along the line that marks the difference between policy formulation and policy implementation. Van Wart and Dicke (2008) had even suggested that this principle of separation had evolved from the notion of a separation of power first suggested by Montesquieu (1748). In this view, the political and legislative elements were seen to be more the government, while the civil and public servants were more the administrators who would implement the will of the government (Terry 2003). This classical view of public governance structure would see the public administration element as a functionally uniform and hierarchical organisation, staffed by neutrally competent civil servants who deliver their services to the citizens (Weber 1915, Ostrom 1973). Throughout the early twentieth century, this dichotomy between the political world of policy making and the technical and neutral world of policy implementation had been presented as the ideal structure for the management of any sovereign State (Ostrom 1973, Terry 2003). This separation of policy formulation from policy implementation is based on the view that separating the political world of policy making from the neutral world of technical implementation is the ideal structure for the balancing of public roles. The proposition was therefore that the primary role of political leaders was to create strategic vision and to encapsulate those

visions into policies, and the primary role of the administrative leaders was to creatively lead the implementation of the policies and to creatively establish the values put forth by those visions (Joyce 2003, Van Wart 2003). Figure V-AC.1 shows graphically the inter-connected functioning between the political world of policy decision and the administrative world of policy implementation.
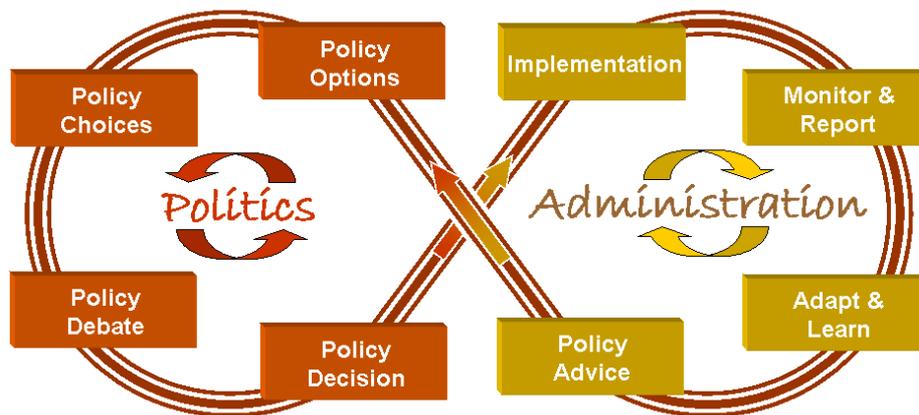

Figure V-AC.1: The Dynamic Link between Politics and Administration

Modern perspectives of public governance structures, even in the era of New Public Management (OECD 2001), were arguably not significantly different from this classical perspective. The observation was that even in the modern era of public management, there is still a requirement for a civil servant cohort whose role is to implement policies alongside the political leaders who had created, formulated and persuaded the public to accept the policies in the first place.

There may be an argument that this broadly typical public governance structure had been evolving over time, all the while adopting emphasis that met the prevailing public management needs. It may be possible to try to map the evolution of the development of leadership perspectives specific to the public sector in Western societies over time. Such a map is presented in Figure V-AC.2 for the purpose of the current discussions.

From the figure, it could be seen how, as Western society evolved largely away from military rules towards citizen democracies, public management and public leadership became increasingly concerned with economic and social development rather than

with military conquests, and democracy and citizen participation became more preferable to despotic coercion and autocracy. Moreover, it could also be seen that as Western societies became increasingly complex with increasing diversity of citizenry interests, more sophisticated structures and systems of public management had to be developed and adopted.

Generations *	Conceptual Thinking	Proponents
Classical Era	Public administration as a social responsibility	Plato (circa. 360 BC) Aristotle (circa. 330 BC) Chanakya (Kautilya) (circa. 283 BC)
Medieval Era	Governance through coercive power and reciprocal military obligations	Machiavelli (1513)
Enlightened Era	Carmeralism and professional courtiers	Von Seckendorff (1656) Becher (1668) Von Schröder (1686) *Friedrich Wilhelm I (1727)***
Colonial Era	Separation of politics and administration	Von Stein (1865) Wilson (1887)
Industrial Era	Seamless web of discretion and interaction	Taylor (1911) Fayol (1917) Gulick and Urwick (1937)
Post War Era	Bureaucratic reform and public accountability	Hoover Commission (1949, 1955) Grace Commission (1984)
Modern Era	The public as customers (NPM) Digitalisation and e-government	Osborne and Gaebler (1992) Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) Dunleavy et al (2006)
Neo Modern Era	Network government Leadership of space Whole systems leadership The public as citizens	Goldsmith and Egger 2004 Lyons 2007 Benington and Hartley 2009 Liddle et al 2009

* Generation Categories based on historical time frame

*** King Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia was the monarch who established the Chairs for State Affairs Management at the Universities of Halle and Frankfurt on the Oder (Tribe 1984)*

Figure V-AC.2: Suggested Mapping of the Development of Public Management Theories
(Developed for the purpose of this paper)

The most recent rounds of evolution were the modern public sector reform era and beyond, which delivered new perspectives of public management. This reform era was ushered in with what was known as New Public Management (NPM) (Hood 1991, Borins 1995). Through this era of reform, the role of public administration had arguably evolved significantly, and had arguably given rise to the notion of

administrative leadership (World Bank 2008), which was the focus of the research described in this document. The classical public management perspective of the complete separation of the administration element from the political element may have served well during the earlier Centuries, but the increased sophistication and diversity of society as the world entered the 20th Century meant that too simple a dichotomy could no longer cope with the increasing complexity (Svara 2006). The emerging danger was that ever larger bureaucracies had to be created to deal with the increasing complexities, but often at the expense of efficiency and effectiveness – resulting in public administration focusing excessively on the *tasks* of administration, and losing sight of the *purpose* of administration, which was to implement public policies to serve the public citizenry (Barzelay and Armajani 1992, Osborne and Plastrik 1997).

Therefore, to reframe the purpose of public administration, the intention of NPM was to introduce a public management approach that emphasised the centrality of the citizenry as customers, as well as accountability for results (Peters 1998). Especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s, NPM had been presented almost as a public management of universal relevance or even the one-best way forward for public management reform (Hood 1991, Osborne and Gaebler 1992, Gendron, et. al. 1999). Indeed, similar NPM-typed reformed had been adopted globally by countries as diverse as New Zealand, Canada, United States, Ireland, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Turkey, Zambia, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan (Hood 1995, OECD 1995).

NPM techniques and practices drew liberally from the private sector (Metcalfe and Richards 1990). Key elements include not only various forms of structural decentralisation within the public services, but also devolved management (Larbi 1999) such as the establishment of autonomous agencies and the devolution of budgets and financial control and increasing use of free market mechanisms such as out-sourcing and competition in the provision of public services (Aucoin 1996, Mukherjee and Wilkins 1999). At the core, the essence of NPM did not seem to contradict even the classical Montesquieu or Weber notion of the bureaucratic separation of responsibility, in that the idea was for the service providers on the one hand to concentrate on efficient production of quality services without the distractions of having to evaluating alternative policies, while policy-makers on the other hand,

can be more focused, more rigorous, and sometimes even more adventurous if their policy making can be carried out without the undertow of concern for the existing service providers (Walsh 1995). Kolthoff et al (2007) had even suggested that this combination of internal markets and performance measurement enable public management to overcome the public choice problems identified by Niskanen (1971) and others, where both politicians and managers have an incentive to pad budgets – their argument was that the constraints of the market forces and the increasing focus on performance would "outweighing the incentives of self-interest" (Kolthoff et al 2007:403).

But regardless of the public choice dimension, the increasing emphasis on performance, outputs and customer orientation was seen as primarily for the goal of improving efficiency and responsiveness to political principals. Indeed, according to Larbi's (1999) critical perspective, the focus on improve efficiency and effectiveness was because NPM reforms have been driven more by socio-economic factors then by political factors – that, while a number of NPM-type reforms could be ascribed to the ascendancy of neo-liberal political ideas, or to the development of information technology, a common feature of countries going down the NPM route has been the experience of economic and fiscal crises. Larbi (1999) suggested that the economic and fiscal crises had triggered the quest for efficiency and for newer ways to cut the cost of delivering public services, particularly as the crisis of the largely welfare states had led to questions about the structure, the role and the institutional character of the state.

Similarly, in the case of some developing and transitional countries, NPM type of reforms in public administration and public management have been driven more by external pressures and had often taken place as a result of either structural adjustment programmes or as lending conditionalities aiming supposedly towards better economic governance (OECD 2001). Osborne and Gaebler had used the phrase "entrepreneurial government" (Osborne and Gaebler 1992:xix) to describe the essence of NPM in this context – their argument was that NPM had changed the incentives that drove public institutions. While they had not argued for governments to be run like businesses – in fact, Osborne and Gaebler (1992:20) had concluded that the public and private sectors are so fundamentally different that government could never

be run like a business – they did suggest that governments need to become more entrepreneurial, by seeking to move resources from areas of lower return to areas of higher return.

But there were dissenting views. Critics such as DeLeon and Denhardt (2000) had argued that NPM had attempted to takes entrepreneurship in government beyond just adopting the techniques of private sector business administration, and had attempted to also adopt the values of private sector businesses. According to DeLeon and Denhardt, the darker side of the entrepreneurial spirit is driven by values characterised by a preference for narrow focus, a willingness to disregard rules and boundaries, and a bias for action so strong as to threaten accountability – arguably all values opposed to those considered core and essential for the public sector. Bellone and Goerl (1992) had also argue that entrepreneurship places value on autonomy, personal vision, secrecy, and risk-taking; which are value opposite to the traditional public management values such as democratic accountability, participation and civic engagement, openness, stewardship and the public interest. Diver (1982) had even suggested that the entrepreneurial model espoused by the NPM reforms was "in conflict with democratic theory" (1982: 404) In the same vein, Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) had instead argue for a New Public Service (NPS) instead of NPM, in which "the primary role of the public servant is to help citizens articulate and meet their shared interests rather than to attempt to control or steer society" (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000: 549). Similarly, Osborne (2009) had suggested that, with the greater stakeholder involvements, NPM has now been replaced by the notion of New Public Governance (NPG).

But regardless of whether the motivation came from economic or political impute, one of the outcomes of the NPM reforms was that hierarchical public organisations had to evolve to adapt. These organistaions were previously structured by functions, were governed by democratically elected popular leaders, and staffed by competent but neutral civil servants who deliver services to citizens (Ostrom 1973). They had to evolve to adapt to an increasingly complex society in which many important public services were now provided through multi and cross organisational arrangements (Ewalt 2001). In a sense, these public services were now provided through an "interconnected clusters of firms, governments, and associations which come

together" (Hjern and Porter 1981:212) to deliver the services. More recently, Goldsmith and Egger (2004) described such governance as Governing by Network and O'Leary et al (2006) employed the term *Collaborative Public Management*. Stoker had earlier described such new concepts of organisational governance as a "new process of governing, or a changed condition of ordered rule; or the new method by which society is governed" (Stoker 1998:17). In essence, these attempts at re-organisation were almost attempts at reinventing government. This theme of reinventing government towards greater public effectiveness was the basis of much of the recent reform discourse in academia originated from the United States (Mathiasen 1996, Lynn 1996, Lynn 1998, Terry 1998, Kelly 1998, Peters and Pierre 1998). Kamarck had suggested that such reinvention was indeed governments' attempts to "rid themselves of the self inflicted wounds of the bureaucratic culture" (Kamarck 2007:40) by trying to be more responsive to the citizenry. Parallel and similar themes were at the same time being developed through research from the United Kingdom., Benington and Hartley (2009) proposed the notion of whole systems leadership within the UK public services. At the regional and local government level, the notion of community leadership (Sullivan et al 2006), the leadership of place (Lyons 2007) and citizen-led leadership (Liddle et al 2009) had gained increasing prominence.

The relevance of this discussion to the context of this research is the question of whether throughout the evolving and changing focus of public administration adopted by the public administrative leaders, there are important values and institutions that, in their perspective, represent the core and unchanging essence of what public administration is about, and therefore needed to be conserved at all times.

Appendix V-D: Recent Changes in the Anglo-Irish-American Public Sectors.

In the context of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, from the pivotal time of the 1854 Northcote-Trevelyan report on the organisation of the British permanent civil service, which laid down the public service structure from which both the current British and Irish public and civil services had their roots, there had been many periods of reform and change, both within the British public services as well as separately within the Irish public services after her independence in 1921. Similarly across the waters in the United States, there had also been much reform since their initial introduction of their civil service system by the passage of the Pendleton Act in 1883, when they decisively moved away from the patronage *spoils* system of appointment to a civil service appointed through merit.

In the context of the British public sector in the modern era, of significance was the 1942 Beveridge Report, which, in anticipation for the need for post-war social and economic reconstruction, proposed universal social welfare for all based on needs rather than ability to pay. The report was implemented by the post-war government of Clement Atlee (1945–1951) almost in its entirety, paving way for the need to build up a significant public and bureaucratic administration. The incoming of the Margaret Thatcher government in 1979 saw "the end of that post-war consensus" (Alldritt et all 2009:15) and the commencement of the intense reform under the now familiar label of New Public Management (NPM) (Hood 1990). Under the Thatcher government, there were the Financial Management Initiatives of 1982, embracing decentralisation and professionalism (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000, Gray and Jenkins 1992), the Next Steps Initiatives of 1988, which saw the breaking up of large centralised departments as well as the creation of numerous smaller executive agencies (Butcher 1995), and the marketisation of public services through the 1991 Compulsory Competitive Tender (CCT) (Wollmann 2003). These were then followed by the introduction of the Citizen Charters under the John Major Government, which "represented an extension of the New Public Management reforms that had characterised the Thatcher period" (Alldritt et all 2009:25). Under the Tony Blair government, the notion of *Joint-up Government* was proposed (Christensen and Laegreid 2007), as was the push towards Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and the introduction of the Local Government Act 1999 that put local authorities under a rigorous top-down performance management

system (Wilson and Game 2002). Much more recently, the Gordon Brown government, in their 2008 Excellent and Fairness Report (Cabinet Office 2008), alongside a new focus *citizen empowerment*, proposed the theme of *new professionalism*, which had suggested that innovation amongst public service staff is vital for raising quality and enacting genuine reform. Thus, it could be argued that much change had been introduced to the British civil and public administrative structure over the recent decades.

In the United States of America, the Republic of Ireland's other nearest neighbour, a significant effort to reform the federal government commenced under the Jimmy Carter administration about the same time as the incoming Thatcher government in the United Kingdom. This came as a follow-on from the Franklin Roosevelt administration's New Deal initiatives in response to the Great Depression of 1932, the John F Kennedy administration's New Frontier initiatives in 1960, and the Lyndon Johnson administration's Great Society initiatives in 1963 (Moynihan and Ingraham 2010). The passing of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 saw the introduction of performance appraisal and merit pay. But the most significant change within the American civil and public administration came about under the Bill Clinton administration in 1992, with their National Performance Review and their subsequent report (Gore 1993). Borrowing directly from Osborne and Gaebler (1992), the term *Reinventing Government* became as well known a battle cry for public sector reform in the United States as *New Public Management* was in the United Kingdom (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2000, Rockman 2001). Thus, similar to the United Kingdom, there had also been much change introduced to the American civil and public administrative structure over the recent decades.

In the Republic of Ireland, ravaged by the failed uprising in 1916 and by the civil war shortly after her independence in 1921, it fell upon the William Cosgrave government to construct a new administration for the new State. The institutions that were established were closely modelled on their British counterparts (Reynolds 1998) and thus the Irish public administration structure inherited most of the strength and the weaknesses of the British framework. Following on from the crippling economic depression of the 1950s, and the success of the Sean Lamass government's new economic policies, the Report of the Public Services Organisation Review Group

1969 (commonly referred to as the Devlin Report) could be seen as the first attempt to reform the modern Irish public administration to meet the needs of a changing economy and society. The Garret Fitzgerald government white paper *Serving the Country Better* in 1985 was another attempt to develop a more citizen responsive public service. The Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) was launched by the Albert Reynolds government in 1994, with the stated objective of enabling public service management to provide public services that were both excellent in quality and effective in delivery. To implement the SMI initiatives, a Co-ordinating Group of Secretaries General was set up in 1994, mandated to spearhead any change, and in 1996, their report titled *Delivering Better Government* (DBG) expanded on the framework set out in the SMI and presented a "vision for the civil service" built around key organisational themes (Delivering Better Government 1996). Indeed, alongside these major milestones, there had been numerous change initiatives within Irish public administration, progressively changing the nature and the structure of the Irish civil public service (OECD 1999). For example, the establishment in 1984 of the Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) through which vacancies in the top two echelons of the Irish civil service were filled, the establish in 1984 of a fixed term appointment for Secretaries Generals, the 1996 *Better Local Government – A Programme for Change* initiative, the introduction of three-year Administrative Budgets process in 1996, the *Quality Customer Service* initiative in 1997 which set out a series of principles for improving public service delivery, the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act in 1997 impacting on administrative processes in the public services, the Public Service Management Act 1997 providing for a new management framework within the civil service, the development in 1998 of partnership structures across the civil service involving management, unions and staff, the eGovernment initiatives commencing 1999 which committed the public services towards the strategic use of information technology meet services objectives, the introduction of the Performance Management and Development (PMDS) system for all civil servants in 2000, the 2004 Decentralisation initiative, decentralising certain civil service functions to provincial centres, the 2004 government white paper on better regulation, Social Partnership initiatives between 1987 and 2009, to list but a few. More recently, as the economic crisis unfolded, the 2009 *Report of the Special Group on Public Service Numbers and Expenditure Programmes* had also

recommended substantial reforming and rationalising of the entire Irish civil and public service in the light of the prevailing financial difficulties (McCarthy 2009).

The relevance of this discussion in the context of this research is the proposition that change is not such a rarity within the public administration arena of the Anglo-Irish-American tripartite. The suggestion is that public administration and change are not such strange bedfellows, and thus sees the conserving tendency of administrators as not so incompatible with an environment of change.

Document Six

Reflection on a Research Journey

October 2012

Contents:

1   Introduction

This is the sixth document in a series of Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) research. The focus of the research is on public sector leadership in the context of the Republic of Ireland. This document is a reflective document, reflecting and mapping out the researcher's own learning and development throughout the six-year process of the entire DBA research project.

Research is about discovery, and thus the process of research can be compared to a journey of discovery. As a journey of discovery, it would be insufficient to evaluate the journey simply by evaluating the destination. Indeed, for many avid travellers, the joy and the value of travelling lies not so much in arriving at the destinations, but more in the experience of the journeys itself.

This document is about a journey towards a DBA qualification. This document is not a sales promotion literature promoting the benefits of subsequently having the DBA initials added to the end of one's name; nor is it an apologetic defense of how the research findings of this DBA research might contribute to the various bodies of academic knowledge. This document is a reflection of the experience of the research journey, of how the journey had changed the perspectives of the researcher, and how the journey had helped to re-shaped some of the previously entrenched mind-sets.

This reflection does not seek to place any value judgment on the various experiences encountered through the research journey. The underlying assumption adopts a moral utilitarian perspective (Mill and Sher 2002) wherewith experiences are not seen as either good or bad experiences. The perspective is that while some experiences might be more unpleasant than others, all experiences are neutral experiences that add to the learning and to the personal development of the individuals involved.

Philosophically then, such a perspective would suggest that even though two different individuals may start at the same life stage, and even though they may arrive at some identical life circumstance together, but because of the differences in the life experiences each went through to get to that same life circumstance, they would have

ended up as two very different individuals. The extension to that concept is that two different individuals even with identical life experiences can become two very different individuals because they responded to those same life experiences differently. Thus the suggestion is that we become who we are not only depending on the life experiences we go through, but also depending on how we choose to respond to those experiences.

Thus this document is intended to reflect upon the research experiences and upon how the researcher responded to those research experiences. The hope is that through these reflections, it might be possible to foster a degree of understanding concerning how the researcher had personally developed as a result of having gone through the DBA journey. Suffice it to say that, apart from the research journey cumulated in the delivery of a set of research findings, the journey had also helped to reframe the researcher's own epistemological perspectives of knowledge and of life.

The milestones of this research journey were marked by the completion of a series of six separate research documents, with the current document being the sixth. The proposition is that, therefore, this final reflection document will be structured to reflect the learning experiences while completing each of the previous documents.

2 Document 1 – The commencement of the journey

Award winning author Ursula Le Guin (1972 America National Book Award winner and 2004 American Library Association Lifetime Contribution Award winner) wrote that "it is good to have an end to journey towards, but it is the journey that matters, in the end" (Le Guin 1969:220). Her suggestion was that where one is going is of less significance than how one gets there. Yet, for the researcher, the commencement of this research journey definitely started with a focus on a particular destination, and with getting to that destination being the priority. At the commencement of the journey, the actual journey experience was felt to be inconsequential to the researcher.

The intention at the start of this research journey was to deliver a strong defense of a leadership proposition, to be supported by convincing evidence from research. The

stance at the onset was firmly positivistic in perspective, and the intention unquestionably apologetic. Suffice it to say that as the journey progressed, the focus on the destination became gradually softer, and the actual experience of the journey became progressively more poignant. Moreover, the positivistic stance had also became increasingly less absolute as the journey progressed.

The initial positivist perspective had a deeper origin, rooted in the psyche of the researcher through the formative years of upbringing. Four generations of British Colonial culture and an earlier career as an engineer had fostered in the researcher a rigid and a realist perspective of life and of the universe. The patriarch of the family four generations ago was one of only a handful of English speaking Chinese merchants who actively served the Colonial Governor in the initial establishment of Hong Kong as a British Crown Colony. Subsequently his son became an Oxford graduate in Jurisprudence and served as a Crown appointed Legislator in the Legislative Chamber of the Hong Kong Government. His grandson, the researcher's father, retired as Director General of a central Government Department at the height of Hong Kong's development. Descended from such a line of senior Colonial public and civil servants who staunchly defended the bureaucratic way of life that characterised the British colonial civil service (Lau 1997), and brought up with strict Confucian values of decorum, propriety and correctness, it was not difficult during the formative years of growing up to foster both a perspective of life carved out of absolutism and a value system reflecting only black and white. Indeed, Mintzberg (1979) had suggested that bureaucracy was coordination through the standardization of processes, implying that staunch bureaucrats would judge ways of doing things only in terms of either the right way or the wrong way. The researcher's perspective of life was indeed in monochromatic black and white without any shade of grey. Such a realist perspective and such a positivist outlook was further reinforced by five years of rigid regime in a traditional British boarding school, and an early career as an engineer, where the study of the natural sciences required no less a positivist perspective. Furthermore, being an ordained lay preacher of some twenty years in the Protestant Christian church, the need to preach on a weekly basis from a monotheist perspective of moral absolutism (Adam 1979) reinforced the conviction that there was an absolute delineation between what is right and what is wrong.

That was the mindset of the researcher at the commencement of the journey, and the mindset upon which the research proposal in Document 1 (Chau 2007a) was framed. The motivation to commence this research was in response to what was perceived as a peculiar moral perspective in public leadership in the Republic of Ireland. From the researcher's initial positivist perspective, public leaders in the Republic of Ireland whose behaviours would have been held in disrepute elsewhere and public leaders who had actually been judged to have acted inappropriately by the Law Courts in Ireland – public leaders whom, in the researcher's view, should have therefore been judged infamous by the court of popular opinions, were instead repeated voted back into public office, and were even given moving eulogies as heroes at their passing (Chau 2007a). In the mind of the researcher, there appeared to be a paradox of co-existence between public leadership acceptance and what would have been perceived as otherwise unacceptable leadership behaviours – a paradox that suggested willing followership regardless of how their leaders behave.

Thus began the research journey, the beginning of a quest to examine a paradox; but with an initial perspective that there can be clear and absolute judgment of what is right and what is wrong when analysing the dynamic interaction between public leadership and public acceptance, and when assessing the ethics and the morality of public leadership,.

3   Document 2 – Begin at the beginning, go on till you come to the end: then stop

In the children's novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, written in 1865 by the English author Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, it tells the story of a girl named Alice who fell down a rabbit hole into a fantastic world of made-believe. In the story, when asked to read a paper, Rabbit asked the King where to begin. The King very gravely answered "Begin at the beginning, and go on till you come to the end: then stop" (Carroll 1982:109)

The DBA research journey was not merely a journey of chance discovery – it was also a journey of purposive searching, in essence a journey of exploration. The suggestion is that rarely would someone commence a DBA programme purely for the

purpose of personal character building. Instead it is likely that many would enter a DBA programme primarily for the purpose of either gaining the DBA award, or for specific academic or knowledge development. The suggestion was that the academic materials were the purposive discoveries whereas the personal development aspects were the inevitable by-products. After all, it would certainly be unconventional to award a DBA on the basis of limited academic contribution but on the basis of significant personal development on the part of the candidate.

To begin at the beginning in terms of the academic search was the purpose of Document 2 (Chau 2007b). The purpose of the literature review in Document 2 (Chau 2007b) was to discover and to establish the foundation upon which the remainder of the DBA research could be build. However, starting from the initial positivist perspective, no sooner had the journey begun, a significant challenge emerged. It was a challenge to the basis of one's perception, a challenge to the researcher's fundamental epistemological perspective of the universe and of life.

The challenge was for the researcher to shift his mindset from the initial positivist stance towards a more constructivist perspective. But this transition from a positivist perspective to a constructivist perspective seemed an almost quantum leap. From a positivist perspective, the alternative perspective seemed almost contradictory. It was almost like saying that *the right way* to look at something is from the perspective that there is *no right way* to look at anything. Applied to the study of the natural sciences, this alternative to a positivist stance might seem frivolous or even pedantic. Consider the following debate – would it not seem as if an argument was created just for the sake of having an argument?

Statement:	The Earth is round and not flat …
Response:	Well, that depends on the perspective. From the defined perspective of a builder on a building site in central Dublin using a spirit-level tool, the Earth is pretty flat … and since 'round' is a conceptual notion, the earth is only round to those who share the same concept of what 'round' is.
Counter:	So, is the Earth round or not?

Yet in comparison, a similar debate in the social science realm would be seen as quite a reasonable debate:

Statement: Adolf Hitler was an evil leader …

Response: Well, that depends on the perspective. In a moral relativist perspective, there is no value judgment with regards to what is good or what is evil. And from the defined perspective of the German nation in the context of the punitive economic reparation era of the 1930's, Hitler was able to bring back nationalist pride to a people in the depth of despair – and there was a large citizenry genuinely and sacrificially committed to following him. (For a wider discussion on the relative morality of national leadership, please see Chau 2007b.)

Counter: Adolf Hitler was more a misguided leader who ended up doing terrible things to many people, rather than an evil leader.

Thus the journey through Document 2 (Chau 2007b) started simply enough at the beginning. But starting with a staunch positivist perspective, progress was soon stalled once the positivist perspective met the constructivist counterpart head on. Semantics and word emphasis became the focus of much redrafting. Assumptions and unsubstantiated claims were relegated to the same unwelcoming status as a convicted pedophile would be in a school playground. And a number of positivist words and terms were condemned never to see the light of day in subsequent documents. The taking down of the positivist had earnestly begun.

But if Document 2 (Chau 2007b) was an indicative nudge towards a perspective change, it was merely a prologue; Document 3 (Chau 2008) proved to be a baptism of fire.

4   Document 3 – The truth, the whole truth, nothing but the truth

According to the relevant provisions of the United Kingdom's Oaths Act (1978), witnesses in the law courts are to swear an oath or to make a solemn declaration

pledging that the evidence given "shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" (Judicial Studies Board 2004:3/11). The assumption seemed to be that there is an independent and objective truth, that there is an independent and objective reality independent of the observer.

In the Holy Bible (NIV 1984), it was recorded that in the trial of Jesus Christ, when challenged by the Roman Procurator Pontius Pilate as to whether he was a king, Jesus answered "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (NIV 1984: Gospel of John chapter 18 verse 37). The recorded response of Pontius Pilate was a simple but rhetorical question, "What is truth?" (NIV 1984: Gospel of John chapter 18 verse 38).

Indeed, the questioning of what is truth, the questioning of whether there is an absolute truth or the questioning of whether an objective reality exists – these are in parts the challenge presented by this research journey, challenging the very core of the researcher's fundamental epistemological perspective. Document 3 (Chau 2008) was an interpretive analysis exercise. For the completion of this document, the guidance at the onset was that the purpose of this part of the research was not in establishing what the researcher thought the perspectives of the interviewees were, but that the purpose of this part of the research was to explore and interpret what the interviewees themselves was trying to say. Such a notion indeed presented a degree of cognitive dissonance to the positivist psyche. How is it possible for a researcher to completely forsake his or her own perspective so that he or she can authentically report on another's perspectives? What if those perspectives stand diametrically opposed to each other? For example, could a secular humanist genuinely appreciate the perspectives and the conviction of one who is utterly devoted to the worship in faith of a spiritual deity, or vice versa? If one's perception is one's view of life and existence, a view filtered by a unique combination of life experiences – then how is it possible for someone else to share one's internal perception? As a case in illustration at the most basic level of philosophical analysis, how can one verify that what the reader now sees as the whiteness of this page is the same whiteness as seen by the writer? For one to genuinely interpret the perspective of another person, it would seem that one would have to literally become the other person – and would that not

imply having to lead an almost Jekyll and Hyde existence – a sane and controllable version of schizophrenia?

It would seem that in order to move away from the positivist perspective, one has to forsake the notion that there is any absolute perspective – or at least to forsake the notion of an absolute truth or the notion of an independent reality.

It was becoming clear that the necessity to adopt such a research stance was in essence the basis of the main challenge the researcher faced in this DBA research journey.

5 Document 4 – Ours is not to question why, but to do and die

It was about the willingness to change; the willingness to submit to the forces of change. When faced with the challenge of change, in particular when faced with the demand for changing one's core perspectives, the tendency is to resist change (Coetsee 1999, Dent and Goldberg 1999). The suggestion is that it is general human nature to resist attempts to change a status quo, let alone attempts to change one's fundamental perspectives.

But the question was whether change was necessary in order to attain the desired goal and whether change was essential to the attainment of the desired achievement aimed for at the commencement of the journey. The question was about the extent to which the researcher was willing to yield in order to ensure the completion of the journey. History had recorded incidences of incredible submission and compliance because of the desire to achieve particular goals. For example, referring to the events at the Battle of Balaclava on October 25, 1854, poet laureate Lord Alfred Tennyson wrote in his poem *The Charge of the Light Brigade* the line, "Theirs not to make reply, Theirs not to reason why, Theirs but to do and die" (Tennyson 1854, reproduced in Tennyson 1908:369). Whether it was out of a sense of loyalty to the reputation of their brigade, whether it was out of a sense of bound duty or perhaps out of a fear of court-martial, or maybe it was out of an ill judged sense of confidence, history recorded that the Light Brigade made a suicidal charge. Every man in the entire brigade, by their own

choice complied with the demand on their lives without dissention. History recorded that of the 673 cavalrymen that took part in the charge, 405 were either killed, wounded or taken prisoner, and only 195 were still with horses when the brigade regrouped at the end of the battle (Dutton 2007).

Soldiers on the battlefield are trained to following orders, as they may neither have the time nor the wider perspectives to consider the validity or the consequences of their actions. But doctoral candidates would not consider themselves in the same genre. It would be much more likely to detect a touch of arrogance in doctoral candidates not found in soldiers. After all, to be a doctoral candidate is to lay claim to a certain level of knowledge and expertise, or at least so the candidate would claim.

The perspective of the researcher at the commencement of this research journey certainly did not reflect that of a soldier. Having been involved for nearly twenty years in academia where academics walk a fine line between declaring creative independent thinking and making unsubstantiated claims; having been a lecturer all these years during which one's students were not always in a position to challenge what were said in class; and having been a preacher week in and week out supposedly defending the infallible and the unquestionable truth from the pulpit, it was easy to assume that one always knew what one was talking about. Moreover, this DBA journey was not the researcher's first research journey at doctoral level – albeit that the previous journey was with an American institution of lesser credibility, where the doctoral accreditation was controversially accredited with substantial recognition of equivalent work experiences alongside a much less onerous research requirement. Given such a background, when one's views were challenged or when being told that there were different ways of looking at reality, it would take significant humility to stand back and accept the critical evaluation without resistance.

Indeed, when faced with the demand for a fundamental shift in the epistemological perspective of life and of the universe, when faced with a demand to almost abandon one's core values and perspectives – and to do so for the purpose of obtaining a qualification that was not absolutely essential to one's job security or career progression, the easiest option would have been to resisted the forces of change.

There is an ancient morality tale of unknown origin that the researcher grew up with. It was a story of a mountainous wild boar and a donkey. The story suggested that in order to tame the wild boar, all one had to do was to tie it to the donkey. The wild boar would charge and ram the donkey and it would try to pull and drag the donkey, but the donkey would simply and stubbornly stood its ground, despite the hardship inflicted by the boar. The story suggested that after a number of days, one would find the boar following sheepishly behind the donkey. The story is not so much about whether it is morally defensible to break the spirit of a free-spirited wild boar, nor is it about the morality of exploiting an innocent donkey for third party gains. The story teaches that sometime one's stubbornness is met by a greater stubbornness, and one may have no option but to yield to the forces of change if one desires to move forward.

Since the research journey was one taken voluntarily rather than one taken under compulsion, what would be the benefit of resisting the forces of change that emerged in the course of the journey? An intransigent stance of bringing the fight all the way to the *Viva Voce* would probably reflect well a staunch positivist perspective. It would have been a gallant charge – almost comparable to the charge of the Light Brigade. But as in the case of the Battle of Balaclava, gallantry may not guarantee success. The French Marshal Pierre Bosquet, who witnessed the charge of the Light Brigade, was said to have stated "*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre. C'est de la folie.*" ("It is magnificent, but it is not war. It is madness.") (Raugh 2004:93). This research journey was not a battle; this journey was supposed to be a journey of exploration, a journey of discovery. And to discover, one must be willing to step off the well-trodden path to experience the unknown.

Document 4 (Chau 2009) thus marked a turning point for the researcher. Hitherto, the researcher's perspective was apologetic, defensive even. Every turn was an attempt to defend one's argument; every opportunity was seized upon to take down the opposite views. The paradox of the turning point was that in order to *liberate* one's mind, one had to paradoxically *conform* one's mind to a doctrine of research that demanded critical thinking rather than defensive stubbornness. Instead of defending intransigently, the order, so to speak, was to charge forth and explore.

The order to charge forth against the positivist stance was perhaps not unlike the order given to the Light Brigade in terms of the gravity of the task at hand, but certainly the outcome was far less destructive. There might even be those who would hail the undermining of the positivist perspective as a victory and not at all comparable to the "madness" (Raugh 2004:93) and to the terrible sacrifices of the noble cavalrymen of the Light Brigade.

6   Document 5 – Waking up to the reality; to find that there is no reality

There is an ancient Hindu tale from India, attributed to the Hindus tradition, but made popular in the West by the 19th Century poem by John Godfrey Saxe (1873). In the tale, a group of blind men touched an elephant to learn what it is like. Each one touched a different part of the elephant, and then made their judgments. The blind man who touched the leg said that an elephant was like a pillar; the one who touched the tail said that an elephant was like a rope; the one who touched the trunk said that an elephant was like a tree branch; the one who touched the ear said that an elephant was like a hand fan; the one who touched the belly said that an elephant was like a wall; and the one who touched the tusk said that an elephant was like a solid pipe. The story was often used to teach that reality may be viewed differently depending upon one's perspective, suggesting that what was complete reality to one person may be only part-reality from a wider perspective.

The lesson is about open-mindedness, about awareness of other perspectives, about not insisting on one's own perspective as the only perspective. However, could there still be an objective reality in the positivist sense? Each blind man in the above tale may argue for and defend his own reality, and paradoxically to each, all the other realities could be shown to be as real. But at the so-called higher level of realisation, is there not still an objective reality of an elephant in its entire form?

That notwithstanding, the research journey through Document 5 (Chau 2010), however, had led to the realisation that objective reality, whatever that may be, matters much less to anyone than the perception of reality. In the context of the citizen's perception of government, for example, the perceived existence of a high level government conspiracy is possibly just as real to a paranoid schizophrenic, as is

the perception of a loyal party faithful that the government has absolutely nothing to hide – and there may be no objective evidence strong enough to convince either party otherwise. Even the branding of paranoid schizophrenia as a mental illness by itself would not take away the reality of that patient's perception.

The lesson from the research journey had become much clearer – the lesson being that apart from our own perception and perspectives, other perceptions and perspectives could exist, and they could be as real and as valid. The research journey therefore should not be one that leads to an irrefutable defense of a particular perspective – the research journey should be one that leads to the revelation of other perspectives, and in so doing helps to inform and to add to the wider bodies of knowledge.

As such, perhaps the blind men in the above elephant tale did not need to so much defend their own perspectives, but by discovering and adding to each other's perspective, a better revelation of what an elephant is might emerge.

7   Document 6 – I think, therefore I am … I think

The statement *Cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) by René Descartes from his *Principles of Philosophy* (Descartes 1644, translated by Miller and Miller 1983:4) simply means that if an individual is wondering whether or not he or she exists, that is in and of itself proof that he or she does exist, because, at the very least, there is an entity who is doing the thinking (Baird and Kaufmann 2008).

Is the argument that reality is only a consequence of our mind? From an interpretive and constructivist perspective, does the lack of an objective reality imply that there is no external reality?

The researcher recalls having colleagues and friends during the 1970s, who were frequently under the influence of psychedelic substances. A popular perception amongst them while under the influence of the then popular and relatively easily available psychoactive hallucinogenic drugs such as Lysergic Acid Diathylamide (LSD), was the perception that nothing was real, that the whole universe was merely

conjured and created by their own minds, almost in a dream-like fashion. Their frequent rhetoric was to question how we could be sure that anything could be real, and not merely figments of our imagination. Indeed, how do we know?

With this current document (Document 6), the DBA research journey is now almost at the end. From a staunch positivist stance with a realist perspective at the commencement of the research journey, the lesson of the journey had succeeded in bringing about a change in perspective. However, while reality for the researcher may no longer be in monochromatic black and white, but perhaps reality in some form is still acknowledged – at the very least, there is still certainty that existence around him is not merely a figment of his imagination.

8 Conclusion

There is the suggestion that the actual findings presented by this series of research can contribute to academia by adding to the various relevant bodies of academic knowledge. In particular, there could well be contribution to the debates concerning the perspectives and the social constructions of leadership amongst the public administrative leaders in the Republic of Ireland. In that sense, perhaps this research journey has a lasting contribution to life and to the universe. But the argument is that the research journey had delivered more than just research outputs – that the research journey also had provided developmental benefits for the researcher, regardless of the research outputs – and that those benefits goes far beyond merely a Doctorate in Business Administration (DBA) award.

There is an ancient Chinese proverb of unknown origin, though frequently mis-attributed to the Chinese ancient philosopher Lao-Tzu (老子) (circa. 6th century B.C.); "Give a man a fish, you have fed him for today; teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime." (授人以魚，不如授之以漁；授人以魚，三餐之需，授之以漁，终身之用。) This proverb was even quoted by the Chinese Premier Wen Jia-Bao (溫家寶) in his State visit to Egypt in November 2009 (China Review News 2009).

The attainment of the DBA qualification may in the immediate term open doors for the successful candidates. For some, perhaps it may bring better jobs with higher income; for others, perhaps it may bring promotion or some better appointments; or perhaps it may bring a sense of pride with the new title and the extra initials after one's name. But if that is all one attained, then that would be like being given a fish rather than being taught how to fish. Rather the DBA research journey is supposed to give the researchers not just an end in having a DBA qualification, but also a means – a new perspective and a new way of thinking.

The researcher started off this research journey as what could arguably be a strict realist with a positivist outlook. Has the researcher's perspective of life changed as a result of the research journey? Could a mindset entrenched by almost half a century of life-molding experiences be changed so dramatically by merely six years of DBA research? Could a leopard change its spots, as the well-known English idiom goes? Perhaps not so definitively.

But the need to develop critical thinking, the need to always question, to always validate and to always substantiate any statement or claim – in essence the need to develop core perspectives associated with constructivism – they had certainly and firmly been introduced to the psyche of the researcher as a result of this research journey. And these perspectives may well prove to be the fishing knowhow, so to speak, or the mental faculties that would benefit the researcher in the long run.

In conclusion then, has the researcher changed as a result of this research experience? There is arguably evidence to suggest so. But has the researcher become a better person as a result? Now, would it not take a positivist to pass such a judgment?

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