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Gendering Political Leadership in the Scottish Parliament Since Devolution

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Management

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to explore the extent to which the experience of political leadership in the Scottish Parliament is gendered, the extent to which the Scottish Parliament is a gendered workplace and how this has gendered outcomes for political leaders. It responds to the emergent body of literature that conceptualises parliaments as gendered workplaces and how this impacts leadership. At present, this body of literature remains in its infancy and recognises that there is much to be discovered. In this light, the Scottish Parliament presents an empirically rich research setting to respond to such calls. Unlike other national parliaments, gender equality was designed in the feminist institutional blueprint of the parliament and the Scottish Parliament has enjoyed relative success on women's representation where women have occupied 33-45% of seats since 1999. Additionally since devolution, existing literature on the Scottish Parliament has not systematically explored gender and political leadership, nor has the Scottish Parliament been conceptualised as a gendered workplace, in the 24 years of the parliament's existence.

Empirically, this thesis is based on a unique dataset of 31 elite interviews with men and women MSPs. The cross-party interview sample includes former and current MSPs from each of the political parties elected in the first five sessions of the Scottish Parliament (1999-2021). This thesis develops a theoretical framing by using Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, capitals, and field to understand the ways that leaders' biographies shape their leadership practice, how leadership capitals are learned and developed, and how the rules of the field shape leadership. This is combined with a Feminist Institutional approach to examine the ways in which the formal and informal rules in the parliament are gendered. Using Bourdieu's concepts, the thesis develops a distinctive leadership practice that is informed by MSPs' pre-parliamentary histories that influence the field-specific political habitus in the parliament. Women's inclusion has created a feminised habitus where both men and women value and embody leadership capitals, including collegiality, care, and empathy. However, conclusions drawn indicate the presence of feminine workplace ideals that exist in tension with masculine workplace practices. In sum, this thesis contributes to understandings of gender and political leadership that go beyond reductive binary gendered leadership assumptions by situating leadership in the complex political field where valued leadership capitals are informed by the 'gendered conditions' of the political landscape, parliamentary history, and gendered workplace rules.

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In 2016, I attended the Scottish Parliament for the launch of The Parliament Project, an organisation that aimed to equip women with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to stand for election. Unbeknownst to me at the time, it was a pivotal moment that would shape my academic future. Enchanted by the women and the stories they shared about their political journeys, I decided to (re)write my undergraduate dissertation on cyber-misogyny and its impact on women's political candidature. It was the catalyst that ignited my academic passion. Never did I think that I would begin a PhD on gender and political leadership in the very building in which I sat. During the many difficult moments of writing this PhD, I thought back to that day and reflected on where this all began.

This thesis is the product of several years of learning and perseverance. My PhD journey was significantly thrown off-course by the Covid-19 pandemic. I was just 6 interviews into my fieldwork when the parliament, and the rest of the world shut. During this time, and at several other stages, the completion of this thesis felt impossible; it was only made achievable (and enjoyable) by the support I had from those around me.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Laura Shaw

List of Abbreviations

AMS	Additional Member System
AWS	All-Women Shortlists
CO	Constituency office
DFM	Deputy First Minister
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
FI	Feminist Institutionalism
FM	First Minister
FMQs	First Minister's Questions
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MP	Member of Parliament (UK House of Commons)
MSP	Member of the Scottish Parliament
PM	Prime Minister
PO	Presiding Officer
SNP	Scottish National Party
SP	Scottish Parliament
SPCB	Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body
SPICe	Scottish Parliament Information Centre

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. A Case for the Study of Gender and Political Leadership in the Scottish Parliament

'I look forward to the days ahead when this Chamber will sound with debate, argument, and passion. When men and women from all over Scotland will meet and work together for a future built from the first principles of social justice' (First Minister Donald Dewar, 1999, speech at the opening of the Scottish Parliament).

The Scottish Parliament presents a compelling research setting in which to study gender and political leadership. For almost 300 years, following the Treaty of the Union in 1707, the Scottish Parliament was adjourned, and Scotland had been governed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom from 1801, electing 72 Scottish Members of Parliament (MPs) to the House of Commons. In 1999, the Scottish Parliament was re-established and required 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) to lead a newly devolved Scotland. The number of political leaders in Scotland more than doubled and thus increased the opportunity to lead. In its first term, 48 women (37.2%) and 81 men (62.8%) comprised the 129 newly elected MSPs that took their seats in the Scottish Parliament to represent 73 constituencies and 8 regions from across Scotland.

The relative success of women's representation signalled a 'gender coup' (Mackay et al, 2003: 84), and for many, Scottish devolution was widely signalled as an opportunity for 'new politics' in Scotland as the electorate was promised 'new institutions, new processes and new political culture' (Keating and Cairney, 2006: 43; Mitchell, 2000). The re-establishment of the parliament offered greater opportunities for political participation, representation, and leadership. Since the opening of the parliament to the time fieldwork was conducted (2021), there have been five elections, five First Ministers, six Presiding Officers and 347 MSPs that have led, shaped and influenced Scottish politics since devolution. This thesis reflects on the 22 years since MSPs occupied their seats in the new Scottish parliamentary political field (1999-2021). Interviews with 31 former and current MSPs illuminate how experience of political leadership has evolved and developed over the course of the parliament and its gendered implications. The focus of this thesis oscillates between inward perspectives, towards individual leaders' experiences, and outward perspectives, at the parliamentary context in which leaders operate.

Designed upon an infrastructure of inclusivity, the Scottish Parliament was built as a political home for everyone in Scotland (Mitchell, 2000). More specifically, gender equality was a fundamental principle built into the restructuring of the Scottish Parliament (Mackay *et al.* 2003). Unlike many historic political institutions that were built by men, for men, the Scottish Parliament presented an opportunity for feminist institutional innovation (Mackay, 2014). Devolution benefitted women's access to political participation and leadership; in 1999, more women were elected to Holyrood for the first parliamentary session, than the number of women MPs that represented Scottish constituencies in the House of Commons since 1923 (Kenny and Mackay, 2020). In its devolved infancy, Scotland enjoyed being poised among leading countries for women's representation as the 'female face' of the Scottish Parliament was hailed as one of devolution's 'success stories' (Mackay *et al.* 2003; Mackay and Kenny, 2007). Scotland was one of the leading countries for women's representation, ranked 4th globally. Since, women's representation has varied between 33-45%, and women's representation by party has varied between 0-66% (see Figure 1). Currently, Scotland is ranked 17th globally for women's representation (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2023).

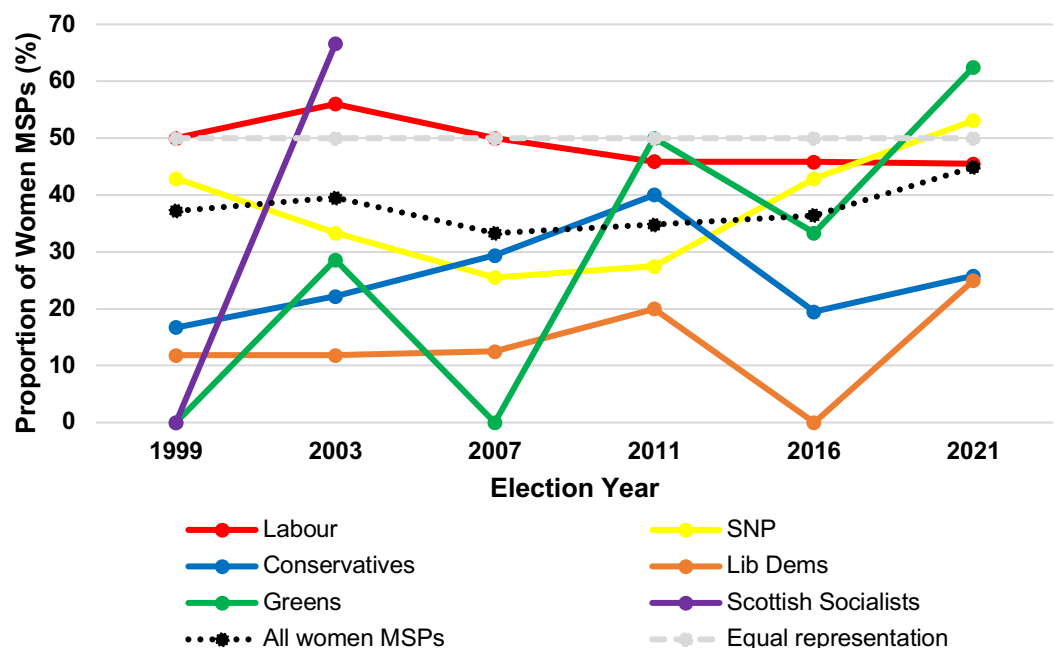


Figure 1. Women's representation by party and Scottish Parliament Election

Furthermore, the parliament has enjoyed relative success on women's party leadership. There have been 12 women party leaders and between 2015 and 2017 the three main Scottish party leaders were women, two of which identify as LGBTQ+ (Robinson and Kerr, 2017). In contrast, there have been 23 men party leaders. The Scottish Green Party has a co-leader structure that must be one man and one woman. As such, there have been six

Scottish Green Party women co-leaders (see Table 1 for proportion of women leaders by party).

Parties	Number of Women Leaders	% of leaders (as of 1999)
Scottish Conservative and Unionist	2	40.0
Scottish Green Party	6	66.7
Scottish Labour	3	30.0
Scottish Liberal Democrats	0	0.0
Scottish National Party	1	25.0

Table 1. Proportion of women in party leadership positions (adapted from *The Scottish Parliament, 2023*)

Since 1999, there has been a steady increase in women occupying Cabinet positions, from 30% to 53% (see Table 2). The first gender-balanced Cabinet was selected by FM Sturgeon in 2014 and has been maintained since. Analysis detailed in the gender sensitive audit of the Scottish Parliament suggests that this steady increase is evidence of a 'concrete floor' where gender balanced Cabinets have become a norm (Annesley *et al.* 2021; the Scottish Parliament, 2023). However, it is also noted that Cabinets are selected by the governing party leader; therefore, without statutory rules that require a gender-balanced Cabinet there is no assurance that this norm will continue.

Cabinet by session	Number of women (start of session)	Percentage of women (start of session)	Number of women (end of session)	Percentage of women (end of session)
1	6	30.0	6	30.0
2	6	31.6	7	38.9
3	5	31.3	5	31.3
4	6	33.3	10	43.5
5	10	45.5	14	53.8
6	12	48.0	15 ¹	53.6

Table 2. Proportion of women in Cabinet positions (adapted from *The Scottish Parliament, 2023*)

Other measures of parliamentary diversity fall below the population composition. Disabled, working class and non-university educated people remain significantly underrepresented (O'Hagan and Yaqoob, 2019). Until 2021, there had not been a woman of colour elected to the parliament. To be reflective of the Scottish population, the parliament would require 65 women MSPs, 26 disabled MSPs and 5 MSPs from an ethnic minority background (SPICe, 2020).

As a research site, the Scottish Parliament has been the subject of several iterations of analysis as it has journeyed from a new political institution to one that is now entering 'maturity' (St Denny, 2020). In the early years of devolution, there was acute scholarly focus on substantive and descriptive parliamentary representation (Breitenbach, 2006; Mackay, 2006; Kenny and Mackay, 2007; Kenny and Mackay, 2020). Taking a language-centred approach, Shaw (2002) analysed the linguistic practices of both MPs in the House of

¹ Current number of women in Cabinet positions.

Commons and MSPs in the Scottish Parliament. Later, Malley (2012) conducted a feminist institutional approach to study the Scottish Parliament in tandem with the Houses of Commons, centring her analysis on feelings of belonging and parliamentary rituals. Mackay (2014) examined the Scottish Parliament as a new, gendered institution, mapping its institutional processes and the gendered limits of institutional change. Elsewhere, women's descriptive representation in Scotland is grouped within the UK in statistical analyses (IPU, 2023).

The study of political leadership is undergoing a renaissance after decades of inattention (Bennister *et al.* 2017). New perspectives have emerged that have re-energised the field and greater attention has been given to the everyday practices and process of political leadership. This has occurred in tandem with the 'institutional turn' in political and organisational literature that signifies the importance of the environment and its influence on leadership. Parliaments have been transformed worldwide by the inclusion of women parliamentarians and the ascension of women in leadership positions. However, gender and leadership, and its interplay in parliamentary settings, remains an understudied branch of gender and politics literature (Waylen, 2021).

This coincides with an absence of literature within the Scottish context; since devolution, there has been little-to-no research into political leadership, particularly through a gender lens. In the final months of writing this thesis, two articles were published on political leadership in Scotland, focusing on the role of the First Minister (Graham, 2023; Hassan, 2023). The articles demonstrate the rising interest in political leadership in Scotland. Taken together, these factors demonstrate that the Scottish parliamentary political context presents an analytically compelling research site in which to respond to calls within the field for greater research on gender and political leadership. Against this background, this thesis takes a novel approach by framing all MSPs as political leaders. This contrasts most studies of leadership that reserve the title of political 'leader' for formal party leaders, Cabinet members and heads of governments or states. This enables a broad understanding of political leadership that is experienced and exercised by all MSPs.

This thesis explores how the experience of political leadership in the Scottish Parliament is a gendered experience, the extent to which the Scottish Parliament is a gendered workplace and its impact on leadership. The Scottish Parliament has enjoyed relative success on gender balance; however, parliamentary cultures are difficult to quantify and yet are central to leaders' experiences within the parliament and how they interact with gender; 'We still

know too little about how political leadership is gendered and how political leaders operate as gendered actors' (Waylen, 2021: 1157). A newer coalition of gender and politics scholars have called for greater research on gender and political leadership, particularly conceptualising parliaments as gendered workplaces and the implications this has on political leadership, particularly in political settings that are gender balanced and where 'critical mass' has been achieved (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023; Childs and Krook, 2006). As such, the Scottish Parliament constitutes a suitable case. This further encourages an appropriate research approach to develop intimate understandings of the political setting. Thus, the single context approach in the Scottish Parliament allows for an in-depth and contextual study. Interpretive parliamentary studies promote the use of such approaches to unveil nuanced findings of parliamentary life (Geddes and Rhodes, 2018). The Scottish Parliament joins a small number of parliaments that have been studied through this lens that presents parliaments as gendered workplaces alongside the Swedish Riksdag (Erikson and Josefsson, 2019; 2020; 2023) and the Australian Parliament (Crawford and Pini, 2011).

1.1.1. Gendering Leadership, Gendered Parliaments, and Gendered Organisations: Gendering as an Analytic Process

Crucial to this thesis is the process of gendering. Using gender as a verb allows gender to be conceptualised as performance and something that individuals do through repetition (Kantola and Lombardo, 2017). As such:

'The term "gendering" adopts a verb form of the noun "gender" to capture the active, ongoing, and always incomplete processes that constitute (make come into existence) [Jones, 1997: 265] "women" and "men" as specific kinds of unequal political subjects' (Bacchi, 2017: 20).

Thus, men and women should be viewed as 'sites of political debate', rather than 'natural categories' (Bacchi, 2019). Such an approach stems from the view that we 'do gender', rather than 'have a gender' (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Gendered practices are those that are culturally and socially available to use. Furthermore, gendering refers to the ascribed masculine and feminine expectations that are placed on men and women. Using the concept of gender in the analysis of a policy or organisation should primarily consider how it encourages behaviours that are 'conventionally associated with men and women' and the implications this has on gender equality (Bacchi, 2017: 22). In a political context, this analytical process allows for institutional analyses that 'contextualise gendered behaviour' and 'explore the complex ways in which gender plays out in political institutions' (Kenny, 2009: 5). Feminist Institutionalism understands how parliamentary rules 'constitute' who they are and the possibilities of agency, rather than rules having effects on actors

(Miller, 2018: 4). Complementarily, Acker's (1990) concept of gendered organisations also demonstrates the ways in which the process of gendering is ever-present within organisations, even when gender is not perceived to play a role in the workplace. Thus, these conceptualisations of gendered parliaments and organisations are vital to understanding how rules regarding leadership are gendered and have gendered outcomes. This will be further explored in Chapters Two and Three.

1.2. Leadership: An Interdisciplinary Pursuit

The study of leadership is an interdisciplinary pursuit that extends into several traditions and disciplines (Sjoberg, 2012). It offers an invitation for diverse methodologies, innovations and approaches that can be applied to an array of contexts. With centuries of scholarship, the study of leadership has an assorted history that traverses philosophy, psychology, politics, business, and organisational literature. Complex by nature, leadership is a term that has numerous assumed definitions, is widely recognised, and is subject to stereotype and caricature. Most can identify a good or bad leader and the favourable and unfavourable behaviours associated with leadership, yet it is a complex term that is 'largely elusive and enigmatic' (Klenke, 2018: 3), and is seldom explicitly defined (Badaracco, 2006). Definitions of leadership vary between scholars and across disciplines; 'there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define it' (Bass, 1990). Consequently, the study of leadership has undergone a series of evolutions in definition, typology and paradigm.

Early typologies in formal leadership scholarship were led by the belief that leadership qualities were born from inherited characteristics. Traditional typologies of leadership are leader-centred and trait-based, with emphasis placed on an individual's characteristics and ability to influence their followers, depicting connotations of exceptionalism, intellect, and power (Werhane and Painter-Morland, 2011). However, such assumptions and 'myths' were dispelled upon Stogdill's (1948) review of leadership literature, addressing the omission and importance of the situation and context in which leadership occurs (cited in Bass and Bass, 2008). From here, leadership behaviours and effectiveness took the scholarship spotlight and emphasis placed on relationships between leaders and followers and their outcomes (Badaracco, 2006). From a social constructivist perspective, leadership is constructed by the leaders themselves, their followers, and intermediate influences such as the media (Liu, 2010). The emergence of charismatic leadership received great attention but reduced leadership again to personality (Bell, 2014). Salient interventions in leadership scholarship arose from the theorisation of transactional and transformational leadership.

This redressed the issue of the individual and personality traits but married it with situation and followership (Badaracco, 2006). More recently, leadership theories have intensified their focus on ethics and morality as a benchmark of good leadership (Lui, 2017). Ethical leadership is informed by humanistic and positive leadership behaviours for the betterment of society and organisations.

In political science, shifts have occurred both inward to gain deeper understandings of leaders, and outward to examine the interactions, institutions are contexts in which political actors experience leadership (Bennister et al. 2017: 3). Until the 1990s, behaviouralism occupied dominant discourse before theories of neo-institutionalism, rational choice and social constructivism became favoured. However, recent literature has seen the individual come to the forefront of research again as scholars have given attention to the careers of political leaders, leadership styles and policy impacts of leaders (Bennister et al. 2017). Yet, gender has not played a focal role in these analyses, rather it exists on the periphery. This shows that both bodies of leaders have converged to focus on the importance of context and leadership behaviours and presents an opportunity to bridge micro and macro perspectives on leadership within the political field.

1.2.1. An Interdisciplinary Approach: Bridging Organisational and Political Leadership

This thesis is a critical synthesis of organisational and political studies. Organisational literature and political science literature on leadership are two distinctive bodies of literature that have limited overlap; 'there is minimal interaction between the political-science based leadership literature and [...] organisational leadership-focused literature' (Wilson, 2013: 11). Despite this limited relationship, there are significant shared features between literature bodies. Indeed, both bodies of literature are historically and persistently androcentric. As such, this lack of communication between fields offers an invitation for interdisciplinarity.

Interdisciplinarity is innate to the 'nature' of leadership (Jackson and Parry, 2007). Leadership is a constant entity that has been inherent within societies, families, governments and organisations that offers a range of global, historic perspectives. Jackson and Parry (2007) advocate for the interdisciplinary study of leadership as single-discipline research the ability to reach saturation in its production of similar findings. 'If [...] we continue to conduct typical leadership studies we are likely to find supportive results – but results that lack true meaning, substance and practice utility' (Storey, 2007: 443, cited in

Jackson and Parry, 2007). Thus, innovative, interdisciplinary approaches are imperative to the evolution of leadership studies.

By crossing 'intellectual borders', interdisciplinarity offers the ability to deviate from disciplinary norms, synthesise different fields of literature and adopt alternative methods, definitions, concepts and theories (Warleigh-Lack and Cini, 2009). Interdisciplinarity, within this thesis, requires the immersion in both political and management literature to draw on how leadership, political leadership, the study of parliaments and the study of organisations have been researched; particularly examining how gender has been woven throughout these bodies of literature. As such, I reach a deeper understanding of gender and leadership, before utilising elite interviewing techniques from political science. I develop an integrated theoretical framework that draws on Bourdieusian concepts and Feminist Institutionalism that informs my data analysis. Feminist Institutionalism (FI) typically resides in political science studies on gender and politics, whilst Bourdieusian concepts are complementary to the study of leadership but are gender blind. In addition, organisational research often consults new institutionalism, yet has not yielded the benefits of FI to develop 'fine grained' gender analyses of organisations (Lovenduski, 2011). Thus, interdisciplinarity offers a deeper and more complex undertaking of research on gender and political leadership than one discipline can offer.

Interdisciplinary research is frequently subject to critique due to epistemic concerns over the production of knowledge and pragmatic methodological concerns over the ways in which phenomena is researched (Salter and Hearn, 1996). Caution is advised in selecting appropriate and compatible disciplines that benefit from one another. In this case, drawing on both political and organisational literature allows for a more detailed, expansive, and exploratory understanding of how leadership is performed, embodied and recognised. Further, as shown, both organisational and political literature utilise qualitative interviewing to give voice to leaders. This will be further explored within the methodological section (Chapter Three) of this thesis.

A key advantageous characteristic of interdisciplinary research is the ability to have impact that spans multiple academic fields and converse in a range of discussions, ultimately widening its potential impact (Busby, 2013). By combining approaches from political science and organisational studies, this thesis has potential to reach a range of audiences and demonstrates the value of interdisciplinarity.

1.3. The Research Questions, Contributions and Structure of the Thesis

The overarching aim of the thesis is to explore how the experience of political leadership in the Scottish Parliament is a gendered experience, the extent to which the Scottish Parliament is a gendered workplace and its impact on leadership. To enable this exploration, this thesis is guided by two research questions. The questions address the complexity of gender and political leadership within a parliamentary setting by recognising the importance of both leaders and context. The questions also reflect the proceeding structure of the thesis that looks inward and outward at leadership to explore leaders' agency within the parliamentary workplace. Throughout the course of this thesis, I therefore seek to address the following questions:

1. How is the experience of political leadership in the Scottish Parliament gendered?
2. To what extent is the Scottish Parliament a gendered organisation, and what effects does this have on political leadership?

1.3.1. Summary of Empirical, Methodological and Theoretical Contributions

The contribution of this thesis is threefold by making empirical, methodological, and theoretical interventions in the study of gender and political leadership. This thesis is motivated by the shifts in leadership studies that have developed understandings of how leaders operate in contextual settings (Bennister *et al.* 2017). The institutional turn in leadership literature has attributed importance to the impacts of workplace cultures of leadership. Women's (under)representation has dominated decades of parliamentary research that concerns gender, whilst parliamentary working conditions have been understudied (Josefsson and Erikson, 2021). To date, the study of leadership has been criticised for its over-emphasis on leaders, rather than leadership, a focus on effectiveness as an outcome, rather than a purpose, lack of contextualisation, and lack of multi-level analyses and approaches (Helms, 2014). However, in doing so there is risk of losing micro level analysis of leadership. As such, the thesis develops theoretical framing that combines complementary Bourdieusian concepts that are pertinent to the study of leadership, and Feminist Institutionalism.

Using both theoretical lenses together, enables thorough exploration of both the (gendered) institution and the actors within it. FI has been used in hybrid approaches in conjunction with other theories to explain gendered phenomena, including Acker's gendered

organisations (Josefsson and Erikson, 2020) and Butler's gender performativity (Miller, 2018). However, Bourdieu and FI have not been combined. An enduring critique of Bourdieu's scholarship is gender blindness (Huppatz, 2012). Thus, this research contributes to the Bourdieusian theoretical blind spot by offering a critical feminist intervention. By uniquely combining these theories, the thesis develops a theory of leadership practice that demonstrates the ways in which women's inclusion in the parliament has led to formations of a feminised political habitus that values typically feminine leadership capitals. As such, both men and women subscribe to a leadership practice that challenges binary gendered leadership assumptions. This research therefore extends the feminisation of politics (Lovenduski, 2012; Mackay and McAllister, 2012) to the feminisation of political leadership and unearths the ways in which men contribute to this feminisation through Bourdieu's concept of capital. Moreover, there are numerous dichotomies, tensions and contradictions within the data that point to the complexity of the parliamentary workplace and political landscape that present gendered conditions for leaders to navigate (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

Responding to the call for methodological innovation in leadership studies, this research takes a broadly interpretivist approach. Methodologically, this research challenges dominant methods to leadership that are typically positivist and quantitative in approach (Wilson, 2013). Interpretivist approaches to the study of leadership offer new possibilities, particularly in parliamentary settings (Bennister, 2021). I do so by conducting interviews with MSPs from the first five parliamentary sessions of the Scottish Parliaments (1999-2021). This research is the first study in over 20 years to interview both men and women, specifically about their experiences of political leadership through a gendered lens.

Empirically, this research contributes to the existing scholarship on the Scottish Parliament. Since its reestablishment, just one other study has taken the approach of interviewing both men and women MSPs with specific regard to gender. Captured in the first two years of the opening, Mackay et al (2003: 91) conducted seventy interviews with MSPs centring on the question: 'what difference does a substantial proportion of women politicians make to political institutions, political parties and policy agenda?'. Since, studies that have explored gender in the Scottish Parliament using interviews have either interviewed women only (Malley, 2012), or political actors (e.g. activists, candidates, party officials) that are not elected representatives (Kenny, 2013; McAngus and Rummery, 2018). Similarly, there has been greater focus on women's substantive representation, and whilst the two areas of study are entwined, little attention has been given to leadership.

1.3.2. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured in nine chapters. Introducing this thesis, this chapter has presented the motivation for the thesis, research questions and a brief background of the empirical setting, the Scottish Parliament. It has introduced non-gendered leadership theory that grounds the proceeding literature review that moves towards understandings of gender and leadership in organisational and political literature. This emphasises that the study of leadership is both complex and multidimensional. As such, each chapter oscillates between looking inwards and outwards, between leaders and leadership contexts within institutions and organisations.

Chapter Two provides a synthesis of existing literature that informs and grounds the research. The first section of the literature review occupies an inward perspective on leadership from organisational and political literature to shed light on gendered leadership stereotypes, role incongruity, the double binds that women in leadership experience and the embodied experience of leadership. The second section outwardly considers the situational contexts, namely (gendered) organisations and parliaments, in which leaders, and leadership, exist. The third section finally considers the existing literature on the Scottish Parliament that focuses on women's descriptive representation, the parliamentary building, and its historical context. The central purpose of Chapter Two is to bridge organisational and political literature on gender and leadership that informs understandings of gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament.

Chapter Three introduces the integrated theoretical framing used to inform the findings and discussion chapters that follow. It integrated two theoretical frameworks that provide the necessary theoretical tools that examine leadership inwardly and outwardly – retaining the importance of leadership experience and practice and the context in which this occurs. The Bourdieusian concepts habitus, capital, field, hexis and doxa allow for intimate understandings of how leaders develop the prerequisite capital to access the political field. This places emphasis on leaders' biographies, their political motivations, and former careers. The second theoretical framework used that complements a Bourdieusian approach is Feminist Institutionalism (FI). This framing interrogates the context in which leadership occurs through a gendered lens and is alert to the gendered workplace practices within parliaments and how these have gendered outcomes. Both theoretical frameworks are concerned with the rules of the game and offer complementary but different insights into

leadership. The theoretical frameworks typically reside in different disciplines; Bourdieu is commonly cited in organisational and leadership studies, whilst FI has become the dominant framework used to study parliaments as gendered institutions and workplaces. As such, taken together the theoretical framing offers an approach that gives a fuller picture than used independently, whilst contributing to different bodies of literature.

Chapter Four sets out the methodological rationale, the research design and the methods used. It is a contextually significant chapter as it details how the Covid-19 pandemic impacted on the trajectory of this thesis. My fieldwork began in February 2020, just one month prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. This thesis is reflective of that time; I had to adjust and restructure my methodology to the conditions. This thesis set out to undertake a parliamentary ethnography, using non-participant observational methods to explore gender and political leadership within the context of the Scottish Parliament. Thus, retaining the central focus of MSPs' experiences, I undertook 31 interviews with MSPs, most of which took place online or via telephone. The chapter details the process taken to recruit respondents, the benefits and challenges to virtual interviewing, and my thematic analytic process. It concludes by discussing ethical considerations, reflexivity and possible power imbalances when interviewing politicians.

Subsequently, Chapters Five, Six and Seven, present the main findings of the interviews. Using the skeletal framework that Bourdieu and Feminist Institutionalism offers, the findings are informed by concepts that reflect MSPs' storied experiences of political leadership. Consequently, the chapters are structured based on the storied format that interviews took. Chapter Five is informed by Bourdieu's concept of habitus and explored MSPs' entry to the political field, specifically their familial backgrounds and prior careers. Chapter Six presents findings on the ways in which MSPs' understand their roles as MSPs, their leadership styles and that of others, and how leadership capitals influence leadership promotion. Chapter Seven concludes the findings chapter by presenting MSPs' reflections on the parliament as a workplace, their experience of the building and its formal and informal rules.

Chapter Eight offers discussion of the findings presented in the preceding chapters. It serves three main purposes: (1) to discuss findings in relation to the overarching research questions, (2) to make connections with existing literature, and (3) demonstrate the theoretical contributions made. Conclusions throughout demonstrate the theoretical contributions made by the findings that provide critical intervention in the emergent body of politics and gender literature that conceptualises parliaments as gendered workplaces and

the implications this has for the leadership practice of gendered actors. It does so by addressing the micro-perspective omissions in FI literature and the macro-perspective omissions in Bourdieusian analyses by looking inwardly and outwardly at political leadership. The integrated theoretical framing informs the interpretation and 'fleshing out' of the findings.

Finally, Chapter Nine concludes the thesis by offering reflections on this thesis and looks forward at directions for future research. It begins by reflecting on the multiple contributions made by this thesis into the interdisciplinary study of political leadership. Considering the limitations of this thesis, I offer a prospective research agenda that involves a continued focus on parliamentarians as leaders and the possibilities of ethnographic methods in the Scottish Parliament. The chapter continues by reflecting on lessons learned by the Covid-19 pandemic when women's political leadership was largely valued in contrast to other forms of hyper-masculine modes of leadership that were exercised during this crisis.

Before concluding, I speculatively pose and ponder a final question: *what does the future of political leadership in Scotland look like?* Scottish politics is an ever-changing landscape that has been marked by significant events since the reestablishment of the parliament in 1999, including passing ground-breaking progressive legislation, the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, the 2016 Brexit Referendum, and the Covid-19 pandemic. Scotland currently faces domestic and global challenges, and for the first time in 8 years a new First Minister, Humza Yousaf, has taken office. As such, uncertainty and change can offer opportunity for leadership innovation that embodies leadership qualities valued by MSPs such as care and compassion.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

'In my earlier days in politics, I would find myself behaving like the men around me. I would dress sort of in a little bit more of a masculine sense. You would behave in the same sort of adversarial sense in the way the male politicians were. I definitely did that. [...] You don't get any credit for doing that, you end up in a sort of 'double whammy' because you're not ever taken quite as seriously as the men but you're equally being accused of being unfeminine and not being enough of a woman' (First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, 2022).

In just a few sentences, former FM Nicola Sturgeon encapsulates much of the research on gender and leadership. The quote is an excerpt from a podcast interview entitled *Nicola Sturgeon on power and the fifty-something woman*. Elected in 1999, Sturgeon's short reflection on her early career illustrates the ways in which she negotiated her masculinity and femininity. She adopted masculine ways of dressing and behaving, whilst not being taken seriously as a woman political leader. Using Sturgeon's quote as a starting point, this literature review delves into these issues and the early research that underpins and explains such experience, before exploring the contemporary literature that informs current understandings of gender and leadership.

Demonstrating the interdisciplinarity of this thesis, this chapter offers an exploration of the comparative literature that studies gender and leadership. I do so by amalgamating the extensive political and organisational bodies of literature that contribute to current understandings in the field. This literature review consists of three parts that look *inwards* and *outwards* at leadership. Part one of this chapter looks inwards at leadership and leaders, with specific focus on how leadership has been studied through a gendered lens. I explore the ways in which gender and leadership have been studied in both political and organisational literature. This section draws on gendered stereotypes of leadership, the physical embodiment of leadership and how femininities and masculinities are performed through leadership.

The second part of this chapter looks outwards at the contextual political environments in which leadership is experienced, enacted, and embodied. Gender continues to play a central role in this section as I explore such environments as gendered organisations (Acker, 1990). As such, the latter part of this literature review is guided by Feminist Institutional approaches (Franceschet, 2011; Malley, 2012; Kenny, 2014; Lowndes, 2014; Miller, 2018; Josefsson and Erikson, 2020), concerned with how formal structures and informal rules in political life are gendered, that have developed the study of gender and parliaments (Krook and Mackay, 2011). It is an area of research that acknowledges the

importance of earlier academic interventions in organisational literature such as Acker's (1990) conceptualisation of gendered organisations. The third section of this literature review will consult the existing literature on the Scottish Parliament, identifying areas where this thesis can contribute to its study.

2.1. Part One: Gendering Leadership

Gender and leadership is a branch of the expansive and dense 'leadership forest of literature [that] is growing and tangled' (Burns, 1996: 148). As a concept, leadership is bound with persistent historic gendered roles that have transcended centuries, embedded and reproduced within the patriarchal home, politics, education, religion and the workplace. Societies, governments, and organisations have historically, and continue to be, been stratified through hierarchical orders that produce and reproduce leaders and followers; its prescriptive structure is intrinsically linked to issues of class, gender and race that requires both subordination and privilege (Stead and Elliott, 2009).

For centuries, leadership characteristics were, and still commonly remain, synonymised with those associated with masculinity (Sjoberg, 2012). These dominant androcentric, heroic 'Great Man' theories were instilled in both scholarship and public thought (Sjoberg, 2012). This is a result of the persistent structural oppression and subordination of women that mobilised barriers to accessing avenues of power and leadership (Stead and Elliott, 2009). As a result, there has been a disproportionately male-focused, or 'gender neutral', body of leadership literature. Parallel to the shifts in mainstream leadership literature, literature that explicitly accounts for women in leadership roles has undergone numerous evolutions (Enderstein, 2018).

Early literature that discusses gender alongside leadership were traditionally preoccupied with sex and biology that perpetuated the notion that women were psychologically inferior to men (Appelbaum *et al.* 2003). Discredited in the 1970s, psychologists frequently concluded that there were no sex-based differences in managerial skills such as motivation, risk-aversion and persistence, rather gender-based assumptions manifested in organisational discriminatory cultures (Sinclair, 2014). In the 1980s, literature focused on the ways in which women mimicked masculine models of leadership and repressed characteristics associated with femininity (Sinclair, 2014); 'the most powerful organisational positions are almost entirely occupied by men, with the exception of the occasional biological female who acts as a social man' (Sorenson, 1884, cited in Acker, 1990: 139).

Scholarship in the late 1980s and 1990s, alongside the wave transformational leadership, emphasised the ways in which traditionally feminine qualities were beneficial to the workplace such as emotional intelligence, nurturement and collaboration that gave women a ‘female advantage’ (Eagly, 2011; Enderstein, 2018). With hindsight however, such literature has been critiqued for perpetuating gendered and stereotyped perceptions of women and leadership along binary gendered assumptions.

Indeed, over 20 years have passed since the term ‘woman leader’ reflected the ‘anomaly’ of women in management (Bligh and Ito, 2017: 287). Directions in literature, again, shifted that problematically placed onus on women’s agency within masculine corporate organisations, encouraging women to ‘lean in’ and ‘negotiate harder’ to achieve career progression (Sandberg, 2013). There is an abundance of literature that contributes to the ‘deficit model’ of women’s leadership, that offer advice on confidence building and self-promotion (Bligh and Ito, 2017). Contemporary feminist contributions to the field of gender and leadership have attempted to move away from these ‘add women and stir’ accounts as early studies into ‘female leadership’ that tend to lack a critical perspective that deals with issues of power and structure, rather they illuminated the presence and experiences of women in leadership positions (Swan *et al.* 2009; Von Wahl, 2011). Further iterations of scholarship into women’s leadership, particularly within organisational settings, can be viewed through a neoliberal lens whereby career progression is placed on women’s agency and individualism (Gill and Scharff, 2011).

The study of gender and leadership also deviates in approach between disciplines (see Table 3). Gender and leadership, particularly women’s leadership, have been studied from a range of perspectives from micro (e.g. leadership styles, career trajectories) to macro approaches (e.g. systemic barriers to women’s leadership), unveiling a complex research phenomenon.

Discipline	Key areas	Primary research methods
Political science	Leadership styles, voter behaviour/preferences, candidature motivations, media representation, systemic barriers to women’s leadership	Institutional analysis, observational methods, biographical analysis, qualitative interviewing, voter-based surveys, media analysis
Organisational studies	Career trajectories, leadership styles, organisational cultures, organisational performance, embodiment, tokenism	Qualitative interviewing, observational methods, biographical analysis
Psychology	Leadership-follower trust, trait-based leadership	Surveys, experiments, personality profiling
Sociology	Power, gender roles, intersectional inequalities, access to leadership opportunities (e.g. social capital),	Qualitative interviewing, observational methods,

	unconscious bias, hegemonic masculinity	
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Table 3. Approaches to gender and leadership by discipline (adapted from Madsen, 2017)

By adopting a feminist perspective, Sinclair (2014) argues a case for feminist leadership studies. In doing so, she emphasises that the study of leadership should occupy a starting point with the view that androcentric knowledge has dominated scholarship and popular thought to serve patriarchal structures and men's interests. Further, feminist leadership should address power and privilege intertwined with gender relations. Sinclair (2014) urges that feminist leadership scholars should offer insights into personal experiences of leadership that are often omitted in patriarchal accounts of leadership. Additionally, in order to fully understand the obstacles that hinder women's leadership progression, it is necessary to address men's leadership, specifically hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Sinclair 2014; Bjarnegård, 2013). Thus, by gendering leadership, it is inadequate to focus solely on women's experiences of leadership, but also to take men's leadership into account as a relational concept.

2.1.1. Evolutions of Leadership Literature: Stereotyped Styles, the Double Bind and Gender Hybridity

Stereotyping Women's Leadership, Double Binds and Role Incongruity

Within traditional theories of leadership, the necessary qualities of effective leaders are synonymous with masculinity (Baxter, 2010). Traits traditionally associated with masculinity, and therefore leadership, include 'self-interest, assertiveness, tough-minded, control, domination, efficient and a heroic orientation toward task accomplishment' (Fondas, 1997: 260). Conversely, feminine traits include 'empathy, helpfulness, cooperative relationships, interpersonal sensitivity and orientation toward collective interest'. These behaviours are gender-coded against prescribed gendered expectations and are perceived positively or negatively (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023) (see Table 4). Whilst there is conflation between masculinity and traditional leadership expectations, there is little overlap between femininity and traditional leadership expectations (Sjoberg, 2014). However, expectations of leadership have changed over time and (gendered) expectations of leaders are evolving.

	Men	Women
Positive	Agentic, strong, assertive, ambitious, rational, dominant, commanding, charismatic, decisive, independent.	Collegial, sensitive, compromising, compassionate, honest, supportive, warm.

Negative	Aggressive, insensitive, controlling, bullying.	Emotional, demanding, weak, unformed, passive, dependent.
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Table 4. Gender-coded leadership trait stereotypes

The scholarly interest in women's leadership is a result of women's perceived 'out of placeness' in leadership roles (Puwar, 2004; Stead and Elliott, 2009). However, there is a lack of critical or empirical exploration into women's lived experience of leadership from a biographical or interpretivist position (Bierema, 2016). Literature on women's political leadership has often assumed the form of case study analysis on individual characteristics of leaders due to the rarity of women in such positions (Curtin, 2008; Cook and Glass, 2014).

Role incongruity theory explains that 'prejudice exists when social perceivers hold a stereotype about a social group that is incongruent with the attributes that are thought to be required for success in certain classes of social roles (Eagly and Karau, 2002). This contributes to two categories of prejudice towards women and leadership. Firstly, the stereotypically aligned traits that are perceived as masculine leads to women's potential for leadership to be viewed unfavourably, and when women lead, they may be perceived negatively as leadership behaviour is deemed less desirable in women (Smith, 2019). These gendered leadership stereotypes are upheld by the gender bias, which is broadly defined by the processes that uphold the preferential treatment of one gender (men) (Rothchild, 2014). Thus, women experience the femininity vs. competency bind and women may find balance between stereotypically feminine and masculine behaviours (Jamieson, 1995). Indeed, Byrne *et al* (2021) suggest that both men and women partake in 'gender gymnastics' in their leadership practices and move fluidly between configurations of masculinity and femininity. This speaks to former FM Sturgeon's quote that introduced this chapter. However, there is a dearth of research on how men employ femininity in traditionally masculine fields such as politics.

'Think Manager - Think Male': Masculinities and Leadership

'A gendered analysis is as much about men and masculinity as it is about women and femininity' (Bjarnegård, 2013: 1).

Gender and leadership is a subject often synonymous with women and leadership in literature. This contributes to the omission of men and masculinities in organisational and political leadership. The presumed objectiveness of organisations as neutral environments

allows masculine, dominant cultures to embed themselves as the norm. In the 1990s, an emergent body of literature gave attention to men in organisations. This critical intervention illuminated, and challenges, issues of patriarchal power that are 'structural or interpersonal, public and/or private, accepted and taken-for-granted or recognised and resisted, obvious or subtle' (Hearn, 2004: 51).

Whilst there is substantial work into the underrepresentation of women in political leadership positions, there is less attention given to men's political leadership. Bjarnegård (2018) argues that in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of political representation (and therefore political leadership), a new focus on men and masculinities in political settings is necessary. As such, men must be viewed as gendered research subjects, rather than non-gendered politicians as the norm. In doing so, ideas surrounding entitlement, privilege, practices of asserting power and different gendered forms of political capital must be explored, alongside the 'overt and highly conscious practices aimed at maintaining and preserving gendered hierarchies of power' (Bjarnegård, 2018: 2). Consequently, men that adapt to the masculine norms, feel comfortable in such spheres and have access to political capital can 'walk straight through [...] open doors'.

Consideration of masculinities in leadership studies tend to centre on Connell's (1995) theory of hegemonic masculinities. Hegemony is a process that consists of a 'complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits' (Williams, 1997: 112). Thus, hegemonic masculinity is not a passive concept, rather it requires renewal, modification, and recreation. Masculinities are continually in flux; as a socially constructed concept, masculinities are fluid over space and time (Coles, 2009). In considering the concept of hegemonic masculinity that exerts that 'at any given time, one form of masculinity [...] is culturally exalted' (Connell, 2005). Coles (2009) argues that there is a lack of critical consideration of how masculinities change and develop. Individual identities, including masculinities, are subject to negotiation by the reshaping of social and symbolic boundaries (Eisen and Yamashita, 2019). Hearn and Collinson (1998) discuss the ways in which masculine cultures permeate, and continue to permeate, workplace cultures. Research shows that a hegemonic masculine, gendered workplace culture exists across a diverse range of organisations (Hearn and Collinson, 1998).

Whilst it is argued that all men benefit from their dominant position in patriarchal societal structures, there are subordinate masculinities (Connell, 1995). Within the field of masculinity exist 'sites of domination, and subordination, orthodoxy (maintaining the status

quo) and heterodoxy (seeking change), submission and usurpation' (Coles, 2009: 36). There is contestation between individuals and groups of men over legitimacy of capitals within the field of masculinity. Extending this thought, Smith (2019) offers the suggestion of political masculinity as a subfield where dominant and subordinate masculinities exist, and it does not necessarily reflect societal hegemonic masculinity. Within the field of political masculinity, there are subfields that can be marked across the political spectrum, where differing capitals are valued (Higgins, 2020).

Gender Hybridity in Leadership

Gender norms change over space and time (Smith, 2019). The gendering of women's leadership is often problematised, whilst the gendering of men's leadership is underexplored (Byrne *et al.* 2021). However, there is an emergent body of gender and leadership literature that discusses the ways in which leadership styles that have been associated with women's leadership of care and nurture are becoming dominant forms of leadership for both men and women (Lewis and Benschop, 2022). As such, both stereotyped masculine and feminine leadership styles coexist and are exercised by both men and women. Increasingly, successful leadership is recognised as 'gender balancing' that is achieved through collaboration, care and empathy, alongside behaviours associated with masculinity. Lewis and Benschop (2022) conceptualise this as 'gender hybridity'.

According to Lewis and Benschop (2022), theoretically both men and women can perform gender hybridity in leadership. However, Khan *et al.* (2022) argue that 'only men are able to perform both masculinised and feminised attributes, despite the theoretical assertion that [gender hybridity] leadership can be performed by both men and women', thus emphasising the persistence of how the double bind continues to be used to assess women's leadership. Here, literature continues to emphasise how women negotiate role incongruity (Lewis and Benschop, 2022). In this light, it is important to consider how men negotiate both masculinity and femininity in a world where care and nurture are becoming more desirable in leadership qualities (Johnson and Williams, 2020). The following section considers another double bind that women experience - brains vs. bodies (Jamieson, 1995).

2.1.2. The Embodied Leader

Echoing former FM Nicola Sturgeon's experience highlighted at the start of this chapter, research shows that women navigate gendered bodily expectations on their appearance

and behaviours (Stead, 2013). The body is the physical site of where gender performance, intersectionality, experience, and leadership performance meet and intertwine. Bodies are ever-present in leadership but are often 'degendered and disembodied' in organisational and leadership discourses (Sinclair, 2005: 388; Dale and Burrell, 2015). Workers within organisations are perceived as bodiless, gender-neutral, emotionless, and unencumbered (Acker, 1990). Leadership has been perpetually viewed as the 'accomplishment of mental mastery' that has silenced the presence of the body in leadership scholarship (Sinclair, 2011: 121). However, neither bodies, nor the spaces that they occupy, are neutral (Puwar, 2004). Sinclair (2011) argues that this is, in part, a result of the invisibility and conformity of men's bodies that have shaped the leadership mould, whilst women are often objects of analysis between states of difference and exclusion.

'Men's universal status and their occupancy of the normative standard state [within leadership] has rendered them invisible as objects of analysis, interrogation or academic theorising' (Collison and Hearn, 1994).

During the 2016 Presidential campaign, former US President Donald Trump claimed 'I just don't think she [Hillary Clinton] has a presidential look, and you need a presidential look'. In doing so, Trump referred to the gendered reality that for 228 years presidents look male (Presidential Gender Watch, 2016). Further analyses of Trump's physicality during the 2016 Presidential campaign (e.g. walking around the stage during a TV debate with Hillary Clinton; standing behind her when she was speaking) played to the implicit theories that associate leadership with the masculine body – intimidating, dominating, controlling (Stead *et al.* 2021). The ways in which male leadership has been aesthetically symbolised – the White, middle-class, suited archetype – has disembodied leadership. In spite of their perceived invisibility, there are also stereotypes of bodily characteristics associated with male leaders within traditional discourse – youthfulness, strength, attractiveness and 'charged with high testosterone' (McDowell, 1997, cited in Sinclair, 2005: 389). Contrastingly, for centuries women's bodies have been associated with opposing characteristics such as docility, weakness, reproduction and sexualisation – none of which are typically associated with leadership (Puwar, 2004). Further, women's 'pregnancy, breastfeeding, and childcare, menstruation, and mythic 'emotionality'' have been stigmatised and viewed as incongruous with working life, particularly achievement of top leadership positions (Acker, 1990: 152).

Sinclair (2005: 387) illustrates leadership as a bodily practice that is confined to performances that are bound to wider power relations. She emphasises the ways in which individuals are 'trapped' in gender regimes of masculine and feminine assumptions, race

and class-based expectations, and socially and culturally constructed 'norms' that have implications on the ways that bodies are perceived, implicating experiences and enactments of leadership. Whilst some leadership behaviours, such as authoritativeness, are prescribed and honoured, others are condemned in accordance with bodily regimes in which they are categorised. These include speech, appearance, dress, stance, and stature (Sinclair, 2005). Bodies therefore must not only conform to the organisational practices and regulations, but also according to their intersectional positioning of gender, race, class, ability, and sexuality. Stead's (2013) qualitative research into the lived experiences of women leaders in academia highlight the ways in which the leaders must navigate both their own gendered performances alongside the gendered institutions in which they work. For example, interviewees cited using dress as authoritative expression, 'mixing' femininity and masculinity with their appearance and behavioural expectations. Brown and Lemi (2021) direct attention to the politics of appearance that Black women politicians navigate, involving gendered and racialised assumptions that are tied to European depictions of beauty standards. Interviews with Black women political elites detail how they negotiate compounding racism, colourism, and misogyny.

As bodies are central to the construction and performance of identities, they can catalyse subconscious prejudices and societal assumptions (Kenny and Bell, 2011). One way in which bodies are presented is through dress. Within organisations, bodies are dressed and presented to adhere to cultural expectations (Connell, 2000). Costume and dress are integral components of social materiality, group integration and organisational belonging (Bell and Sinclair: 2016). Dress contributes to aesthetic symbolism that can indicate a person's social position, occupation, class, gender, and power. There are prescribed meanings and symbols attached to certain modes of fashion; for example, suits have become synonymous with representations of men in power (Connell, 2000). Equally, formal business dress has also become an accustomed norm for women within organisations alike. Again considering the 2016 Presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton spoke of why she wore her 'uniform' of a colourful pantsuit. For Clinton, developing a habitual clothing pattern was a 'anti-distraction technique', where she hoped that people would focus on what she was saying instead of wearing (Clinton, 2017). Additionally, she spoke of her dress as a 'visual cue' that she was 'different from the men but also familiar' of the accepted image of a politician in a suit. This echoes many women politicians' experiences where there is an attempt to neutralise their appearance to avoid gendered commentary on their appearance.

Gendered scrutiny that accompanies women's seniority is commonly coupled with sexism and misogyny, frequently featuring comments on 'their bodies, clothes, sexuality and gaze'

(Bell and Sinclair, 2016: 322). Whilst White male leaders enjoy bodily invisibility, women's bodies are measured against both the masculine leader stereotype and the feminine stereotype. With specific focus on women's bodies in political spaces, Puwar (2004) stresses that we should not think of MPs and gender as two separately independent structures, rather that they are inbuilt and inseparable; the body is the site where both gender and being an MP are synchronised. Puwar (2004) discusses the ways in which women, specifically women of colour, navigate traditionally White male spaces. In doing so, she uses the term 'space invaders' to depict connotations compatible with those associated with notions out-of-placeness. Puwar (2004) exemplifies Westminster as a site of traditional White maleness that has previously excluded women.

Gendered Media Constructions of Women Political Leaders

When bodies act outside of normative boundaries – for example when women lead – individuals are often met with scrutiny (Puwar, 2004). Women politicians experience gendered media attention that attempts to 'delegitimise and trivialise their political careers', whilst treating women as 'novelties' (Williams, 2019: viii). Critique of women in politics is frequently laced with a series of gender-based, misogynistic, and sexist language. This has occurred in tandem with the growth of the personalisation of politics where politicians' personal lives are frequent media stories (Pedersen, 2016; Higgins and McKay, 2016). As such, media representation of women politicians is a highly developed area of literature; this section considers how this is practised in the Scottish context.

In 2004, Sturgeon was a frontrunner in the contest for SNP leader, alongside MSP Roseanna Cunningham (former MP since 1995 and MSP since 1999). 'Combative' headlines echoed wider masculinised media commentary, including 'Can a woman be man enough for Scottish politics?' (Luckhurst, *Scottish Daily Mail*, 2004) and 'Sturgeon vows tough fight for SNP top job: Women square up for battle' (Hanna, *Scottish Mirror*, 2004, cited in Higgins and McKay, 2016). Such rhetoric provokes connotations of war and violence and suggests that Scottish politics is a masculine domain (Higgins and Mackay, 2016). Further media dialogue during the 2014 Independence Referendum period went on to describe Sturgeon as 'nippy', or 'nippy sweetie', denoting sour or abruptness. This contrasts the conventionally feminine ideals of demureness or soft-spokenness (Higgins and McKay, 2016). Sturgeon (2023) has since reflected what she refers to as her 'superpower' – her shyness. She notes that her shy and reservedness has been misinterpreted as rude by the media. Elsewhere, when PM Theresa May and FM Sturgeon met for the first time to discuss Scotland's position in the EU exit process, a Daily Mail headline wrote 'Never mind Brexit,

who won Legs-it!' and the article focused on their shoes (see Appendix 5 for image). Williams (2021) argues that this redirection of public attention from their discussion to their appearance is a form of silencing.

Often centring around motherhood and reproduction, biological and bodily differences between men and women are used to evidence women's incapability and unsuitability to political life. Budig (2014) argues that whilst heteronormative ideals around fatherhood and family life are advantageous to men in politics, motherhood and family life are disadvantageous to women. Referred to as the 'fatherhood bonus' and the 'motherhood penalty', male politicians with children are hailed as 'family men', whilst mothers in politics are contrasted as neglectful or selfish (Budig, 2014). Analysis shows that in the House of Commons, MPs who are mothers are more likely to enter parliament when their children are older; for women the average age of their eldest child when they entered parliament was 15 and 11 for men (Campbell and Childs, 2019). Furthermore, having a partner and children acts as a political resource for men as women are more likely to be primary caretakers, allowing men the time to explore political avenues; 'there are far fewer male politicians without children than there are women, because maternity discrimination and childcare difficulties are very real issues in politics' (Yaqoob, 2016, cited in Brooks, 2016).

This gendered scrutiny also extends to women that do not have children and are perceived as deviant (Mortimore, 2004). 2017 analysis shows that 39% of women MPs do not have children, compared to 30% of men (Campbell and Childs, 2019). Media headlines such as 'The Motherhood Trap: why are so many successful women childless?' highlight a further double bind that women in leadership positions experience. Former FM Nicola Sturgeon features among other women political leaders on the cover of the *New Statesman* (2016) who also do not have children. The image on the front page depicts a ballot box in a crib, suggesting that these women have replaced motherhood with a career in politics (see Appendix 5 for image). In another article, Sturgeon is listed among other women under the heading 'Childless politicians' (Rhodes, 2016). None of those listed were men. The list appeared alongside an article in which Sturgeon spoke of her experience of miscarriage which ultimately received cross-party condemnation. In contrast, in 2020 Cabinet Secretary Humza Yousaf spoke of his and his wife's experience of multiple miscarriages, which was not met with the same gendered and misogynistic commentary as Sturgeon's experience (Rhodes, 2020). In recent public discourse, men MPs are increasingly discussing parenthood as parliamentarians.

Another way in which the media is used to undermine women's power and political legitimacy is social media. The prevalence of abuse directed at women politicians on social media is well-documented and has become normalised as 'the cost of doing politics' (Krook, 2020). Krook (2020) argues that access to social media has 'dramatically expanded opportunities to harass women directly' and echoes offline misogyny and violence that women experience. Whilst online harassment of men is often designed to shame or embarrass, online harassment of women is targeted, persistent, sexualised and reflects the reality of gendered violence that is aimed to 'intimidate, control and silence' (Chemaly, 2016). Social media abuse of women politicians is indiscriminate and compounded by racism, homophobia, and ableism. Globally, numerous women from across the party spectrum have spoken publicly about their experience of such targeted abuse and its negative impacts (IPU, 2016). The following section of this literature review will situate these experiences of leadership within the gendered parliamentary contexts.

2.2. Part Two: Situating Leadership: Gendered Organisations, Parliaments, and the Workplace

'The key puzzle of political leadership is how it affects, and is affected by, the contexts in which it occurs' (Bennister *et al.*, 2017: 1).

Having looked inwards at the experiences of leadership, it is important to look outwards and give attention to the physical environments in which such experiences and processes occur. Contextualising political leadership in the Scottish Parliament that is seen as both a political institution and a workplace is central to this thesis. As such, this section begins by examining the ways in which organisations are gendered, before addressing the ways in which parliaments and political fields have also been critiqued through a gendered lens.

2.2.1. Gendered Organisations

In contemporary literature, gender relations in the workplace are an integral part of organisational and working life (Swan *et al.* 2009), yet nearly all theories of organisations are silent on issues of gender (Jeanes *et al.* 2011). The contributions made by Joan Acker (1990) mark notable intervention to organisational literature in developing the concept of gendered organisations. Challenging traditional assumptions that organisations are inherently gender-neutral and exempt from gendered implications, Acker (1990) theorised that organisations are unequal on the basis that gender and that organisations are gendered. Gender regimes penetrate 'all organisational practices, cultures, structures and

processes' and dictate whose bodies belong where (Swan et al. 2009: 434). Acker (2006: 110) recognises organisational inequalities as 'systematic disparities between groups of organisational participants in control over organisational goals and outcomes, work processes and decisions, in opportunities to enter and advance in particular job areas, in security of position and levels of pay, in intrinsic pleasures of the work, and in respect and freedom of harassment'. Further, Acker (1990: 140) proposes four dimensions of gendered institutions to be considered: (1) organisations are hierarchical and segregated based on gender, (2) symbols, images and ideologies that 'explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose' gendered divisions, (3) gendered interactions, and (4) the appropriateness of 'performances' of masculinity and femininity accepted within the organisation. This is particularly relevant to this study that seeks to unveil the extent to which the parliament is a gendered workplace, where some gendering processes are hidden from public view. Acker's (1990) theory helps to penetrate accounts of leadership that may appear 'un-gendered' or gender neutral.

According to Acker (1990), gender is embedded in the hierarchical structures of organisations, the division of organisational labour, recruitment process, career trajectories, representations and images of leaders and workers, interconnections between work and family and constructions of identity (Acker, 2011). The embeddedness of this 'gender regime' is hidden within a gender-neutral discourse where the 'ideal worker' is the male, whose life centres around his job. Further feminist contributions to the gendering of organisations highlight which work is valued, the division of labour in the workplace and the distribution of power (Swan et al. 2009). Again, this is pertinent to the political environment that relies on self-selection and election as the recruitment process. It further signifies how representations of 'ideal leaders' are constructed and interpreted in the workplace, which has implications on how political actors exercise (gendered) leadership practices to reflect idealised norms (Acker, 2011; Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

Within institutions and organisations, it is argued that 'gender regimes' exist that reflect and reproduce wider gendered structures. Diversity, equality and inclusion in contemporary organisational corporate values have become an expectation within Western organisations (Rutherford, 2011). However, it is how such values are translated in organisational culture where they come under scrutiny. For Acker (1990) organisational cultures are gendered. Organisational culture is defined by 'the attitudes, values, beliefs and patterns of behaviour of organisational members. It is expressed in the management styles, work ideologies (what is and isn't work), language and communication, physical artefacts, informal socialising and temporal structure of work' (Rutherford, 2011: 28).

Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations is now commonly discussed in management and organisational literature that studies gender within the 'post-feminist organisation'. Post feminism explores the extent to which women are, or are not, empowered autonomous individuals whose lives are, or are not, shaped by individual choice (Rumens, 2017). In an organisational context, it debates whether the agentic individualism of women in the workplace is a result of neoliberalism or whether it is a result of successfully dismantling patriarchal structures (Gill and Scharff, 2011). Furthermore, it redresses women's inclusion in the workplace and interrogates how women are included differently to men. Rumens (2017) poses three avenues of research through which organisations, and indeed parliaments, could be explored: (1) scholars should problematise the gender binary in which women are seen as empowered at work; (2) there should be interrogation of postfeminist masculinities that are assumed to be inclusive in the workplace; (3) examine how men perform postfeminist masculinities at work. Thus, it is important to be cognisant of how this may occur in parliamentary cultures, particularly in those that have achieved, or almost achieved, gender balance – women are included, but this poses the question of *how* they are included. This is pertinent when considering leadership and how men and women are included and valued as leaders, and how femininity is valued and exercised when employed by different actors.

Learning Leadership

'[Men] got there first and set the patterns and rules according to what pleases them. It's up to women to take the initiative in learning to understand men's ways' (Stechert, 1986, cited in Kenny and Bell, 2011).

Learning leadership is not a static, singular educational event; it is an on-going formal and informal process situated in everyday social interactions (Stead and Elliott, 2009). Further, it requires consideration of broader social contexts that shape gendered norms and cultural expectations (Stead, 2013). The notion that leadership can be learned refutes early leadership theories that suggest individuals possess innate leadership qualities. However, discussion of women and leadership learning are often framed through the deficit model (Sinclair, 2011). Women's leadership development is usually differentiated from general leadership development as women face gendered obstacles to leadership. Within organisations, the lack of role models and mentors for aspiring women leaders is well documented (Stead and Elliott, 2019). Thus, women's leadership development attempts to challenge gender bias.

Women's leadership programmes and training are said to risk perpetuating the perception that women need to be 'fixed' (Mavin, 2008). Furthermore, such training does not necessarily address systemic and institutional workplace barriers, and thus places the onus on women to learn and acquire skills and knowledge that may conflict with organisational practices. Women's leadership training has regained attention in postfeminist organisational literature that encourages women's empowerment (Gill *et al.* 2016). Again, this places emphasis on women's agency and neglects structural barriers that impede women's leadership.

2.2.2. Gendered Parliaments

Literature on the underrepresentation of women in politics is highly developed, and a significant factor in this pernicious underrepresentation is the role of parliaments. Transforming political institutions is central to the project of feminist change (Mackay and Waylen, 2014). Although parliaments have been transformed worldwide by the inclusion of women parliamentarians, gender bias in cultural practices remains prevalent; 'most countries have 18th century style politics and 19th century style institutions in the 21st century' (Apolitical Foundation, 2022).

The scholarly gendering of parliaments began in the 1990s; parliaments – like organisations – are not gender-neutral entities. Feminist interventions in political science scholarship spoke of the 'institutional turn' in the field (Kenny, 2007). A gendered focus on political leadership shifted emphasis from women in leadership positions to the gendering *of* political institutions that unearth the ways in which political institutions 'reflect, structure and reinforce gendered patterns of power' in which leadership is experienced, embodied, and enacted (Kenny, 2013: 34). Since the 1990s, feminist scholars have centred analyses of political power within political institutions (Krook and Squires, 2006). Scholarship on gender and parliaments is a highly developed field, particularly the use of Feminist Institutionalism. However, through this analytic lens, work on gender and political leadership is less developed.

Political leadership is context-dependent on the political landscape, within its parliamentary institution and political party boundaries (Bennister, et al. 2017). By 'gendering parliaments', gender is ever-present and embedded into the foundations of parliaments' organisation, like 'the rings inside a tree trunk [...], gender is everywhere' (Lowndes, 2019). Consequently, it can be practically challenging to identify gender within political institutions as does not

reside in a specific place or within a specific group of people. As such, Lowndes (2019) suggests that through gendering political institutions, researchers must identify the roles of gendered rules, gendered actors, and gendered outcomes.

'When Women Run, Women Win': Selection, Election and Promotion

Globally, women have unequal access to political power; 90% of countries are led by men, and women comprise 25% of parliamentarians (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). Just 21% of Cabinet ministers around the world are women, and only 14 countries have gender balanced Cabinets (UN Women, 2021). Women's underrepresentation as leaders is well-documented as statistical deficits highlight the gendered differences in access to leadership roles. Extensive academic literature shows that men and women have different access to, and experiences of, political leadership (O'Brien, 2015).

As there are no universal qualifications for political candidacy, the electoral process relies on individual self-selection. Research shows that men and women have similar reasons for standing for election – the primary motivator is to effect change (Fawcett, 2018, cited in Cowper-Coles, 2021). However, further studies detail that women are more likely to stand for election due to specific issues, rather than self-advancement factors (Kamlongera, 2008; Prindeville, 2020, cited in Cowper-Coles, 2021). Scholars have demonstrated women's electability based on electoral share and success rates, which have led to the mantra: 'when women run, women win' (Sanbonmatsu, 2006). However, this electability does not translate into women's representation.

Women's global underrepresentation in politics has been explained by a political 'ambition gap' (Fox and Lawless, 2005; 2010). This body of literature offers explanation as to why fewer women stand for election than men and has become a 'taken-for-granted fact' in electoral politics (Piscopo and Kenny, 2020). It explains the ways in which women self-exclude themselves from selection and election and do not view themselves as viable candidates against masculinised leadership ideals. However, this places the onus on women and treats political ambition as a deficit.

Exploring women's underrepresentation from a structural perspective, there is a body of literature that examines how political recruitment and candidate selection processes are gendered and therefore allows for the continuity of male dominance in politics (Krook, 2009; Kenny, 2011; Bjarnegård and Kenny, 2015). Bjarnegård and Kenny (2015: 748) refer to this as the 'secret garden' of politics, where selection practices are dictated by 'internal party

rules, informal practices and power relationships'. These 'seemingly neutral' recruitment practices are subject to wider systemic gender implications (Kenny, 2011: 23). These include three categories of barriers that disproportionately impact on women's candidature: social and cultural barriers, structural and institutional barriers, and knowledge and information barriers (Maguire, 2018). Social and cultural barriers include caring and time demands, financial accessibility, aspiration and confidence, contacts and connections, and gender-based violence. Structural and institutional barriers include recruitment practices and working practices and rights. Knowledge and information barriers concern the accessibility of political engagement and networking. Thus, women are less likely to have the necessary social, economic, and cultural capital required for political candidature (Norris *et al*, 2004). Even in instances where men and women have matching qualifications, Johnston and Elliott's (2015) research on Scottish Local Government Elections found that women councillors were half as likely to stand for election and require three times more encouragement to stand. Such barriers can be further characterised through Norris and Lovenduski's (1995) 'supply and demand' model. Supply factors (e.g. personal political ambition, access to resources including time and finances) impacts on who decides to put themselves forward for election, whilst the demand factors (e.g. the role of political parties' selection processes and dominant socio-cultural norms) affect who is perceived as a desirable candidate (Norris and Lovenduski, 1995).

An additional element in selection and electoral processes is the use of gender quotas. Gender quotas are a positive action measure that 'require a certain proportion of women – or of both men and women – among those nominated or elected' (Dahlerup, 2020). Gender quota systems can be a legislated requirement of political parties, or parliaments, or can be voluntary measures that are typically enshrined in political party statutes (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2010). Both are designed to 'fast track' women's political representation that can otherwise take decades to occur 'organically' (Paxton and Hughes, 2015). They attempt to overcome some of the disproportionate barriers that challenge women's access to political engagement.

Gender quotas in Scottish Parliament Elections are voluntary methods used at the discretion of each political party. There was an expectancy for political parties to 'increase the openness of candidacy [and] to allow greater membership participation in selection' (Bradbury *et al*. 2000, cited in Kenny, 2013). Parties faced both internal and external pressure to ensure high levels of women's representation (Kenny, 2013). This pressure on parties has continued in subsequent elections and has had varying results. Outcomes on women's representation have varied by party since 1999, from 0% to 66% (see Figure 1, p. 12). Women's representation peaked in the most recent parliamentary election where 45% of MSPs are now women after a long period of stagnation where numbers of women did

not rise above 40% (Kenny and Mackay, 2020). This outcome was due to the concerted effort of the SNP, Scottish Labour and Scottish Greens that used an array of voluntary gender quotas, including placement of women and BAME candidates in favourable list positions.

Leadership Labyrinths, Ladders and Cliffs

Organisations present a gendered landscape designed to benefit men that women must negotiate to progress into leadership roles (Stead and Elliott, 2018). Women's experiences of career progression and leadership are often illustrated through the use of metaphors that depict the numerous, shared and structural difficulties and hindrances women face. Born in organisational literature, the 'glass ceiling', 'glass cliff', 'leadership labyrinth', 'leadership ladder', 'sticky floor' and 'firewall' all encapsulate the ways in which women are presented with barriers that must be overcome on an individual level, despite their intangible systematic and structural connotations (Eagly and Carli, 2016). Furthermore, the 'leadership web' describes the environmental and personal factors that influence women's leadership ambitions (Stead and Elliott, 2009). Each metaphor can be seen to be representative of Acker's (1990) concept of gendered organisations. Indeed, women must navigate this gendered terrain, both in and out of politics (Elliott and Stead, 2021).

Coined by Ryan and Haslam (2005), the 'glass cliff' has joined the array of metaphors used to conceptualise the representation of women in leadership. The metaphor of the 'glass cliff' is used to describe the phenomenon whereby women are more likely to be appointed as leaders when the leadership position is perceived to be 'less attractive' or in crisis (O'Brien, 2015; Cook and Glass, 2014; Beckwith, 2015). This is particularly applicable to political events; 'women's initial access to power increases when the post is least attractive' (O'Brien, 2015: 1023). Such political 'crisis conditions' include when party votes are in decline, when there is less competition or during major political or social uncertainty (O'Brien, 2015; Belknap et al. 2020). During such times, parties are more likely to select new and different types of leaders, and women are more likely to resign than men. An example of this is illustrated by former PM Liz Truss' time in office. She was elected following PM Boris Johnson's multiple 'scandals'; however, her tenure ceased after 45 days due to mismanagement of the economy, ongoing Brexit issues and the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Nelmes, 2022) In contrast, during times of success, there is a lack of incentive to depart from the status quo that favours male leaders (O'Brien, 2015).

Party leadership contests have historically been struggles over masculinity (e.g. dominance, assertiveness, strength) and masculinised policy issues (e.g. national security) (Belknap *et al.* 2020). When women run for party leadership, ongoing gendered stereotyping and commentary often targets women's appearance, speech, and motherhood as discussed in the previous section (Smith, 2019). Thus, women political leaders are subjected to a 'different (and often more demanding) set of rules than men' (O'Brien, 2015: 1023).

In contrast, this pattern of metaphors has been used in a positive way to describe the ways in which women's representation has been embedded into the process of Cabinet appointments and has been used to describe the Scottish context (Scottish Parliament, 2023). The 'concrete floor' provides an explanation as to why the appointment of all male Cabinets and fewer women than in the previous Cabinet is typically avoided. The 'concrete floor' is defined as the minimum proportions of women for a Cabinet to be 'perceived as sufficiently representative and legitimate' (Annesley *et al.* 2021: iv).

Promotion in Parliament

The study of women's political leadership has spotlighted women in executive leadership positions where the term 'leader' is typically reserved for those that hold elected head of state roles (Jalazi, 2013; Sykes, 2016; Bullough *et al.* 2012). This somewhat narrow view of leadership omits the influential leadership that parliamentarians can execute as leaders of their constituencies and their ability to influence policy. Genovese and Steckenrider (2013) offer a broader definition for what constitutes as a political leader: holding office, possessing the ability to influence, inspire and mobilise others. These divergent definitions present challenges to the coherency of discussion of women as political leaders.

Until the 20th century, the role of global political executives – prime ministers, presidents and Cabinets – have been highly gendered, solely occupied by men (Beckwith, 2020). Cabinets are central to governing power (Annesley *et al.* 2019). Cabinets and the ministers that comprise them represent the 'apex of political power' (Smith and Martin, 2017). Individual ministers attain portfolios and are responsible for policy in that area. Such promotion into Cabinet can be the pinnacle of a politician's career. There are no universal rules for the selection of Cabinet ministers. In many countries, there are prerequisites to Cabinet membership. Formal rules can include qualifying criteria of several years of parliamentary service or specify that ministers must be drawn from parliament. Informal rules define the eligibility and standards of what constitutes someone to be 'ministrable'

(Annesley *et al.* 2019). Desirable competencies can include policy expertise, party loyalty and political experience. Citing the expansive body of literature on Cabinets and ministerial power, Annesley *et al.* (2019) argue that selectors, leaders of Cabinets, are guided by formal and informal rules.

Also at play are informal rules about gender and political leadership. Globally, women have unequal access to such power, occupying only 21% of ministerial positions (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). Global trends in distribution of ministerial portfolios are categorised by gender; women ministers are concentrated in portfolios such as family/children/disabled/elderly people, education, and employment. Portfolios with the fewest women ministers are transport, finance, and defence (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2021). Annesley and Gains (2010) argue that there is a clear gender bias in the selection of Cabinet ministers that acts as a barrier to women's political agency. Burch and Holliday (1996) emphasise that the institutional configuration of Cabinet systems is not gender neutral; there is a gendered disposition in Cabinet recruitment and prioritisation of policy areas. Further, gender norms exist regarding what constitutes a good minister (Annesley and Gains, 2010). Women parliamentarians, and Cabinet ministers alike, are judged to different criteria than men (O'Brien, 2015).

Literature on women's ministerial presence is not as expansive as the literature on women's parliamentary presence, despite considerable overlap on substantive representation (Annesley *et al.* 2019). Substantive representation and processes of policy change were confined to analysis through a lens that focused on women's policy agencies, rather than Cabinet analyses (Annesley and Gains, 2010). However, more recent literature has involved biographical accounts and case study analyses of women in executive political positions, detailing their ascension to governing power (Bauer and Tremblay, 2011; Genovese and Steckenrider, 2013; Jalalzai, 2013). Further existent literature into the selection of Cabinet promotions show that leftist politicians appoint greater numbers of women (Claveria, 2014; Krook and O'Brien, 2012; Annesley *et al.* 2019). Anecdotal evidence shows that women are also frequently given 'housekeeping' and 'organisational' roles that do not contribute to shaping policy outcomes such as 'Leader of the House of Commons' and 'Chief Whip' (Annesley and Gains, 2010: 917).

Parliaments as Gendered Workplaces

'Politics has long been viewed as a quintessentially masculine space. At a practical level, parliamentary working arrangements – hours, debate styles, and even

architecture – also tend to reflect the assumption that MPs will be male’ (Krook, 2018: 68).

There is a new generation of gender and politics scholars that are examining parliaments as gendered workplaces and gendered organisations (Crawford and Pini, 2011; Crewe, 2014; Erikson and Josefsson, 2019, 2020; Erikson and Verge, 2020; Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). This thesis is influenced by this emergent body of work and makes contributions to understandings of gender and leadership within the gendered workplace. First addressed in their work, *The Australian Parliament: A Gendered Organisation*, Crawford and Pini (2011) use Acker’s (1990) theoretical framework of ‘gendered organisations’, which typically resides in organisational literature, to study the Australian Parliament. Using Acker’s four dimensions that are required to constitute ‘a systematic theory of gender and organisations’, Crawford and Pini (2011) consider (1) how organisations are hierarchical and segregated based on gender, (2) how symbols, images and ideologies reinforce gendered divisions, (3) how interactions are gendered, and (4) how workers manifest behaviours that are ‘appropriately gendered for the institutional setting’. In doing so, they conducted interviews with both men and women to analyse the gendered division of labour within the parliament. Using gender as an analytic comparator, Crawford and Pini (2011) expose the gendered differences in experience of political leadership where women engaged with conversations surrounding bodily and self-surveillance whilst men afforded value to self-aggrandising to promote their careers. The study also spoke of converging experiences between men and women, highlighting the need for a diversity of perspectives in order to fully understand the gendering of the parliament. Crawford and Pini (2011: 100) conclude that the study of women and politics benefit methodologically from the inclusion of men within the research sample to investigate ‘nuanced masculinities’ that exist within political spaces, as echoed also in organisational literature (Sinclair, 2014).

Subsequently, Erikson and Josefsson (2019) have developed this branch of literature. They acknowledge that women’s substantive representation is typically viewed through policy outcomes, rather than whether women have the same workplace opportunities as men to conduct their parliamentary duties. Using a survey to access the parliament’s ‘inner workings’, they explore the extent to which the Swedish Parliament is a gendered workplace, unveiling that whilst women are not discriminated against through formal rules and regulations, power hierarchies and informal practices are gendered and privilege masculine behaviour (Erikson and Josefsson, 2019). Taking Acker’s (1990) concepts further, Erikson and Josefsson (2019) have provided a framework to study parliaments as gendered workplaces, drawing on Feminist Institutionalism to underpin their approach (see

Table 6, p. 88). This approach demonstrates the ways in which workplace conditions have gendered outcomes.

In their subsequent iteration of this research, Erikson and Josefsson (2023) explore how the Swedish Parliament, as a gendered workplace, presents gendered leadership conditions. They explore how feminine leadership ideals and masculine leadership practices co-exist within the gender balanced Riksdag and how this has negative consequences for women leaders. They interviewed both men and women parliamentarians to gain rich data on experiences of leadership within the parliament and is a study that is particularly insightful as it aligns with the purposes of this research.

Gender Sensitive Parliaments

‘Gender sensitive parliaments represent the ‘gold standard’ of what parliaments should be’ (Palmieri and Childs, 2022).

In 2011, the call for the transformation of parliaments to become *gender sensitive parliaments* was led by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. It sought to transform the ways in which parliaments are structured to promote gender equality (Palmieri, 2018). It gave parliaments the tools to identify and assess gender sensitivity against an international framework. Internationally, gender sensitive parliaments are being recognised as a democratic standard (Palmieri and Childs, 2020). For several years, parliaments have conducted internal reviews including the Parliament of Canada (Barnes and Munn-Rivard, 2012), the Riksdag of Sweden (Engström MP, 2009) and the UK Parliament (2018). Beyond women’s representation, these audits have included analyses of sitting times, dress codes, proxy voting, parental leave, childcare, and women’s leadership.

There are four principal elements of a gender sensitive parliament. Firstly, the parliament is responsible for the achievement of gender equality, both as a process and a policy outcome. Second, the parliament is led by institutional policies and frameworks that contribute towards ongoing monitoring. Third, the parliament ‘institutionalises a gender mainstreaming approach’. Lastly, the parliament works to eliminate institutional cultures that ‘perpetuate discriminatory, prejudicial norms and attitudes in the workplace against women members and staff’ (Palmieri, 2018: 1). Among EU countries, the UK Parliament scores 62.4 out of 100, ranking fifth behind Sweden, Finland, the European Parliament and Austria (EIGE,

2019), whilst the Scottish Parliament, as a devolved parliament, does not appear as separate data.

Expanding this area of study, Childs (2016) conducted research on the UK House of Commons on its diversity sensitivity. Placing emphasis on institutional change, the report *The Good Parliament* offers a series of recommendations to address the catalogue of 'diversity insensitivities' to become a 'better parliament' (Childs, 2016: 9). Recommendations include to trial operating sittings of the House around business hours, produce a House statement on parental and caring leave, allow infants in the chamber and committees, remote voting, diverse artwork, and provision of a crèche facility. However, the acceptance and implementation of a gender sensitive parliament is 'contingent on institutional culture – which in some cases remains unapologetically masculinised' (Childs and Palmieri, 2023). Whilst most of these recommendations have not yet been implemented, the Covid-19 pandemic changed the parliamentary workplace, albeit temporarily.

Globally, the Covid-19 pandemic saw the creation of virtual parliamentary workplaces as populations, including parliamentarians, were expected to work from home. From April 2020, MSPs joined Zoom committee meetings, debates and FMQs. Virtual voting and voting by proxy allowed for an inclusive voting system. However, accompanying commentary on the Covid-19 pandemic detailed the multiple ways in which the pandemic increased the burden of care, home-schooling, and domestic labour for women as schools and childcare facilities closed (Power, 2020; Palmieri and Childs, 2020). By 2022, working procedures in the UK House of Commons returned to those before the pandemic (Scottish Parliament, 2022). In the Scottish Parliament, 78% of MSPs supported the continuation of Members participating in parliament virtually due to family circumstances, suggesting that the working practices during the pandemic were steps towards greater gender sensitivity (Smith, 2022). As such, there is ongoing consultation to formally retain some of the flexible workplace arrangements (e.g. virtual participation) that were temporarily introduced during the pandemic.

In 2022, Presiding Officer Alison Johnstone MSP launched an audit of the parliament's gender sensitivity (The Scottish Parliament, 2022). The audit was informed by the IPU framework, specifically assessing the extent to which the parliament: (1) 'promotes and achieves quality in numbers of women and men across all of its bodies and internal structures', (2) 'mainstreams gender equality', (3) 'fosters an internal culture that respects

women's rights, promotes gender equality, and responds both to the realities of parliamentarians' lives' and (4) 'encourages political parties to take a proactive role in the promotion and achievement of gender equality' (The Scottish Parliament, 2022).

2.3. Part Three: The Scottish Parliament and Political Leadership

The final section of this literature review empirically grounds the research. In this section, I explore the existing literature on the Scottish Parliament, particularly the scholarship that addresses gender within the parliamentary context. The aim of this chapter is therefore to 'set the scene' within the Scottish Parliament by exploring its organisational history. Globally, centuries-old parliaments have extensive significant bodies of literature that contribute to understandings of the parliament, yet the newness of the Scottish Parliament allows for greater examination. I therefore consider the historic and contemporary political landscape that constitute the conditions for political leadership and the opportunities to lead (Robinson and Kerr, 2017).

2.3.1. The Historical Context: A 'Blank Canvas' for Feminist Institutional Innovation

Robinson and Kerr (2017) argue that in order to understand how leaders attain such positions, it is necessary to begin by taking a historic perspective to understand the events that shape 'emergent processes of organisation and change' (Harrison, 2016, cited in Robinson and Kerr, 2017). They highlight that political leaders do not emerge 'fully formed', rather the emergence of leaders is both 'time-bound' and 'historically specific' to the context. More specifically, it is argued that the emergence of women party leaders in the Scottish Parliament (e.g. Sturgeon, Dugdale and Davidson) are a result of women's political mobilisation during the Thatcher Government, the women's liberation movement and the campaign for devolution that converged to create conditions that enabled women's succession to formal leadership (Robinson and Kerr, 2017). It is argued that a culmination of these factors catalysed a 'genesis' of nationalism, feminism and democracy that explain how women leaders in Scottish politics later emerged (Robinson and Kerr, 2017: 7).

Prior to the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999, women in Scotland had been historically excluded from formal politics. Between 1918 and 1999, just 21 women had represented Scottish constituencies in the House of Commons. In the 1990s, under 5% of Scotland's MPs were women (Morrison and Gibb, 2021). Women's political participation predominantly resided in left-wing extra-parliamentary activism such as trade unionism and

the women's liberation movement of the 1970s (Browne, 2014, cited in Morrison and Gibb, 2021). The rise of Thatcherism in the 1970s saw increased mobilisation of women in informal political circles as threats to women's liberation heightened. By the late 1980s, the renewed devolution campaign had gained momentum with feminist actors playing a central role. *A Claim of Right for Scotland* was a document, published by the cross-party group Campaign for a Scottish Assembly and signed by 58 of Scotland's 72 MPs, that demanded Scotland's sovereign right to form Government. As a response to this, in 1991, *A Woman's Right of Claim*, was submitted to the Scottish Constitutional Convention to raise awareness of the concerns over masculinised, conflict-based style of politics, gender representation and misogynistic culture.

It was this period that proved to be a critical juncture in the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and attempts to embed gender equality. At the end of the 20th century, 'feminist reformers' (Mackay, 2014: 557) in Scotland were part of the international trend that saw feminist scholars give attention to the importance of institutions on the lives of women (Morrison and Gibbs, 2021). This 'institutional turn' moved away from '*women in to the gendering of political institutions*' (Kenney, 1996: 455, cited in Kenny, 2009). As such, the new Scottish Parliament was seen as a 'blank canvas' that presented an opportunity for feminist intervention and innovation (Shaw, 2020). The 'opportunity for innovation', with regard to gender equality, can occur during the design of new political institutions or during periods of reform (Mackay, 2014: 549). Indeed, as discussed in Chapter One, the Scottish Parliament was praised for its 'female face' in the early years of devolution, achieving numbers of women MSPs that placed Scotland as a front-runner for women's representation globally.

The Scottish Parliament has been applauded for its 'constitutional engineering' where its attention to gender equality in its blueprint has led to positive outcomes for women's descriptive representation (Waylen, 2006, cited in Mackay, 2014). 'Family friendly' workplace policies were introduced which included the operation of parliament during business hours, with most parliamentary business scheduled over three weekdays, allowing two days where MSPs work from their constituencies (Democratic Audit UK 2017). Furthermore, the parliamentary calendar aligns with school terms and there are breastfeeding and creche facilities on-site. Such measures were to ensure that 'arrangements for the operation of the parliament should be equally attractive to men and women' (Consultative Steering Group, 1998: 13, cited in Kenny and Mackay, 2019). Allen *et al.* (2016) found that almost three-quarters of MSPs agreed that the 'family friendly' policies were implemented well. However, such attempts to create gender equality in

institutions can be undone. New institutions are subject to 'organisational and institutional legacies' whilst contending with 'path dependencies' of wider environmental institutional processes (Mackay, 2014: 550). Here, Mackay (2014: 567) argues such attempts of 'new politics' in relation to gender equality have been 'partially institutionalised'. Rather, the Scottish Parliament provides an example of the difficulties of gender reform and institutional change as the parliament exists within the wider political hegemonic masculine norms. Indeed, a number of women MSPs have resigned from their position, citing incompatibilities with childcare and other caring responsibilities.

Another significant conflict that opposes the foundational principles of the Scottish Parliament is the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace (Progressive, 2018). In light of the MeToo movement, a 2018 staff survey was issued to explore the issue of sexual harassment; its results demonstrated its prevalence. It exposed an unsafe working environment where 1 in 3 women experienced inappropriate behaviour. Overall, 20% of staff had personally experienced sexual harassment, specifically 30% of women and 6% of men. It also illuminated a culture of where reporting of sexual harassment and sexist behaviour was discouraged, as expressed by 24% of survey respondents. In addition, Former FM Alex Salmond, was accused and tried for charges of sexual assault, indecent assault, and attempted rape (BBC News, 2019). Engender (2018) commented that the frequency of sexism and sexual harassment at Holyrood is a result in embedded power dynamics that uphold male entitlement, power, and control. This resulted in parliamentary equality, diversity and inclusion training to provide awareness of inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. There are also signs and notices around the parliamentary estate that signal a zero-tolerance approach to such behaviours and who to contact in such instances (see Appendix 6). This demonstrates that despite gender equality aims, the parliament is not exempt from violence against women.

Westminster was perceived as the 'negative template' against which the Scottish Parliament was designed (Macmillan 2020, cited in Morrison and Gibbs, 2021), where 'hegemonic political masculinity' prevails and men and women are required to enact and embody 'competitive masculinity in order to be effective' (Connell, 2002; Lovenduski, 2005). Mackay (2014) argues that on a symbolic level, the creation of 'new politics' in a devolved Scotland disrupted the hegemonic political masculinity model. In doing so, there was a concerted move away from centralised authority, dominant executive leadership and 'winner-takes-all' Westminster model that are bound to hegemonic masculinity. This attempt was also built into the fabrication of the parliamentary building.

2.3.2. The Scottish Parliamentary Building: Cultural and Symbolic Intentions

Scholarly interest in the built environment and its impact on leadership has increased in recent leadership literature (Salovaara and Ropo, 2018; 2019). It goes beyond human-human encounters and encompasses human-material interaction. Several studies have analysed the significance of space and materiality on leadership practices (Ropo and Salovaara, 2019). Attention has been given to the spatial arrangements such as co-working spaces and offices, and contexts such as at-home working. Conclusions from this body of literature signal that human social interactions, and therefore leadership, are embedded and embodied in the physical space in which they occur (Ropo and Salovaara, 2019). This body of literature has mirrored the 'institutional turn' in political science.

The new 1999 cohort of MSPs required a parliament building. Between 1999-2004, committee rooms and the debating chamber were housed in the temporary parliament in the General Assembly Hall on The Mound in Edinburgh whilst construction was ongoing at the new Holyrood site. The design of the new parliament building was awarded to Catalanian architects Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue following a design competition launched by Secretary of State for Scotland Donald Dewar (Gillick and Ivett, 2019). Following years of controversial planning and costing debates, in 2004, MSPs attended the opening of the new parliamentary building, situated at the bottom of the Royal Mile, at Holyrood.

Built at the turn of the 21st century, the Scottish Parliament was designed to house 21st century progressive politics (Balfour, 2005). It was constructed upon the fundamental principles proposed by the Consultative Steering Group (CGS) that comprised a cross-party group of senior politicians, representatives from local government, civic society groups, and the private sector (St Denny, 2020). These four principles included accountability, power-sharing, access and participation, and equal opportunities (CGS, 1998). These principles were to underpin the institutional architecture of the parliament, encompassing its legislative processes, decision-making, electoral system, working conditions, representation, and technology to enhance transparency.

'The coming of a Scottish Parliament will usher in a new way of politics that is radically different from the rituals of Westminster; more participative, more creative, less confrontational... a culture of openness which will enable the people how decisions are being taken in their name and why' (McGarvey 2001: 430, cited in Arter 2004).

Architecturally, the post-modern parliament embodies 'anti-classical' and 'de-institutionalised' design (Ronstad, 2016). Exteriorly, the parliament offers a public space with seating around fountains to the front and amphitheatre-style seating overlooking The Salisbury Crags and the Palace of Holyroodhouse, initiating public engagement with the estate (Gillick and Ivett, 2019). Internally, the public is welcomed to the Debating Chamber's viewing gallery where members of the public can book tickets to watch debates and FMQs, and committee meetings. The Debating Chamber forms a semi-circular layout that 'eschews the oppositional dynamic' and encourages mutuality and consensus between parties (Gillick and Ivett, 2019: 237) (see Appendix 6). Each MSP can access their own seat and podium, featuring a desk, voting equipment and microphones that are switched on upon MSPs' digital requests to the Presiding Officer to speak.

Elsewhere, MSPs' offices are grouped by party and are positioned behind glass walls with adjoining rooms for staff that promote collaborative working. Each office features a reflection window 'nook' that were spaces crafted for members to sit and reflect on their decision-making whilst looking out onto the Scottish public and landscape (see Appendix 6). Offices belonging to Cabinet secretaries, junior ministers, deputy and presiding officers, and the First Minister are separate from MSPs' offices but retain spatial openness with their staff members. On the walls throughout, artwork includes a portrait of Dr Winnie Ewing (former MSP and SNP President) by Donald Davidson (1970) and a piece entitled *Travelling the Distance* by Shauna McMullan (2006) (see Appendix 6) who journeyed around Scotland to meet 99 women who she asked to write a sentence about a woman they felt that made a significant contribution to life, culture or democracy in Scotland which were then inscribed in porcelain (Scottish Parliament, 2022).

In their architectural decisions, Miralles and Tagliabue (1998) illustrated the significance of the building's political connotations: 'The crucial idea that sustains is that the Parliament sits in the land because it belongs to the Scottish land'. Gillick and Ivett (2019: 238) claim that this deliberate 'symphony of [design] instances' created a certain 'visual language of public interpretation' of being more transparent, accessible and participatory. Judge and Leston-Bandeira (2018) emphasise that parliaments are built with 'symbolic intent' to serve as cues that represent the political landscape of a nation. As such, it is argued that political representation is not confined to those elected to parliament, but also the institution itself. Thus, the political designers and architects of Scottish Parliament used such modernist features to metaphorically convey that it was a progressive political institution for a 'born-again Scotland' that was establishing itself as a global player (Gillick and Ivett, 2019).

Simultaneously, there was a concerted effort for the Scottish Parliament to contrast the Palace of Westminster, both symbolically and architecturally; a building that was originally built by men and for men in 1016. William II built Westminster Hall with the symbolic intention to be 'a project to impress his new subjects with his power and the majesty of his authority' (UK Parliament, 2015, cited in Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2018). This demonstrates the relationship between parliamentary symbolism and an elite and authoritarian depiction of leadership (Judge and Leston-Bandeira, 2018). Until 1908, women had only been permitted into the parliament to attend the Ladies' Gallery, in which relations and acquaintances of male MPs observed Commons Chamber below (Puwar, 2010; Richardson, 2019). In the Commons Chamber, the opposition benches remain two sword lengths apart. There are also not enough seats on the benches to accommodate all MPs and MPs do not have access to individual microphones. Such spatial arrangements can result in MPs being forced to stand at the entrance to the Chamber and it is not uncommon for MPs to raise their voice to be heard. On the walls, paintings of historically significant kings and colonels embellished with weapons adorn the corridors and rooms, illustrating the parliament's 'male script' (Puwar, 2010: 309).

Malley (2012) conducted a comparative parliamentary ethnographic study into belonging and inclusion in Westminster and the Scottish Parliament through a gendered lens. She found that there are institutionally specific modes of behaviour in accordance with the dominant norm. MSPs were positive about their experiences of belonging due to the parliament's founding commitments to equality and inclusion (Malley, 2012). However, the original desire to create a consensus-building and non-adversarial parliament had not been met due to the confrontational style of debate that occurred in the chamber. Although, this was not found to be a gendered issue. At Westminster, MPs experienced exclusion on the grounds of the masculine and Oxbridge political rituals (Malley, 2012). This sentiment was experienced by both men and women who did not fit the 'political norm'. Thus, nearly 25 years since its initial planning, there is debate as to whether the designers' intentions came to fruition and became embedded in the institution as an equal playing field for political leadership.

2.3.3. Positions in the Field: Opportunities to Lead

The reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament required a new cohort of politicians in Scotland. Every four years, the Scottish electorate has the opportunity to elect 129 MSPs

to the Scottish Parliament. Using a hybrid first past the post and proportional representation electoral system (Additional Member System (AMS)), Scotland comprises 73 constituencies and 8 regions and each voter casts two votes. It was a deliberate electoral system that was built into the 'inclusive' infrastructure of 'new politics' (Mitchell and Henderson, 2020: 213), designed to encourage equal gender representation and to give a great amount of power to the electorate (Constitutional Convention, 1990).

Scotland is a small nation with a population of 5.5 million, densely concentrated within the central belt, with an even smaller population of the 'political elite' (Young, 2002). In the twenty-two years since the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament, 347 MSPs have been elected. Young (2002: 154) describes Scotland as a 'village', particularly amongst the small network of political elites where 'everyone who is anyone knows everyone who matters'. Alongside the demand for greater women's representation in politics, another part of the argument for devolution and the reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament was concerned with the issue of class and elected representatives (Keating *et al*, 2020). There was a demand to broaden the political field, making Scottish politics more accessible and representative of its population in contrast to the perceived exclusionary politics of Westminster (Keating and Cairney, 2006).

The Role of MSPs

'Political roles are the place where individual choices meet institutional constraints' (Searing, 1994: x).

MSPs perform several roles in office. Roles are 'coherent sets of 'norms' of behaviour' whereby individuals ascribe to a 'logic of appropriateness' to their behaviour (March and Olsen, 1989, cited in van Vonno, 2012). Within parliaments, parliamentarians' conception of their role(s) is based on institutional expectations based on their position, who they interact with and situational contexts (van Vonno, 2012). Thus, political roles are constructed by the political institution and reconstructed by politicians who perform them. Searing's (1994) seminal work on political roles demonstrates how MPs shape their behaviour within the complex parliamentary institution, also taking party influence into account. In the context of this thesis, the term 'political leader' is given to Members of the Scottish Parliament. Typically, it is a term that is reserved for heads of state, Cabinet (or other forms of executive) members, rather than recognising the leadership exercised by those in elected positions. However, MSPs' leadership opportunities are multiple.

Convery and Parker (2020) developed a typology of MSP roles that fulfil three key functions: the *representative*, the *legislator*, and the *scrutiniser*. For most, the *representative* is the dominant role, and representing people and issues in their constituency or region is their primary priority (Convery and Parker, 2020). As constituency and regional MSPs are elected through different methods, their representational roles and activities can differ. Since 1999, there has been a 'clear division of labour' between the two sets of MSPs. Constituency members serve a smaller geographical area than regional members, and since their name has appeared on the ballot, are more likely to establish closer relationships with constituents. Forging such relationships and championing local issues can, in turn, be electorally rewarded and thus creates an incentive for creating a positive reputation in the constituency (Convery and Parker, 2020). Contrastingly, list MSPs do not necessarily share the same electoral incentives as their region is larger and there are six other MSPs to 'share' the casework. As such, list MSPs are more likely to be active in the Chamber and engage with 'party branding activities' such as policymaking and media output (Convery and Parker, 2020). As a result, Convery and Parker (2020) suggest that this creates two different representational styles within the parliament.

As *legislators*, MSPs play a central role in the legislative process. In this role, MSPs can offer amendments to Bills, participate in legislative debates, and draft legislation either as part of a committee or as a member's Bill (Convery and Parker, 2020). As a unicameral parliament, the function of the Scottish Parliament's committee system encompasses legislative scrutiny, contribution to policy making and initiation of legislation (St Denny, 2020). As such, committees were 'envisaged as legislative actors in their own right' (St Denny, 2020: 485). Committees comprise five to fifteen MSPs that reflect the parliament's political party composition and cover areas specified in the Parliament's Standing Orders and in alignment with government ministers' portfolios. Such committees include 'Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture', 'Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice' and 'Rural Affairs, Islands and the Natural Environment'. MSPs that belong to committees are expected to build expertise on the area (Convery and Parker, 2020). Furthermore, there is the expectation that MSPs work cross-party and should act independently from party affiliations within committee settings.

As individual *legislators*, MSPs can exercise legislative leadership by proposing two members' Bills per parliamentary session to promote a particular issue that could be of personal, public or local significance (Convery and Parker, 2020). Members' Bills must receive public consultation and support from a minimum of 18 MSPs and at least half of political parties (Scottish Parliament, 2022). Since 1999, 37% of members' Bills have been

introduced into law. Examples include MSP Tricia Marwick's 2001 Bill to introduce proportional representation for Local Government elections based on the Single Transferable Vote System and MSP Monica Lennon's 2017 Bill to ensure free access to sanitary products, including in schools, colleges, and universities (Scottish Parliament, 2022).

In most majority political systems, the largest non-governing party forms the opposition, led by the leader of the opposition, and promotes members of the party into the opposition shadow Cabinet. In the Scottish Parliament, there is not an official opposition party. In this respect, all non-governing parties are equal. Each elected party can assign shadow Cabinet positions or spokespeople for portfolios. This was a deliberate feature of the Additional Member System. Under AMS, it is unlikely that parties will obtain enough seats to secure a majority government. This was specifically designed to create cooperative politics and cross-party working (Mitchell and Henderson, 2020). Figure 2 illustrates the party formation of each parliamentary session since 1999, where there has been only one majority government formed (2011-2016).

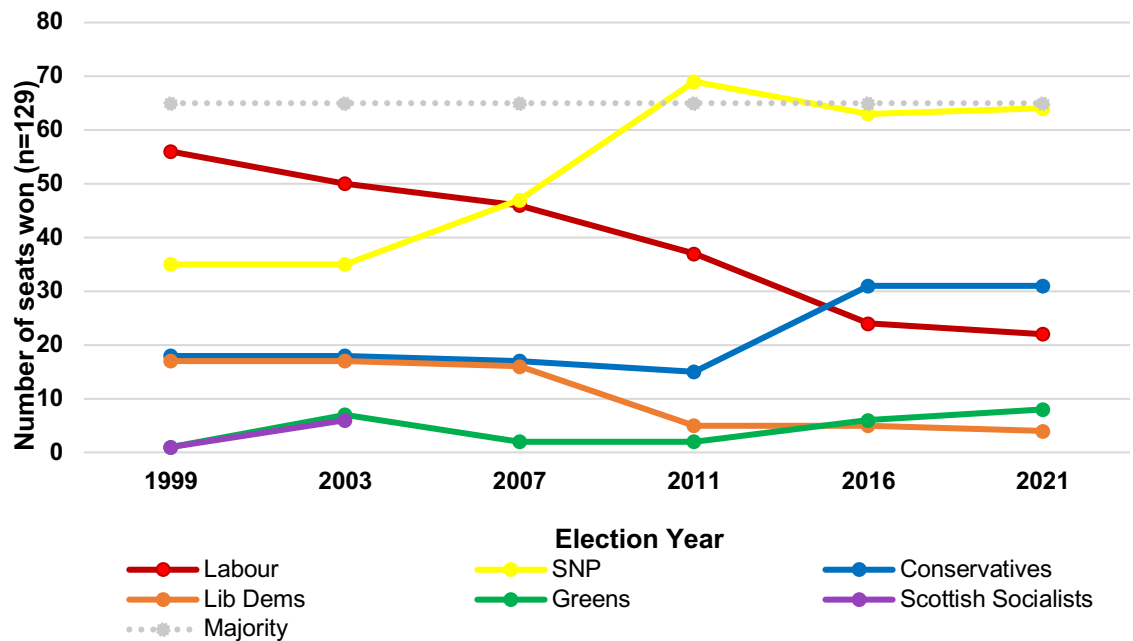


Figure 2. Seats by party and Scottish Parliament Elections

Substantive representation is defined by what women *do* when they are elected, encompassing 'women's (diverse) policy needs, policy preferences, and political interests in policy development and legislative activities, leading to more equal outcomes' (Kenny and Mackay, 2020). Early literature on substantive representation generally presumes that women will pursue and promote 'women's issues' in parliament (Tremblay, 2007). However,

the relationship between women's descriptive and substantive representation is not linear and oversimplification can reinforce traditional gender stereotypes (Celis *et al.* 2007). Increased numbers of women parliamentarians do not always reflect policy outcomes that promote equality. There is, however, a positive relationship between the introduction of gender quotas and increased legislative interest in 'women's issues' (Clayton and Zetterberg, 2018).

Kenny and Mackay (2020) use policymaking on gender-based violence as a case study to examine women's substantive representation in the Scottish parliament. Scotland's feminist approach to gender-based violence accompanies just a few countries that incorporate UN conventions, place emphasis on the importance of the women's sector, and frame gender-based violence embedded in broader gender inequalities (Kenny and Mackay, 2020). In the early years of devolution, gender-based violence was prioritised in the National Strategy to Address Domestic Abuse in Scotland signalling inclusivity. The Protection from Abuse (Scotland) Act 2011 was a symbolic legislative intervention driven by organisations such as Women's Aid and introduced to parliament by a cross-party group of feminist women MSPs and male allies (Mackay, 2010). This highlights how political leadership on policymaking and women's substantive representation are interwoven.

Lastly, in Convery and Parker's (2020) MSP role typology, is the *scrutiniser*. Both individual MSPs and committees can scrutinise and hold the Scottish Government and its ministers to account. Scrutiny of the Government is most noticeable, and receives the most attention, during weekly First Minister's Questions (FMQ). During the 45-minute session, leaders of the opposition parties begin by asking questions to the First Minister, followed by backbenchers' and supplementary questions. FMQ sessions can be lively debates that can stray into hostile and confrontational exchanges. MSPs can also verbally ask questions to ministers during Topical, Portfolio and General Question Times, or write to ministers with questions.

A further leadership role undertaken by MSPs is through employment and management of their staff. MSPs have the ability to employ staff (e.g. researchers, caseworks, media communications, office managers) at their own discretion and receive Members' Support Allowance to run their office. Many members of parliament are first-time employers and face inexperience of recruitment and management (Miller, 2012). Parliamentary rules stipulate that MSPs can advertise positions via the Scottish Parliament website in a fair and competitive process. However, MSPs are also at liberty to recruit personal contacts and

family members; this information must be submitted to the Scottish Parliament Corporate Body (SPCB) and is accessible to the public (SPCB, 2022). In the August 2021 register, four MSPs recruited either their child or partner (SPCB, 2021). It is also common for MSPs to recruit co-campaigners and party members that they worked alongside during their elections. This demonstrates the presence of informal networks in the recruitment process in which MSPs take on a management role.

The Cabinet

In the Scottish Parliament, the Cabinet is led by the First Minister who appoints their senior Cabinet Secretaries, who are supported by junior Ministers. Appointment is at the discretion of the First Minister and there are no qualifying criteria for promotion. Like the general body of literature on gender and Cabinets, there is an absence of literature on Scotland's Cabinets. Furthermore, the gender composition of ministerial portfolios in the Scottish Parliament does not necessarily reflect the global trend. In numerous appointments, Former FM Sturgeon selected newcomers that perhaps do not have substantial political experience. MSP Kate Forbes was the first woman to be the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Economy and was the youngest MSP to obtain a Cabinet position, having previously worked as an accountant in the banking sector (Carrell, 2020).

Party Leadership

Party leaders play a significant leadership role in Scottish politics. Party leaders are influential actors that shape their parties' vote and policy-making direction (O'Brien, 2021). Each political party in the Scottish Parliament has its own elected leader. Leaders are elected by party members in leadership contests. Scholarship on gender and political party leadership shows that men and women have differential access to, and experiences of, party leadership (O'Brien, 2015).

There are glass cliff scenarios that have occurred in the Scottish Parliament, particularly following poor party electoral performance. As noted, former FM Nicola Sturgeon became leader of the SNP following the unsuccessful result of the 2014 Independence Referendum: an example of the 'glass cliff' scenario. Likewise, former Scottish Conservative Party leader Ruth Davidson was elected as leader during a period of poor electoral performance.

'To not have a Tory Party exist in Scotland, that was the reason why I ran. [...] Whilst lots of people think it was just shameless arrogance on my part; I had to be talked

into it. I actually didn't want to be leader that quickly. I wanted to learn my trade as a politician on the backbenches' (Former Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party Leader, RT Ruth Davidson, 2021).

Elsewhere, comparative global analysis shows that green and environmental parties are more likely to elect women party leaders than any other party ideology (O'Brien, 2021). Indeed, the Scottish Greens have a co-leader structure that must be gendered balanced, echoing green party structures in Germany, New Zealand, and Sweden. This commitment also withstands varying levels of seat share and government status, highlighting the parties' gender egalitarian stance (O'Brien, 2021).

Several biographies have been published that document the lives of party leaders in the Scottish Parliament (e.g. Donald Dewar, Jack McConnell, Alex Salmond, Nicola Sturgeon and Ruth Davidson). While such accounts are useful in mapping career trajectories of party leaders and First Ministers, they do not provide first-hand experiential accounts of leadership. Furthermore, they focus on First Ministerial and party leader power, perpetuating the notion that the title of leaders is reserved for those in top leadership positions, rather than viewing leadership as a process and activity that all MSPs engage in.

The Career Politician: MSP Career Trajectories

Keating *et al* (2020: 500) argue that, like those elected to Westminster, Scotland also possesses a particular 'reproducing' political class. Since the reformation of the Scottish Parliament, MSPs cohorts have been characterised by their extensive political experience prior to parliamentary election (Stolz, 2019). Of the first cohort of MSPs to enter the Scottish Parliament in 1999, 80% of MSPs had experience of elected party-political office and 40% had been elected within local government. A further 19% had held office as a Westminster MP and 40% had stood in a UK general election (Stolz, 2019). Notably, the first two First Ministers of Scotland were 'politically socialised' in Westminster; Donald Dewar served as Secretary State of Scotland (1997-1999), whilst McLeish served as Minister of State for Scotland (1997-1999) (Lynch, 2006: 425). In 2011, 14% of MSPs had previously occupied political roles such as researchers, advisers and caseworkers within constituency offices or party headquarters. 10% of MSPs elected in 2011 had held a previous role within the Scottish Parliament. Of MSPs elected in 2016, one third of MSPs have been former local councillors; 28% held MSPs' staff positions. There is variation between parties, with 57% of SNP MSPs 61% of Labour MSPs being elected via this trajectory, compared with 39% of

Conservative MSPs who are more likely to have stood as candidates in UK General Elections.

Employment in roles such as parliamentary researchers and caseworkers have been described as 'brokerage careers' to becoming members of parliament (Miller, 2018). Keating *et al* (2020) describes these 'politics-facilitating' jobs, including political workers (party officers, councillors, etc.), full-time trade union officials, journalists, and those that work in public relations, interest groups, or think tanks. Traditionally, brokerage occupations to elected office include lawyers, teachers and lecturers that possess advantageous tenets such as links to the community and prerequisite skills conducive to campaigning including public speaking. However, as demonstrated, 'politics-facilitating' occupations have arisen as a dominant pathway to political progression (Keating *et al.* 2020).

In his analysis of the Scottish political class, Stolz (2019) also cites the 'career politician', defined as 'the collective interest in a reliable income from politics and in a reasonable chance for career maintenance and advancement' (Borchert, 2003: 3, cited in Stolz, 2019). This is achieved by being socialised in the institutional structure and learning from those in it (Miller, 2012). Prior to the recent 2021 election, the average tenure of an MSP was 9.3 years, demonstrating effective career maintenance. There is also a trend of 'upward mobility' for Labour and Conservative MSPs that seek election to Westminster (Stolz, 2019). Several Labour and Conservative MSPs have sought election to Westminster. Stolz (2019) suggests that this is evidence of the long-term professional career politician class. Indeed, several MSPs have served continuously since 1999, although many stood down in the 2021 election.

Class, Occupation and Education

Those entering politics from traditional working-class backgrounds have been in long decline in British politics; fewer members of parliament are entering parliament from working-class occupations (Keating *et al.* 2020). During the post-war era (1945-1970) 40% of Scottish Labour MPs had come from manual occupations or trade union officials. In the Conservative Party, Scottish MPs often had former agricultural and military careers (Keating *et al.* 2020).

In examining MSPs educational and occupational backgrounds, descriptive representation of the Scottish population is decreasing (Stolz, 2019). There is an over-representation of professional and higher-educational (i.e. possessing a university degree) background. Table 5 illustrates the change in demographics of the parliament. In 1999, over half of MSPs were from professional backgrounds, by 2016, this number halved and most MSPs had former politics-facilitating occupations (Keating *et al.* 2020).

Occupation	1999	2003	2007	2011	2016
Professional	51.2%	49.6%	45%	33.1%	25.6%
Business	17.3%	14%	15.5%	17.7%	16.3%
Politics-facilitating	18.1%	24.8%	23.3%	28.2%	43.4%
Blue or white collar	3.9%	3.9%	7%	9.7%	7.8%
Miscellaneous	5.5%	7.8%	8.5%	11.3%	7%

Table 5. Formative occupations amongst MSP' (Keating *et al.* 2020)

Globally, and particularly in Westminster, the educational background of members of parliament has been subject to considerable historical critique (Keating *et al.* 2020). Data from the Sutton Trust (2017) shows that just under one third of all Westminster MPs were privately educated, and one in ten attended the all-boys private school Eton College (cited in Keating *et al.* 2020). Devolution and the 'new politics' that came with it sought to turn this trend. Since 1999, almost 90% of MSPs have attended state schools. This is partly due to the overall trend that there are less privately educated pupils in Scotland than in England. However, at present 20% of MSPs attended a fee-paying school, compared to 6% of the Scottish population. At the current rate of progress, it will be 2056 before the parliament is reflective of the educational background of the population (David Hume Institute, 2021).

Keating *et al.* (2020) argue that although there has been avoidance of the degree of elitism in the form of Oxbridge education and its prevalence in Westminster, university graduates dominate in the Scottish Parliament. The proportion of MSPs without further education qualifications is one in six (Keating *et al.* 2020). Of the Scottish population, 75% of adults do not have a university degree or professional qualification (Scotland's Census, 2011). Thus, university graduates are overrepresented in the Scottish Parliament.

Young's (2002) claim that 'everyone knows everyone' in the 'village' of Scotland is particularly true for those that have familial ties within Scottish politics. Most notably, Winnie Ewing (former MP, MEP, MSP, and President of the SNP) and her children Annabelle and Fergus have all held seats in the Scottish Parliament as SNP MSPs. Father and daughter, John Finnie, and Ruth Maguire, have also shared the Debating Chamber. Upon her

resignation, Michael Mara sought to gain his sister's seat, Jenny Marra. There is no formal analysis of familial ties within Scottish politics, however political dynasties are common globally and are a common trajectory into political leadership in many legislatures (Smith and Martin, 2016).

Many of the Scottish political elite have educational roots at the University of Glasgow. Attending the University has been referred to as the Scottish equivalent of attending 'Oxbridge' to do a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE), in its success of producing future politicians (Torrance, 2016). Such Scottish politicians include key players in the newly devolved Scotland such as Donald Dewar (First Minister, 1999-2000), Nicola Sturgeon (First Minister, 2014-2023), Wendy Alexander (Scottish Labour leader, 2007-2008) and Joann Lamont (Scottish Labour leader, 2011-2014), among several Cabinet secretaries. Although it could be argued this is coincidence, it is a pertinent and frequent feature in several Scottish political leaders' backgrounds. Additionally, there is anecdotal discussion that there is a culture among those involved with Debating Society and student politics that partake in adversarial debates and public speaking training in a hall that resembles a smaller version of the Houses of Commons Debating Chamber in its décor, that may act as development for political pursuits. This places importance on MSPs backgrounds prior to entering politics and their 'political socialisation' (Rush and Giddings, 2011).

2.4. Conclusion: Interdisciplinary Offerings

This extensive literature review has acted as a bridge between organisational literature and political science research that centres on gender and leadership. It has offered a foundation that informs the research undertaken in this thesis. Existing literature emphasises the ways in which leadership and access to leadership roles are gendered experiences that have negative outcomes for women. Binary gendered assumptions in leadership literature continue to dominate understandings of gender and leadership. However, there are significant shifts, particularly in organisational and management literature, that contribute to developing understandings of gender hybridity.

This chapter has unveiled that the study of political leadership within gendered parliaments has not fully been realised and focus thus far has given attention to executive leadership of senior leaders, rather than the everyday leadership practices of all politicians as leaders. The literature that conceptualises parliaments as gendered workplaces and explores the

ways in which this has gendered outcomes for leadership is in its infancy and there is much to be explored (Erikson and Josefsson, 2019; Waylen, 2021). Upon this omission, this thesis makes theoretical and empirical contributions to this dialogue. I do so by accessing situated knowledge and lived experience from MSPs. Developing the theoretical framing was an iterative process that relied on the themes from the data. As such, the use of Bourdieu's concepts and Feminist Institutionalism is discussed in detail in the following chapter. The two theories provide a complementary skeletal framing with appropriate and useful concepts that allow for thorough exploration of the interview findings. The integrated approach enables a deeper understanding of leadership from an inward and outward perspective.

Chapter Three: Developing an Integrated Theoretical Framework: Combining Bourdieusian Concepts and Feminist Institutionalism

Shifts in leadership studies in political science have occurred to develop both *inward* and *outward* perspectives to understand how leaders operate in contextual settings (Bennister et al. 2017:3). As demonstrated in Chapter Two, attention given to leadership in previous literature oscillates between individual actors and the context in which they are situated. Inward, micro perspectives consider leadership trajectories and leadership styles, whilst outward, macro perspectives consider environmental settings such as the state and institutions, including government and parliaments. By prioritising the experiences of leaders within the Scottish Parliament, this research examines leadership both inward and outwardly (Bennister, 2017). In doing so, I attempt to mitigate against the critique of using an institutionalist perspective that can risk losing focus on leadership (Helms, 2014). This thesis is guided and anchored by actor-centred narrative data that offers experiential accounts of leadership. This approach views leadership as a process and as a behavioural activity, performed daily by all MSPs whilst occurring within the institutional setting of the Scottish Parliament. As such, this holistic study is scaffolded by an integrated theoretical framing that mediates structure and agency.

Thus, in order to fully access and analyse the data from both inward and outward perspectives, appropriate theoretical framing is required. This chapter works towards integrating a Bourdieusian analysis of political leadership and a Feminist Institutionalist framing to understand the gendered workings of the Scottish Parliament. This lens illuminates the dynamic interaction between structures and actors through an analysis that explores MSPs' experience of leadership and the parliament. The integrated approach provides a skeleton structure that informs data analysis as used in some approaches to management research (Laughlin, 1995; 2004).

The chapter will firstly draw on the Bourdieusian conceptual tools that are both useful and appropriate to the research context, including field, habitus, capital and doxa (Bourdieu, 1984; 1990; 2001). Such tools allow for an effective analysis of leadership by unveiling how leadership *capital* is obtained, valued and devalued when performed by men and women with the parliament setting, or political *field*. However, as this chapter will unveil, Bourdieusian analyses are inherently 'gender-neutral' (Huppertz, 2012: 25) as Bourdieu did not incorporate thorough gendered analyses into his work. To redress this, feminist critiques of Bourdieu's work have demonstrated the ways in which his concepts can be adapted and

developed in feminist research (McCall, 1992; Lovell, 2000; Adkin and Skeggs, 2004; Kraiss, 2006; Huppatz, 2012).

Upon establishing this ground, the chapter will introduce FI. Retaining the feminist position of this research, it is necessary to expand on Bourdieu's conceptual tools to account for the gender dynamics within this political setting. Looking outwards at the institutional context of the Scottish Parliament in which leadership occurs, FI offers a conceptual framework that looks at political environments as gendered settings that can constrain or enhance agency, and therefore leadership (Lovenduski, 2011; Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). A central tenet that features in both a Bourdieusian approach and a feminist institutional approach is the focus on formal and informal rules. Both FI and Bourdieu's concepts examine the 'rules of the game' that influence actors' behaviours. Both theories offer relevant tools that are accommodating in understanding leadership as it is a concept that spans discussions of structure and agency. Analytically, these tools are used to support and facilitate the study of gender and leadership. They provide a skeleton framing that is useful to develop understandings of gender and political leadership within the Scottish Parliament.

3.1. Leading in the Political Field: A Bourdieusian Approach

Bourdieuian analyses have transcended both organisational and political literature in the study of leadership. Bourdieu (1984; 1996; 2001) offers a range of concepts in the pursuit to understand the 'relationship between people's practices and their context' (Busby, 2013: 204). Bourdieu's sociological work (1996) often spoke to the field of politics, for example his linkage between educational settings and state elites, however it did not directly address formal, institutional politics (Davis, 2010). There are several examples that have since used a selection of Bourdieu's concepts in political and management settings. Like many Bourdieusian analyses, the utility of Bourdieu's concepts in this framework does not reflect Bourdieu's 'entire conceptual arsenals', rather applicable concepts have been selected that are suited to this research (Adler-Nissen, 2009: 87; Busby, 2013). Such analyses have been concerned with Bourdieu's concepts of habitus (Puwar, 2004), fields (Alder, 2009; Busby, 2013) and capital (Lowndes, 2004; Bennister *et al.* 2017; Robinson and Kerr, 2017) within political settings.

Bourdieu's analysis of the social world occupies a wider structural constructivist approach, whereby it transcends prescriptions of structuralism that neglect actors' capacity for agency, without resorting to individualism (Bourdieu, 1990). Here, in a political context, 'a

constructivist account of politics that believes in the construction of reality by agents who [are] constrained by structures that are material and symbolic' (Kauppi, 2003, cited in Busby, 2013). This is useful for several reasons. Firstly, it bounds actors within contexts – politicians are 'socially embedded actors' that navigate, and are navigated by, social spaces, relations and structures (Davis, 2010). Turning to situational contexts, for Bourdieu (1990) it is insufficient to examine a social phenomenon through a singular lens of what was said or what happened (cited in Davis, 2010). Rather, situating social phenomena, such as leadership, within historical contexts and institutional landscapes is imperative. Situational approaches to leadership encompass the political context, and 'postulate that leaders may emerge who have the characteristics and skills to meet the needs of their group, organisation, or society at a given time' (Gill, 2006: 36; Robinson and Kerr, 2017).

3.1.1. Habitus

Like leadership, habitus is an enigmatic concept that is often misunderstood and difficult to define, whilst also being widely cited across disciplines and applicably straightforward (Maton, 2008). The concept begins with the question of agency and structure – actors feel a sense of freedom in their daily decision-making, yet there are social practices characterised by regularities that create sense predictability of the social world (Maton, 2008). Bourdieu (1984: 467) conceptualises habitus as 'internalised embodied schemes [acquired] in the course of individual history'. In other words, habitus is a socially acquired set of dispositions that are learned through experience (Busby, 2013). It is a concept that reconciles the interaction between structure and agency; habitus provides the 'rules of the game' through which actors experience everyday life. Individuals have agency; however autonomy is bound to classed potentialities (Huppertz, 2012). Habitus is 'structured' by one's past and is constantly 'structuring' by influencing an individual's practices (Maton, 2008). Thus, an individual possesses their 'individual system of dispositions [that] may be seen as a structural variant [...] of class' (Bourdieu, 1990).

'[Habitus] captures how we carry ourselves within us our history, how we bring this history into our present circumstances, and how we then make choices to act in certain ways and not others' (Maton, 2008: 52).

Different social class groups possess 'homogeneity of the habitus', or a shared habitus. The 'original' habitus, or habitus première, is formed through childhood, based on familial and educational experiences that shapes individuals' behaviour (Bourdieu, 2000). Over time, the 'specific' habitus, or habitus secondaire, is a set of dispositions acquired and shaped by a particular field such as an occupation. The habitus is a durable system that follows a

'practical logic' that shapes and produces practice but is not deterministic. It goes beyond institutionalised rules by encompassing 'conventionalised and internalised behaviour [...] that are anchored in the body or daily practices of individuals, groups, societies' (Wodak, 2009: 11). The specific habitus is normalised within the field and requires particular skills and knowledge that distinguishes the field from another (Busby, 2013). The dominant habitus can also change over time as it reflects individuals' life histories, thus capable of reproducing and transforming (Busby, 2013).

Habitus is a highly developed, habitual bodily experience. Bourdieu defines this experience as the hexis: the corporeal embodiment of habitus. It is the physical site of one's incorporated history that is inscribed into the body through posture, facial expressions, dress and accent (Maton, 2008). Like habitus, the hexis is a classed phenomenon. It is this bodily experience that constitutes what is 'for us, and what 'is not' and manifests itself through feelings of belonging. For Bourdieu, actors experience a mismatch in habitus and the social field where they feel as though they do not belong (Maton, 2008). This sentiment shows awareness of the 'rules of the game', i.e. who is permissible in the social field and who is not. Hexis is a particularly relevant Bourdieusian concept to the study of leadership. Considering habitus in the political context, Jentges (2017) notes that in many political fields globally, the dominant habitus of politicians' mimics that of the elite. Thus, newcomers from marginalised backgrounds face challenges in acquiring the accepted habitus within the field.

Habitus is therefore a useful tool in the study of leadership as it prompts the question whether political leaders share a common habitus that has influenced their common leadership position (e.g. as MSPs). Jentges (2017) argues that in the study of leadership, the concept of capital has taken precedence over habitus, yet understanding habitus is crucial to understanding the 'interconnectedness' of leadership. Kerr and Robinson (2011) further advocate for the use of habitus in leadership studies as it addresses the structure and agency dichotomy in leadership literature where leadership is viewed through a binary perspective.

3.1.2. Field

For Bourdieu, the social world is composed of distinct arenas, or *fields*. Such fields signify arenas of knowledge or status, where 'competitive positions are held by actors in their struggle to accumulate, exchange, and monopolise different kinds of power resources (capitals)' (Swartz, 2016). Fields are socio-spatial settings in which social actors are

located, such as the family, education, religion, law, and indeed politics, that each have unique sets of knowledge, rules, and capitals. More specifically, Adler-Nissen (2009: 87) describes the field as 'a relatively autonomous social system consisting of a patterned set of practices and beliefs, which suggests competent action in conformity with rules and roles' (cited in Busby, 2013).

Bourdieu used the metaphor of a game to illustrate his understanding of the social world, which he divides into fields. Each field has its own game. The game is understood through learning its rules, understanding how to play it, an awareness of the field and how other players operate. Games, like politics, are strategic and the strategy is determined by rules. Those that conform to the 'rules of the game' are more likely to succeed (Adler-Nissen, 2009, cited in Busby, 2013). Within the field, actors, or players of the game, are competing for resources. In politics, this is often influence and prestige (Busby, 2013).

The political field, according to Bourdieu (2001) is central to, and sits within, the wider field of power. The political field also does not solely consist of politicians, but also unelected representatives and lobbyists, and overlaps with the journalistic field that covers politics (Jentges, 2017). On the periphery of the political field, voters hold significant power in determining who enters the elected political field. As with any field, entry to the elected political field is determined by acquisition of economic and cultural capital (Jentges, 2017). This is demonstrated by the 'capacity to mobilise support for a candidate, cause, party [...] that is the ability to mobilise collective resources' (Swartz, 2013: 37, cited in Jentges, 2017). According to Wodak (2009), also required for the successful practice of politics, and thus political leadership, is the synthesis of three types of knowledge: organisational knowledge, expert knowledge, and political knowledge (Wodak, 2009). Organisational knowledge is the rules and routines that MSPs must know such as voting procedures and legislative interventions. Expert knowledge is required to pursue specific policy with credibility. Lastly, political knowledge is the 'know-how of the political game', including how to persuade and build alliances for their own strategic gain (Busby, 2013: 97)

For Bourdieu (1993), analysis of a social phenomenon (e.g. leadership) must be located in the social space in its specific historic, regional and relational context (Thomson, 2008). Thinking within boundaries of fields brings social spaces to the centre of analysis (Adler-Nissen, 2009). In analysing the European Parliament through a Bourdieusian lens, Busby (2013: 95) conceptualises the parliament as a 'super field', composed of 'smaller, relatively autonomous institutional fields' (e.g. the countries represented and the political parties

represented). A similar lens could be applied to the Scottish Parliament, where smaller fields exist within the parliamentary field. These fields include constituencies/regions, political parties, and the parliament. Each field has different practices and rules, yet fields are simultaneously fluid in the ways in which MSPs oscillate between them. As Busby (2013) details, fields are 'shifting, dynamic and fluid, and made up of interactions which are part of the game'. Upon this, this thesis conceptualises the Scottish Parliament as a political field with its own organisational habitus and rules of the game.

3.1.3. Capital

In order to enter the field, field-specific capital must be obtained. Field-specific capital is described as 'the practical mastery of the immanent logic of the [...] field' (Bourdieu, 1986). An actor's position in the field is dependent on their possession of valid capital that enables them to exercise influence within the game at play (Busby, 2013). Actors continue to gain forms of capital, social networks, knowledge and the 'laws of operation particular to that field' (Davis, 2010). Different classes have different levels of capital, and therefore have varying opportunities to access different fields. Capital takes numerous forms: economic (wealth and assets), cultural (knowledge and education), social (shared norms and values) and symbolic (distinction and status) (Kerr and Robinson, 2016).

With specific reference to the political field, Bourdieu (1991) began to use *political capital* in the 1980s in discussion of political representation (cited in Jentges, 2017). Economic capital can 'buy' time to actively engage with politics and run political campaigns. Social capital, in a political context, refers to the networks required to access the political field. Cultural capital is the embodied '*class politique*' habitus that politicians learn in the socialisation process. Lastly, symbolic capital is the 'legitimation, authority, [and] prestige' required to succeed in the political field, and particularly in political leadership (Swartz, 2013; Jentges, 2017). Political capital, specifically political leadership capital, is a culmination of the prerequisite capitals necessary for entry to the political field. How leaders succeed and progress within the field depends on their leadership legitimacy which is determined by their ability to mobilise specific forms of capital (Robinson and Kerr, 2009; Stead *et al.* 2021). Furthermore, changes within the field, and in the specific political context, can result in changing forms of political capital required.

Bourdieu's concept of capital is one that features in political leadership literature. However, political capital is frequently synonymised with popularity of political leaders (Bennister *et*

al. 2015). Bourdieusian analyses of political leadership are concerned with the acquisition and mobilisation of political *capital* that contribute to leadership. Both positivist and interpretivist approaches have been used to analyse political leadership through a Bourdieusian lens. Political leadership capital is a concept that is difficult to quantify (Bennister *et al.* 2017). Working towards a universal measurement of political leadership, Bennister *et al.* (2017) have developed the 'leadership capital index', through which leadership is scored on a systematic spectrum of ten indicators. These measurable leadership indicators include (1) political vision/policy, (2) commutative performance, (3) personal polling performance, (4) time in office, (5) re-election margin, (6) party polling performance, (7) levels of public trust, (8) likelihood of credible leadership challenge, (9) perceived ability to influence party policy, and (10) perceived parliamentary effectiveness (Bennister *et al.* 2017). However, this approach takes a positivist perspective and actively moves away from heuristic approaches and offers a systematic measurement scale that is reliant on data sources such as polls, electoral results and speeches. Whilst it does not account for first-hand experiences of leadership, it presents a list of variables to consider when analysing personal narratives of leadership.

Applying Bourdieu's concepts of capital, field and habitus, Davis (2010) illustrates how these can be used within a British politics context. In doing so, Davis (2010) compares forms of capital possessed by front and backbench MPs within the field of the UK House of Commons. Davis (2010) demonstrates how capitals change over time between old and new political generations, and how this can impact MPs' political mobility. Taking an interpretivist position, Davis (2010) interviewed 60 politicians, focusing on their education, career patterns and ambitions, drawing on habitus, capital and fields. Conclusions drawn highlight the importance of socio-economic capital (education and occupation) on entry to frontbench politics. Davis (2010) argues for the case of applying Bourdieu's analytical tools to study both political recruitment and mobility as it provides an interpretive and systematic schema for researching 'exceptional' individuals. Contributing towards the motivation behind this research, Davis (2010) provides a 'gender-neutral' example of how the adoption of Bourdieusian concepts do not necessarily unveil patterns of gendered practices.

3.1.4. Doxa

Doxa is the adherence to the field's ways of working (Deer, 2008). Across all fields, *doxa* is the 'shared central beliefs of those who mutually recognise each other as legitimate actors within their field' (Jentges, 2017: 8). The doxa is the taken-for-granted, shared perceptions mediated by the field; it is the 'enshrined way to think' (Busby, 2013: 100). Doxa can also

take the form of symbolic power where legitimacy of power is unquestioned; it is the 'unconditional allegiance' to the 'rules of the game' by social actors with a shared field-specific habitus (Deer, 2008: 116). Doxa is particularly relevant to the political field where common central beliefs underpin political parties' philosophies and policies. Jentges (2017) explains that shared beliefs can be a concern for constitutional issues (e.g. Scottish independence) are present cross-parties, or party-specific beliefs that act as signals of, and connections between, in-group membership.

3.2. Bourdieu and Feminist Reinterpretations

Feminist theory has advanced sociological positions by making critical interventions (Krais, 2006). The work of Bourdieu resided in the margins of such feminist dialogue as it was widely acknowledged, and admitted by Bourdieu, that his earlier work paid insufficient attention to gender (Mottier, 2002; Adkins, 2004). Consequently, Bourdieu's work played almost no role in gender studies (Krais, 2000). The 'unifying central project' of Bourdieu's work is 'the analysis of power and domination and their social reproduction' (Mottier, 2002: 346). Yet, for a theory that fundamentally concerns power relations and resources, by omitting gender Bourdieu ignores a critical analytical axis of inequality (Adkins and Skeggs, 2014). As such, there have been numerous feminist critiques and interventions of Bourdieu's work. Indeed, many Bourdieusian feminists have fully integrated gender as a central analytical category in contemporary Bourdieusian scholarship.

There is a collective critique that Bourdieu under-theorises gender. For Bourdieu, class is the principal social organising structure. There is acknowledgement that class and gender are inextricable, famously claiming that 'sexual properties are as inseparable from class properties as yellowness of a lemon is from its acidity', meaning that 'class is always gendered' and gender is always classed (Bourdieu, 1984, cited in Huppertz, 2012). Yet, gender is not fully realised in his early scholarship. In his early scholarship where gender is raised, Bourdieu focuses on the sexual division of labour that generates and reproduces a sexually differentiated perspective of the social world. Bourdieu argues that bodies are sexed and the social construction of masculinity and femininity shape bodies' behaviours, habits, possibilities for expression and how the body is perceived (Krais, 2006). In his own words, Bourdieu (2001:3) argues that there is 'sexually characterised habitus', in doing so he reduces gender power relations to sex differences (Mottier, 2002). As such, reinterpretations of habitus have been analysed through an intersectional lens to illuminate the ways in which groups are included and excluded across various fields according to gender, race, disability, sexuality, and class.

3.2.1. The Gendered Habitus

Bourdieu entered the theoretical debate on gender with *La Masculine Domination*, *Masculine Domination*, in 1990, and again in 2001 when it was published as a book, to redress prior theoretical shortcomings. A further issue he sought to rectify was his previously androcentric viewpoint. The concept of habitus is the core of *Masculine Domination*, and gender is an integral part of the habitus. Bourdieu (2001) suggests that gender dispositions are embodied in the habitus, meaning that 'gender relations are ever present in 'perception, thought and action' (Huppatz, 2012). In the same fashion as class, gendered habitus shapes 'aspirations according to concrete indices of the accessible and inaccessible, of what is and what is not 'for us'' (Bourdieu, 1990: 64). The habitus provides a 'relative consistency' over time regarding what is perceived masculine and feminine (Huppatz, 2012: 18). This is an important point to note in relation to leadership and politics, and how political institutions signal who can be included and excluded.

3.2.2. Gender Capital and Gendered Fields

Throughout his scholarship, Bourdieu does not offer the possibility of women accumulating capital or occupying fields outwith the domestic sphere (Wulff *et al.* 2022). Instead, class was used as the primary form of social stratification. Problematically, one of the only references to women and capital is that of 'beauty capital', where women derive 'labour market value' (Bourdieu, 1984: 152, cited in Ross-Smith and Huppatz, 2010). This is despite women's presence in, and mobility within, the public sphere and labour markets during the time of Bourdieu's writing. To redress this omission, feminist reinterpretations have focused on women's employment in organisational literature (McCall, 1992; Skeggs, 1997; Lovell, 2000).

Capital typically corresponds to occupational fields, however for McCall (1992: 842), capital has 'gendered meaning because they are given form by gendered dispositions'. Thus, gender capital stems from gendered habitus. As a starting point, McCall (1992) explains that women's employment is the amalgamation of gender symbolism, gender organisation and gender identity. Gender symbolism is the cultural expression of gender differences (e.g. masculine and feminine). Here, the process of gender organisation is identified as the gendered division of labour and occupational segregation. Gender identity is, therefore, the multiple and fluid experiences of masculinities and femininities that are often contradictory across time, space and within individuals (McCall, 1992). By analysing the intersection of

gendered individuals and gendered occupations, McCall (1992) argues that Bourdieu's conceptual framework is both helpful and expandable in this context.

Skeggs (1997) provides a further intervention by demonstrating how women and men can both possess feminine and masculine cultural capital and can mobilise such capitals accordingly. Skeggs (1997) argues that feminine capital is the 'discursive position available through gender relations that women are encouraged to inhabit and use' but can also be resisted. Within organisations, gendered capital rewards members of gendered groups. Lovell (2000) explores the potential for Bourdieu's theoretical concepts to study how women experience male-dominated occupations, thus having to adapt to a 'masculine game' (Powell and Sang, 2015). This highlights resistance to gender norms. As such, numerous studies have since examined how men and women experience non-traditional, or heavily stereotyped jobs (Huppatz, and Goodwin, 2013) such as construction (Wulff *et al.* 2022) and care work (Huppatz, 2009). Such analyses illustrate the field-specific conventions of 'doing gender' for both men and women.

The detraditionalization of the gender order is seen to be a result of not of the cessation of masculine domination, but as the 'refashioning of gender' capitals in the dominant classes (Adkins, 2004; McRobbie, 2004, cited in Kraus, 2006: 131). Adkins and Lurry (1999) suggest that men can use traditionally feminine dispositions to their advantage (e.g. exhibiting compassion) that women cannot as they are deemed to occur 'naturally'. As such, this demonstrates the ways in which capitals can evolve and dominant capitals can be replaced. This is a useful reinterpretation of Bourdieu's work and is applicable to the political field that 'has long been viewed as a quintessentially masculine space' (Krook, 2018: 68).

3.2.3. Gendered Access to the Field

'White male bodies of a specific habitus continue to be the somatic norm. These bodies are valorised as the corporeal presence of political leadership' (Puwar, 2004: 141).

The use of Bourdieusian concepts in feminist research in a parliamentary setting was introduced by Puwar (2004) in her seminal work, *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. Puwar (2004) uses a Bourdieusian approach to explore how the House of Commons is a site of exclusion on the basis of gender, race and class. This built on prior research on the barriers to women's political participation where women have unequal access to the necessary economic, social and cultural capital to stand for election and enter formal politics (Lowndes, 2004).

Habitus and capital operate in, and are intertwined with, fields that have their own 'regulative principles' and valued capitals (Mottier, 2002). As detailed, access to the field is dependent on possession of field-specific capital. In workplaces, particularly in management, there are requirements and prerequisite skills necessary for appointment (Corsun and Costen, 2001). Workplaces are instilled with history and meaning with codified and uncoded rules. In many occupational spaces, women, and particularly women of colour, are deemed 'space invaders' due to their corporeal hexis (Puwar, 2004). Bourdieu's concept of 'hexis' is the embodied exercise of habitus, encompassing accent, posture, and dress. As outlined in Chapter 2 (Part 1), the male body is traditionally synonymous with 'the fantastic qualities of transcendental rationality and universal leadership' (Puwar, 2004: 142).

Feminist critiques and reinterpretations of Bourdieu's work have transformed the use of Bourdieu's collection of concepts, reshaping a gender-blind, class-focused theory into one that can fully realise the importance of gender as a critical axis of inequality. However, such Bourdieusian concepts can be enriched by FI. The Scottish Parliament presented itself as a new *field* in 1999, comprising sub-fields such as political parties and constituencies where capitals competed for dominance, yet it was also a new institution where *gendered* rules of the game were formed. As such, the use of both theories as a guiding skeletal framing is complementary to the study of political leadership.

3.3. A Feminist Institutional Approach

'The foundations of feminist institutionalist analysis are fine-grained descriptions of gendered environments accompanied by explanations of how gender constrains or enhances agency and affects stability and change' (Lovenduski, 2011: xi).

Feminist Institutionalism is a critical conceptual framework that acts as an 'emancipatory project' (Palmieri and Baker, 2022: 60). It is intended to 'alert us' to the masculine assumptions that underpin political institutions (Lovenduski, 2014: 17). Building on the literature on how parliaments are gendered (see Chapter 2), this section draws on the ways in which FI has become a dominant theory in understanding the ways in which institutional processes and practices reproduce gender inequality (Krook and Mackay, 2011; Palmieri and Baker, 2022). FI poses several questions for interrogation: 'how are formal structures and informal 'rules of the game' gendered?'; 'How do institutions constrain actors, ideas,

and interests?'; And 'how do political institutions affect the daily lives of women and men respectively?' (Krook and Mackay, 2011: 1). Critically, Feminist Institutionalists answer such questions by unveiling how 'political opportunities and outcomes are shaped by not only rules 'about gender' but also seemingly neutral rules that have 'gendered effects' due to their interaction with institutions outside the realm of formal politics' (Lowndes, 2019: 1).

A key tenet of FI is that gender is viewed as a constructed performance that takes place within institutional contexts, mediated by relations and interactions within such contexts (Palmieri, 2018). Rather than viewing power as a 'numerical force', power is perceived as institutional legitimacy and influence. Like Bourdieu's conceptual tools, FI is not an explicit theory, rather it is an 'analytical strategy' (Hay, 2002, cited in Miller, 2013) or 'conceptual framework' (Lowndes, 2014). Instead, it sits within the broader school of new institutionalism. New institutionalism underlines that institutions 'matter' (March and Olsen, 1984: 747, cited in Kenny, 2009). It is offered as a malleable framework that has been used in tandem with other theoretical frameworks such as Acker's gendered organisations (Josefsson and Erikson, 2020) and Butler's gender performativity (Miller, 2018).

Looking outwardly, institutional analyses of leadership focus on the institutional contexts in which leaders operate, rather than on individual actors (Helms, 2012). The 'institutionalist turn' in feminist political scholarship occurred in the 1990s as numbers of women parliamentarians increased. As such, political institutions and their inner workings became the subject of analyses. Political institutions possess a certain 'logic of appropriateness' defined as:

'Collections of interrelated rules and routines that define appropriate actions [...] When individuals enter an institution, they try to discover, and are taught the rules. When they encounter a new situation, they try to associate it with a situation for which rules already exist' (March and Olsen, 1989: 161).

The logic of appropriateness thus forms the (gendered) 'rules of the game'. Kenny (2014) emphasises that gender is not necessarily visible in institutions. Rather, gender is enacted through the 'logic of appropriateness' that underpins political institutions (Chappell, 2006: 223). This concept has been developed by feminist scholars to account for the gendered dimension of the logic of appropriateness whereby the rules and routines that define appropriateness are gendered. It also speaks to the 'logic of the field' as set out by Bourdieu (1986) that requires a specific capital to gain entry.

FI is the dominant conceptual framework in much of the recent research on gender and parliaments (Malley, 2012; Mackay, 2014; Gains and Lowndes, 2014; Lowndes, 2014; Miller, 2018; Josefsson and Erikson, 2019). This body of work can be categorised further into literature on women's substantive representation through policy outcomes (Franceshet, 2010; Freidenvall and Krook, 2011), political recruitment (Kenny, 2014) gender quotas (Franceshet, 2011), institutional reform (Waylen, 2011; Mackay, 2014; Beyeler and Annesley, 2011) and more recently, parliaments as a workplace (Erikson and Josefsson, 2019). It has become a highly developed branch of gender and politics and has been used to study a variety of political settings. Although each aspect of this literature plays a role in analysing gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament, it is the most recently developed category, the parliamentary workplace, that this thesis primarily engages with as it prompts a dialogue with organisational literature.

The Scottish Parliament is one of several parliaments that has been explored through a Feminist Institutionalist lens. Such applications in the Scottish parliamentary context include Mackay's (2004; 2009; 2014) extensive work on the parliament's institutional blueprint and change, Kenny's (2009; 2011; 2013) work on political recruitment and gender quotas, and Malley's (2012) comparative research on the substantive representation of women in the Scottish Parliament and Westminster. This demonstrates its appropriateness to the parliamentary context. Other parliaments where the working culture has been the focal point include the Australian Parliament (Crawford and Pini, 2011), Westminster (Malley, 2012, Miller, 2018), and the Swedish Parliament (Erikson and Josefsson, 2018; 2021) that have been underpinned using FI.

Feminist Institutionalism nods to the seminal work of Acker (1990) on gendered organisations, demonstrating how gender is embedded within institutional processes. Resonating with Acker's analysis of seeming 'gender neutral organisations', 'apparently gender-neutral political institutions have differential effects on women and men' (Mackay, 2011: 181). This is particularly evident in analyses that focus on parliamentary working culture. Feminist institutionalists view gender as both a 'practice' and a 'process' that places emphasis on social and political institutions, rather than the sexed body (Kenny, 2009). More specifically, for Beckwith (2005: 132), 'gender as a process is manifested as the differential effects of apparently gender-neutral structures and politics upon women and men, and upon masculine and/or feminine actors' (cited in Chappell, 2006). Chappell (2006) highlights that assumptions regarding appropriate masculine and feminine behaviour (by men and women) can vary between institutions within the same country, such as parliament and courts, and between similar institutions in different countries, such as the House of

Commons and other Westminster-style parliaments (e.g. Canada). This speaks to the Bourdieusian notion that each sub-field (i.e. each parliament) has different rules of the game, yet are informed by the overarching rules of the political field that are subject to 'path dependencies' of wider environmental institutional processes (Mackay, 2014: 550).

3.3.1. Formal and Informal Parliamentary Rules

Like Bourdieu, Feminist Institutionalists are concerned with the (gendered) 'rules of the game' that shape political life (Kenny, 2014; Miller, 2018). Lowndes (2019) provides a conceptual framework to explain the ways in which gendered actors work within rules (see Figure 3). Rules about gender can be explicit or implicit – in other words, they can be written or unwritten. Written rules may concern equality legislation or affirmative action such as gender quotas. Unwritten rules may concern the 'customary exclusion' of women in 'non-feminine' policy areas (e.g. national security or finance) (Lowndes, 2019: 3). Rules with gendered effects can be seemingly gender-neutral rules such as parliamentary working hours, however these have gendered outcomes due to their interaction beyond the political field that relate to gendered divisions of household labour. Informal rules with gendered effects include perceptions of what makes a good politician, with emphasis on presenteeism. Gendered actors may work within rules but can also resist and negotiate both formal and informal rules (Lowndes, 2019).

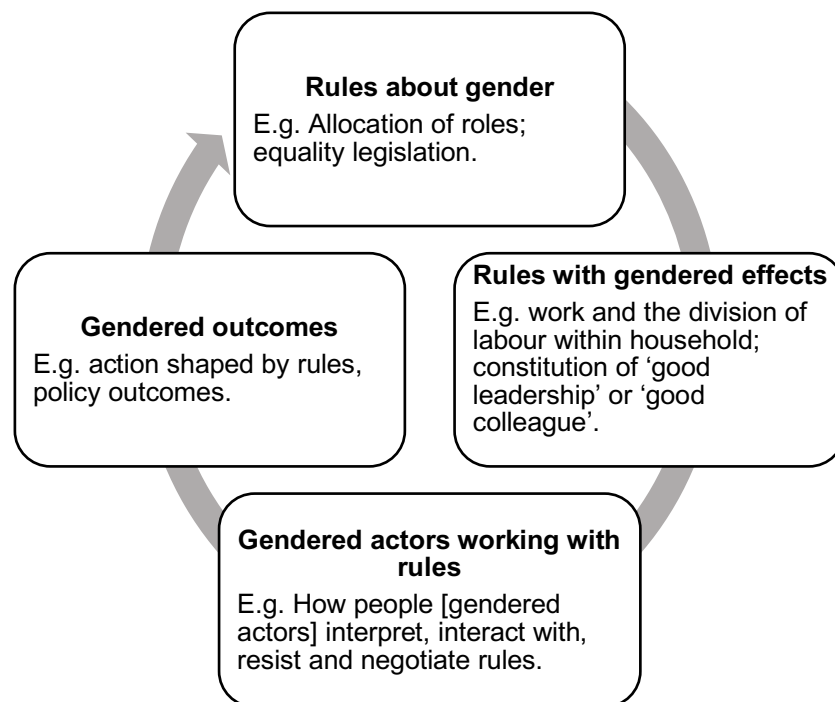


Figure 3. Gendering political institutions: a model (adapted from Lowndes (2019))

Lowndes (2014) conceptualises three broader types of rules that provide actors with boundaries in which they can operate, shaping actors' behaviours within institutions. (1) Regulatory rules are formal, official rules that set out behaviours that are 'required, permitted or prohibited'. (2) Obligatory rules are those that are replicated through conduct, observable, learnt and are sanctioned through wider disapproval. (3) Persuasive rules are those displayed through performance and provide actors with narratives that dictate behaviours in particular settings, including linguistic choices, dress, and occupation of space. When these three types of rules operate in tandem over time to root gender inequality, it results in a 'power settlement'.

To understand an organisation's effects on gender, analysis of the relationship between formal and informal rules and values is crucial. In establishing these rules, Lowndes (2019: 11) proposes three sets of questions for researchers: (1) 'how do institutions regulate actors' behaviour to produce gendered effects?'; (2) 'how do institutions obligate actors to behave in gendered ways?'; 'how do institutions narrate forms of gendered behaviour and hence legitimise gendered political outcomes?'. Thus, rather than studying the effects that rules have on parliamentary actors, FI unveils how rules constitute who actors are and how they operate within parliaments (Miller, 2018).

3.3.2. Feminist Institutionalism and Political Leadership

Until recent interventions, research on women's political leadership is typically biographical and emphasis is placed on individual resources, familial background, and political experience (Beckwith, 2015). Lesser attention is given to the institutional structural factors that contribute to leadership. Indeed, few studies explicitly explore leadership that are led by FI. Leadership has primarily existed in the margins of other analyses on parliaments and representation (Erikson and Josefsson, 2018). For example, the 2011 book *Gender, Politics and Institutions: Towards a Feminist Institutionalism* (Krook and Mackay, 2011) provides a collection of studies on FI in different countries; there is no chapter that directly addresses leadership, instead leadership is tied to other analyses such as underrepresentation of women. Erikson and Josefsson (2020) conclude their research on 'gendered opportunities to represent' by suggesting that greater attention to leadership is required. In this light, researchers are urged to move beyond gendered leadership styles, and instead look at interplay between how political leaders perform their roles and the implications this has on the parliamentary working environment. Erikson and Josefsson (2020) further recommend interviews with leaders can be useful in achieving such scholarly ambitions.

Gender norms within institutional contexts are imperative to understand how political leaders 'do leadership' (Rosenthal, 1998: 5, cited in Erikson and Josefsson, 2020). Traditional conceptions of leadership are masculine, and those that perform masculinity appropriate to the political conditions are those that reach leadership positions (Puwar, 2004). Going further, Erikson and Josefsson (2020) extend Lowndes' (2019) conceptual framework (see Figure 3). Combining Acker's 'gender organisations' theory, Erikson and Josefsson view the parliament as a gendered workplace and analyse how formal and informal rules impact on leadership, allocation of tasks, and interactions between MPs (see Table 6). How leadership is appointed and performed is shaped by formal rules including parliamentary policy and party statutes, informal rules such as wider gendered norms surrounding who can be a political leader and in the incongruity between women and leadership norms. However, it could be argued that each of these formal and informal rules and processes impact leadership.

Workplace aspect	Formal rules	Informal rules	Gendering processes
Organisation of work (e.g. working hours, parental leave)	Parliamentary policies (rules of procedure), party group statutes	(Gendered) politician norm, caring and parenting norms, lack of work-life balance	Hegemonic masculinity
Tasks: how the meaning and content of tasks are determined and allocated	Parliamentary policies (rules of procedure), party group statutes	(Gendered) norms for merits, practices for appointments, networks	Gender segregation of labour, gender marking
Leadership: how leadership is appointed and performed	Parliamentary policies (rules of procedure), party group statutes	(Gendered) politician norm, (gendered) leadership norms	Lack of congruity between women and leadership norms, male homosocial practices, gender discrimination
Infrastructure: location, architecture, office spaces, facilities	Parliament's physical location and facilities, parliamentary policies (rules of procedure), party group statutes	Symbols, (gendered) parenting norms, practices for use of support functions	Hegemonic masculinity, lack of work-life balance
Interactions between MPs: treatment of each other and interaction in different venues	Parliament's code of conduct, party groups' codes of conduct	Norms ascribing (gendered) 'logics of appropriateness', practices for tone, taking turns, etc.	Gender segregation, sexism, sexual harassment

Table 6. The parliament as a gendered workplace (adapted from Erikson and Josefsson (2020: 7))

Elsewhere, several empirical leadership studies have identified gender bias in leadership appointments (Erikson and Josefsson, 2020). Global patterns of leadership show that

women are more likely to obtain leadership positions (e.g. ministerial appointment) on issues that are perceived to be women's issues (Palmieri, 2011). In the UK House of Commons, intraparty selection to committee chair positions favoured women (O'Brien, 2012). In the Indian Parliament, MPs did not perceive themselves to be leaders due to institutional and cultural gender biases (Rai and Spary, 2019). Thus, it is evident that political leadership has not been fully realised in Feminist Institutional literature. The Scottish Parliament, therefore, acts as a vessel, or field, to study political leadership in a parliament that had inherently feminist aims from its conception.

3.4. Conclusion: Towards a Theory of (Leadership) Practice

Bourdieu's concepts work in tandem towards a theory of practice. Bourdieu (1986) provides an equation to describe this relationship: $(\text{habitus})(\text{capital}) + \text{field} = \text{practice}$. Practice is the outcome of the relationship between an individual's dispositions (habitus), their position in the field (capital) and the social arena in which they are situated (Maton, 2008). Leadership is either an outcome of individual agency, or as a result of structural domination in the field (Zoller and Fairhurst, 2007, cited in Kerr and Robinson, 2011). However, taking agency and structure together through Bourdieusian concepts and applying the concept of parliaments as gendered workplace works towards a theory of practice. Figure 4 illustrates the integrated theoretical framing. It acts as a skeletal guide to 'flesh out' the data. The habitus informs entry to the political field where political leaders bring their personal histories; these are negotiated within the rules of the game where leaders develop the field-specific habitus, and these rules of the game have gendered outcomes and result in a theory of leadership practice.

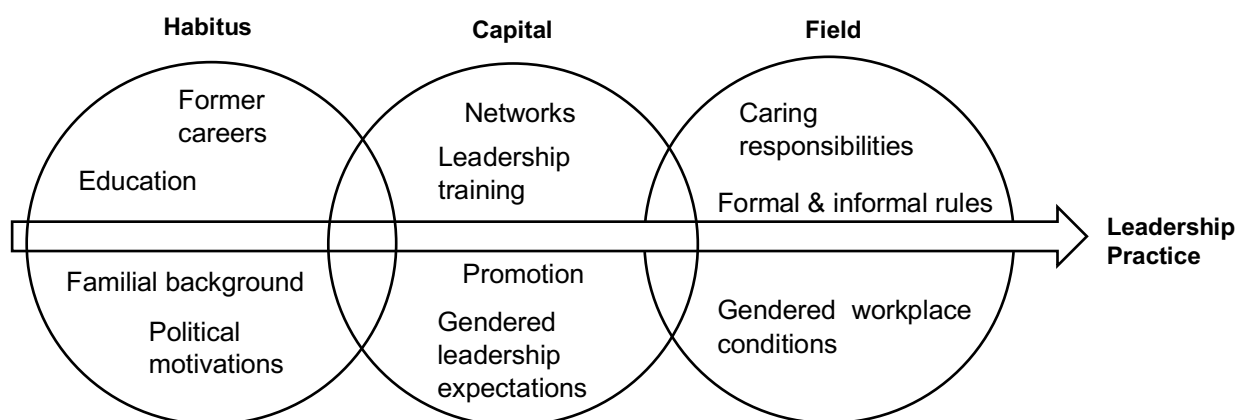


Figure 4. Theoretical framing

Combining different theoretical frameworks presents significant opportunities. Reflecting both *inward* and *outward* perspectives, and accounting for both structure and agency, the

rationale for this framing builds on Erikson and Josefsson's (2020) recommendations for future research on gender and political leadership within parliaments as gendered workplaces. However, institutional analysis can lose sight of leaders' biographies which are critical in understanding leadership (Helms, 2014). As such, Bourdieu's concepts are useful to study leadership that captures both agency and structure, whilst an FI framework centres analysis on gender to address Bourdieu's 'gender blindness'. Additionally, parliaments are multifaceted institutions; Rai and Spary (2019: 283) detail that 'the multiplicity of audiences, spaces and scales of the political lives of MPs' that comprise the parliamentary workplace entail great challenges for studying leadership in parliament'. Here, the concept of field is particularly applicable to explore different aspects (sub fields) of the parliament. It is also important to note that both the hexis and the doxa play a role in the development of the leadership practice as the hexis is the physical embodiment of the habitus and the doxa explains the ways in which the field is reproduced. Both are malleable and complementary theoretical frameworks that consequently would not produce the same breadth of knowledge alone.

As discussed, the development of utilising these theoretical frameworks was an iterative process that was primarily informed by the data. The data from interviews with MSPs typically took a storied format where MSPs journeyed from their childhood or early political socialisation, their election, their reflections on the parliament as a workplace, and their experience of leadership. As such, each point speaks to both Bourdieusian concepts (habitus, capital, field, hexis and doxa) and FI concerns with the gendered outcomes of formal and informal rules. Lastly, as this thesis sits at the intersection between organisation and management studies and political science, the two conceptual frameworks aid dialogue between the disciplines. Whilst there is significant overlap in Bourdieusian approaches to organisational and political literature, FI primarily exists in political science. Thus, FI is a novel approach in organisational studies and offers a critical intervention in the study of political leadership.

The following chapter introduces the method of elite interviewing used to explore leadership in the Scottish parliamentary field. The chapter journeys from the original intended research design, and how such methods were adapted to mitigate against Covid-19 pandemic disruptions whilst retaining the fundamental aim of exploring gender and leadership both inwardly and outwardly in the Scottish Parliament.

Chapter Four: Methodology and Research Design

This chapter addresses the methodological approach taken to conduct this empirical research. Between February 2020 and January 2021, I interviewed 31 former and current MSPs from every political party elected since devolution. This actor-focused and context-sensitive approach was taken to access MSPs' experiences about how they enact, embody and experience political leadership in the Scottish Parliament. This chapter firstly begins with the philosophical underpinnings that foundationally shaped the research design, exemplifying the ways in which the study of leadership can benefit from a qualitative, interpretivist approach, and how it can be further enriched with an overarching feminist methodology. The chapter then turns to discuss the practical utility of methods used to research gender and leadership within the Scottish Parliament, addressing the methodological challenges associated with elite interviewing. It then concludes by illustrating how an interpretivist thematic approach was used to analyse the interview data collected whilst drawing on the importance of transparency and positionality to ensure quality in qualitative research.

4.1. The Leadership Paradigm: An Interpretivist Approach

'Interpretive approaches present new possibilities in the understanding and study of leadership in a parliamentary setting' (Bennister, 2021: 2059).

Centring on the experiences of political leaders in Scotland, this research takes an interpretivist approach that occupies the perspective that realities are socially constructed (Busby, 2013). Interpretivist approaches begin with the aim to understand actions, practices, and institutions through accessing the 'relevant meanings, the beliefs and the preferences of the people involved' (Bevir and Rhodes, 2004: 2). The plurality of realities demonstrates the rejection of an independent objective reality. Rather, knowledge is gained by interpreting the meanings that others attach to their actions (Bevir and Rhodes, 2004). In favouring an explorative approach, interpretivists commonly use methods including ethnography, interviewing and focus groups in order to access situated knowledge within particular context. Qualitative interviewing, in this case, is an iterative and inductive process where the theoretical framing evolves as the data is collected and developed (Busby, 2013).

Quantitative methods have been the dominant strategy for studying leadership for the last 100 years (Avolio, 2009, cited in Bryman, 2011). Still apparent today, research on

leadership has traditionally occupied the positivist, objectivist, and quantitative paradigm (Klenke, 2016). Typically, leadership scholars have held the assumption that leadership is timeless and holds essentialist qualities that are an 'enduring feature of the human condition' (Wilson, 2013: 44). In doing so, leadership has been researched to produce generalisable laws that exist as a reality, irrespective of time, place or individuals (Klenke, 2016). Deemed the 'typical leadership study' approach, the primary method employed within leadership scholarship has been the utility of self-completed questionnaires (Hunter *et al.* 2007, cited in Bryman, 2011: 15). In utilising this method, statistical data has illuminated leadership behaviours, styles, biases, motivations and effectiveness across a range of disciplines including political and organisational literature. Yet, such methods do not reveal deeper insights into personal narratives, experiences, or meanings of leadership within specific contexts (Ford *et al.* 2008). With an increasing demand to diversify research methods, theoretical positions and research settings, qualitative approaches have piqued the interest of leadership scholars (Collinson and Grint, 2005).

Qualitative research is the application of methods that explore social phenomena 'from the interior', provoking questions such as 'why' and 'how' rather than 'how many', enabling an in-depth exploration of social contours and situational contexts (Ormston *et al.* 2013). Typically aligned with interpretivism, methods require researchers to seek participants' perceptions and experiences. Knowledge regarding humans' experiences of a phenomenon, such as leadership, can only be acquired from the individuals that possess such experiences (Weber, 1947, cited in Bryman, 2012). As a result, qualitative research can produce direct quotations and 'thick' descriptions of events, situations, places, interactions and observed behaviours, all of which can be beneficial to the study of leadership due to its embeddedness (Klenke, 2016).

Qualitative methods have been deemed well-suited to leadership research due to the 'multidisciplinary nature of the field' (Klenke, 2016: 4). For Ford *et al.* (2008: 7), 'as leadership's focus is very much upon subjectively located interactions, there is a need for studies that tell us something about the subjective and the personal... Qualitative research allows us to explore something about these things'. In acknowledging that leadership is context-dependent, qualitative methods have become increasingly exercised with the use of interviews and observational methods to access this situated knowledge. Such methods to expose leaders' experiences and redress the omission of contextual settings have been prioritised (Klenke, 2016). Further, the use of qualitative methods allows for critical analysis and understandings of leadership that cannot be derived from 'narrow' quantitative statistics (Ford *et al.* 2008: 22). In political settings, interpretivist approaches to political leadership

that give attention to institutional or organisational analysis focus on 'what institutions mean to the people who work in them' (Rhodes, 2011: 3). In challenging traditional notions that institutions such as parliaments are objective entities, interpretivist approaches go between institutions in which leaders sit and leadership behaviours (Helms, 2012). Through an interpretivist perspective, governance occurs through everyday practices and a 'bottom-up approach'; 'interpretivism decentres governance' (Miller, 2018).

As outlined by previous literature, the study into women's leadership, particularly political leadership, continues to adopt quantitative methods to emphasise commonalities, patterns and trends between women in leadership roles. Klenke (2016) suggests that although there has been a shift towards qualitative approaches to study leadership, the advantageous characteristics of using such methods have not been fully explored. This is particularly absent within discussion of gender and leadership; whilst there are calls in the field of gender and politics for analyses of parliaments as gendered workplaces, there is little in the way of methodological propositions. Further, there is a continued preoccupation amongst leadership scholars on the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy with regard to validity, rigour and reliability (Klenke, 2016; Bryman, 2011). In light of this, feminist approaches might be useful in understanding leadership as a research field that can benefit from qualitative methods, particularly to address issues of gender, power, context, unpacking organisational cultures, whilst employing rigorous reflexivity. This therefore highlights the necessity for the feminist methodology that underpins the methodological approach in this research.

4.2. A Feminist Methodological Framework

Centring gender as the focus of inquiry, feminist research is a holistic approach that encompasses every stage of the research process. From theory to the practical conduction of research, emphasis is placed on the synergy between epistemology, methodology and method (Brooks and Hesse-Biber, 2006). Adopting a feminist methodology can enable a cohesive research stance as feminist philosophy is inclusive of epistemic, ontological, and axiological positions. At its foundation, feminist research is intrinsically invested, and theoretically grounded, in prioritising and reflecting the social realities of women whilst challenging and exposing patriarchal structures (Hesse-Biber, 2014). It is a multifaceted philosophy that encompasses different political positions, paradigms, and intersectional approaches to feminist research. Further, it is historically critical of the traditional, dominant approaches to social sciences for being androcentric and privileges White male knowledge (Oakley, 1974). This is particularly relevant about leadership literature that has been predominantly androcentric, both in authorship and focus (Sinclair, 2014).

In an attempt to correct androcentric biases, feminist research has expanded into multiple disciplines including political science, psychology, philosophy, history and organisational studies. Whilst there is no singular feminist method, DeVault (1996) suggests that feminist research shares a common perspective; (1) feminist researchers follow guidance from feminist theory, (2) feminist research focus on social change and aim to represent diverse voices, and (3) feminist researchers seek to minimise harm in the research process. In doing so, qualitative research has been praised as an effective strategy to rectify androcentric biases in the construction of social theory that largely omitted women (Grant et al, 1987).

Feminist methodologies often feature qualitative methods such as interviews as they give participants a direct voice and narrative, rather than submerging personal and individual experiences in statistical data whilst overlooking the significance of context (Westmarland, 2001). Although quantitative research can also be used to illuminate generalisable issues of gendered inequalities such as employment, income and health, there is a wealth of descriptive statistics that demonstrate that women are consistently and globally underrepresented in leadership positions. In alignment with an interpretivist epistemological foundation, utilising quantitative methods in this research context would not produce the in-depth personal narratives of political leaders within the Scottish Parliament as such, data is difficult to quantify.

As demonstrated, feminist research holds a different standard of ethical or moral considerations to other forms of sociological research. Firstly, feminist research should be designed to be inclusive, valuing the range of differences, and multiple social realities, of the studied population (Hesse-Biber, 2014). However, focusing on gender as a definitive research variable, in any context, raises the issue of essentialism. Essentialism is the philosophical term given to groups of things that have certain sets of characteristics that make them what they are (Stone, 2007). In this case, it is important to avoid grouping men and women participants into essentialist categories bound by notions of binary sex even where gendered commonalities and differences exist. Here, it is vital to critically analyse such experiences under the patriarchal structures, gendered social norms and the gender regimes in which we operate (Sinclair, 2005).

Within debates surrounding feminist research, the issue of essentialism is disputed over whether there is anything that women have in common, or whether there is too much

diversity among women to group them as a research population (Stone, 2007). Critically, it is frequently argued that exclusion, exploitation and oppression are not singular, individualistic experiences, but are shared by women, to varying degrees, under the dominant system of patriarchy (Ryan, 2007). This understanding can also be applied to men's experience of hegemonic masculinity where certain forms of masculinity are culturally valued (Connell, 2005). The shared commonality among the research population is that participants occupy leadership roles within the Scottish Parliament, yet there is variation of experience by intersectionality.

The notion that feminist research is typically conducted 'by documenting *women's* lives, experiences and concerns, illuminating gender-based stereotypes and biases, and unearthing women's subjugated knowledge' presents challenges for the inclusion of men within the research sample (Brooks and Hese-Biber, 2006). Due to these definitions and assumptions of feminist research, retaining a commitment to an overarching feminist methodology was imperative alongside the inclusion of male MSPs. In doing so, this research benefits from learning from both women and men's experiences of leadership in numerous ways. According to Lohan (2000), the inclusion of men within feminist research is a significant part of the 'feminist project' in understanding the patriarchal processes by which men achieve their status. This is important in exploring whether the pathways to leadership in Scottish politics are gendered. Consequently, such data could not be derived from women-only interviews. Further, embedded in feminist leadership literature, Sinclair (2014) argues that in order to fully understand the obstacles that hinder women's leadership progression, it is necessary to address men's leadership. Sinclair (2014) advocates for the exploration of masculinity within leadership research and how hegemonic masculinity penetrates organisational cultural norms, specifically models of leadership. Thus, in spite of warnings that those interviewing both men and women often tend to ignore women's knowledge, exposing biases towards a male perspective, it is vital to retain a wedded attentiveness to the 'feminist task' and feminist methodology (Sinclair, 2014).

Organisational literature that emerged in the 1990s gave attention to the embedded, taken-for-granted-ness of men in leadership positions (Collinson and Grint, 2005). In doing so, it acknowledges the ways in which masculinities are performed and rewarded but are also often invisible and assumptive (Crawford and Pini, 2011). Current postfeminist critiques of leadership recognise a convergence in masculine and feminine behaviours by both men and women while exercising leadership (Lewis *et al.* 2017). Here, Lewis *et al.* (2017) places leadership within the context of postfeminist organisations, defined as adopting moderate feminisms and a 'safe' alliance with the promotion of gender equality. Within these

organisations, the promotion of gender equality is seen to be taken for granted; characteristics that could arguably be seen in the Scottish Parliament despite its unequal gender balance. Lewis et al (2017) argues that although women are included, it is the *type* of inclusion and discourse around their inclusion that must be addressed in leadership research.

Feminist understandings of leadership recognise the absence of women in leadership positions as a societal, gendered problem. Feminist approaches to researching leadership have shifted from viewing women leaders as 'others' that have defied gender stereotypes and barriers. Instead, researchers are documenting the ways in which organisations are gendered and leadership is established where masculinities are favoured and women's experiences are devalued (Sinclair, 2014). Further, this is a move away from the notion that leadership through a feminist lens is not merely the study of women in leadership roles. The 'feminist task' is therefore to illuminate, and challenge, the ways that organisations construct their leadership discourse and the ways in which these can be perceived as gendered (Sinclair, 2014: 28).

In using qualitative and interpretivist approaches, Stead and Elliott (2009) encourage methods that allow for women to narrate their own stories of leadership. They argue that when women position themselves as leaders and share their personal narratives, it can allow for a developing understanding of the interplay between their practice of leadership and wider power relations. Such 'storying' by women leaders can further illuminate the ways in which they navigate masculine cultures and negotiate gendered practices (Ford *et al.* 2008). This approach is reflective of pursuing the 'feminist task' as proposed by Sinclair and will be used within the research design of this thesis (2014). Further, there is no expectation for participants to be objective in their narration of their experiences; experiences have personal emotions attached and are bound by memory.

A further ethical consideration that is typically acknowledged in feminist research is the issue of privilege and power – two concepts that are intrinsically linked to leadership. Sinclair (2014: 29) emphasises that through studying leadership, researchers are giving voices to those that already possess privilege and power as participants belong to an elite group as elected politicians. It is therefore imperative that the outcomes of leadership research must be 'useful, inspiring and empowering for women with less access to power'. This is a significant aim of this research as it possesses the aspiration to widely inspire and educate on gender and political leadership.

4.3. The Research Strategy

4.3.1. The Research (Re)design and Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Before addressing the methodological approach undertaken in this research, it is important to address the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic had a series of implications that played a fundamental role in the shaping of my research process. From planning to its execution, the research strategy, research population and methods used underwent several stages of evolution due to unforeseeable events that impacted on fieldwork within the Scottish Parliament. Just two months into my fieldwork, six face-to-face interviews, several visits to the parliament and one full day of shadowing an MSP, the Scottish Parliament closed to the public. The parliament remained closed to the public and non-essential visits for over two years. During this time, and in order to progress with fieldwork, I made the decision to reframe and restructure this thesis, including the research methods used.

In the infancy of this study, I aspired to conduct an ethnographic study into women's leadership in the Scottish Parliament. Parliamentary ethnography is a commonly deployed method in the study of gender and politics that unveil nuanced, unseen parliamentary workings and gendered effects (Childs, 2004; Malley, 2012; Crewe, 2012; Miller, 2018) The objective was to obtain experiential narratives from women MSPs and other parliamentary leaders in order to explore leadership not only from a political vantage point, but from an organisational perspective that would not solely focus on MSPs.

A further aspect of this research aspired to look at the role of organisational and political space, and the role in which space played in women's leadership in the parliament, gendering the concept of 'spacing leadership' (Ropo and Salovaara, 2018; 2019). To do so, a multifaceted qualitative methodology would have been applied (Mason, 2011). A multi-method approach was deemed necessary in order to adequately engage with both aspects of the research in which interviews and non-participant observation would have been conducted. Interviews would have been conducted with women MSPs and other parliamentary leaders (e.g. committee clerks) and the use of 'shadowing' to gather situated observational data of the interaction between leaders and the parliamentary/organisational space (see Appendix 4) (McDonald, 2005; 2019). Further, a personal reflexive diary would have provided thorough reflexivity to account for personal embodiment, feelings, identity,

and interactions as a situated researcher within the parliament, adhering also to feminist reflexivity (Coffey, 1999, cited in Mason, 2018).

Prior to Covid-19, gaining access to the parliament presented a number of practical challenges. Gaining access is a commonly cited ethnographic challenge due to the prolonged situatedness of the researcher within the research setting (Puwar, 1997). This issue is further exacerbated when attempting to gain access to political settings. There are often numerous security procedures and protocols to adhere to (Crewe, 2018). As a result, all access to interviews and shadowing parliamentary leaders (e.g. the Assistant Chief Executive) were declined. This led to the initial shift to focusing on women MSPs as the primary research sample. Between February and March 2020, I conducted six interviews with women MSPs within the parliament and their constituency offices. I spent several days in parliament each week, attending debates, FMQs and committee meetings. When the parliament closed in March 2020, the lack of access to the spatial aspect of this research led to a series of methodological alterations. Any access I had to shadowing MSPs was no longer available and virtual interviews replaced all face-to-face interviews. Interviews that were scheduled prior to the closure of the parliament were either conducted virtually or postponed until the anticipated reopening of the building, however these never took place.

The demise of the observational and spatial aspect of this research led to seeking data from other sources. In order to provide comparative data to women's experiences of leadership, it was deemed necessary to seek men's experiences as a gender comparator. At this stage, fewer than 10 interviews with women MSPs had been conducted, illuminating commonalities and themes. To adequately analyse this data, comparative data by gender was required in order to determine whether such experiences of leadership were gendered. Without interviews with men as a comparator, data was existing one-dimensionally. Considering a range of methodological approaches, I revisited the literature that discussed research on gender and leadership that included both men and women within the empirical research, using men's experiences as a comparative narrative (Sinclair, 2014; Bjarnegård, 2018). As such, I made an informed decision to include men in the research sample and reframe the research to adequately explore gender and political leadership in the parliamentary workplace.

All research is subject to time and context that offer limitations and opportunities, and this research was undertaken during unprecedented circumstances. The following discussion will highlight how I prioritised the retention of feminist methodological aims, whilst shifting

my focus from women to gender in the Scottish Parliament and broadened my research sample to include men MSPs. A feminist approach was woven throughout to ultimately contribute to the limited leadership research that explicitly aligns itself with feminist aspirations and values. While the outcome of the intended research project differs, it retains its commitment to extending understandings of gender and political leadership.

4.3.2. Semi-Structured Elite Interviews

'Interviews are almost always an appropriate method strategy when studying politicians [...] to tap into political constructs that may otherwise be difficult to examine' (Crawford and Pini, 2011: 88).

Political leadership is a difficult political construct to examine, particularly when conceptualising it as an everyday practice that goes beyond the interactions that take place in the debating chamber. To unveil such everyday experiences, interviews were deemed an effective method to capture such insights. Qualitative interviews are intrinsically based on the epistemological premise that individuals hold distinctive knowledge based on their subjective, personal experiences (Mason, 2018). Qualitative interviews aim to gather rich data from the perspective of specific research participants that can inform the research topic (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). Interviewing is an interactional process that goes beyond 'fact gathering', rather it is an on-going process of conversation and interpretation (Mason, 2018). In their basic form, semi-structured interviews are defined by the process where the researcher prepares a list of potential interview questions that can be contextually adapted and appropriately phrased within the conversation development of the interview (Gibson and Brown, 2009).

Within political research, researching 'elites' has focused on those that occupy top positions, or those that are in close proximity to power within decision-making bodies, including parliaments, political parties and government (Lilleker, 2003; Schiff, 2013). A common method of inquiry to access elite worlds is the use of interviews. More specifically and relevantly, 'elite interviews' have been used to study gender and politics, whereby researchers have conducted interviews with parliamentarians to unveil issues surrounding gender and the gendering of parliaments (Childs, 2004; Puwar, 2004). Bridging interdisciplinarity, elite interviews have also been used in organisational settings to interview corporate leaders. This is due to the possibility for interviews to provide insights about activities that take place beyond the gaze of the public or media, thus demonstrating its methodological effectiveness in organisational and political settings (Lilleker, 2003).

There are differing designations of elites depending on the research subject, where individuals are positioned on a spectrum of power and status on the basis of class, education, occupation or role (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001). For the purposes of this thesis, MSPs elected to the Scottish Parliament since 1999 are considered elites. Similar to much of leadership study, the focus of elite studies has been given to individual characteristics, overlooking issues of privilege and structural power relations that give allowance to, and produce, elite positions (Puwar, 1997). In conjunction with feminist research ethics and objectives, it is imperative within this research to illuminate the ways in which gender and leadership interact in a meaningful and impactful way that does not solely amplify elite voices (Sinclair, 2014).

Interviewing elites can lead to a number of practical issues. Literature on elite interviewing tends to err on the side of caution, featuring warnings about the process. Indeed, interviewing elites, particularly with regard to politicians, brings issues of control, power and accessibility into question (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001). Establishing trust between the researcher and the research participants usually demands a period of time for rapport to build. However, as politicians' time is typically scarce, the researcher must prove their credibility quickly and convincingly to establish trustworthiness (Crewe, 2018). Extending this notion of establishing trust with politicians, Puwar (1997) highlights that politicians are 'skilled interviewees' who are often familiar with journalistic and academic enquiries, and can therefore present filtered, rehearsed or cliched responses (Ball, 1994: 96, cited in Puwar, 1997).

Researchers must try to penetrate such responses and tactfully prompt further elaboration or explanation. Puwar (1997) further cites her experiences of interviewing women politicians where interviewees have attempted to control the interview agenda, thus emphasising the need for interviewer skill and preparation. Oldendahl and Shaw (2011) emphasise the importance of preparation and effectively utilising the time that the participant has available for the interview. In response to this, semi-structured interviews were deemed the most appropriate and suitable form of interview technique.

The most common type of interview used within elite research is semi-structured interviewing (Lilleker, 2003; Gubrium and Holstein, 2001). A semi-structured interview schedule allows for adaptability and fluidity to accommodate different individual experiences and personalities (Bryman, 2012). With the ability to freely edit questions during the

process, semi-structured interviews can also allow for a conversational dynamic that assists in enabling rapport quickly, an important tenet of elite interviewing. Lilleker (2003) further advocates for the use of semi-structured interviews where interview questions might be individual-specific. Interview questions were developed in response to the overarching research questions that guide this thesis. It was presumed within this research that there will be a diversity of leadership experiences that spanned two decades; therefore, it would be inappropriate to adhere to a rigid list of interview questions. Instead, tailored and personalised questions were asked to reflect different experiences relevant to the specific participant and were dependent upon the flow of the interview that fitted into a generic interview schedule (see Appendix 1 for interview schedule). This contributed towards the possibility of greater comparability between respondents that could illuminate differences between parties, time, gender and leadership position.

4.4. The Research Setting

4.4.1. Gaining Access to Participants and the Parliament

Gaining access to 'elite' participants requires a balance of 'ingenuity, social skills, contacts, care, negotiation and circumstance' (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001: 8). Literature advising on such an undertaking is cautionary. Whilst politicians often exhibit an 'image of democratic accessibility', there is often a wariness to engage with research requests, particularly where interviews are requested (Marland and Esselment, 2019: 686). This can be due to a number of practical issues such as time constraints and the parliamentary calendar or issues such as suspicion and partisanship (Hunt *et al*, 1964, cited in Marland and Esselment, 2019). Jupp (2006) emphasises the cost-benefit valuation process undertaken by elites when deciding to accept or decline interview invitations. Unlike media interviews, where politicians have a 'symbiotic relationship' with journalists, and their interaction reaches the public, participating in academic research is often regarded as of little benefit to politicians (Marland and Esselment, 2019). This potential issue was appeased by explicitly emphasising the importance of this research when inviting their participation. It was stressed that this research is non-partisan and would be both impactful and beneficial to discussions of gender and leadership, both academically and politically, whilst also contributing to Scotland's political history. This further enabled promotion of the feminist aims that this research possesses in an attempt to encourage potential participation.

In order to recruit participants for this research, both purposive and snowball sampling were employed. Purposive sampling is commonly used in both organisational and management

research where the researcher seeks their sample based on criteria such as expert knowledge, occupation or position (Jupp, 2006). Mason (2019: 55) suggests that qualitative samples should be 'generative' in that it is possible to yield meaningful illustrations, experiences, and scenarios. In this case, MSPs were considered as possessing the experiential knowledge of political leadership that is necessary for the purposes of this research.

To begin, all 47 current MSP women were contacted via publicly accessible email addresses inviting their participation in a 1-hour interview and requesting the opportunity to shadow their working day(s). At this point, shadowing was imperative to the research design that sought to use situated methods in the parliament to explore women's leadership and use of political space. As a physical process, the researcher is embedded in the participant's routine where the researcher is required to adapt, take notes, observe and improvise responses to occurring events (Gill et al, 2014). I used the term 'shadowing' to encompass this ethnographic approach as it was language deemed more familiar. As such, I was able to arrange several days to shadow MSPs, however I was only able to attend one before the parliament closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic (see Appendix 4 for more detail). Upon the inclusion of men in the sample, all 129 MSPs were invited to participate in this study. Invitations were sent multiple times to each MSP and former MSPs. When I reached greater numbers of interviewees and noticed imbalances in party representation, efforts were made to more representation².

Contacting current MSPs was a relatively straightforward process due to their public contact information. A greater difficulty was attempting to contact former MSPs as many had retired from political and public life. Lilleker (2003) recommends seeking contact information for former colleagues from current elites. At the end of each interview, MSPs were asked for potential contact details of former MSPs which enabled a snowball sample. Due to accessibility issues of conducting elite interviews, it is not uncommon for participant sample numbers to be relatively small (Natow, 2020). Indeed, there are published studies that have as few as three or four elite interviews. Most samples of elite interviews, particularly within the field of gender and politics, range from 20-40 interviews (Childs, 2004; Crawford and Pini, 2011).

² For example, I would specifically say that I had fewer numbers of women from the Scottish Conservative Party when contacting this group.

4.4.2. The Virtual Interview: Opportunities and Challenges

In total, I undertook just 6 interviews face-to-face within constituency offices and the parliament, and the remaining 25 interviews were conducted via Zoom or telephone. Telephone and Zoom interviews were initially to be reserved for interviews with former political leaders where geographical issues arose. It was not foreseen that this would become the most frequented method within this thesis. As aforementioned, emphasis was placed on the situatedness and embeddedness of using face-to-face interviews and non-participant observation within the parliament in order to gain experiential insight into the parliament itself. However, as the research evolved, moving interviews virtually was essential.

Virtual interviewing refers to the methods of primary data collection of interviewing through technological means such as telephone or video-conference software (e.g. Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams). Telephone and video interviewing offer differing opportunities and challenges to the 'disembodied' interviewing process (James and Busher, 2012). Virtual interviewing is a popular method due to its time effectiveness and ability to access hard to reach research populations (Block and Erskine, 2012). Further, virtual interviewing is cost-effective and has the beneficial ability to overcome geographical issues.

Telephone interviewing has received a volume of critique and comes with an array of cautionary warnings of its perceived inadequacy for conducting in-depth qualitative interviews which is further exacerbated when conducting elite interviews (Irvine *et al.* 2012). In comparison with face-to-face interviewing, telephone interviewing is often critiqued for the lack of 'natural rapport' built during in-person social interactions (Shuy, 2003, cited in Irvine *et al.* 2013). Those cautious of telephone interviewing frequently cite the lessened quality of interview and data obtained. Block and Erskine (2012) refer to 'low relationship quality' and its impact on data quality, where the ambiguous 'interpersonal chemistry' of face-to-face interactions that involve politeness, non-verbal communication, trust, rapport, humour and emotion is compromised (Gillham, 2005, cited in Irvine *et al.* 2012). When attempting to obtain personal narratives of individuals' experiences this becomes particularly pronounced. This is, in part, due to the visual anonymity of both the researcher and the interviewee. In the instance of this research, whilst I was aware of what the interviewees looked like, they were unaware of what I looked like, which is recognised as an important aspect of building research relationships; 'trust, a fragile commodity... seems ever more fragile in a disembodied, anonymous setting' (Orgad, 2005, cited in James and

Busher, 2012). In overcoming visual anonymity, video interviewing, such as the use of Zoom, allows the researcher and participant to see each other in real time (Deakin and Wakefield, 2013).

Further significance is placed on bodily presence within face-to-face interviews; 'bodily closeness... is part and parcel of social relations. Although often thought of as mundane, shaking hands... can be integral to establishing rapport' (Adams-Hutcheson and Longhurst, 2017: 152). Here it is suggested that shaking hands with someone or having a coffee with someone can stimulate an 'affective atmosphere', that is 'conducive to conversation'. A slight degree of nervousness accompanied me as I entered every interview. When I entered the parliament or constituency office, said my name at the reception and who I was there to see, waited to be collected and taken to the MSP's office, walked through the parliament building and then being greeted with a usually friendly, warm handshake, formal introductions and small talk, my nervousness would ease. It would continue to ease as we approached the first question, signed the consent forms, and set up the audio recording. It was these little but meaningful moments that were absent from telephone and Zoom interviews.

Face-to-face interviews were an event. I would spend the whole day in the parliament, filling my days with going to different committees and debates, getting a ticket for FMQs, or finding a corner in the parliament to sit and write. Interviews conducted whilst working at home did not possess the same eventfulness. Face-to-face interviews with current MSPs allowed for numerous spontaneous instances within the parliament that were absent in telephone and Skype interviews. For example, meeting other MSPs whilst in the parliament, explicit discussion of the parliament building in which we sat, having lunch with MSPs' staff, having a coffee with an MSP, being invited to join an MSP during her constituency surgeries, and being offered to use an MSP's office space to do thesis work when visiting the parliament. Such occurrences would not have happened without face-to-face interaction. Similarly, face-to-face interviews often ended with comments such as 'you know where I am if you need me' (see Appendix 4 for a detailed account). Such relations were more difficult to achieve in the absence of face-to-face interaction.

By the end of my data collection, virtual meetings were widely considered the norm and interviewees were familiar with using Zoom. Whilst there is a degree of negativity that accompanies virtual or telephone interviewing (Irvine *et al.* 2012), in my interview experience, those that were conducted via telephone tended to be more emotive than those

in face-to-face or Zoom settings. Consistent with several findings within literature that analyses virtual interviewing, the benefits to using virtual interviewing counteracted the challenges that were present in conducting face-to-face interviews. In one instance, an interviewee cried when discussing a specific political achievement when her Bill was passed through parliament. Such emotion may not have occurred in a face-to-face, workplace environment. Instead, virtual and telephone interviews often took place from interviewees' homes where there could be a heightened level of comfort. In their homes, MSPs could not be heard by other members of staff, and thus conversation might have been less contrived. This is seen as a beneficial tenet of virtual interviewing, particularly when discussing workplace cultures, people and opportunities.

4.4.3. The Research Sample

Between February 2020 and January 2021, 20 interviews took place with current MSPs and 11 interviews with former MSPs (see Appendix 2 for more detail). A total of 16 women MSPs and 15 men MSPs were interviewed. Interviewees had a range of varying political leadership experience and had served in the Scottish Parliament throughout different sessions since 1999. Interviewing MSPs that had been elected at various points since devolution allowed for reflections on how the parliament, the political landscape and political leadership changed over time. At least one MSP from every party elected to the Scottish Parliament was interviewed: 13 Scottish Labour MSPs, 10 SNP MSPs, 3 Scottish Conservative MSPs, 2 Scottish Green MSPs, 2 Scottish Liberal Democrat MSPs, and 1 Scottish Socialist MSP. This cross-party scope was imperative to gaining a breadth of insight from MSPs from parties in government, parties in oppositions, and parties that were no longer elected in the parliament.

4.5. Data Management, Analysis and Interpretation

The inherent value of interview data is that it offers a 'systematic way to uncover people's experiences over time, as well as their perceptions, motives and accounts of these experiences and actions' (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002: 221). Data took a storied format; MSPs recounted their experience through storytelling that was often chronological. Stories are what 'we *tell* each other' about a person, event or experience (Langellier, 1999: 125, cited in Prior and Leston-Bandeira, 2020). Stories provide 'insights into the emotional and symbolic ascriptions and hence into the meanings that narrators ascribe to events' (Klenke,

2008: 243). 'Narratives constitute the social knowledge – based on subjective experience or tradition – that stories allude to' (Prior and Leston-Bandeira, 2020: 4).

At the start of each interview, interviewees were asked about their career trajectory and how they became involved in politics. Each responded with a biographical account of how they journeyed into political leadership and fulfilled different roles, referring to their background, barriers, and opportunities. Further questions were answered with anecdotes and stories that illustrated aspects of their experience. MSPs told storied experiences with plots and characters. Key storylines involved the opening of the parliament, bringing forth motions that resulted in passed legislation, promotions into leadership positions, losing seats and the Independence and Brexit Referendums, illustrating personal and political landmarks since devolution. To make sense of this rich and detailed data, a thematic approach was used.

4.5.1. Data Management and Analysis: A Thematic Approach

Upon conducting 31 interviews with former and current MSPs, each interview was manually transcribed verbatim. Interviews ranged between 30 and 60 minutes which is consistent with Peabody *et al's* (1990) observation that interviews with politicians typically last 30 minutes due to competing priorities (cited in Crawford and Pini, 2011) (see Appendix 2 for the interview schedule). The textual data was input into NVivo that was used as an analytic and data management tool to code the data thematically.

To interrogate the data thematic analysis was used. Thematic analysis is an approach used to find themes, commonalities, and differences in textual data. It enables insights into the relationships between themes, codes and the research questions (Yarrow and Johnston, 2022). As such, the analytic process was guided by Braun and Clarke's (2021) six phases of thematic analysis to establish a systematic process, from familiarisation with the data, coding the data, creation of initial themes to ultimately refine overarching themes.

Familiarisation with the data was achieved through manual transcription of the interviews that enabled a closeness with the data. Subsequently, I went through each transcript and coded sections of text. Coding by section, rather than by line as an alternative method, meant that sections could have multiple themes based on nuances or broader context. This approach also mitigated against distilling the data and compromising its richness and

complexity. The first stage of coding involved assigning descriptive labels to specific sections, this is often referred to as ‘open coding’ that does not follow a prescribed coding frame or codebook (Braun and Clarke, 2019). Using this method allowed for a systematic and consistent approach to analysis that is also malleable and flexible. Braun and Clarke (2021) describe this phase as an ‘organic’ and ‘evolving process’ and offer an iterative process (see Table 7).

Data Extract	Codes
<i>I suppose the job I got as a researcher was a very useful insight into the workings of the parliament which put me in good stead when I got elected because I at least knew my way around the place and I knew some of the figuratively and sort of literally as well.</i>	Prior career; Former parliamentary experience; Familiarity
<i>I worked for 20 years as a mental health pharmacist, and you know I was involved in my community, the way that women are. I was a Brownie leader. I was an antenatal teacher.</i>	Prior career(s); Community involvement (gendered)
<i>What’s required is good communication and the ability to handle lots of information and good instinct.</i>	Skill requirements

Table 7. Thematic analysis process: open coding

Upon coding all interviews, I generated initial themes that took initial codes and developed them from concrete meaning to abstract themes. The interim stage elaborated on the initial code meanings to create initial themes (see Table 8).

Codes	Initial Themes	Refined Themes
Prior career	Former political experience; former non-political experience	Formative leadership training
Skill requirements	Leadership skills	Leadership expectations

Table 8. Thematic analysis process: refining themes

During this stage, I used analytic memos to explore relationships between themes and noted analytic thoughts in relation to the data, existing literature, and theory. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasise that thematic analysis is ‘a theoretically flexible method’ that complements an inductive approach. Thus, during the analytic process, I was guided by my overarching research questions. At the time of data analysis, this research was not prescriptively guided by specific theoretical tools, rather I maintained ‘theoretical awareness’ and analysis was ‘data-driven’ (Braun and Clarke, 2021). With this in mind, the discussion of my findings (Chapter Eight) is structured by my research questions – these are not pre-imposed theoretical lenses but provide an organising logic.

Establishing the theoretical framing was an iterative process where I often cited my analytic memos and codes derived from the data. As such, my themes from the data informed my choice of using Bourdieu's concepts and FI as an appropriate and complementary integrated approach. As explored in further detail in the previous chapter, both theoretical frameworks are used in leadership literature in political and organisation research. Thereafter, the theoretical framing provides a skeleton structure that informs my findings chapters, as well as the discussion, in a manner not dissimilar from the middle range thinking which is becoming prevalent in some public management literature (e.g. Laughlin 1995, 2004; Kominis and Dudau, 2012, Dudau et al. 2020).

4.5.2. Interpreting the Data: Partial Truths, Facts, Fictions and Fantasies

Gabriel (2000) details that storytelling in organisations can result in inconsistencies, contradictions, hyperbole, equivocation and nostalgia – or 'facts, fictions and fantasies'. Storytellers portray characters, including themselves, as 'protagonists, antagonists, heroes, or survivors' (Leavy, 2020: 291). Here, although this research is not concerned with differentiating fact from fiction, this is even more pronounced when interviewing within a political context (Berry, 2002); 'political interviews are themselves highly political'. As such, Berry (2002: 680) warns of interviews that can be self-serving or 'party-line accounts'. Bull *et al.* (1996) further conceptualises the 'three faces of political interviews', suggesting that politicians move between a personal-political face and a party face in interviews. This approach recognises that individual stories are 'boundaried' within the party-political contexts in which they sit, and the wider happenings of the political landscape (Leavy, 2020). Indeed, MSPs went between individual narratives, party narratives and broader contextual narratives. Notably, interviewees were reluctant to speak negatively about their party and its progress on gender equality, often failing to recognise gender imbalances, inequalities and potential shortcomings. However, it is important to note that whilst this raises questions regarding the truthfulness of data, as this research sits within the interpretivist paradigm, it is less concerned with truthfulness, instead attention is given to the significance placed by interviewees on their experiences.

In organisational studies, stories can be (re)productions of meta-narratives of the rules and routines of an organisation (and who these apply to) that can be viewed from a vantage point of convergent and divergent stories. Those that embark on such approaches, particularly in leadership research, praise the ability to give an embodied experience of a place and group of people through the data (Leavy, 2020). This is particularly helpful in the

absence of ethnographic methods. Going further, Boje (2008) urges that organisational storytelling is not only what its employees say about the organisation, but the stories the organisation portrays of its values, principles, history and identity.

Discussion of gender can evoke tension and contradiction. Virtue signalling and 'institutional peacocking' are methods used by individuals to overstate organisational gender equality for 'institutional gains' (Yarrow and Johnston, 2022). Researchers should be mindful of such claims. Here, it is necessary to refer to Sinclair's (2014) recommendations of studying men's perceptions of leadership and how these can penetrate organisational cultures. Taken with a feminist approach, it is necessary to problematise patriarchal structures and gendered outcomes (McAlpine, 2016). This is particularly necessary in interviews where there was a tendency for some (particularly men) to portray positive notions surrounding gender, for example 'un-gendering' the conversation if asked about the gendered barriers to pursuing political leadership. In the following section, I reflect on my positionality as a feminist researcher and the possible implications this might have had on discussions surrounding gender.

4.6. Methodological Reflections and Ethical Considerations

4.6.1. Interviewing the 'Elite': Anonymity, Confidentiality and Vulnerability

Respect for participants' anonymity, confidentiality and vulnerability was given significant attention in the research process. Due to the nature of interviewing publicly identifiable people, numerous ethical considerations have been regarded and mitigated against. Ethical issues such as anonymity are exacerbated by the small pool of politicians within the Scottish political field and their recognisability by party, position, location, gender, and sessions in which they sat in parliament. Implicating anonymity, it was deemed imperative that participants' identities were anonymised 'as far as possible' due to the small sample. This caveat was included within the participant information form that was sent to all potential interviewees during the recruitment of participants. It was again emphasised within the consent form given to all interviewees. In all virtual interviews, consent was verbally obtained before proceeding and interviewees received a copy of the consent form to their email address for their own records. The consent form also stated that participants withheld the right to withdraw from this research up to three months after the interview to ensure a progress of ongoing, informed consent.

The ethical issues of anonymity and sensitivity are closely entwined. Lancaster (2017) highlights that whilst qualitative researchers that undertake elite interviewing frequently pseudonyms, it is important to be mindful of the sensitivity of data that may expose participants' identities. This is particularly relevant within this research as participants discuss their experiences that could identify them. For example, if an MSP discusses being the first woman leader of her named party, her identity could be deduced. It was therefore important to attempt to conceal participants' identities within the data as far as possible. Due to the relatively small number of MSPs that have been elected to the parliament, protecting MSPs' identities was paramount. Attributing labels to MSPs such as their party and position may result in their identities being deduced. On balance, Lancaster further discusses the implications of removing demographic or professional descriptors (e.g. political position and party) and the effects this has on the reported findings that may need to be contextualised by such descriptors. Ultimately, concealment of leaders' identities was prioritised over the importance of contextualisation. As such, I made the decision to exclude all labels apart from gender. Pseudonyms used were informed by those used by Erikson and Josefsson (2023) in their interviews with MPs in the Swedish Parliament (e.g. R2, woman; R6, man) where gender was a key analytical lens. This approach places emphasis on the gendered experiences of gendered actors whilst mitigating against possible identification of participants (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

Interviewee characteristics example	Pseudonym
Interview 1: Woman MSP; SNP; Cabinet Secretary; 1999	Interview 1; woman
Interview 2: Man MSP; Scottish Labour; Backbencher; 2011	Interview 2; man

Table 9. Pseudonym key

Discussing vulnerability, Lancaster (2017) emphasises the importance of how the process of elite interviewing can leave participants 'vulnerable'. Unlike traditional definitions of vulnerability within qualitative research, here it is defined by the potential repercussions of participants discussing their elite role and workplace (Lancaster, 2017). In some instances, participants expressed that certain things were said 'off the record' or were 'not for repeating'. Here, they were particularly concerned about their party and position being identifiable. This typically followed discussions where specific, identifiable people had been discussed and often critiqued, and as such were removed from transcriptions.

Sensitivity, in its traditional form, within qualitative research typically concerns asking questions that could provoke harm (Hesse-Biber, 2014). One of the interview questions I asked in interviews regarded barriers to political candidacy or promotion and potential

gendered differences. This was frequently answered with discussions of online and offline abuse towards politicians, particularly women. In referring to victimological ethical considerations, Fontes (2004) stresses the importance of the researcher in being aware of potential upset. A further issue that prompted sensitivity was discussions of job loss as a result of politicians losing their seat. In some instances, it was clear that losing their seats had emotionally negative impacts on former MSPs. An advantageous tenet of semi-structured interviews gave allowance to approach such questions with tact and caution and the ability to move on to other topics where appropriate.

4.6.3. The Role of the Researcher: Positionality and Interviewing the Elite

‘There is no escaping your own body; this will affect how you are received and how participants interact with you in the field’ (O’Reilly, 2012: 100).

Reflexivity and positionality are key elements of feminist research (Hesse-Biber, 2014). Feminist research typically occupies the position that there are ‘no value-free sociologies’ (Hill, 1984); researchers are positioned in the cultural, social and political contexts in which they study (Skeggs, 1997). Researchers possess multiple identities and positionalities that are ever present and shape interactions (Glas, 2021). Through active reflexivity, feminist researchers encourage critical interrogation of the self that assess the effect we have on our research, explicitly exposing their influences, potential biases, aspirations, privilege and personal characteristics to contextual their presence within the research (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Thus, reflexivity is the active cognisance of the researcher where they continuously observes themselves as a subject within their research (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Indeed, through positioning the researcher within the research, the self becomes a source of data.

As a twenty-something, White, able-bodied, cis-gendered, Scottish PhD student with a background in gender and Scottish politics³, my identity posed benefits and risks within the research. The overarching benefit was that my identity was ‘unthreatening’ in the field, whilst the overarching risk is that I do not have lived experience beyond my own identity. Miller (2018) reflects on her positionality as a young woman ethnographer in Westminster and

³ My undergraduate dissertation was entitled ‘Cyber-misogyny experienced by women in politics and its role as a potential barrier to female candidature’. My MSc dissertation was entitled ‘A qualitative exploration into women’s experiences as candidates in the Scottish governmental and local electoral processes’. Both involved primary interviews with politically active women. This developed prior knowledge of the field before undertaking this research.

how she was perceived on a spectrum between threatening and non-threatening. Like Miller (2018), I understood MSPs to perceive me to be non-threatening as a relatively young PhD student. Young female researchers are often perceived as 'surrogate granddaughters' (Brewer, 2006: 99), indeed, older MSPs spoke of having children the same age as me and often discussed their children being at university, thus I felt more as a 'surrogate daughter', rather than granddaughter. Odendahl (2001) also says that elites spoke more candidly with her than they do with her as an older researcher – suggesting she thought that perhaps discounted her ability to do much with the information given. There were multiple instances where MSPs would say 'you probably weren't born then' or 'you're probably too young to remember'. However, at times, this was beneficial as they did not make assumptions about my pre-existing knowledge. Furthermore, such instances presented opportunities to ask for more contextual information which added to the detail of their experiences. My previous research experience and knowledge of the field often allowed MSPs to bypass 'introductions' to their role and procedures in the Scottish Parliament.

When speaking with women about their experiences of being a woman in politics, there was a presumption that I 'knew' because of our shared gender. There were multiple instances where women said utterances such as 'I'm sure I don't need to tell you', or 'I'm sure you're aware'. These accompanied discussions of being the only woman in the room in certain male-dominated scenarios, online media abuse, and balancing family commitments and work, where they assumed my knowledge, experience, or empathy. Feminist researchers often attribute this sense of familiarity to the shared gendered experience in patriarchal societies (Oakley, 1981). The same was not felt in discussion with men, however, I did perceive that multiple men were eager to present themselves as feminist allies. They often spoke of the ways in which they supported and encouraged women in politics, how they did not display traditionally masculine forms of leadership styles, and how they favoured traditionally feminine leadership styles (this will be further explored in Chapter Eight). This was perhaps encouraged by both my own gender and the subject matter at hand.

Lastly, it is important to consider political impartiality. There is an 'inevitability' in the asymmetry of the power dynamics within elite interviewing (Desmond, 2004). This was particularly felt when MSPs exposed their political beliefs about several topics including Scottish independence, Covid-19, opposition parties, and other politicians. Throughout, I maintained impartiality. However, I found myself to be agreeable with an array of their opinions, and I did so to encourage conversation, rather than pose debate on points I disagreed with. I also did so to be seen as a non-threatening, impartial researcher, not a political opponent. Exposing my potential biases and positionality as the researcher, I have

attempted to ensure transparency. The final section of this chapter explores further ways to ensure quality in qualitative research.

4.6.4. Ensuring 'Quality' in Qualitative Research

Although commonly used within political and organisational research, the methods deployed within this research can raise issues of generalisability, reliability, and validity. There are specific criteria that underpin quality in qualitative research (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that qualitative research should possess trustworthiness to be deemed high quality which is underpinned by four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

The criterion of credibility involves the 'trueness' of findings and can be established through a number of techniques (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Qualitative researchers often spend prolonged engagement within the research setting, triangulation of data, persistent observation, or respondent validation (Silverman, 2017). To achieve this, in a more informal manner, throughout my interviews I would seek confirmation from interviewees, ensuring that I was interpreting their narratives in the way in which they were inferred.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criterion of transferability refers to the issues surrounding the replicability of the research and applicability of methods in other contexts. As such, I have provided a detailed account of my research strategy, the questions that I asked interviewees (see Appendix 1) and how the data was managed and analysed that can be taken forward in further research. In a similar vein, providing a detailed account of the research process contributes to the dependability of qualitative research which concerns the transparency of the research, ensuring that the complete research process is accessible and documented (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bryman, 2012).

The issue of generalisability is typically raised in conjunction with an assessment of the size and demographic characteristics of the research sample (Bryman, 2012). However, this again is typically done so through a positivist or quantitative lens. The aims of this thesis are concerned with theory-building from an interpretivist approach. Thus, the notion generalisability speaks to the ways in which the research adds to the field and how others can use learning from the research and apply it to other contexts or further research. For example, this research builds on understandings of how political leadership is experienced, learned and valued in a uniquely new, relatively small parliament that had feminist aims from its conception.

A further way to ensure quality in qualitative research is to 'collect data until saturation has occurred' (Morse, 1995: 147). Saturation is often defined as the end point of the data collection process whereby no additional data are being found, the researcher observes 'similar instances over and over again' and the researcher becomes 'empirically confident that a category is saturated' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 61). This becomes somewhat problematic when asking individuals about their personal experiences that often differ and offer alternative perspectives. It was important that I achieved a cross-party sample of men and women that had been elected at different points since devolution with differing life experiences, however this has implications for this definition of saturation. Instead, an alternative definition of saturation, as defined by Charmaz (2014: 213), is 'not the same as repetition of events or stories in the data', rather saturation can occur when the categories of data have 'conceptual depth' and are robust. This, alongside reaching a plateau in participant recruitment after addressing gaps in party representation, saw the completion of my data collection. Whilst gaps in further measures of representation remain, time constraints also played a factor in concluding interviews.

By committing to a feminist methodology, there are ethical standards that are unique to feminist research. One of these ethical considerations refers to intersectionality. Intersectionality recognises that societies are built upon multiple different 'systems of domination' that intersect with gender oppression (Hill, 1990: cited in Stone, 2007: 151). Practising intersectionality within research is by understanding phenomena through 'intersecting and overlapping contexts and social forces such as race, age, gender, sexuality', disability and class (Ackerly and True, 2010: 30).

A visible ethical issue within this research that is linked to intersectionality is the lack of diversity within the research sample. During the time of fieldwork, there were 2 BAME men MSPs elected in the Scottish Parliament. There had not been a woman from an ethnic minority background elected. Mohanty (1991) suggests that feminist research must be reflective of the social contexts in which it is conducted. Thus, although minority ethnic groups make up 4% of the Scottish population, only four MSPs (all of whom were men) had been elected to the parliament between 1999-2021 (Rodger, 2020). Three former and current BAME MSPs were contacted to participate in this research but did not respond. The issue of intersectionality and the limitations of this research are explored in more detail in Chapter Nine. There, I consider how intersectionality might be addressed in future research in light of increased levels of diversity upon the 2021 Scottish Parliament election where the first women of colour, first permanent wheelchair user, and more men of colour were elected.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the methods employed to effectively conduct empirical research on gender and political leadership and provided a detailed rationale for the choice of methods used. Elite interviews are an advantageous way to penetrate political institutional cultures whilst retaining central focus on the importance of lived experience of those in power. The chapter has further demonstrated the necessity of a feminist methodology to fully engage with the gendered dimension of leadership experiences, whilst challenging the dominant positivist and androcentric approaches to leadership studies. Simultaneously, challenges encountered throughout the research process highlighted the unpredictability of research. As such, I sought to provide insight and guidance on the adaptation of methods in response to crisis and unpredictability, namely the Covid-19 pandemic. It emphasises the importance of retaining foundational tenets of the study. In this case, it was imperative to access situated knowledge through interviews, despite the inability to fully conduct ethnographic methods such as shadowing. This ensures the ability to be responsive to the research field and any unforeseen challenges that may arise.

Chapter Five: Learning to Lead: Entry to the Field and Formations of Political Habitus

This chapter is the first of three empirical chapters that present the findings from my interviews with MSPs (see Appendix 1 for interview schedule). The chapters are informed by Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capitals and field. Bourdieu's concepts give structure to findings that journey from the initial election of MSPs, experience of political leadership, and the significance of the parliament's formal and informal rules. Informed by the concept of habitus, this chapter explores how MSPs came to be political leaders, develop and acquire their leadership skills and styles. The following chapter (Chapter Six) considers how leadership capital is developed in the parliament and how capitals are legitimised and valued. The final empirical chapter (Chapter Seven) then explores the Scottish Parliament as a political field and how institutional rules of the game are developed and embedded, and the implications this has on (gendered) political actors. These chapters captures the storied aspects of interview discussions from political ambition and socialisation to experiences of leadership. Each of these chapters conclude with reflections on the findings that contribute towards the discussion chapter (Chapter Eight) which will demonstrate the significance of these findings and explore connections to existing theory and literature.

5.1. Formative Learning, Selection and Election

MSP leadership trajectories formally begin with election to the parliament. Scottish Parliament Elections are held on the first Thursday in May every four years; the following day prospective MSPs are notified of the outcome of their election, and the subsequent Monday successful candidates are expected to begin their role as a parliamentarian. It is therefore necessary to explore how MSPs arrived at their political role and their entry to the political field (Robinson and Kerr, 2017). However, political ambition and motivations predate election. Thus, interviews often began with a narration of MSPs' journeys into politics; where they grew up, familial influences, education, career trajectories, their political predispositions and the catalyst for getting involved in formal politics.

5.1.1. Motivating Influences for Political Participation

Party political recruitment in the Scottish context occurs internally, reliant on self-nomination of party members to stand as candidates, submitting themselves for vetting, shortlisting, and obtaining internal support to be put forward as a constituency or list candidate.

Motivations for standing for selection and election are varied, ranging from childhood experiences, political movements, to specific issue-based motivators such the closure of a local park. The following example demonstrates how one MSP gained experience lobbying MSPs and having influence on local issues.

A local playfield near to where I live was threatened with development and I got involved in a campaign with neighbours. I started writing to the council, newspapers; I wrote to Donald Dewar, Alex Salmond, Robin Harper. I was like a loose cannon. It ended up as a huge community campaign. [...] By the time I had engaged with a few parties, I thought 'I quite like the [party] approach' and I went along to one of their conferences. [...] I had no formal politics knowledge or background⁴.

Most respondents journeyed back to their childhood or time at university to illustrate their trajectories. A distinct number of MSPs spoke about their childhood, familial background, and class. Working-classness was a significant feature of many respondents' trajectories. Reflections on working-classness typically followed two narratives: their working-class background either excluded them from being politically interested until later in life, or their working-class background galvanised their political interest. Exclusion from politics for one working-class MSP was compounded by a lack of women in pre-devolution politics, as such she internalised that it was an occupation for men.

My mum brought me up herself. I come from a very working class, single-parent household in the Borders; that's my background. Politics and elected politics was not something you ever thought was for you. It was for somebody else, and predominantly you know when you were growing up, it was something men did. All the people you saw around about were men⁵.

I came from a very kind of rural non-political background and the thought never really crossed my mind⁶.

The majority of MSPs that were elected in early devolution spoke of Scottish politics during the Margaret Thatcher administration. The degradation of working-class communities was often cited and inspired political mobilisation through trade union movements. For some, this predisposition and interest in politics was married to the result of Thatcher's governance.

It's a passion for change. [...] What got me into politics was a desire to understand and change the world. [...] I grew up in [town]. Both my grandfathers were steelworkers, my mum was a nurse and my dad worked for the co-op. None of them were politically active; they had opinions and they voted. Everyone is a product of a time and place; I left school when you could get any job you wanted. That came to an end when Thatcher was elected. No steel working jobs, no car factory jobs; shipyard jobs went out the window. Unemployment hadn't been a feature of the

⁴ Interview 4; woman.

⁵ Interview 10; woman.

⁶ Interview 30; man.

West of Scotland since the 1930s. It shapes your outlook; it was a formative period that everyone went through⁷.

I became political without realising it and that was essentially because of Margaret Thatcher. I had quite strong views and was very opinionated. It was really around the industrial difficulties and the unemployment created by Mrs Thatcher and I thought 'well I have to do something about it', so I joined the [redacted] party⁸.

I suppose I became involved through the trade union movement and then I worked for Unison, kind of locally, and I had been a member and then an officer with Unison. So, I guess that had got me more politically active⁹.

For newer MSPs, the 2014 Independence Referendum was a politically stimulating period. The independence campaign offered increased opportunity for political participation. Many respondents, particularly women, that had not been involved in formal party politics began campaigning for and against independence. As a result, there were several MSPs that were elected in 2016 that were galvanised to stand for election.

I did volunteering but I had never been involved in party politics and I was never a political party member, and I mean I guess I always was, and to make it clear, my default setting was always pro-independence. When the opportunity to get involved in the [2014 Independence] campaign came along, I was very keen to get involved¹⁰.

Among interviewees, the independence campaign was particularly mobilising for women. Specific localised women's groups for independence were a further route to politics for two MSPs that allowed greater opportunities for political training such as public speaking.

I'd always had a strong interest in politics but had never been active in politics. I used to just be that person that would start arguments at dinner parties and shout at the telly and then the Scottish independence referendum came around. I was volunteering as a political lobbyist at that point and someone who worked there said 'oh, you should really get involved with Women for Independence, they're an organisation'. I hadn't really heard of them at this point but they were a really good organisation for getting public speaking gigs for practice¹¹.

Commonalities between MSPs routes into formal politics suggest that there is a particular route or trajectory that there are shared motivating factors for political leaders. Each predates MSPs' election and demonstrates varying levels of predisposed interest in politics, from familial and childhood influences on political events such as the Independence Referendum that encouraged participation.

⁷ Interview 18; man.

⁸ Interview 25; man.

⁹ Interview 7; woman.

¹⁰ Interview 8; woman.

¹¹ Interview 3; woman.

5.1.2. Ambition vs. Reluctance

It became clear through interviews with MSPs that motivation and ambition were classified as different entities for some. Whilst MSPs could identify the source of their political motivation, they often did not recognise their political ambition and often experienced internal resistance to political ambition. As such, MSPs spoke of their ambition to stand for election to varying degrees. Each placed themselves differently on the spectrum between ambition to reluctance. Most women MSPs spoke 'passively' about their trajectories as something that happened *to* them, with the majority having been asked or encouraged by others to stand for election. In the following example, one woman offered a passive account of her leadership trajectory despite being an active party member who contributed to local politics and had leadership experience in a former occupation.

*For the first time ever, I started to speak at meetings, put my opinion forward on things, and it was interesting, folk then started to say to me 'why don't you stand?' I remember [another party member], we came out of a meeting and she said 'when are you going to put your money where your mouth is?' [Laughing] So, there was a wee seed planted. I was the director of a housing association at the time, so I was perfectly content in my career. Then, my partner said 'seriously, why don't you think about it?' and people just started to suggest that I should, and I couldn't even say that there was a huge decision made. I just sort of... I went for the vetting to get on the approved list of candidates and shock, passed, and then it all just sort of... I'm sounding very **passive** here, but it felt that way, it just became its own trajectory¹².*

In the same vein, one MSP spoke of her trajectory through anti-nuclear and anti-war campaigning. She was asked to stand as a councillor and went on to be elected as an MSP. Despite this succession, her passive language diminishes a sense of agency in her reflection on her political trajectory, distinguishing the difference between political involvement at a local, campaigning level and political aspiration.

*I'd say I'm a very **reluctant** politician, I suppose in lots of ways. It wasn't sort of something I particularly aspired to [...] I never, I never set out to be a politician. I'd always been quite active, and I did always sort of look for ways to make a difference and be involved in things, but I didn't aspire to be a politician¹³.*

Another respondent echoed this feeling of reluctance and was encouraged by others to stand who saw her as someone representative of their community. She offers her own gendered analysis of this sentiment, attributing a lack of self-confidence and formal political ambition to being a woman. She further notes the significance of a lack of representation of people like her in the parliament as a demotivating factor. Initially, she had self-excluded herself from the role as a result of feeling underqualified. Yet, at the same, she recognised

¹² Interview 5; woman.

¹³ Interview 12; woman.

that she possessed the prerequisite skills to be a politician and cautiously put herself forward for selection and election.

*People would say to me 'you're the kind of person that should represent us' and I have to admit at first I was pretty **reluctant** and it's an interesting thing; partly because we don't see people like me doing this job and I didn't look like or sound like people who do this job, and also in that typical female way I said to myself 'I'm not qualified for that job, I'm not sure I know I could do it well, I don't know if... I haven't done the training'. [...] Women tend to want to be absolutely sure before they launch in and I know that's a conventional stereotype, but I think research might agree. I said 'I'll just explore it' and I thought actually this is a job I could do, I do have transferable skills, I might not have learned about politics but I have good communication skills and I just kind of took that attitude and thought I'll just see how far I can go¹⁴.*

Despite this perceived reluctance, most women MSPs were elected the first time they stood, thus contributing to the evidence that shows *when women run, women win* (Carroll and Sanbonmatsu, 2013). In contrast, several men MSPs stood for election a number of times or were clear about their long-term political aspirations. One MSP said he had stood six times in various elections over 15 years before getting elected.

5.1.3. Electoral Experience

Three MSPs from different parties offered differing gendered analyses of their experiences of standing for election. One woman suggested that it is more difficult for women than men to understand the internal processes that are often hidden from public view. She attributes this to a perceived lack of experience, meanwhile the man's experience was that he received party support despite his inexperience.

It was difficult for new women to get in if you didn't know the processes. There seemed to be a lot of people kind of coalescing around certain candidates and in both contests I was in I was the only woman. I quite quickly realised that it wasn't the calibre of the person in the contest, it was more to do with how you approached taking part in the contest. So, I needed more experience in that¹⁵.

Contrastingly, another woman MSP spoke of how she was 'taken under the wing' of more experienced politicians when she was an active party member and considering candidacy. Echoing the importance of support, she benefited from the opportunities that were presented by senior figures.

My MSP and MP at the time were [redacted], and [redacted] wife who was the secretary of the local constituency [party]. And the three of them really took me under their wing really quickly. I think they maybe identified something in me that they

¹⁴ Interview 8; woman.

¹⁵ Interview 3; woman.

thought and could be developed. So, I think it would have had a very different experience if I hadn't met them early on, and they hadn't given me the opportunities that they did¹⁶.

In the following excerpt, both gender and age are considered significant in this case – the MSP perceived that the party wanted a younger man (himself) as their candidate, rather than two experienced women. As such, his quick ascension appears to have been controversial within the party. It demonstrates the importance of the role of the party and who is deemed a suitable party candidate by those most experienced, as suggested in the previous quote.

I was asked to put my name forward to be [elected party position] by people in the people around the party leadership at the time, unknown to the two women who were both better known to the party leadership. I think they wanted somebody young who had recently caused a bit of a stir by the style of campaigning I had been doing. [...] I think to most people's surprise at the time, there was quite a lot of controversy, I reckon, whether or not the was an appointment based on picking the one guy on the list rather than the two more experienced women¹⁷.

In the following section, MSPs reflections on what happens after their election are discussed and how these experiences inform their transition into the parliamentary workplace.

5.2. 'Learning on the Job' as an MSP

5.2.1. Parliamentary Leadership Training

Just a few days after an election, newly elected MSPs are expected to assume their new role in the parliament. MSPs spoke of how this entails setting up their new office, recruiting staff and learning about the job. Many likened this initial process to setting up your own business or being self-employed. Several respondents expressed that they received no support with this, and that it can be a daunting and lonely time. Some MSPs were becoming managers for the first time and had to hire staff, having no previous managerial experience. Instead, MSPs were reliant on 'learning on the job'¹⁸. Newer MSPs spoke of the 3-day induction that new MSPs receive when elected. This covers basic training on parliamentary procedures such as:

¹⁶ Interview 18; woman.

¹⁷ Interview 30; man.

¹⁸ Interview 27; man.

How to write a speech, how to manage your office, how to recruit, expenses. I think they actually took us into the chamber and told us which buttons to press and what would happen, the whole thing. That was really useful¹⁹.

In your first two weeks, your biggest achievement is finding your office. You walk around lost all the time just pretending to know where you're going. We got a lot [of training] early on parliamentary procedure, the basic stuff²⁰.

Whilst some MSPs found this to be a helpful resource, others sought further training and guidance. One respondent mentioned that there is opportunity to outsource training, however this would be deducted from their overall expenses and budget that are publicly available and is thus open to public scrutiny and may prompt questions surrounding competency.

[In other professions] there is a lot of money and options for continuous professional development. [...] [Another MSP] had spent money on coaching for public speaking and obviously we have a budget that we can spend on a variety of things, from envelopes to lunches, and he spent some of that on training. Then the headline was '[redacted] spends £1,000 of public money on...'²¹.

To overcome this shortcoming in parliamentary training, instead some MSPs have set up informal mentoring relationships where they are relying on those with greater political leadership experience to teach them.

I'm the kind of person who would love more training, coaching and mentoring and there's nothing. I set up my own mentoring. I just approached someone more senior than me and just said 'would you mentor me?' They said yes because they didn't really have any training on how to do it. I used to see him for half an hour once a month with a list of problems and ask 'how would you deal with these?' It was useful because this person had been involved in politics for a very long time and was very senior, but it would be good if there was something more formal²².

This absence of training also impacts on casework due to the unpredictability of the role.

No one really trains you on how to deal with casework, I suppose that would be more difficult to do because nobody can say 'that's what's going to happen' because you don't know from one day to the next or what's likely to come through your door²³.

Compared to newer MSPs, those that were elected in the early days of devolution spoke of the total absence training, demonstrating that it was a critical gap that was later filled by the parliament. Again, the following quote emphasised that there are multiple dimensions to the

¹⁹ Interview 2; woman.

²⁰ Interview 24; man.

²¹ Interview 3; woman.

²² Interview 3; woman.

²³ Interview 7; woman.

role of MSPs which cannot be assumed as pre-existing knowledge for newcomers to the role.

I think one of the interesting things is that it's one of the jobs that you're not prepared for. You get no induction, no training. It is a monumental change in role. I look back and I think I wish I thought it through more and I wish I'd had more support for the real thinking through of what the job entails and how you manage all the different dimensions of it. I do a lot of this work now and I look at processes; I work internationally, and I support members of parliaments. A lot of it is [working with] women and you say to women 'right...' and you walk them through, how you prepare for the job, what the job entails, the different things you have to manage. We never got any of that. I wish someone told me that when I first got elected²⁴.

The same MSP concluded that the lack of training impacts MSPs ability to lead effectively.

I'm not dismissing the quality of the MSPs or anything or any party, but the processes are not there to help them do their job effectively²⁵.

The majority of MSPs agreed that parliamentary leadership training is insufficient. Learning on the job the common avenue through which MSPs learned to lead. Without formal training, this prompts a question regarding MSPs' replication of leadership and parliamentary behaviour through imitation, thus reproducing existing practices.

5.2.2. Prior Careers and Transferable Skills

Prior to election, the majority of MSPs interviewed came from professional backgrounds such as the public sector, law, and teaching. For those elected in the earlier parliamentary sessions, there was limited opportunity to have political experience before election as the Scottish Parliament was a new institution. Among the 1999 cohort, most MSPs said that they learned leadership in former occupations and brought aspects of that into the parliament, including confidence.

I had not been in politics; I had been a school teacher for 20 years and my confidence came from that²⁶.

I've had a very varied career. I started off being a lawyer and I wasn't very good at that, so I became a church minister which I was okay at. [...] I think probably my leadership style came more from working outwith politics, so within the law and then within a church setting²⁷.

²⁴ Interview 9; woman.

²⁵ Interview 9; woman.

²⁶ Interview 1; woman.

²⁷ Interview 17; man.

For many MSPs, particularly those that had been elected more recently, political training and socialisation began before being elected. Several MSPs had received political training through formative careers as parliamentary researchers and councillors. MSPs spoke of this political 'apprenticeship' as exceedingly helpful in preparation for their subsequent MSP role. Such roles meant that they were familiar with the parliament building, legislative processes and colleagues.

I suppose the job I got as a [parliamentary] researcher was a very useful insight into the workings of the parliament which put me in good stead when I got elected because I at least knew my way around the place and I knew some of the figuratively and sort of literally as well²⁸.

Because I worked in the Parliament by that point, I was probably, of those five [new MSPs], the most experienced in knowing how parliament worked, how to get things done, how to table questions, all that type of thing. So, I progressed pretty quickly and I was put in the [redacted] shadow Cabinet for six months as [redacted]. Then from that I was promoted again to take on the job of [redacted]. I had all of that about 18 months into my political career²⁹.

These 'politics-facilitating' jobs (Keating *et al.* 2020) or 'brokerage roles' (Miller, 2018) are becoming an increasingly common trajectory for MSPs (Keating *et al.* 2020). Former careers and their proximity to the political field seemed to relate to confidence of newly elected MSPs. As another respondent noted that it would have been a disadvantage had he not received former parliamentary socialisation through his former role as a councillor. This contrasts the experience of those that struggled to get to know the processes such as recruiting their team or learning parliamentary procedures.

There are too many of us that were MPs' researchers or whatever, but actually that background gave me an opportunity to hit the ground running from day one. I knew how parliament worked. I knew who ministers were. If I didn't have that background, I quite clearly would have had to have learned, it's as simple as that, but that certainly was a huge help when I was a first elected MSP. I was speaking to the government ministers, that was my day job as a councillor. I knew how it worked and I'm sure that if I didn't have that background that would be a disadvantage³⁰.

One MSP, who came from a non-political career in the Highlands said that she felt naïve compared to those that had a political background. As such, time was taken to learn knowledge and skills that others possess. She further alludes to the informal rules of the game where she did not understand others' motives and attempts to politically undermine her, having been motivated by 'wanting to make the world a better place'³¹. She goes onto how this experience was compounded by her self-doubt that she attributes to the gendered

²⁸ Interview 2; woman.

²⁹ Interview 18; woman.

³⁰ Interview 24; man.

³¹ Interview 8; woman.

experience of a lack of confidence in her abilities. Navigating these feelings, she emphasises that political skills can be learned, and fear of failure should not be an inhibitor.

I was very critical of career politicians like most of the population before I became a politician myself. When I became a politician myself, I thought gosh I actually would have liked to do the apprenticeship and I've arrived in this position without any idea how all of this works and naivety is a killer as a politician. So, there's not understanding what people were after and thinking people were trying to catch you out, stuff like that; all that nonsense that goes with being in politics. I came from the very naïve position of wanting to make the world a better place, but the reality is, you can learn anything. And if we go back to my story about my trajectory, particularly women, the thing that inhibits you is the little voice in your head that goes 'I'm not sure you should go for this' and 'I'm not sure you're able to do this', and it's good to be aware of your own limits but we should ignore them and try and be less afraid of failure³².

Another MSP echoes this experience of a lack of knowledge. She noted that because she did not have recent experience in a professional role due to her time as a stay-at-home mum, she did not easily transition into the political environment. It was felt that others from such backgrounds had an easier introduction.

It was quite a change for me because I hadn't worked full-time, I think since 2003. I had been working part-time, so this was my first proper job. I've got children so I had had quite a lot of time off looking after my children and this was my first job back. So, I felt like it was quite a shock to my system in a way that it maybe wouldn't have been to other people. I felt like if you had had a sort of quite high-level professional job, maybe you'd been a lawyer or a social worker, a teacher, you'd be more used to it. I felt like I was kind of dumped in the deep end. You don't really get any support of any kind³³.

Upon reflecting on former careers, MSPs, particularly those elected in the early days of the parliament, advised that newcomers to politics should have experience in previous careers and should avoid following the more common trajectory of becoming a parliamentary staffer before entering formal politics.

There wasn't a Scottish Parliament for more than half my life. That makes my political experience different to perhaps the political experience of people coming in now³⁴.

Many emphasised the benefits of learning leadership through former career paths. This enables expertise on policy areas, such as education, health or criminal justice from an insider, practitioner perspective that are often sought to inform legislative inquiries. Transferable knowledge and skills from previous careers are valued in the parliament and

³² Interview 8; woman.

³³ Interview 3; woman.

³⁴ Interview 26; man.

can contribute to promotions in related areas (see Chapter 6). However, those without former 'politics-facilitating' job experience feel a sense of disadvantage and naivety to both the formal (practical skills and knowledge) and informal (understanding others' behaviours) aspects of politics.

5.2.3. Building Support Networks

MSPs, both men and women, emphasised the importance of building support networks. This was a theme that was present in the data, despite not asking questions regarding MSPs' support network (see Appendix 1 for interview schedule). The nature of the support varied between MSPs; for some, mostly women, emphasis was placed on parliamentary friendships. For others, building a support network centred on political support such as gaining policy backing and taking accountability for other roles. Other forms of support were familial.

[Leadership] can be a lonely place. [...] You need people around you that you can absolutely trust. Sometimes you're going to make very tough decisions on your own. [...] You can do much more when you build teams that can also take responsibility and be accountable for what they do³⁵.

Party and parliamentary relationships are a key component to building a 'support system' for MSPs. For many women, building friendships was significant to building a network in the parliament. Indeed, one election, a cohort of newly elected women formed a friendship group that several interviewees placed themselves in and spoke of its importance.

When we got into parliament, a group of us that were friendly, around five of us, made a really conscious effort to support each other and almost physically be there. So, when one of the groups was making a speech or had something to do to actually physically be around them, but also share information and really, actively help and promote each other. [...] We talk a lot and help each other out³⁶.

Another woman from the same group echoed the value of this support, detailing that the group of women were all elected at the same time and were of a similar age and therefore shared a common experience. She briefly reflected on friendships with male colleagues but emphasised greater bonds with other women. The welcoming of the wider party also contributed to a sense of belonging within politics.

The [party] is a good group, it is a great bunch of people and they are really friendly so I didn't really feel like I was an outsider. [...] In that intake there was an awful lot of women who were around my age, who were all entering parliament at the same time [...] You kind of coalesce together and become quite a strong team, so I certainly would say that I made some quite supportive relationships with some of my

³⁵ Interview 1; woman.

³⁶ Interview 16; woman.

female, and male, but mainly my female colleagues at that point which is still going now nearly four years later. [...] They are good friends and colleagues that can give you valuable feedback and criticism when you need it.

We all support each other and help each other, go and talk to each other, so it's a really good supportive group which is really helpful³⁷.

In contrast, parliamentary friendships were not a feature of political life that men discussed (see Appendix 4 for further observation on women's parliamentary friendships).

5.3. Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from MSPs' reflections on their political motivations, election and leadership learning. For some MSPs, leadership learning and political socialisation occurred (oftentimes long) before election to the Scottish Parliament. As this section has shown, there were distinctive commonalities between the motivating factors that contributed to MSPs' leadership trajectories. The most common motivators were either local issues or national political events such as the Independence Referendum. There was an overall sense that MSPs were motivated by the common good, rather than personal or careerist ambition. However, as some MSPs recognised, gender plays a factor in this trajectory. Women MSPs spoke of their reluctance, lack of confidence and passive role in their unsought political ascension. They were often asked to stand by others, whilst men spoke of themselves as more active in their decision to stand for election.

In early devolution, MSPs shared common routes to parliament through professional careers such as teaching and law. However, political-facilitating jobs have become a more common prerequisite to becoming an MSP. The interviews show that this avenue had significant benefits for political socialisation and parliamentary know-how. Those without tended to experience less confidence and greater doubt about their abilities; this was further compounded by the perceived gendered experiences of confidence and doubt. Upon entering parliament, the lack of leadership parliamentary training appeared to disproportionately impact women than men. Women were more likely to seek additional training, set up mentorships, and rely on groups of other women for friendship and support in parliamentary tasks.

As noted, these reflections will inform the discussion chapter (Chapter Eight) that ties the conclusions together through answering the research questions and making contributions

³⁷ Interview 3; woman.

to existing literature. The interviews took a chronologically storied format, and thus the following chapter presents the next stage in MSPs' political trajectories – leading in the parliament.

Chapter Six: Legitimising Power: Leadership Capital and Expectations

The previous chapter explored the ways in which MSPs come to be parliamentarians, from initial motivations, party socialisation and leadership training. Having illustrated entry to the political field and the different avenues that MSPs took to be elected, I now turn to look at how MSPs identify their leadership styles, and how they develop leadership behaviours that are legitimised and valued in the parliament. Respondents further offer reflections on the gendered expectations placed on them, and their experiences of promotion and policy influence. This chapter further demonstrates that different leadership capitals are valued depending on political context.

6.1. Leadership Identities, Expectations and Styles

6.1.1. Interpreting Political Leadership Roles

In order to explore understandings of political leadership and how it is recognised in the parliament, MSPs were asked to define political leadership. A recurring theme throughout interviews was the denial of leadership. In many cases, MSPs did not view themselves as leaders due to the party leadership structures in the parliament. As a result, whilst several respondents mentioned the importance of party leaders in their definitions of leadership, others recognised the nuanced leadership behaviours and responsibilities that are central to the role of MSPs of all parties and positions such as ‘giving people in the community a voice’³⁸. Indeed, MSPs leadership roles are multiple and exist across different political fields including the constituencies and the parliament.

The majority of respondents emphasised the importance of their constituency in the role as ‘constituency leaders’ (Convery and Parker, 2020). A key role of political leaders in the Scottish Parliament is to represent their constituencies. It was commonly recognised that MSPs would not be in their political positions without the support of their constituency; ‘I’ve got 80,000 bosses, I’ve got to keep them all happy’³⁹. For another MSP, she recognised her constituents as part of her team.

Leadership is not just about taking a stand, it is also about listening to what people are telling you, so in a way you are dependent on your constituents as part of your team to tell you what’s going on on the ground so that you can then represent them.

³⁸ Interview 24; man.

³⁹ Interview 27; man.

The leadership bit is about using the expertise and skills around you as much as anything else⁴⁰.

Your office has power, and you need to use that for the people you represent; they need to be able to use it for their issues. I am first and foremost a constituency MSP and proud of it. You know, a lot of my colleagues say, 'oh constituency work, it doesn't matter', it absolutely does. It absolutely does⁴¹.

For many, the parliament is geographically far removed from their constituency. As such, the way they interpreted their role as leaders was to act as a bridge between their constituents and the parliament by bringing highly localised issues that affect their constituencies to the parliament, such as hospital or park closures.

*I work to **bridge** the distance by bringing what the parliament decides to a local level and localising it, and likewise by bringing their cases into the parliament but if don't bridge that gap it can seem as far away as London for some⁴².*

*I want people to feel a sense of **connection** with the parliament. I think that's really important and I think it's easy for that not to happen if you live very far away from it and you don't think you're ever likely to be in the building. [...] I guess one of the things I do is communicate a lot with people at home and I try to take that communication into the chamber so that they can hear their own voice⁴³.*

*I was told 'you rise with your class, not out of it'. To me, that is a part of leadership; it's about keeping in contact with the people you are seeking to **emancipate**⁴⁴.*

Elaborating on this point, one respondent spoke of her 'clever' use of parliamentary processes that are available to MSPs to promote local constituency issues. This is a skill that she has developed upon recognising the pattern of questions asked during FMQs. By asking constituency-specific questions, she demonstrates care for her constituents and the community.

[It's] just clever use of the chamber. I don't know why my colleagues aren't fighting me every week to get into FMQs, but they're not. I ask and I get the questions, so I'll keep asking. You learn that actually raising a really party-political point, I'm not going to get picked, but a constituency case that illustrates a national point that is of interest, I will get picked. So, I might get picked over somebody they know will do a 'does Nicola Sturgeon agree with me that I'm a wonderful person?' I mean it doesn't advance the parliament's reputation at all. So, I like to think I've learned to be a much better politician for my constituents and therefore a much more effective politician in parliament but when I first started, I wouldn't say I had that degree of knowledge. I think you build that up over time⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ Interview 7; woman.

⁴¹ Interview 6; woman.

⁴² Interview 5; woman.

⁴³ Interview 8; woman.

⁴⁴ Interview 18; man.

⁴⁵ Interview 6; woman.

Being part of their local community was a primary leadership tenet for MSPs. Reflecting on leadership expectations between the parliament and constituency, one respondent said that she had been described as scary within the parliament. She contrasted this description with being 'one of the gang' in her constituency, demonstrating the different leadership expectations between the two political settings.

*I'm told I'm scary at times in here [the parliament], I don't get that in my constituency. That's why I'm wondering if there might be a difference [between the parliament and my constituency]. I mean with the local party, I'm just **one of the gang** really. Maybe that's leadership in itself, Laura, I've never really thought about that⁴⁶.*

Several MSPs emphasised the importance of being available and recognisable in their community. This extends the sentiment felt of being part of the community that they represent and the 'privilege' that accompanies that.

*I want to be an MSP that people can walk up to. It comes with its challenges; if you're going around the supermarket on a Saturday [...] people stop me and say 'I know you're doing your messages but...'. So I walk around with a post-it note [so I remember what people say]. I like that because it's a privilege to represent people so you should make yourself **available**. People will make appointments, people will invite other people to their homes, others will stop you in the street because they know you're out and about. It's usually low-level stuff but people love seeing me; they love the fact that you're in their place⁴⁷.*

This contrasts understandings of the gendered division of labour in constituency work. In gender and politics literature there is evidence that there is a gendered division of labour in parliamentary duties (Smrek, 2020). This is particularly in regard to constituency and regional casework where women are seen to do more. One woman MSP echoed this notion, stating that she has observed women engaging in casework more than men.

There's a difference between women and men's leadership, without being too generalising, I think women get much more involved in the constituency. [Male MSP] has said to me many a time 'oh I don't do constituency work'⁴⁸.

However, several men spoke of being an MSP as a caring role, comparing it to that of a social worker. Noting the importance of engaging with their community and constituency work, one respondent said that MSPs are often the last point of contact for people that are facing systemic and societal issues.

I mean you are talking to people who have come to you possibly as the last hope. They may have been through the system, and the system didn't work for them and sometimes that's because the system is flawed. Sometimes it's because they have

⁴⁶ Interview 4; woman.

⁴⁷ Interview 6; woman.

⁴⁸ Interview 4; woman.

not really been very good at engaging or because they haven't got the skills to do so. So, I think that I think there is an element of being a social worker⁴⁹.

Another MSP emphasised that this caring role is heightened in areas with higher levels of socioeconomic deprivation. Having stood in multiple elections and areas, this respondent reflected on the difference in role between two constituencies. His experience highlights that leadership is dependent on context.

There's almost a sense in which in [constituency] you would be a social worker. I mean, people come to you with their problems, and you would, would help them to access, you know, the official or the resource or the capability they need that to kind of take that forward⁵⁰.

Further definitions of leadership focused on leadership within the parliament and parties. These are reminiscent of wider understandings of leadership, rather than everyday practices that MSPs engage in. As such, those in more senior positions are responsible for role modelling and creating vision among followers.

Each of our [parties] have a leader who leads the group who gives vision and purpose to that. But I think there is leadership in other ways, you can have leadership from the back benches. There are some people who have a real interest and a real passion and that can give leadership as well⁵¹.

I think the First Minister has done a phenomenal job in terms of paving the way. [...] She's shown lots of other women and girls, and boys as well, that it doesn't matter who you are or what your background is that you should emulate the top job and hopefully with the kind of change that we're seeing that's a lot more value-based kind of country that underpins kindness, wellbeing, respect, dignity, all these things that we can start to have a positive impact on our politics⁵².

Party leaders identified their own leadership in the context of the political climate. The political landscape acts as a backdrop for political leadership. Respondents expressed that this can place limitations on leadership, depending on whether the political context lends itself to their leadership intentions.

In terms of my own leadership of the party, I think you can only ever see that in the context of the time. Leaderships are defined by what they have to deal with. My leadership was almost entirely shaped by the referendum. [...] The bigger picture is so important. A lot of the things you I wanted to put in place as a leader couldn't really be dealt with [because of the Referendum]⁵³.

⁴⁹ Interview 27; man.

⁵⁰ Interview 29; man.

⁵¹ Interview 17; man.

⁵² Interview 2; woman.

⁵³ Interview 1; woman.

6.1.2. Developing Leadership Styles: Agency vs. Osmosis

Developing political leadership styles occurred differently for MSPs. The majority of MSP described their leadership styles as collegiate and inclusive, describing leadership skills that include decisiveness, a good listener, and an effective communicator.

It varies with every person because in a way there is no [leadership] training. I suppose people come with their own leadership style⁵⁴.

*My own personal style is of a more **collective** style of leadership. I don't like individualistic and charismatic leadership. Charisma is a value asset but it's not the key to leadership. I much prefer people who are **sympathetic, empathetic**, who **listen, include people**, and are rational. I think the parliament itself is a very inclusive place and operates on those terms⁵⁵.*

MSPs occupy a unique vantage point from which they have observed different iterations of leadership styles over the duration of the parliament. MSPs from all political parties identified the First Minister and party leaders as critical actors that set the tone for leadership in the parliament. Thus, importance was attributed to their leadership styles.

[Sturgeon] is certainly a role model for me. I was reading a book [and it] was talking about the 'stereotype threat', apparently the only time it doesn't apply is if there is a more senior woman than you, doing the job and doing it well, and that kind of calms the stereotype threat. Obviously if I stand up in the chamber, and let's say it's an opposition debate against the Tories. Nearly all the Tories are male and they're all standing there, you do kind of feel that 'well, what does a politician look like?' Male, maybe an older man, whereas if you've got someone like Nicola to look up to, I think that does calm that down because you think 'well, it's fine, the best person in politics is her and she's female'. It does kind of give that you that assurance which I think is really helpful⁵⁶.

*I think [redacted] style was very masculine. She just replicated a very **traditional, masculine** version of what it means to be strong, and it wasn't my style. I think quite often mine would have been the opposite of that. I don't think [redacted] was very good, or very keen at trying to demonstrate **empathy** and I think that's a really strong aspect of leadership, a very important one, to be able to understand and relate to people before you seek to represent them. [...] I was always struck by how she felt she had to behave that way in order to exert authority within her own party, and that might speak to what it's like to be woman within the [party] or it might just be how she is and how she wanted to be but I always thought that was very, very different. Whereas I think [redacted] managed to do both, to be empathetic, and also to be **strong**⁵⁷.*

⁵⁴ Interview 7; woman.

⁵⁵ Interview 25; man.

⁵⁶ Interview 3; woman.

⁵⁷ Interview 18; woman.

*I could answer for the qualities that I think political leaders ought to have, but that's probably very different from the qualities that genuinely lead to success. I mean, if we look at some of the most impactful politicians in this country, and around the world at the moment, you know, **integrity, attention to detail, honesty**, are not the most high-profile characteristics that we would recognise, I think. The **collective** approach, the **collegiate** approach to leadership, isn't the dominant model either. You have this kind of big man figure approach to leadership, and I regret to say it remains very successful. You know, I would love to think that we could get to a point where someone who asks the electorate for power in order to share it more equitably, rather than to hoard it, would be seen as something more successful⁵⁸.*

Leadership, particularly party leadership, is seen by some MSPs as an avenue to transform politics. One MSP said that he sought to be elected as a party leader as a means to challenge aggressive performances of leadership with a softer approach. He sought to change the confrontational status quo and recognised his leadership style as offering an alternative. This approach places emphasis on the role of the party leader.

*I've always been **ambitious** but just ambitious with others in the sense of, you know, I don't automatically think of myself as the best person to lead but sometimes you look around you and actually think, well you do need to step up because I can see the weaknesses and why others wouldn't work. And that was definitely the case both times I stood [for party leader]. I was particularly anxious about the style of leader we had there. I didn't want more confrontation. People measure leaders by how well they perform at FMQs. [Redacted] was still in charge, and it was like 'how are you going to take on [redacted]?' [Redacted], for me, epitomises everything that's bad about a leader: arrogant, dominating, bullying, personal. I stood specifically because I didn't think we should [demonstrate the same leadership style as them]. You need a different kind of person⁵⁹.*

Distribution of leadership is another means of affecting change. Rather than attributing significance to one person in a leadership role, one party leader spoke of how their party widely distributed leadership throughout underrepresented wings of the party. This creates greater leadership opportunities for underrepresented groups, whilst challenges dominant leadership approaches; power-sharing was also one of the founding principles of the Scottish Parliament (Scottish Parliament, 2023).

*We've had that tradition of kind of **collaborative** approaches to leadership. I think we have tried to use leadership in a way that gives a platform to others within the party, like the [youth wing, women's wing and LGBTQI+ wing] of the party] to try to demonstrate that the type of people who find it easier to get onto a path towards a position called leadership, are not the only, or the most important, voices in a political party⁶⁰.*

⁵⁸ Interview 28; man.

⁵⁹ Interview 15; man.

⁶⁰ Interview 28; man.

I'm really hands-off. I'm not a micro-manager; I like to say 'these are the outcomes I'd like to see' and then I like to let other people find their way to deliver that because that then gives them ownership and gives them meaning in their work as well⁶¹.

MSPs were asked to share others' leadership styles that they had observed within the parliament. MSPs mentioned the positive and negative leadership behaviours that they had witnessed. Indeed, almost all negative leadership behaviours cited were those typically aligned with masculine forms of leadership and including descriptions such as 'aggressive', 'bullying', 'controlling'.

I never thought [redacted] was a very nice individual but he held sway over his party in a way that was truly quite astonishing. He was a better 'new Labour' than new Labour if I could put it that way. The control of the party was extraordinary, there was no one setting foot outside particular boundaries. Nobody criticised him. Nobody talked about succession to him⁶².

I know that some ministers, you know, they shout at staff and chuck them out [of meetings] and I'm not like that. I don't think you get the best out of people if you shout at them⁶³.

The role of others' leadership behaviours can impact on the ways in which MSPs lead, particularly party leaders. For party leaders, FMQs dominate their political agenda and how they respond to other party leaders is a central focal point of their leadership. One MSP emphasised how this was particularly challenging when faced with aggressive, masculine forms of political behaviour.

*This guy is a big figure, a pretty tough character [and it was] my job was really to present myself like I'm not frightened of this. I've got an argument that is equally as strong, in fact, my job is to poke a stick at this guy. There was a very important role there which was about **confidence** and specifically how you dealt with [redacted] in FMQs. It was about **humour** and kind of getting under what that **great statesman** had to say, have a dig at him and have the right to do that. Turn people against him or kind of win that argument with people as well⁶⁴.*

*It was very obvious that it was 'my way or the highway', 'I'm not having the nonsense that we had under [redacted] lack of confidence'. People got deselected, and that's something about leadership discipline and that leader is very strong. In fact, I challenged him at one point. I said to him very early on; I said 'you've got to loosen the strings a little bit on your committee members. They are so disciplined that they are not able to do their job'. He got serious with me; he was just enraged by that. [...] He was quite a **demagogic** figure I think and had that thing because there was this [political] goal and because he carried so much on the back of his own personality, he was a huge figure⁶⁵.*

⁶¹ Interview 3; woman.

⁶² Interview 6; woman.

⁶³ Interview 3; woman.

⁶⁴ Interview 1; woman.

⁶⁵ Interview 1; woman.

These reflections highlight the role of party leaders and the ways in which their leadership behaviours are reflective of the broader political field.

Several discussions with MSPs challenged assumptions that political leaders inherently are confident, extroverted, and self-assured. Some respondents experienced a lack of confidence and felt as though they lacked necessary political skills.

I'm not going to say that I didn't find speaking in the chamber extremely difficult, because I did. I don't think I was the only one. It was always a great disappointment to me that I lost, because I think if I'd actually managed to get myself elected for a second term, I would find a lot of things a lot more, a lot more straightforward, because I could have developed experience and confidence. [...] There were some people who were very clearly powerful performers within the chamber. I mean, [redacted] for example. Very strong performer. She had a level of gravitas that a lot of other people quite simply lack. I mean, there were a lot of other very strong women, [...] there were people within the Parliament and the chamber who were just very strong performers. I mean, politicians by nature are not shrinking violets. And I mean, if you are, you're just not going to go into politics, and I mean politics, I think it can be a pretty tough sort of thing⁶⁶.

*[Redacted] went from someone who was very **introverted**, so I have an admiration for what she does. She is one of nature's introverts so it must take a huge amount out of her, so I have respect for what she has done and how she operates⁶⁷.*

This section has demonstrated the ways in which leadership styles are developed in the parliament in the absence of parliamentary leadership training. MSPs respond to the leadership behaviours that are valued in the parliament and challenge those that are conflicting with perceived leadership ideals. Indeed, reflections have highlighted that MSPs do not necessarily arrive to parliament with the leadership skills and styles and rely on leadership role models.

6.1.3. Gendered Expectations of Leaders

I was expected to wear dresses. That was the big shocker and do you know, I fell for it as well. I don't even know why. [...] I was never that bothered about [my appearance] but you do have to care when you have to do regular telly, you just do because people will comment on how you look before they'll comment on what you've said. So, if you can neutralise the how you look bit, you can get on to what matters with your words. So, I would wear a lot of dark suits, block colour tops, and everybody was like 'you can look a lot better than that'. The boys would say that to

⁶⁶ Interview 11; woman.

⁶⁷ Interview 6; woman.

me, but then I would get sent away with some older women to have it sorted. I was taken for a stylist session in London and bought a whole new wardrobe; I had my hair done. I hadn't worn dresses since I was three years old. [...] They had clearly had meetings without me, the male advisors and the female senior folk that had been brought in, and they decided that they were going to make a concerted effort to improve my looks, so to speak. I came away with a grand worth of new clothes and suits, largely dresses and shoes and was told like 'wear this and people won't comment on how you look anymore', this argument about just naturalising it [my appearance], just take it out of the equation. And that's what they did. And the thing about me being in heels was once I was in heels, I was substantially taller than [redacted]. So that was perceived to matter, because then I would look stronger⁶⁸.

A former party leader went into significant detail about how her appearance was managed by her party. Internal conversations were had without her knowledge after she tried to adopt a uniform for the same reasons mentioned by women parliamentarians globally, to neutralise it. Senior staff within her team colluded to 'improve' her appearance by sending her to stylist sessions, which appears to conflict with her sense of agency. She was encouraged to wear more feminine clothing, although contrastingly the respondent was also encouraged to wear heels to appear taller in stature and 'stronger' which alludes to traditional masculine leadership ideals and reflects the double bind that women leaders experience. Others in her party perceived that if she was taller than her political opponents that would give her a leadership advantage. Another MSP, elected later, spoke of a similar experience where she attempted to divert attention and public comment on her appearance by appearing more feminine. Both experienced a shift in a 'need' to care more for their appearance as politicians than in their previous roles.

*I'm quite a **relaxed** and **informal** person, I never really wore makeup. I started to wear makeup. I started to dye my hair; just take care of my presentation a bit more. I think that's about my confidence rather than looking a certain way for other people and it's also partly about making my appearance **less 'pass comment-able'**. It just makes it less of an issue. So, yes, I have changed superficially⁶⁹.*

The focus on women's appearance has received enduring attention throughout parliamentary sessions since 1999, however it appears to have worsened over time. One MSP noted that there are additional pressures on younger women, or women that are elected now, compared to the earlier days of parliament.

When I look back to 99, we were such a mix. The women were such a mix and everyone was tidy and neat but it was quite different from now. It seems to me there is just a lot of pressure on young women to look perfect. It might simply just be a generation thing. I don't know, maybe there is seriously something going wrong if you can't just up and you don't wear the highest heels and the brightest make up. I don't know, maybe I'm just very old and looking at it in a different way. It feels a bit...

⁶⁸ Interview 18; woman.

⁶⁹ Interview 6; woman.

I think there is stress on some of these young women and there's not on the men. The men just need to be tidy. But that's maybe just a generational thing as well⁷⁰.

Contrastingly, there were no reflections from men MSPs interviewed that they changed any physical aspects of themselves, thus emphasising the disproportionate and gendered expectations on women leaders within traditionally masculine leadership ideals. Gendered expectations of leadership were grouped by two categories: behaviour and appearance. One respondent said that she felt an expectation that she had to be aggressive in her role and actively resisted adopting such behaviours. She emphasised that this would be inauthentic, and that she was elected on the basis of her authenticity.

*I think unfortunately that there is still a feeling that you need to be quite **aggressive** which I don't think fits me. [...] [For] me personally, it's about making sure that I don't lose too much of myself because I don't want to be someone that is aggressive because that's not me. I guess that's not authentic, and people want people to be authentic when they elect them. You don't want to have to end up changing yourself to fit in with the system and I think that if the system requires you to be aggressive then probably the system is wrong⁷¹.*

A number of women who placed emphasis on being '**thick skinned**' and '**not a shrinking violet**⁷². These were phrases that were commonly used by women elected in early devolution and inferred that there were expectations on them to act as such. Some women MSPs explicitly labelled their leadership style as feminist. Yet, this respondent expressed how she was influenced by traditionally masculine styles of leadership, suggesting that leadership styles are not binary and a hybrid combination of feminist and macho.

*I think the leadership within [party] was quite **macho**, and a lot, myself included I would say, were influenced by that. That's okay, you don't get only one kind of **feminist** leadership. I used to joke and say that a feminist approach to leadership isn't about getting [party leader] and [party leader] and me around a flipchart and say 'let's see what we can agree on sisters'. That's not what feminist politics is. Feminist politics can be strong, can be passionate, can be divergent⁷³.*

*My reputation would have been that I was feisty. That was always the word that was used for me, was **feisty and assertive**. So, I did develop an assertive leadership style and led from the front, you know. Assertive, I would say. Other people would say I was too feisty, but that was an external kind of thing. [...] This was just how I guided myself into the job. And politics is quite a tough culture. Scottish politics is quite a **tough culture**, so you have to stand your ground, and I always felt like I had to stand my ground for other women because if I get swept aside, you know, women*

⁷⁰ Interview 1; woman.

⁷¹ Interview 2; woman.

⁷² Interview 7; woman.

⁷³ Interview 9; woman.

would get swept aside. It wasn't just me, a lot of us felt that way, so I absolutely had to **fight my corner**⁷⁴.

This form of gender hybridity in leadership style was also spoken about by a respondent who reflected on the ways in which he actively manages his masculinity and has viewed other men in the parliament also doing so to varying degrees of success. Thus, he suggests that men either emphasise their masculinity and adopt traditional forms of leadership or mediate that through more traditionally feminine forms of leadership. However, this mediation and resultant leadership style is not always valued.

*I think there is a kind of choice, you know, if you're a man and a leader. You can kind of make a virtue of that, as it were, it's not really a virtue, but you can play on that with a very macho style of leadership. Donald Trump is an extreme of that. Boris Johnson, I think, is as well but with a somewhat different background. [...] They are both extremes of that style. I suppose for other male leaders, you can try to almost to run **counter to your masculinity**. So other leaders that I have seen have tried to not lead in a macho way and be much more empathetic to women and sensitive to gender issues and use their own style to be less macho. I suppose [party leader] was an example of that. [Party leader] could be... Well, he's a man like the rest of us but unlike the likes of Trump and Boris Johnson, he was conscious of the dangers of machismo in leadership. He would at least be thinking about the style of leadership he was exercising and the degree to which was including or excluding women from his team. So, I suppose that would probably be seen as a softer style of leadership. And as I was saying to you, the likes of Alasdair Jack respecting and including people, I think that is the more effective approach, but it does not always get you the plaudits of leadership, a **softer** or more **collegiate** style⁷⁵.*

*I think I'm quite an **informal** person. I think that has helped me over the years to have good quality groups of people around me and have us stick together in bad times as well as good. I think sometimes more traditional, political, or even maybe managerial styles I've found are difficult to work with and would be more obvious in terms of men finding it difficult to work with because I'm more informal and less formal. [...] It's helped me work better with women almost all my life than most of my contemporaries. I think I've had a good working relationship with most of the women I've worked with over the years, partly because my style is not as good as traditional and, and exclusive, as perhaps may have been the case with others⁷⁶.*

Overall, this section has demonstrated the ways in which MSPs employ gendered strategies to meet and challenge gendered leadership expectations. However, the reflections suggest that women are expected to exhibit more masculine behavioural styles, whilst appearing more feminine physically. Conversely, men experienced mitigated against masculine

⁷⁴ Interview 9; woman.

⁷⁵ Interview 15; man.

⁷⁶ Interview 30; man.

leadership behaviours and adopted softer leadership behaviours that are more commonly associated with women's leadership.

6.2. Influence, Promotion and Limitations

6.2.1. Promotion in Parliament: Duty vs Aspiration

Promotion in the parliament was explored with interviewees from different vantage points – those whose role was to promote and those that had been promoted. Promotion to senior leadership roles, such as party spokespeople, junior ministers and Cabinet secretaries is at the discretion of party leaders; 'these things are the gift of your leader'⁷⁷. Party leaders face competing priorities when promoting, including the extent to which their Cabinet or shadow Cabinet is gender balanced. Gender-balanced Cabinets have been appointed since 2014 and are now regarded as an institutional norm in the Scottish Parliament (Scottish Parliament, 2023). However, promotion remains the discretion of party leaders. A former First Minister discussed these competing priorities that involved gender-balancing, which was not achieved, and ensuring a cohesive group. He further noted that he experienced internal resistance to follow 'natural temptation'⁷⁸ to promote (male) friends and colleagues. Instead, he went on to say that he promoted men and women based on 'experience and judgement'.

[When I appointed my Cabinet] I wanted to send certain signals about cohesion and focus on some even basic principles of ministerial office and so there were quite a few changes in my first Cabinet. I wasn't only thinking about gender balance, I was thinking about other things as well, so it was a mixture of issues helping me make my decision. I think, for a male politician, to resist what might be a natural temptation to appoint those that socially, you know, you're closer to because you spend more time with people of your own gender. I was always kind of conscious of that⁷⁹.

For others, appointing a gender-balanced Cabinet was not an active decision, it was ingrained in the fabric of their personal politics and their party; 'that's just my politics, from the beginning when I joined the [party] is when I learned about feminism really'⁸⁰. Another party leader elaborated that she made deliberate decisions to appoint men and women to roles that are traditionally seen to be gendered roles.

[It's] in my blood. [...] When I set up my first shadow Cabinet, it was an absolute point of principle to make my economy spokesperson and my finance spokesperson

⁷⁷ Interview 24; man.

⁷⁸ Interview 30; man.

⁷⁹ Interview 30; man.

⁸⁰ Interview 7; woman.

*a woman because there had never been women before that point, and my health spokesperson and my education spokesperson were men. It turned out those people I picked were suited to those jobs anyway, but there was a deliberate point being made there about this idea of gendered issues*⁸¹.

However, when exploring promotion through the experience of those that are selected for promotion, the experience differs. This contrasts another MSP's experience, from a different party, of gendered promotion appointments to specific portfolios. This suggests that there might be party differences and illustrates the discretion of the party leader to appoint roles. Having worked on the transport portfolio due to personal interest in the sector, she was oftentimes the only woman in meetings. She argued that this is despite more women having lived experience of being more reliant on public transport than men.

*I'm very very aware of transport being a real men's thing. I once went to a [transport meeting] [...] and I was the only woman there. It must have been me and twenty men at least because yeah there's just this thing around transport. I've always said if I were a Cabinet Secretary in here, the portfolio I would go for would be transport. It's so sort of male dominated and I think it's a system that works more for men who are more likely to be driving the car and are more likely to be able to afford to drive the car. Women are more reliant on public transport, so it is really interesting how that has happened*⁸².

The reluctant politician was an enduring feature throughout both men and women's leadership trajectories from selection and election to promotion to senior roles. One MSP that was promoted within her first 18 months in parliament called the promotion 'frightening' because she wanted to 'do a good a job as possible'⁸³. The following quote shows that another MSP reflected on his promotion to Cabinet in the first parliamentary session, having no former political experience due to the newness of the parliament. As such, he attributed his promotion to prior leadership experience within the party as a branch secretary and built a profile.

*I suppose I was thrust into a leadership position quite quickly, and really to my surprise. I think that's an important element of politics that is not always that visible. [...] I was a junior minister that nobody had ever heard of and had no experience in formal politics. I was dropped in at the deep end but a lot of us were in those days because the parliament was completely new. There was quite a lot of the ministerial team that had found themselves there by accident. [...] You had to learn quite quickly and demonstrate quite quickly elements of leadership like building consensus*⁸⁴.

⁸¹ Interview 18; woman.

⁸² Interview 4; woman.

⁸³ Interview 8; woman.

⁸⁴ Interview 15; man.

I was made a minister by [redacted]; I was useful for a couple of years. I was the right person that was needed at that time. I think I would have been the right person to carry on with it, but [redacted] obviously didn't⁸⁵.

For party leaders, ascension to party leadership was often unexpected and unsought. In the case of two-party leaders, they describe their experience in an organic and passive way as something that happened to them, rather than guided by an active ambition or desire. This echoed sentiments felt by MSPs about their elections, which appeared to follow them into promotion.

I'm not going to pretend that I didn't want to do it [become party leader]. Yeah, I did want to do it, but the opportunity fell into my lap a little bit in the way that wouldn't necessarily have been my expectation in [year]⁸⁶.

The following three reflections on women's experience of party leadership during turbulent times for their parties. As such, they experienced a feeling of duty and expectation placed on them by others. Such experiences suggest that the leaders' ascension to leadership is reminiscent of the 'glass cliff', where women occupy office at a time deemed unattractive or during crises (O'Brien, 2015).

It wasn't the peak of my ambition to be leader of the [party]. It was a sense of duty, honestly a sense of duty in a difficult time. I wasn't thinking 'oh, I can't promote that person because they might want to be leader', if they want to be leader, they can be leader, I don't care⁸⁷.

I should say after the [redacted], [redacted] quits, [redacted] becomes leader, and I put my name forward to become deputy. [Redacted] then loses his seat and the whole world, in my world at least, just turned and looked at me. I genuinely never aspired to be the leader of the [party]. I aspired to be deputy leader, those were my skill sets: teamwork, building movements, bringing people, running campaigns. I never aspired to be the leader but then suddenly I was⁸⁸.

She knows I think this, but I think [redacted] opportunity came too early. She was too young, and she took on leadership [of the party] at a tremendously difficult time and I think she did a tremendous job⁸⁹.

Contrastingly, for one party leader, his unsuccessful bid to become First Minister was met with a sense of failure. There was an expectation from others for him to be First Minister, increase party support and ultimately make societal change.

Everyone expected me to be First Minister, so in my head, in a way, my leadership has been defined by failure. I'm not going to throw myself off a bridge or anything, but if I'm honest, I did [fail]. What's the purpose of leadership? What's the purpose

⁸⁵ Interview 5; woman.

⁸⁶ Interview 19; man.

⁸⁷ Interview 1; woman.

⁸⁸ Interview 18; woman.

⁸⁹ Interview 15; man.

of politics? It's to change the world in the way you think will make it better. I sincerely believe that almost all the politicians in all of the parties, that is what they are trying to do. So, the point of leadership and the point of trying to become First Minister was to change things and I knew so many things that I was trying to do and I didn't get to do them. So, that feels like failure. It doesn't mean I regret it or that I feel terrible about it but yeah, it was failure⁹⁰.

As such, these divergent reflections demonstrate the ways in which leadership is exercised and valued in different political fields, namely the Scottish Parliament and constituencies.

6.2.2. Policy Influence and Intervention

When asked 'what defines/defined your time as a leader in Scottish politics?' the majority of MSPs struggled to answer. After modest long pauses and hesitation, most spoke of a policy intervention. Policy interests often mirrored the same motivating factors that stimulated MSPs' political trajectories and ambition. MSPs spoke of how they become known for having specific policy interests that become their 'agenda' and 'modus operandi'⁹¹, oftentimes informed by previous careers where they have built a knowledge base from which to influence legislation, as mentioned in Chapter Five. One example of this is one MSPs' experience in the circular economy and going into influencing policy around sustainability. Another aligned her ministerial role with her knowledge from a previous occupation.

I actually thought that I could see why they gave me this job [Government Minister]. I worked for twenty years in mental health and one of the few people in the parliament who knows absolutely the impact that a difficult childhood can have on your way through your life⁹².

Other catalysts for policy invention had more personal foundations. One MSP shared an emotional story where she had an impact on policy that was personally important. Having experienced the recent death of her mother, the interviewee sought to establish a charter for dementia patients' rights. She set up a cross-party group, mostly of women; 'it was the women [as carers] who understood the issue'⁹³, as she recalled many of the women in the chamber had parents that were receiving social care. Crying throughout as she remembered being told her Bill would be incorporated in the National Dementia Strategy, she spoke of this as her proudest time as a political leader that placed importance on collaborative, cross-party working with other women that stemmed from personal motivation.

⁹⁰ Interview 15; man.

⁹¹ Interview 21; man.

⁹² Interview 8; woman.

⁹³ Interview 13; woman.

When prioritising women's expertise, MSPs signified that it is simultaneously important that a balance is struck that does not overburden women. Attempting to achieve greater representation of women can mean that the same women are overworked.

What you would find was that women were actually having to do more work to give the appearance of a party being gender balanced. [...] It did get to a point where I remember sort of quite forcefully saying to the Minister of Parliamentary Business that you need to just tell Special Advisers that we can't have any [women] on this because it's actually not balanced if you've had ten women doing double the work. We need to just and work with that so that we're not breaking the women that we do have and they're not going come back because they're so exhausted you know⁹⁴.

It's important that we get those voices in [women's expertise]. It is harder to get women because women will do the thing where they say 'oh I'm not an expert, I couldn't possibly'... And maybe they're more nervous and they need more support but we need to hear them. I think it's easy to fall back on usual suspects. I think that we need to be careful not to do that all the time⁹⁵.

Several MSPs did not have experience being promoted to senior roles within their parties, rather they were content leading from the backbenches and placed emphasis on policy intervention. For others, they experienced limitations on their ability to lead from other positions in the chamber.

As an opposition MSP, your leadership is a bit more marginal, in terms of the sorts of wins or leadership you can have in terms of getting amendments through. You know that the government sets the agenda for the whole Bill, but there is an opportunity at the margins, if you like to do bits and bobs in terms of leadership on that front⁹⁶.

This section has demonstrated multiple ways in which MSPs influence policy and decision-making. MSPs often use their skills and knowledge from former occupations, whilst others, particularly women, have personal motivations to effect change. The interventions in the parliament were said to define MSPs' leadership, however, the following section explores how challenges to leadership legitimacy is gendered.

6.3. Gendered Challenges to Political Leadership Legitimacy

⁹⁴ Interview 12; woman.

⁹⁵ Interview 2; woman.

⁹⁶ Interview 21; man.

Gendered media critiques on women political leaders can be interpreted as challenges to their political leadership legitimacy, attempting to undermine authority and power. According to MSPs elected during the initial years of the parliament, traditional print media persistently published misogynistic articles about women MSPs' appearance. One MSP recalls a particularly offensive headline that referred to the new cohort of Labour women MSPs as 'Forty, Fat and Frumpy'. Reflecting on this, a former FM spoke of how he witnessed the impact of the media during this time on women MSPs in his party, including how this hindered one woman's leadership progression.

There was one of them who I had a very high regard for, and I wanted as a minister, on my first ministerial team as First Minister. She would have been my automatic choice for a minister. I really wanted her. [She had] a lot of experience, a very strong person in my experience, and she turned down the job because basically those first two years had just knocked her confidence so much she wouldn't. She never served as a minister and I think she would have been a great minister, really good, but her confidence was so knocked. She basically left the parliament after a few years⁹⁷.

Without prompt, most interviewees, both men and women, raised the issue of social media abuse directed towards those in politics. As such women censor their public profile as leaders by actively not tweeting about certain issues or not appearing on TV to mitigate against such gendered abuse.

I think everyone is aware that we are scrutinised a lot. I think what it does is it puts you off wanting to get a higher profile. So, if Question Time rang me up and said 'do you want to go on?' I would really think twice about it because I know that the minute you do that, you get 150 emails in your inbox telling you that you're awful and that you should die. [...] It's this thing about not wanting to put your head above the parapet⁹⁸.

Whilst both men and women MSPs cited that abuse on social media is disproportionately experienced by women, many men discussed the hostility that they faced online surrounding nationalism. MSPs discussed that the independence debate created a hostile political environment that exacerbated toxicity in politics. This contributed to the aggressive and adversarial nature of debate in parliament that some say has worsened over time (see Chapter 7).

One MSP shared that she had experienced physical intimidation on several occasions including when seven people from an activist organisation that opposed a Bill that her committee was attempting to pass attended her constituency surgery and vandalised her office. On another occasion she was followed. She feared for her young family, attributed

⁹⁷ Interview 30; man.

⁹⁸ Interview 3; woman.

blame to herself for entering politics and questioned her political career. This intimidation and act of physical violence had personal impacts and affected her leadership capabilities and desire to lead in this area.

I suppose as a woman, you think, well I signed up to this, but my family didn't. My children get exposed to this. That was a very low point there. Then I got off the train at Central Station and somebody was following me and taking pictures of me. I thought oh my goodness, what am I doing? But anyway, we finally got the legislation through, and I couldn't wait, I'll be honest, to get off the [redacted] committee⁹⁹.

Women MSPs' reflections highlight the gendered impacts of media, social media and physical intimidation. These impacts have consequences not only for women's representation in politics, but their leadership aspirations and political trajectories.

6.4. Conclusion

The role of an MSP is multifaceted and as such, leadership is interpreted differently for MSPs and is legitimised in different ways. Interviews showed that the most significant role for MSPs is to represent their communities and is done so through leadership behaviours such as care, listening, empathising, and representing local issues in the parliamentary space. Most MSPs viewed their role as being the connection, or bridge, between their constituents and the parliament. In the absence of formal leadership training, MSPs predominately learned parliamentary leadership and ways of working through osmosis where MSPs mimic leadership behaviours of others to learn the ways of working, or the 'rules in use' (Lowndes, 2014; 2020).

Gendered differences are present in the findings in relation to the seemingly gendered expectations of leaders. This is particularly evident for women MSPs in their attempts to change their appearances (or have their appearance change for them, as in one example). Women tried to neutralise their appearance by wearing make-up and uniforms to mitigate potential gendered commentary. There were also greater expectations placed on women MSPs to be 'thick-skinned' or 'assertive'. This contrasted men's experiences of lessening their masculinity to appear 'softer'. This highlights the unequal gendered strategies that are employed by MSPs. These gendered strategies also exist for politicians online. Women were more likely to cite social media and physical violence rather than men and were more

⁹⁹ Interview 13; woman.

likely to censor themselves as a result. This has implications for women's leadership promotion and 'not wanting to raise your head above the parapet'¹⁰⁰.

An unexpected, enduring feature of leadership promotion was a sense of duty and reluctance experienced by both men and women in the parliament; both were 'thrust' into leadership roles during times of political instability. This emphasises the nuances in leadership ascension (e.g. policy expertise) and counters the 'glass cliff' phenomenon that women leaders experience. Rather, in the Scottish context, both men and women had a sense of duty rather than ambition. The following chapter situates these findings within the Scottish Parliament by exploring the formal and informal rules of the building.

¹⁰⁰ Interview 3; woman.

Chapter Seven: Political Leadership in a New Field: Gendered Rules of the Game

As the previous findings chapters have demonstrated, context is vital to understandings of political leadership. In Chapter Two, I explored the ways in which the Scottish Parliament was a new institution with a feminist blueprint. Its designers aimed to reflect a new culture of politics and leadership style that was more consensual, less combative, and more progressive. However, as the final findings chapter will illuminate, MSPs expressed mixed perspectives on the ways in which the Scottish Parliament has successfully established itself differently and independently from Westminster. As such, this chapter places emphasis on the cultural rules of the game within the Scottish Parliament and its impacts on political leadership. It highlights how the formal and informal rules of the Scottish Parliament have gendered outcomes and further considers how these workplace rules have changed over time.

7.1. Establishing the Rules of the Game

7.1.1. Reflections on the Early Parliament

Prior to devolution, access to political leadership for those seeking to be involved in formal politics was limited prior to the expansion of political participation that the Scottish Parliament enabled. For some respondents, Westminster was not a viable or desirable option, thus, devolution offered a new more accessible opportunity.

I would never have become a parliamentarian if the Scottish Parliament hadn't come about because of the routes you had to go down at that time. In order to become an MP, you had to be incredibly lucky¹⁰¹.

The big difference was the Scottish Parliament. I remember the first referendum back in 1978; my dad was a very active campaigner in the yes movement, so I was always a big supporter of the Scottish Parliament. The [party] wrote to all its members and asked, 'have you considered being a candidate?' I hadn't really considered Westminster, and so I thought 'well yes, I am interested'¹⁰².

It was just the gender debate, the representation debate [within the devolution referendum] that fired me¹⁰³.

Those that were elected to the Scottish Parliament in its earliest days took great ownership of the parliament and its achievements. MSPs' leadership was distinctly marked by

¹⁰¹ Interview 29; man.

¹⁰² Interview 25; man.

¹⁰³ Interview 4; woman.

establishing the parliament as a legitimate political institution. The architectural design of the parliament was a paramount topic for those elected in 1999 as the build took almost the entirety of the first parliamentary term to complete. The building controversies surrounding the cost dominated media attention during this time and MSPs expressed that they had to justify both the building and themselves as political leaders; ‘the whole of the first parliament [session] was dogged by this building¹⁰⁴’. Having overcome such challenges, there was a distinct narrative throughout interviews with MSPs elected in 1999. They spoke of the Scottish Parliament with pride, belonging and ownership. This is a sentiment that has continued among successive cohorts.

I wasn't naïve, I absolutely knew [of the challenges] but I believed in it [the parliament]. I still do. I believed that we, on behalf of Scotland, had to own this parliament; (gesturing around the room) this is ours¹⁰⁵.

The new MSPs looked to experienced politicians to set the example and provide leadership in the new parliament where a significant number of MSPs did not have formal political training.

You had Donald Dewar whose authority came from his experience in Westminster. He was exceptionally bright. He was an intelligent guy, very thoughtful. He had huge respect way beyond his own party and the interesting thing, I thought, was having kind of being schooled in Westminster, he was a very nice man, very personable on an individual level and he had to learn to deal with a very new institution and there was a lot of new people that had not been elected representatives. I think he found that very challenging¹⁰⁶.

We were fortunate that we had two very good Presiding Officers ... [Party leader] suffered from not having past parliamentary experience¹⁰⁷.

7.1.2. Early Opportunities for Gender Equality

Establishing new rules for the new institution, the Scottish Parliament, was a task for new MSPs. Recognising the scale of potential, it was an opportunity for MSPs to embed formal and informal rules that enhanced and encouraged inclusion.

I remember arriving here and thinking this is great, the potential is enormous, what are you going to do? [...] We brought professional experience in and actually half of us were women, certainly in the [party]. That was a bit transformational; plus, it was a new institution so you could start to develop your own customs, rather than

¹⁰⁴ Interview 23; man.

¹⁰⁵ Interview 5; woman.

¹⁰⁶ Interview 1; woman.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 23; man.

adopting customs from other places. So, I remember distinctly being slightly in awe¹⁰⁸.

I think women have had to work harder than men to get here, and I think sometimes we have to continue to work harder because people are... At the very beginning of the parliament journalists were very critical of the female MSPs, partly because some of our male colleagues from other parties started having a go at some of the women. The most joyful thing at the time [was when] two MSPs had a go at some of the [party] women on the backbenches and they were quickly put back in their place by the SNP women which I thought was really fabulous. There are moments when the women in the parliament come together for each other, and that's really interesting¹⁰⁹.

Men have got a habit of referencing each other in discussions. Men will always say 'as Ed said' or 'as Douglas said' or you know, whoever said, 'Ivan said'. Women don't do that and we as women need to learn how to do that. So, when you're coming in [to speak] you'd always say 'as Yvette said', 'as Margaret said'. So, it was interesting, that kind of change in cultural behaviour¹¹⁰.

In Chapter Five, building networks of support and the significance of women's parliamentary friendships was highlighted. However, other forms of support for women are more nuanced, concerning parliamentary cultural norms, and less reliant on relationships. Instead, women's support structures stemmed from cross-party respect and mutual understanding of experience. These nuanced exchanges and behaviours signal that women were attempting to influence the informal rules within the parliament to advance gender equality beyond the formalised parliamentary rules in use.

7.1.3. The Parliamentary Building: An Inclusive Space?

There were mixed opinions on the successfulness of the parliament's creation of a collegiate, consensus-driven political workplace. MSPs emphasised that the parliament can be a combative political arena and that the divisiveness of Scottish politics contributes to antagonistic exchanges in the debating chamber. However, this was not always seen as a negative outcome.

It's definitely not as combative as Westminster but it can be combative. I actually like that; I don't want to sit there and you know... I mean it's probably good for democracy. You get into politics because you feel strongly about things and so I have no problem with the chamber being noisy and people shouting at people and people getting quite heated. That's fine, maybe not all the time but in some cases, yeah¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁸ Interview 6; woman.

¹⁰⁹ Interview 6; woman.

¹¹⁰ Interview 9; woman.

¹¹¹ Interview 3; woman.

As discussed in relation to leadership behaviours, different parties and people in parliament can shift the tone of debate that reflect wider political debates.

When I joined in the third parliament there was a different culture among opposition parties, particularly among the [party] who had been pro-devolution and had respect for the [Scottish Parliament] institution. The newer intake has changed that dynamic. [Debate] is much more aggressive and much more personal than it had been before¹¹².

As noted, a few MSPs have both Westminster and Holyrood experience. They offered contrasting experiences between the cultures experienced in between parliaments. Reflecting on her experience at Westminster, one respondent was questioned about her belonging within the parliament estate. This speaks to the experience of other women and people of colour at Westminster (Puwar, 2004). She notes that the Scottish Parliament is a nice place to work for all staff, not just for those elected, suggesting that the parliamentary space is not exclusive based on hierarchies.

We've done really well. It's a nice atmosphere and it comes right across from security staff through to the cleaning staff. When I hear stories about Westminster, how folk have got to get out a lift if an MP gets in it. It's years since I've been because I hated going and I was down for something, can't remember what, and I was in the canteen and there was a big queue and I thought 'oh that counter is empty', so I went over to this counter and they were like 'it's members only' and I was like 'I'm a Member of the Scottish Parliament' and she was like 'Members of the House'¹¹³.

Another MSPs spoke of the ways in which the Scottish Parliament evaded production of the 'old boys' network' due to the parliamentary infrastructure and the design of the building. He reflected on social opportunities with both men and women.

I think the fact that most people went home at night, rather than lived away from home the way they do in London, and most people did not hang around in the building at night for a drink, or a meal or whatever, it created a very different culture from the Westminster sort of club culture. That definitely changes the balance of social interaction between men and women. There is still an element in Westminster culture of the boozy, sitting around the dinner table, go to the bar culture amongst the staff and the politicians, and while that's not all male preserve as it once would have been. It doesn't take much searching to look around the building and see that it's mostly male preserve. These atmospheres definitely plead to the alpha males. We had a group of MSPs that I ate with on a Wednesday night. I think two-thirds, or three-quarters, of that group were women and that would have been an unusual thing at Westminster obviously¹¹⁴.

¹¹² Interview 14; woman.

¹¹³ Interview 4; woman.

¹¹⁴ Interview 30; man.

Other positive reflections on the parliament showed the parliament's retention of its founding principles and commitment to openness. The following quotes allude to its openness and transparency.

It's lovely. I've always found it to be a really nice working environment. It's a beautiful building. I really think it's a privilege to work there really¹¹⁵.

I think I've been incredibly lucky, and I feel like it's a very can-do, open, welcoming place and I hope anybody coming into it would feel the same. Debate can get heated at times but with the vast majority of colleagues I would go into the side room off the chamber and have a cup of tea, even if we have just totally diverged policy¹¹⁶.

Numerous stakeholders and lobbyists will tell me that there is no comparison between how accessible politicians are at the Scottish Parliament compared to Westminster. There's just no comparison between the two. We are much more accessible and more transparent¹¹⁷.

I had visited once as a visitor and I loved it. I loved that you could just wander in. My husband and I were down here on a weekend away or something I think and we decided to climb Arthur's Seat, we'd never done that before, and just on the way to Arthur's Seat, I thought 'oh I need the loo and we could just pop into the parliament'. I remember I thought 'isn't that amazing, this place is our place' [...] So, my first impression of the parliament was that it was very much a place for us, the people of Scotland¹¹⁸.

Overall, MSPs interviewed largely supported that the Scottish Parliament building is an inclusive and welcoming environment for both men and women and is reflective of its founding principles. However, whilst the positive role of the building can be deemed significant, it should not be overstated due to mixed views on how the political environment is also dependent on those within it. The political conditions such as the divisiveness of debate that was particularly evident in the Scottish Independence Referendum can shift the tone away from inclusivity.

7.1.4. Reflections on the Family Friendly Parliament

Family friendliness was a key aspect of the initial parliamentary blueprint. Discussions had with interviewees about gender and the Scottish Parliament almost always resulted in critique or praise of its family friendliness. MSPs sought to provide their own experience and analysis of the extent to which family friendliness exists. This ranged from experiences giving birth during parliamentary term, breastfeeding, childcare and general work-life balance.

¹¹⁵ Interview 3; woman.

¹¹⁶ Interview 4; woman.

¹¹⁷ Interview 3; woman.

¹¹⁸ Interview 8; woman.

I had to be in parliament about four weeks after giving birth. So, the kind of family-friendly... Maybe it was 5 [weeks], it wasn't much more than that. That really tested the family-friendly [policies] because they didn't know what to do. They hadn't really thought out what you do with a woman MSP who has a child¹¹⁹.

According to another woman who had given birth during the parliamentary session several years later, these prior issues seem to have been rectified, for example there are provisions in place for breastfeeding at work that had not been considered for new parents previously. She had also been able to take maternity leave during the parliamentary term.

[The parliament] is a nice place for kids as well. I've taken my kids in and it's a really bright space that they feel comfortable in. There are rooms to go in to breastfeed if you want to use them. I never even ended up using them, I was quite comfortable to do that within the parliament building¹²⁰.

Throughout the interviews, there are obvious contradictions when discussing the Scottish Parliament and its family friendliness. The following quote encapsulates the contradictions experienced within the parliament in relation to its commitments to family-friendly working conditions. On the one hand, this MSP states that politics, as a vocation, is not family friendly and suggests that it cannot be. Despite having childcare responsibilities, he does not situate his family experience within his analysis of the parliament. Yet, in the same breath, the respondent suggests that the Scottish Parliament, as an organisation, is one of the best to commit to family friendly policies.

Politics is just not family friendly. There's no two ways about it. It's not a family friendly business. Politics goes on anytime, anywhere [...] Politics is all-consuming. It's actually a reflection of modern society. Everyone is working too long, and it infringes on their [personal] lives because of it, and the parliament is no exception. But, if anything, parliament is one of the best organisations for defending family friendly working and our commitment¹²¹.

Most women MSPs that I interviewed were parents and spoke about their families and home lives. As the previous quote illustrates, in contrast, few men spoke of being a parent, instead they spoke of family friendliness from a more detached perspective. Pondering the feasibility of being a parliamentarian with young children another respondent said he would not have stood for election if he had young children, and if he had, childcare would not have been his responsibility, but that of his wife.

I was 40 when I got elected and my children were nearly grown up, they were finishing school. I'm not sure I would have done the job if they had been any younger.

¹¹⁹ Interview 10; woman.

¹²⁰ Interview 2; woman.

¹²¹ Interview 25; man.

Although if I had, if I'm being honest, the pain of that would have fallen onto my wife. I mean that's the truth¹²².

For those with young children, particularly women, interviewees expressed the challenges that they faced due to parliamentary demands on their time and the personal rules that they had in place to achieve a sense of work-life balance. Women went into great detail about the routines and boundaries that they have placed on their time in an attempt to achieve balance.

[My child] was 7 when I was first elected and I have to say if I hadn't been a minister, I would have found it much more difficult. We would get lifted and laid from our house which helped, and I was just very strict about I either put her to bed or taking her to school, so you could have me in between that time but you're not getting me so that I miss everything. [...] So, there were things I missed out on and there were things I refused to compromise on, okay, which is quite interesting. Were there occasions where I thought that this was getting all too difficult? Probably, but you live for recess in some senses because although I would be in the constituency, there's a different pattern to constituency work. You're in at 9 and you're away at 5¹²³.

I think it's tough to keep a work-life balance. [...] I have two young boys so that as well as being an MSP, and as well as being in government, that I'm also mindful that I'm their mum too and that I have the time for them too¹²⁴.

My children are adults now but at the start I missed parents' nights for [redacted] and school concerts. I missed all sorts of stuff. I'm just two hours away, so for the majority of parliamentarians, it's not family friendly. I think the other thing I would say is that it's actually the role itself is not particularly family friendly, and I think in some ways you need to watch that we don't... I'm not sure how you could make something like this family friendly, where you're basically on all the time, public property to work at weekends as well¹²⁵.

Contrasting, another respondent's reflection shows how he does not need to balance both caring responsibilities and his role as an MSP, rather his wife looks after their children which allows him to be in parliament.

My wife takes on a huge responsibility in terms of looking after the kids when I'm not there. If I didn't have that support in place, frankly I couldn't do this job. It's as simple as that. So, it's not that family friendly¹²⁶.

Offering an alternative perspective, another MSP emphasised that because he does not have a family or caring responsibilities, he is able to commit more time to work but is also cognisant of others' caring responsibilities.

I'm single, I don't have a family, I don't have anything even as demanding as a boyfriend. If I'm working a lot, there is no one to complain about it and I don't have

¹²² Interview 15; man.

¹²³ Interview 6; woman.

¹²⁴ Interview 2; woman.

¹²⁵ Interview 12; woman.

¹²⁶ Interview 24; man.

to feel guilty about it. That's not the case for [redacted], she has a family, she has commitments, and even if her family is balancing domestic commitments fairly and equitably, they still exist and I [as her co-worker] recognise that¹²⁷.

Reflections on the family friendliness of the parliament appear to be gendered. Women with children were more likely to depict a 'balancing act' to achieve an effective work-life balance. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to speak about the family friendliness of the parliament more detachedly.

7.2. Evolving Rules of the Game: Opportunities for Change

The final section of this findings chapter reflects on more recent evolutions of the parliamentary workplace that were prompted by two challenges: the Covid-19 pandemic and workplace sexual harassment. My fieldwork took place at a time where the parliament had first responded to the MeToo movement a few years prior. When asked about the changes witnessed over time in the parliament, those that had been elected for a longer time spoke of changes that occurred as a consequence of the MeToo movement.

I think, to an extent it became more of a talking point and an issue. It took up quite a lot of the parliament's time. We got training as a result of that. There was a change in procedures and the parliament issued a survey to staff that raised some really stark issues, but in a way it was quite forced. We've also had high profile cases with former MSPs that have put a spotlight on that. [...] I was maybe naively quite horrified. [...] When the posters started going up a male colleague said to me that it was quite intimidating and it kind of pointed the finger at all of us¹²⁸.

Several MSPs spoke of how the parliament has responded to the MeToo movement, including conducting a staff survey to illuminate prevalence of sexual harassment, sexism and inappropriate behaviour, voluntary parliamentary training and guidance placed around the building on how to receive support (see Appendix 6 for photo). None of the MSPs interviewed said they had experienced or witnessed such behaviour – commonly citing that this was likely to be because they were either an older woman or a man, alluding to that this was more likely to be experienced by younger women. Yet, as the following quote suggests, there are no systems in place for dismissal for inappropriate behaviour that point to an issue in the formal parliamentary rules.

There have been a number of reviews on how we deal with allegations. There are still fundamental issues that don't just apply to Holyrood but apply to many parliaments that relate to management responsibilities that are not the same in other

¹²⁷ Interview 19; man.

¹²⁸ Interview 24; man.

workplaces. We have seen it in high profile examples [...] where somebody was found to have undertaken behaviour that is entirely unacceptable, professionally and politically, and lost their [redacted] role as a result of that. There isn't any way an MSP can be dismissed for, what would be in any other workplace, gross misconduct¹²⁹.

The same MSP went on to discuss the staffing structure that leaves MSP staff vulnerable due to the lack of accountability measures in the parliament.

[MSP staff are managed by MSPs] If there is a problem in the office, there is no one higher up that can take that on. That's one of the things the parliament and the parties have tried to resolve. [...] I think there have been moves towards it but it's an incomplete job. When you get a high-profile incident, whether it's the [redacted] allegations, or the [redacted] situation, the media are all over it. [...] It leaves anyone wanting to make a complaint question whether they want to surrender to a media circus. So yeah, I think there are still big issues to overcome and particular barriers to address some of the abuses of power that inevitably crop up from time to time¹³⁰.

As such, there are clear suggestions to improve parliamentary culture with regard to inappropriate behaviour. Another pivotal moment for parliamentary change was the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the pandemic was not explicitly asked about, it was a feature of several interviews as MSPs reflected on the occurring crisis and the impacts on the parliament and their leadership. The primary focus of conversation was the issue of presenteeism in the parliament and how this has impacts on MSPs' work-life balance. Several MSPs spoke of the benefits they enjoyed working from home.

What I think it has done is show that there are certain parts of the job that we don't need to be face-to-face together for. I hope [the hybrid measures] continue. I hope we don't go back quite to where we were before¹³¹.

Hybrid measures make the parliament more inclusive for everyone and we need to ensure we keep this flexibility, otherwise we continue to risk losing good politicians¹³².

7.3. Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which MSPs operate within the formal and informal rules of the Scottish Parliament. Devolution offered an opportunity to embed feminist change and gender equality, however the extent to which this has been achieved is open to critique, debate and subjectivity. Reflections from MSPs elected in 1999 shows how attempts were made to establish cultural rules that created an inclusive workplace culture.

¹²⁹ Interview 19; man.

¹³⁰ Interview 19; man.

¹³¹ Interview 8; woman.

¹³² Interview 12; woman.

However, in practice, MSPs discussed the ways in which the building cannot enforce consensus and collegiately, rather interactions within the chamber are influenced by wider divisive Scottish politics. As the findings highlighted, the political landscape, alongside the formal and informal rules of the building, present 'gendered conditions' that have implications on political leadership. With reference to the informal and formal rules of the parliament, the working day, physical location, and interactions within the building, create gendered experiences of leadership.

The parliament intended to be a welcoming, inclusive space, and for several MSPs, this has been achieved. However, a key finding is a lack of consensus over the family friendliness of the parliament, emphasising its subjectivity. Women MSPs often emphasised the ways that they attempt to strike a work-life balance that requires significant emotional labour to organise the parliamentary working day whilst balancing caring responsibilities. In contrast, men's narratives alluded to that of the unencumbered worker where attempts were made to un-gender and gender-neutralise the conversation. Others also voiced issue with presenteeism and travel. Looking forward, it is noted that there is opportunity for the parliament to change and adapt to enhance inclusivity and promote its intended principles.

To conclude, the findings chapters have been informed by Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, and field. The following chapter will interrogate these findings by analysing and synthesising them, using the theoretical framing that was established in Chapter Three. This combines Bourdieusian theoretical tools and Feminist Institutionalism (see Figure 4, p.78). Guided by the research questions, it will draw conclusions and make contributions to existing literature on gender and political leadership.

Chapter Eight: Discussion of Findings

The previous three chapters presented the findings from interviews with MSPs and revealed the nuanced, multiple understandings of the everyday leadership practices that MSPs fulfil in their roles. Findings journeyed from MSPs' childhoods, familial background, education, former careers and political motivations that gleaned an understanding of how MSPs came to be political leaders. Conversations then progressed to discussions surrounding developing leadership skills, styles, leadership training, support networks and promotion. Lastly, MSPs reflected on the inner workings of the parliament, the parliamentary building and its family-friendliness. The themes identified throughout the interviews work towards a holistic view of leadership that spans the personal and the contextual that will be explored in this chapter. The findings also pointed to a number of dichotomies and tensions presented in the data: ambition vs. reluctance, agency vs. osmosis, and the parliamentary building vs. the actors within it. Combined, these share the central tenets of the agency vs. structure dichotomy and offer the debate regarding the extent to which leaders are bound by the gendered regimes in which they operate.

Reflecting on the findings from interviews with MSPs, this chapter serves three main purposes. The first purpose is to present a discussion of the findings in relation to the overarching research questions that were posed at the beginning of this thesis. The second purpose is to make connections with, and demonstrate how this thesis sits within, existing literature. Thirdly, this chapter draws conclusions on the theoretical contributions made to the emergent body of literature that examines political leadership in the context of gendered parliamentary workplaces. I do so by adopting the approach undertaken in previous chapters that look inwardly and outwardly between political leaders and the context of the Scottish Parliament as a gendered workplace. This enables the ability to bridge micro and macro perspectives that retain a focus on institutional rules (field) and the everyday practices of leaders and the importance of their pre-parliamentary histories (the habitus) that shape their leadership practice (capitals) as MSPs. Throughout the course of this research, I have sought to address, and been guided by, two overarching research questions that aimed to penetrate personal experiences of leadership whilst situating experience within the Scottish Parliament, and the extent to which the parliament is a gendered workplace. The research questions are:

1. How is the experience of political leadership in the Scottish Parliament gendered?
2. To what extent is the Scottish Parliament a gendered organisation, and what effects does this have on political leadership?

The following discussion aims to answer these questions using the overarching theoretical framing adopted by this thesis, informed by Bourdieusian concepts and a Feminist

Institutionalism framework. The complementary theoretical approaches contribute towards an enhanced understanding of gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament and consequently make significant theoretical contributions. For Bourdieu (1990), the sum of habitus, capital and field is a theory of practice. Thus, this chapter works towards developing an understanding of how MSPs engage in a practice of leadership that draws on each of these concepts whilst situating leadership within the gendered parliamentary workplace. As such, theoretical tools are integrated to act as skeletal framing that allow the interview findings to be 'fleshed out' and attribute meaning and significance to the findings. Taken together, and responding to both research questions, this chapter works towards understanding a theory of leadership practice in the parliament.

8.1. Understanding the Political Habitus of MSPs

According to Bourdieu actors develop an 'original' habitus, known as the habitus première, that is formed through childhood, based on familial and educational experiences that shapes individuals' behaviour (Bourdieu, 2000). Over time, the 'specific' habitus, or habitus secondaire, is a set of dispositions acquired and shaped by a particular field such as an occupation. Informed by these definitions, it is important to consider the political leaders' personal histories and how the 'original' habitus informs leaders' field-specific' habitus, drawing on political motivators, former careers, and ambitions. It is also necessary to consider how these processes are gendered. As such, this section considers motivations for becoming a political leader and how personal histories impacted on political participation.

Context-specific analyses offer the opportunity for the interpretation of the role of historic, social and institutional contexts that shape gendered pathways to political leadership (Matthews and Whiting, 2022). In tandem, Walter (2014) argues that the study of leadership inherently concerns the actions of individuals in their role as a leader. Biographical accounts of leaders' ascension into leadership roles attributes importance to formative leadership experience, education, and familial history (Adamson and Johansson, 2021). Applying a Bourdieusian approach is particularly appropriate in this context as the concepts of habitus and capital develop understandings of who is permitted access to the Scottish parliamentary political field and possess the prerequisites required.

The value of habitus to understanding how leadership is developed emphasises the critical role of early leadership learning through familial and educational histories (Fitzsimmons and Callan, 2020). Applying the Bourdieusian concept habitus to leadership unearths how and

why individuals respond to leadership and political opportunities differently and how these differences are gendered. Indeed, findings showed that devolution and the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum were influential in personal histories, demonstrating the intersection between the personal and the political (Robinson and Kerr, 2017).

Placing emphasis on the individual, Bourdieu conceptualises habitus as ‘internalised embodied schemes [acquired] in the course of individual history’. It reconciles the interaction between structure and agency by providing the ‘rules of the game’ through which actors experience autonomy that is bound to classed and gendered potentialities (Huppatz, 2012). As such, the gendered habitus shapes ‘aspirations according to concrete indices of the accessible and inaccessible, of what is and what is not ‘for us’ (Bourdieu, 1990: 64). Leadership is a masculinised role that is typically occupied by men (Stead and Elliott, 2021). Existing leadership literature that uses Bourdieu’s concept of habitus argues that women disrupt the normative leadership habitus because they are women (Stead and Elliott, 2013). Indeed, the concept of habitus explains that our internalised ‘schemes’ are developed based on intersectional assumptions such as class and gender that contribute to our understandings of inclusion and exclusion from certain fields, including politics. The habitus thus includes individuals’ thoughts, perceptions, and actions that are concordant with the gendered conditions of the political field (Anastario *et al.* 2013).

8.1.1. Motivations, Working-Classness and the Gendered ‘Ambition Gap’

A significant majority of MSPs that were interviewed were from left and centre-leftist parties and most were elected in the first parliamentary session. Working-classness was a key theme that was identified in the data based on MSPs’ reflections on their backgrounds. Reflecting on their childhood and formative years, class was often discussed by MSPs. MSPs spoke of their non-political, humble beginnings. Adamson and Johansson (2021) consider how elites in business discursively understand their class; they suggest that this is a strategy employed to evoke a perception of ordinariness and authenticity. Indeed, the Scottish electorate has a long-standing affiliation with left-wing, socialist politics (Gordon, 1991). Interviews revealed that among a cohort of MSPs that were elected to the early parliament, there was a shared, collective experience that was formed through familial working-class backgrounds and provoked a particular left-wing brand of political mobilisation. Thus, a certain political habitus was formed prior to devolution among this cohort of MSPs (Robinson and Kerr, 2017).

In the latter half of the 20th century, Scotland endured seismic change to its occupational structure (Knox, n.d.). Substantial social and economic shifts reshaped Scotland's industrial landscape. As such, Scotland offers a 'valuable case study' of how masculinities change over time (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2020: 218). Thousands of working-class men faced unemployment due to deindustrialisation, 'emasculatation', and the demise of an entrenched working identity (Fern, 2019: 55). At the same time, swathes of working-class women faced unemployment due to the closure of factories. Radicalisation of the working classes became highly localised, occurring in tandem with challenging traditional British political structures and increasing Scottish nationalism (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2020). While the impacts of masculinity and political leadership have been studied in this context, there is a dearth of insight into working class women's political leadership. The findings from interviews with left-wing women MSPs that were elected during this time spoke of how they were galvanised by the same deindustrialisation and trade unionism that mobilised left-wing men during this time.

Scottish masculinities, particularly in dominant left-wing politics, were closely intertwined with the industrial landscape. The 'archetype' of the Scottish left-wing man was working class, typically employed in industry, has influenced the image associated with left-wing leadership (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2020). During this time, men accumulated forms of formal and informal political power through trade union avenues where leadership stemmed from the representation of fellow workers. In this light, traditional masculine authority was embedded in industry; it is a gendered image that denotes 'traditional masculine authority' (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2020: 218). Findings from interviews with MSPs suggest that women who were part of the trade union movement were expected to assimilate to this context and not be 'shrinking violets'. Reflecting on their leadership styles, they were also more likely to describe themselves as 'thick-skinned', 'feisty' and 'assertive'.

This gendered image of Scottish left-wing leadership was not sustainable. By the end of the 20th century, coinciding with the creation of the Scottish Parliament, the 'national articulation' of hegemonic masculinity had softened the working class 'hard man' image (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2020). This reflected global trends of the softening of political hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). The composition of the Scottish labour market had changed; increasing numbers of women entered the workplace and men were increasingly involved in family life (McCullough, 2017). As explored in Chapter One, women were increasingly involved in left-wing politics throughout the 20th century. Left-wing politics promoted equality, seeking to gain equal numbers of women's political representation. Thus, women were embedded into the conversation. As one MSP described it, 'we had twice as many

women as men [...] it was in our DNA'¹³³. However, as shown, the ways in which women were included was different to that of men. Their inclusion demonstrates that their displays of 'macho' politics were valued within their party as this led to election to the parliament and subsequent promotions, whilst the 'softening' of men's leadership was valued. This highlights the different gendered expectations for men and women leaders that coexisted among those on the same side of the political spectrum. This will be further explored in how leadership behaviours and qualities can be conceptualised as capitals, and the extent to which these are gendered. Due to sample size and representation in the parliament at the time, a similar analysis could not be explored in the context of more right-wing parties. Nonetheless, this is insightful to understand how a shared habitus was developed during the period of devolution that had gendered implications for women's inclusion and leadership. It could also be argued that the inclusion of women in this left-wing political movement in Scotland, and the softening of hegemonic masculinity created a specific political habitus among this cohort.

Although the societal and economic shifts in Scotland at the end of the 20th century were significant motivating factors for both men and women MSPs that were elected in early devolution, other motivating factors arose for those elected later to the parliament. The findings from interviews with MSPs reflected previous studies that found women politicians are primarily motivated to 'do more' in their communities, and less are motivated or preoccupied by ideological or careerist factors (Cowell-Meyers, 2001; Fawcett Society, 2017; Hibbs, 2022). However, contrasting this finding in the literature, the same was found for men's political motivations. Findings further highlighted that the 2014 Independence Referendum marked an opportunity for greater participation for women. A new cohort of SNP women were elected in 2016 that had been politically motivated during the campaign. The Women for Independence movement provided opportunities for training, public speaking and campaigning. The gendered difference here is that women often found themselves persuaded to stand for election, while men MSPs were more likely to make the decision to stand for election, although they were motivated by the same politically motivating factors.

Literature highlights that gender mediates the decision to stand for election and political ambition (Piscopo and Kenny, 2020). The existence of a gender gap in political ambition is often offered as a straightforward explanation as to why fewer women stand for election than men. There is a persistent, global gender gap in political ambition that finds women to

¹³³ Interview 22; man.

be less politically ambitious than men (Hansard Society, 2019). Factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women, and the ambition gap, are referred to as 'supply barriers' as discussed in Chapter Two (Fox and Lawless, 2014). Applying a Bourdieusian lens, this could be explained by the gendered habitus, where internalised schemes present appropriate occupational choices on the basis of gender and are compounded by class (Huppatz, 2012). Indeed, findings from interviews with MSPs revealed that women described a specific predisposition that excluded them from the political field, and thus their leadership trajectory was marked by passiveness and reluctance. For several women MSPs, they did not actively seek to develop specific skills before their election. Their role was often passive or reluctant, and they were asked to stand for election by others which echoes much of the literature on avenues to candidacy for women (Johnston and Elliott, 2015). One reason for this was a perceived lack of skills and confidence, and a level of comfortability in local politics. This suggests that there is a common predisposition here where women would often self-exclude themselves from formal politics. The women interviewed had often internalised cultural cues from the political field such as role incongruity (Smith, 2019). These findings speak to literature on gender and political ambition and reveal the complex and gendered issues of self-doubt and confidence (Piscopo and Kenny, 2020).

Before entry to the parliament, MSPs must navigate gender biases that exist in party recruitment. Interviewees discussed the 'informal practices' of gendered party recruitment as highlighted in other FI studies (Mackay *et al.* 2010; Kenny, 2014). Whilst this study is not primarily concerned with gendered party recruitment processes, there is evidence that suggests that party members coalesced around dominant men within the party that resulted in greater perceived support networks for men. This, in tandem with other factors, left some women feeling as though they were on the periphery of politics.

To overcome individualised issues that present challenges to women's political candidacy, scholars have emphasised the importance of institutional contextual factors that can shape emergent candidates' decisions to stand (Piscopo and Kenny, 2020). Unlike Westminster, the Scottish Parliament was built on four principles: openness, accessibility, sharing power and equal opportunity. As the research findings highlight, women were included from the reestablishment of the parliament and those elected in 1999 had strong social networks in the political sphere. It was intended to address the underrepresentation of women in Scottish politics and offer greater opportunity for women's inclusion. Both men and women MSPs had excluded themselves from elected politics prior to the Scottish Parliament, internalising that Westminster politics was not 'for them'. Findings from interviews

highlighted that this signalled inclusion and prospective MSPs identified that the parliament could be a political institution ‘for them’ and in this light, women MSPs did not exclude themselves from political leadership. Women MSPs spoke of multiple ways in which they felt included by the parliament, yet they still required encouragement to stand for election and expressed feelings of incompetence. This sense of inclusion was emphasised among women MSPs throughout the parliament’s history, particularly among those elected in 1999 who expressed feelings of ownership of the parliament. Thus, it appears that the pre-parliamentary political habitus formed by the left-wing movement for devolution created a political field that was inclusive for women, yet women experienced an internalised predisposition that diminished a sense of agency in their political trajectory. It could be argued that this is due to role incongruity messaging that excludes women from leadership on the basis of stereotyped characteristics (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

8.1.2. Former Careers, Learning to Lead and the Development of the Field-Specific Habitus

Following discussions of childhoods and adolescence, MSPs discussed how they learned to lead. Upon election, MSPs are expected to learn the ‘rules in use’ and ‘how things are done’ (Lowndes, 2014; 2020). There was a stark absence of leadership training offered by the parliament which has consequences on how MSPs are expected to develop the necessary leadership skills – the occupational habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). MSPs identified three main ways of learning leadership – via osmosis in the parliament, support networks and former careers. For Bourdieu (1986), entry to the political field requires ‘the practical mastery of the immanent logic of the [...] field’. Specifically, in the context of the Scottish Parliament, political leadership skills are required. The most common political leadership skills that MSPs identified were the ability to listen, include others and bring people together and represent local issues. These are everyday actions that contribute to political leadership, while the lesser mentioned skills were those more commonly associated with political leadership. Secondary skills included the ability to communicate, having a vision and the persuasive skills to make others believe in the vision and influence to effect change. Personality and individual dispositions to leadership have been a focus for several leadership studies.

For Feminist Institutionalists, leadership learning, or political socialisation is a gendered process (Hibbs, 2022). Politician socialisation and political trajectories typically begin prior to election (Rush and Giddings, 2011). Those that had previously worked in ‘politics-facilitating’ roles such as MSPs’ staff, parliamentary researchers or councillors, spoke of an

advantage they possessed. They were aware of the formal rules of the parliament (e.g. voting and legislative processes), they knew the building, and they had existing networks and relationships with others. Thus, 'mastering' the logic of the field was an easier process. The feeling of being 'dumped into the deep end' was a consistent message from MSPs and this phrase was specifically used by women to describe their initial experiences in the political field. This reflects findings from Rush and Giddings (2011) on their study with MPs in Westminster and Hibb's (2022) study into women councillors' experience in Wales. Rush and Giddings (2011) describe this time after initial election as a 'steep learning curve', that echoes experiences described by MSPs as they navigated the physical building, recruited staff and set up their office.

Mentoring and training programmes have been highlighted as crucial for women's participation in civic life and politics, and to helping women navigate and understand political systems and develop political knowledge (Maguire 2018; Hibbs 2022). MSPs were offered induction training after election on the 'basics' of parliamentary functions, how to vote and how to write speeches. However, the extent to which this was helpful for MSPs varied, for most it was not sufficient. Women MSPs were more likely to seek additional training and support through establishment mentoring networks. Another way in which women learned to lead was through their parliamentary friendships; here, a specific group of women spoke about the ways they supported each other during debates or asked each other questions when they were unsure. Childs (2013) argues that this is a method employed by women to negotiate gendered political institutions. In this case, it is a method employed as a resource of support and knowledge. It appears that women were more anxious about not doing a good enough job. This finding contributes to the literature that has demonstrated how a lack of training can have significant negative consequences on women's political experience (Stead and Elliott, 2019) and can lead to 'mistake anxiety' which is more prevalent among women parliamentarians than men (Erikson and Josefsson, 2019). It unveils that formal parliamentary rules and procedures for induction and training have gendered outcomes. In other political settings, absence of training has shown that women are likely to feel overwhelmed and can lead to resignation (Hibbs, 2022).

Reflecting on the importance of transferable skills and the future of the parliament, some MSPs that came from prior careers outwith politics advised that aspiring MSPs should gain experience in a non-political role. There were warnings against the trend in new MSPs that have transitioned from political-facilitating jobs. This caution was predominantly advised from those elected in 1999 and alluded to a sense of trying to retain the original parliament which where the vast majority of MSPs had previous jobs including teachers, lawyers, trade

union representatives. It could be argued that MSPs perceive this as disruptive to the original habitus of the parliament where formative knowledge was valued. However, those elected in later parliamentary sessions spoke of their naivety to the political field and identified that those who had a 'political apprenticeship' through prior roles as councillors or parliamentary staff had advantages over those who did not (Miller, 2018). Developing on this, the following section considers how such skills evolve to become leadership capitals and the extent to which expectations on leaders have gendered outcomes.

8.2. Leadership Capital and Gendered Implications

Having explored how leaders access the political field, it is important to consider how leadership capital is developed. Bourdieu's theory of capital suggests that leadership is not solely based on individual skills or traits, but rather on cultural norms and expectations. Gender plays a significant role in shaping these norms, as men are often seen as natural leaders due to societal expectations (Sinclair, 2014). Bourdieu argues that capital, or the shared knowledge and experiences that shape our values and beliefs, is unequally distributed, and can contribute to gender disparities in leadership (Stead *et al.* 2021). However, Bourdieu also acknowledges that capital can be acquired and transformed, new political opportunities for individuals to challenge and reshape societal norms and expectations around gender and leadership. As such, just as hegemonic masculinity and habitus can evolve over time as discussed in the previous section, (gendered) leadership capitals are not static; rather, the value placed on specific capitals can grow and diminish over time depending on the political landscape. As such, this section of the chapter discusses the ways in which (gendered) leadership capitals are developed and valued in the parliament.

One of the key aspects of conceptualising political leadership capital is recognising the 'contexts that can enable or limit a leader' (Bennister *et al.* 2017). The field of politics, like any other field, is a social space of competition which is structured by hierarchies that reward and sanction different capitals. However, Bourdieusian scholars Bennister *et al.* do not offer a way in which to explore such limitations. This is the omission that Feminist Institutionalism addresses. FI allows for the exploration of the gendered contextual factors, or 'gendered conditions', that enable or limit a leader (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

Here, it is important to reintroduce Bourdieu's concept of 'field' as MSPs spoke of the different political spaces in which they lead. Namely, MSPs drew a distinction between the

parliament and their constituencies. For Bourdieu, the field is a socio-spatial setting in which social actors are located and embedded in, such as the family, education, religion, law, and politics. Each has unique sets of knowledge, rules, and capitals, and the political field is an arena of status and power. Individuals are 'socially embedded actors' that navigate, and are navigating, by the rules of the field (Davis, 2010). For Bourdieu, societal realities (e.g. leadership) are constructed in an on-going process that are reproduced by those within the field and reflect institutional social histories that provide 'situational logics of action' (Busby, 2013). An actor's position in the field is dependent on their possession of valid capital that enables them to exercise influence within the game at play (Busby, 2013). Actors continue to gain forms of capital, social networks, knowledge and the 'laws of operation particular to that field' (Davis, 2010).

8.2.1. Gender Hybridity and the Evolving Expectations of Masculine and Feminine Leadership Ideals

For MSPs, leadership capitals in the parliament are constructed as leadership styles and qualities. Masculine leadership ideals have been viewed as an obstacle to women leaders (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). Synonyms such as drive, ambition and motivation are often used to describe leadership qualities (Sjoberg, 2014), yet the findings from this research point to a different set of leadership qualities that are valued in the parliament. Those that display leadership qualities such as empathy, care and collegiality were seen as having greater leadership capital than those who present leadership styles that are controlling, aggressive or individualistic. These are typically 'gender coded' as masculine and feminine leadership styles (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). In the Scottish Parliament, men were more likely to identify, or code, their own leadership styles as feminine. In several instances, women also coded their leadership styles of masculine. Thus, men and women partake in 'gender hybridity' and move between configurations of masculine and feminine leadership styles based on the gendered conditions at hand. As such, the findings from this research echo shifts in leadership research towards gender hybridity (Lewis and Benschop, 2022).

MSPs emphasised that time, place and political context are imperative to understandings of how leadership is experienced and what is expected of them. Previous discussion has shown that the wider political landscape has gendered implications for political leadership. Erikson and Josefsson (2023) present such contexts as 'gendered leadership conditions'. Gendered leadership conditions encompass both gendered leadership ideals and everyday political practices that political leaders experience. MSPs exist within multiple political fields in which they practise leadership, and where different leadership capitals are mobilised and

valued. Within each, MSPs' adapt their leadership styles to meet expectations of the different roles. Findings indicate that different leadership practices occur in different subfields: the parliament and constituencies. MSPs' leadership capitals that they display in their communities are rewarded in the form of strong relationships where MSPs identify their constituents as colleagues. In their constituencies and communities, MSPs position themselves as 'one of the gang'¹³⁴ that requires a certain degree of informality. Within the parliament, leadership becomes more formalised, yet several MSPs spoke of the importance of retaining these approachable and collegiate leadership behaviours and the significance of bridging the parliament and their communities.

As discussed, in the absence of formal leadership training, MSPs often learn to lead via osmosis in the parliament. Those that are seen to possess leadership capital are imitated and thus, leadership behaviours are reproduced. MSPs recognised the importance of the First Minister and party leaders in 'setting the tone' for leadership qualities. This has consequences where the leadership capitals possessed by such individuals disrupt the collegiate and power-sharing habitus of the parliament. Gibbs and Scothorne (2020) demonstrate the ways in which hegemonic masculinity within the left-wing political field has been contested and has evolved to echo changes of accepted capitals of masculinity. Men in left-wing politics, particularly elected leaders, began to present an image that was considered less gendered and less militant. As such, it could be argued this leadership transformation occurred at several points in Scottish politics since devolution. During periods where there have been leaders in the most senior positions that embody dominating leadership styles, this can lead to more divisive and combative politics. MSPs identified this as occurring during the parliament's history that reflected the wider political landscape, specifically during the 2014 Independence Referendum. These historically significant events, and gendered conditions, placed different expectations – capitals – on leaders and had different gendered implications.

The findings show that leadership styles are consequent of the political landscape that present 'gendered conditions' (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). In the early years of the Scottish Parliament, valued leadership capital hinged on policy influence. The first cohort of MSPs were eager to show themselves as capable parliamentarians and that the Scottish Parliament was a necessary and progressive political institution. Those that had been elected earlier in the parliaments' history were more likely to discuss policy interventions as definitive features of their political leadership, whilst those elected later were more likely to

¹³⁴ Interview 5, woman.

describe their leadership behaviours and styles. During this time, leaders were assessed on their legislative capabilities. Another political event that promoted a different set of leadership capitals was during the 2014 Independence Referendum campaign. During this time, MSPs spoke of the divisiveness of politics that favoured more masculine leadership styles. The polarised nature of the debate was said to encourage dominant, aggressive forms of leadership capital. However, MSPs largely condemned these leadership styles and actively rejected or challenged them. One political event that was not mentioned was Brexit; this is likely to be due to the party-political support to remain that was a majority in the parliament. This contrasts the 2014 Independence Referendum. Another impactful political event that again prompted a new set of leadership criteria was the Covid-19 pandemic. It was during this time that interviews were conducted and MSPs placed emphasis on being empathetic and caring leaders.

The ways in which MSPs understand their leadership reflects wider trends in the distinction between good and bad political leaders. Traditionally, effective leadership has been primarily concerned with leaders' competence, skills, and abilities (Gabriel, 2015). However, leadership expectations have changed over time that has altered the criteria for effective leadership. There is increasing public concern regarding the ethics of a leader that scrutinises their integrity and morality. At the same time, leadership literature on ethics and morality have grown (Liu, 2019). The conceptualisation and growth of ethical leadership literature was prompted by the inadequate and unethical leadership in the banking sector that was illuminated by the 2008 financial crash (Ho, 2009, cited in Liu, 2019). Studies into ethical leadership diverge via two paths: focus on individuals' virtues and values, or exploration of how ethical leadership is experienced in organisational contexts. Like much of leadership literature, dominant discussions of ethical leadership focus on individual leaders without thorough contextualisation (Liu, 2019).

MSPs emphasised that their unifying project is to make progressive societal change. Authenticity has been coupled with discussions of leadership for several decades. Authentic leaders are said to be self-assured, know who they are, and ultimately act upon their core values with transparency (Liu *et al.* 2015). Authentic leadership theories have two fundamental elements: 'the concept of the 'true self' and a connection with ethics and morality' (Gardner *et al.* 2011; Liu *et al.* 2015). The archetype of the caring leader is compassionate, empathetic, accessible, and shows solidarity with their followers (Gabriel, 2015). These are characteristics often characterised with women's leadership. Yet, for the caring leader, care is not strictly an attitude or virtue, but is rather a practice. The caring leader is able to balance their own goals in tandem with the overall betterment of society –

if power is central to heroism, love is central to care (Parry and Kempster, 2014). Harnessing followers' desired leadership behaviours and practices contribute to politicians' leadership legitimacy. At present, how care exists within political leadership is under-theorised. Discussions of care and political leadership are persistently divorced, and ethical leadership typically resides in organisational leadership literature. However, a prominent thread that wove between narratives by MSPs from across the political spectrum was the theme of care. Care was a catalyst for the majority of MSPs when they entered politics and is embedded in the political habitus that centred on the importance of community and societal improvement. Thus, it is evident within the Scottish Parliament that the majority of MSPs practise care through political leadership.

At present, there is little research into public and political leaders' informal interactions (Hendriks and Lees-Marshment, 2019), yet MSPs continuously placed importance on interactions with constituents. As such, it is important to recognise the nuances in conceptualising care. Leaders can *care about* issues, and they can *care for* groups. The role of the caregiver is not one that is often presumed in political leadership, despite constituency casework being a portion of day-to-day activity. Women MSPs were eager to be ever visible and accessible in their constituencies as members of the community. The MSP's story about how she carries a notepad when she goes to the supermarket to make note of constituents' issues is a particularly poignant recollection and sheds light on political leaders' interactions with the community. In the examples where two men MSPs said that they felt like social workers, emphasising that the care for their community is part of their role. Such narratives refute notions that political leaders, particularly men, are motivated by self-interest and promotion (Cowell-Meyers, 2001; Fawcett Society, 2017; Hibbs, 2022). 'MPs are not like the rest of us' is a common assumption in public thought (Riddell, 2011). Yet, this research has gone some way in dispelling this myth and demonstrates that MSPs are eager to display their authenticity. Among the cohort of MSPs interviewed, they use the Scottish Parliament as a vehicle to implement change in their communities.

Whilst existing research shows that women political leaders exercise a cognisant 'gender strategy' (Smith, 2019), interviews with men MSPs showed that they also consciously employ a gender strategy. Indeed, some men discussed how they actively and consciously reject traditionally masculine leadership practices in favour of those traditionally associated with feminine leadership styles, using descriptions such as 'collegiate' and 'power-sharing'. It could be argued that this is due to a feminisation of political leadership that aligns with ethical leadership styles, behaviours and practices, there has been a change to the informal rules of the game that constitute who political actors are and how they operate (Miller, 2018).

At the same time, it also shows that men can capitalise on these 'leadership capitals', whilst women were more likely to cite masculine coded gender strategies than men and face repercussions for adopting such leadership styles (e.g. being referred to as 'fiery'). Thus, hybrid masculinity is more accepted than hybrid femininity (Eisen and Yamashita, 2019). This resonates with the quote from former FM Sturgeon that introduced the literature review that explored the double binds that women face, and gender strategies used. The following section considers how this translates into leadership promotion in the parliament.

8.2.2. Leadership Promotion and Redressing the Glass Cliff

Women in senior political leadership positions are often seen as 'novel and newsworthy' (Curtin, 2023). On the face of it, leadership progression in the Scottish Parliament does not appear gendered; there has been a gender-balanced Cabinet since 2014 that has cemented the 'concrete floor' (Scottish Parliament, 2023), yet patterns of leadership progression in the parliament echoes issues found in other parliaments and organisations. Journeys to the top of parties, government and into Cabinet have long been recognised as a gendered process (O'Brien, 2015; Belknap et al. 2020). Leadership labyrinths, ladders and cliffs are ways in which gendered leadership trajectories have been conceptualised that reflect the barriers that disproportionately affect women (Eagly and Carli, 2007).

Both men and women MSPs asserted that they were often 'thrust' into senior positions despite a lack of desire or will. There were multiple examples within the data that demonstrated the glass cliff scenario where women were elected into leadership positions during times of difficulty. These 'glass cliffs' included party-specific electoral challenges and challenges presented by the political landscape such as the 2014 Independence Referendum. However, research on the glass cliff scenario emphasises how that women's leadership ascension is during times of crises. Findings from this research therefore casts new and valuable light on both men and women's political leadership trajectories that shows there was a reluctance that accompanied leadership promotion, and that crisis was a common factor for both men and women's leadership. Thus, among the cohort of interviewees, leadership ambition and desire was novel.

In addition, this research sought to understand how positions are appointed by those in positions of power that use their discretion to promote others. The research findings showed that there is evidence of the 'concrete floor' (Annesley *et al.* 2019) in the Scottish Parliament that exists outwith Cabinet appointment. As demonstrated, promotion is at the discretion of

party leaders', and several spoke of the ways in which they made decisions concerning gender. Whilst some women MSPs highlighted that women were often promoted into roles commonly associated with 'women's issues' (Palmieri, 2011), party leaders spoke of their action to mitigate against this. Several party leaders made conscious decisions to place men in roles on 'women's issues' and women into roles that are deemed 'men's issues'. However, portfolios such as health and education are high status and have the largest budgets. Elsewhere, promotional decisions were based on formative careers, where MSPs used prior knowledge to mobilise leadership capital and expertise. Much of the existing literature on the Scottish Parliament and women's substantive representation discusses the impacts that women's legislative influence had on women's issues, such as domestic violence, during early devolution (Kenny and Mackay, 2020). Indeed, some women spoke of how their gender influenced their policy influence, however this research also suggests that women's policy preferences in the parliament extend beyond stereotyped 'women's issues' and that prior careers have significant influence on policy making decisions. It was also emphasised that women's knowledge is valued in the parliament, however this risks overburdening women due to varying women's representation by party and demands on their time in order to achieve gender balance.

8.2.3. Gendered Challenges to Leadership Legitimacy

Following Bourdieu's logic, leaders are admitted to the field by acquiring the prerequisite capital. Once admitted to the field, particularly the political field, capital must be recognised as legitimate. Leadership legitimacy is achieved in numerous ways and can be a gendered experience. Indeed, a critical issue for women's political leadership is legitimacy (Baker and Palmieri, 2023). Legitimacy is 'a generalised perception or assumption that actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions' (Suchman, 1995: 574). Who is recognised as a legitimate leader is dependent on gendered norms and rules (Williams, 2019). This involves expectations placed on leaders by the public. Leaders convince others of their 'leadership legitimacy' by mobilising specific forms of capital (Robinson and Kerr, 2009; cited in Stead *et al.* 2021). Stead *et al.* (2021) argue that leadership capitals are multidimensional and can be 'strategically mobilised' to strengthen the legitimacy of a leader depending on the specific field and context. The extent to which women are accepted and celebrated as political leaders is determined by wider social norms (Baker and Palmieri, 2023). This section considers the challenges to political leadership legitimacy which are highly gendered, specifically the ways in which women altered, or were expected to alter, their appearance and social media abuse.

As discussed in Chapter Two, women's leadership legitimacy is undermined when it is perceived that women's leadership status is incongruous with gendered leadership expectations (Smith, 2019). As a result, women have different (gendered) leadership experiences. An applicable Bourdieusian concept that is particularly helpful in exploring this phenomenon is the *hexis*; the *hexis* is the corporeal embodiment of the *habitus*. The ways in which women describe their appearances, bodies and methods used to 'neutralise' narratives around this demonstrates the ways in which they internalised broader gendered expectations of leaders. When MSPs enter parliament as new leaders, there are expectations to develop the assumed *hexis* of the environment. For women, this was perceived as changing or altering their appearance. Indeed, this was more commonly experienced by MSPs who perceived incompatibilities of their original *habitus* (e.g. their background, their skills, their appearance) with the political field, and there appeared to be a correlation between women who felt less confident and attempts to change their appearance. Women cited wearing more makeup and changing their dress to appear more 'formal'. By changing their appearance, women suggest that they do not have the appropriate *hexis* to be perceived as a legitimate leader. Another MSP spoke of the ways in which her appearance was managed by her party. She was made to have her hair done and wear dresses and high heels to make her physical stature taller than her opponents. This emphasises the ways in which she was placed in a double bind where both feminine and masculine leadership ideals were being incorporated into her physicality (Jamieson, 1995; Sinclair, 2011). In contrast, men did not recall any experience of where they had to change physically.

Another way in which women's leadership legitimacy is challenged is through the media. Women politicians experience gendered media attention that attempts to 'delegitimise and trivialise their political careers' (Williams, 2019: viii). MSPs discussed both print media and social media as sources of gendered abuse. For those elected to parliament in 1999, gendered media attention had severe consequences on women's leadership; a former First Minister spoke of how he wanted to promote a women MSP to his Cabinet but gendered media scrutiny had acute impacts on her leadership ambitions and she chose to resign as a result. Another woman spoke of how she was physically threatened and intimidated whilst doing constituency work. This gendered abuse, whilst it still exists in traditional media as discussed in Chapter Two, has drastically increased due to social media.

Without prompt, almost all women MSPs cited that a key challenge to their leadership was gendered online abuse or the perceived threat of online abuse. Social media abuse can be seen as a way of challenging the legitimacy of political leadership, disproportionately impactful women's leadership experience. Consequently, women MSPs devised everyday strategies, that largely included censorship that limits their agency, to avoid receiving online abuse. In contrast, multiple men spoke of how they encourage more women to stand for election despite social media abuse. In doing so, they positioned themselves as feminist allies. Several men MSPs also spoke of self-censorship online regarding conversations about Scottish independence. These gendered differences in social media abuse shows that the targeting of women online is an attempt to undermine their political careers, rather than engage in political debate (Krook, 2020). These findings contribute to this area of study as how the media and social media impedes women's leadership has not been sufficiently addressed, rather discussions are typically tied to women's representation.

8.3. The Gendered Parliamentary Field

The political field is dominated by men globally. Political leadership is context-dependent on the parliamentary institution (Bennister, et al. 2017). By 'gendering parliaments', gender is ever-present and embedded into the foundations of parliaments' organisation, like 'the rings inside a tree trunk [...], gender is everywhere' (Lowndes, 2019). To contemplate the second research question 'to what extent is the Scottish Parliament a gendered organisation, and what effects does this have on political leadership?', it is important to consider how rules of the parliamentary field have been developed and the ways in which they are reproduced that have an impact on leadership. This section places significance on the gendered conditions that affect men and women's leadership in the parliament. It takes learning from the previous two sections that discuss the ways in which leadership is a gendered experience and situates these within the context of the gendered parliamentary workplace.

As highlighted, alongside constituencies, the Scottish Parliament is one of two political fields in which MSPs exercise leadership. Reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 carved out a new political field in Scotland (Robinson and Kerr, 2017). The field created opportunities for new Scottish political leaders. From a Feminist Institutionalism perspective, analysis of new opportunities for gendered actors to lead is a 'crucial task' (Waylen, 2021: 1168). To understand how these rules of the parliamentary field are gendered and therefore impact leadership, I consult Feminist Institutionalism. Reproduction of the rules within the field can also be informed by FI insights. This marks a theoretical contribution in leadership

literature and this section makes contributions to understandings of the Scottish Parliament as a gendered workplace.

8.3.1. Gendered Workplace Conditions

The study of gender and political leadership through the lens of gendered organisations (Acker, 1990) is in its infancy. Informed by Feminist Institutionalism, Erikson and Josefsson (2020) conceptualised parliaments as gendered organisations and the implications of political leadership, providing an applicable and useful framework to understand how formal and informal rules have gendered outcomes for leadership (see Table 6, p. 88). As such, findings from interviews with MSPs shed light on a number of these aspects in the Scottish parliamentary context, particularly the 'organisation of work' (Erikson and Josefsson, 2020: 7). Findings from this research show that leadership is not experienced in isolation from the organisation of the workplace, parliamentary tasks, infrastructure, and interactions between MPs as set out in by Erikson and Josefsson (2020); rather, these exist in tandem and contribute to the gendered experience of leadership. Indeed, there are several aspects to leadership that are absent from Erikson and Josefsson's (2020) analysis, particularly how leaders learn to lead and promotion in parliament. This marks another notable intervention in existing literature as the findings demonstrate that leadership cannot be viewed independently from these factors in understanding the Scottish Parliament as a gendered workplace.

MSPs recognised the new parliament as an institution to create new rules that had wider implications for leadership. Indeed, there were several practical measures put in place to attract men and women equally (Consultative Steering Group, 1998: 13, cited in Kenny and Mackay, 2019). Such 'family friendly' measures included the operation of parliament during business hours, with most parliamentary business scheduled over three weekdays, allowing two days where MSPs work from their constituencies (Democratic Audit UK 2017). Furthermore, the parliamentary calendar aligns with school terms and there are breastfeeding and creche facilities on-site. Architectural decisions such as the semi-open plan workspaces and the semi-circular debating chamber were made to encourage cross-party, collegiate work (Gillick and Ivett, 2019). However, working patterns have consequences on equal access to leadership. It is widely acknowledged in organisational literature that presenteeism, long and unpredictable work hours, and lack of flexible working arrangement impact women's career progression (O'Brien *et al.* 2023). Both men and women spoke of the demanding time pressures that they experience. The physical location of the parliament means that several MSPs travel significant distances to spend multiple

days in the parliament per week. Whilst this is the same for both men and women, these formal workplace rules have disproportionately gendered effects on women.

Women MSPs who have caring responsibilities often spoke of themselves as workers that negotiated the gendered workplace. Women depicted a picture where they 'spin multiple plates'¹³⁵, carefully balancing and planning their work commitments around caring responsibilities to ensure that both could be achieved simultaneously. This included aligning work commitments with the school/nursery day. In contrast, men spoke of the family friendliness of the parliament in a detached tone where they presented themselves as 'unencumbered workers' (Acker, 1990). Positioning their gender within the conversation, women MSPs did not present themselves as unencumbered workers; instead, they stressed the importance of balance. Women leaders are often accused of denying the need for feminism by conforming to neoliberal norms of the ideal unencumbered worker (Mavin *et al.* 2023). Here, McRobbie (2009) suggests that women leaders contribute to hegemonic masculinity through display of agency in the public sphere that undermines the feminist cause (cited in Mavin *et al.* 2023). Men, on the other hand, did not speak of their caring responsibilities in relation to the workplace. This unspoken aspect of interviews drew my attention to this 'un-gendering' strategy. There were just two instances where men specifically spoke of their wives' caring role that enabled their political careers, thus they did not have to balance their work and home life. Discursively, they avoided conversations of their own families or caring responsibilities which can be deemed to be symptomatic of patriarchal privilege (Sinclair, 2014). Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations helps to unveil how these 'ungendered' conversations with men show their gendered experience of leadership, and how they benefit within the gendered workplace compared to women.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there were renewed calls for a more inclusive parliament. The hybrid parliamentary working practices allowed MSPs to use video conferencing to join committees, debates and FMQs and electronic voting that highlighted for some that they did not need to be physically present in the parliament to fulfil their role. Smith (2019) emphasises that this had benefits for all and found that it was particularly beneficial for those with caring responsibilities, illness and health conditions. However, following the pandemic a hybrid approach was not fully adopted and MSPs said that a consultation was underway.

Workplace inclusiveness was intended to be a foundational cornerstone policy to prompt gender balanced politics in the Scottish Parliament (Consultative Steering Group, 1998: 13,

¹³⁵ Interview 2; woman.

cited in Kenny and Mackay, 2019). However, MSPs' experience cast valuable light on such policies in practice. Whilst there is evidence that aspects of parliamentary life have undergone feminisation, including leadership capitals, masculinised workplace practices remain. This echoes the findings from analysis of the Swedish Riksdag (Eriksson and Josefsson, 2023). By extending Mackay's (2014) argument, this research has demonstrated the gendered limits of change within the Scottish Parliament. This is further explored in the following section that argues that isomorphism and organisational enchantment are concepts that typically reside in management literature and are applicable in the parliamentary context to discuss how gendered experiences of leadership are reproduced in the parliament.

8.3.2. Reproducing the Gendered Workplace: Isomorphism and Organisational Enchantment

Research shows that states that undergo structural institutional reform, such as post-conflict societies, or the establishment of a new parliament, can capitalise on the opportunity to embed gender equality into political structures (Matthews and Whiting, 2022). The birth of the new Scottish Parliament offered a new political field, delivering a physical space for new players, new forms of capital to be valued, and new rules of the game to be established. Institutional change can present opportunities for feminist innovation (Mackay, 2014). The Scottish Parliament was intended to be a clean slate that would act as a foundation to build a gender-equal parliament. However, as this research has shown, there are divergent opinions whether this has been achieved, and what this means for women's inclusion and opportunities to lead. It is therefore necessary to consider how the gendered workplace is (re)produced and maintained, and how it is ingrained in the social history of the parliament.

Mackay (2014) argues that gender reform measures in institutions such as parliaments are vulnerable, and blueprints that embed gender equality in new institutions may not translate into everyday practices. Informal rules on masculinity and femininity are embedded in wider legacies that penetrate new organisations as actors 'make sense' of the unfamiliarity by imitating the norms of the wider political environment such as Westminster (Campbell, 2010). Here, it is particularly insightful to draw on explanatory concepts from management and organisational literature. Gendered hierarchies in organisations, and indeed parliaments, are reliant on reproduction. Within new institutionalism, isomorphism explains the ways in which seemingly independent, emergent institutions assume similar ways of working to other organisations (Swiss, 2009). Like FI, new institutionalism critically analyses

the ways in which institutional rules have constraining and enabling outcomes of individuals' behaviours. The findings from interviews with MSPs suggest that the case of the Scottish Parliament demonstrates that political institutions are never truly new and are subject to the gendered rules of the political game that exist beyond individual parliamentary rules and norms.

Organisations have the ability to generate specific emotional responses of those that occupy them (Siebert *et al.* 2017). Siebert *et al.* (2017: 2) suggest that those that occupy organisations can experience 'organisational enchantment' where the role of the building is a 'strong material anchor' in maintaining organisational cultures. Thus, workplace identities are socially and symbolically constructed. Indeed, discussions of the parliament building as a physical workplace prompted emotive responses from interviewees. A significant majority of MSPs spoke of the parliament positively and alluded to a sense of pride and attachment. Positive analyses were often coupled by negative analyses of other political institutions such as the UK House of Commons. MSPs' predominantly positive response is symbolic and organisational narratives have implications of the maintenance and reproduction of organisational culture (rules) (Boje, 2008). In this light, Bourdieu's concept of the doxa is particularly helpful to unpack the taken-for-granted ways of working in the Scottish Parliament. Thus, the doxa is the shared perceptions mediated by the field; it is the 'enshrined way to think' (Busby, 2013: 100) and the 'unconditional allegiance' to the rules of the field (Deer, 2008: 116). Formal and informal rules are therefore reproduced by actors that share the field-specific habitus and are compounded by a sense of organisational enchantment (Siebert *et al.*, 2017). MSPs, particularly those elected in 1999, stressed the importance of remembering the past and the reasons why the parliament was established. As such, organisational enchantment has implications on the evolution of leadership and gender equality, particularly where there is a level of attempting to preserve the past.

As mentioned, the majority of MSPs were positive about their experiences within the parliament and aligned their leadership behaviours, implicitly and explicitly, to the founding principles of the Scottish Parliament. Organisations, like individuals, possess identities. Parliaments have 'social characters' that have symbolic meanings (Alder-Nissen, 2009, in Busby, 2013). Subject to space and time, expectations are placed on institutions, and those within them, to behave in certain ways. This is particularly evident when discussing parliamentary gender equality and family friendliness. Whilst several MSPs pointed to the issues presented within the parliament that impede its family friendliness, such as long working hours and time spent away from home/travelling to Holyrood, but often concluded by stating its commitment family friendliness. This presented a tension within the findings

that suggests the presence of masculinised working practices with feminised workplace ideals (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). Such tension could also be explained in some way by virtue signalling and ‘institutional peacocking’ which are methods used by individuals to overstate organisational gender equality for ‘institutional gains’ (Yarrow and Johnston, 2022). Here, it is also important to be cognisant of wider parliamentary issues such as workplace harassment and that women have stood down from politics as a result of caring responsibilities and incompatibilities with the parliamentary working conditions (Progressive, 2018; Gill *et al.* 2017). Again, this exemplifies the ways in which the experience of political leadership exists within these tensions and dichotomies presented in MSPs’ reflections.

8.4. Conclusion: Developing a Theory of Leadership Practice

The purpose of this chapter was to respond to the research questions that have guided this thesis by using a Bourdieusian and FI approach as framing to ‘flesh out’, and attribute meaning to, the findings. Bourdieu’s concepts have been both useful and applicable for gleaning deeper understandings of the ways in which leadership is experienced in the parliamentary setting. Prior to this thesis, gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament had not been studied. Thus, this research has provided a holistic understanding of how leadership is practised by all MSPs and has worked toward a theory of leadership practice that is exercised by MSPs within the parliament. This chapter concludes by developing a theory of leadership practice that argues that the inclusion of women in the parliament from 1999 has embedded a feminised field-specific political habitus. This section also addresses the tensions and dichotomies presented in the data that speaks to the complexity of gendering political leadership in the Scottish Parliament.

Taken together, Bourdieu’s concepts develop a theory of practice: (habitus)(capital) + field = practice. Practice is the result of the relationship between the habitus, individuals’ capitals, and the field in which these occur (Maton, 2008). The theory of practice was outlined in Chapter Three and illustrates the ways in which all aspects of political leadership contribute to a leadership practice (see Figure 4, p. 90). The theory of practice therefore builds a relationship between structure and agency and oscillates between micro and macro perspectives. As such, the theory of practice brings several questions to light: (1) how do MSPs become leaders, (2) how is leadership learned, (3) how do leaders acquire capital in the field, (4) how do capitals evolve over time, and (5) how do the rules of the game in the field impact leadership? Bourdieu argues that fields produce a specific habitus that acts as

a mechanism through which the field is reproduced. Although gender is not understood by Bourdieu to be part of the relationship between habitus and the field, FI has exposed the ways in which gender is constitutive to the theory of practice (see Figure 4, p. 90). The FI approach develops how the Scottish Parliament can be understood as a gendered workplace and its impacts on leadership that also contribute to the development of practice. In sum, this thesis argues that MSPs elected between 1999 and 2021 have developed a leadership practice that is constituted by relationships between the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, capitals, field, hexis, doxa *and* gender.

The development of a theory of practice identifies that a certain leadership practice is exercised within the parliament. The newness of the parliament in 1999 expanded opportunities for political leadership of those that were excluded from Westminster politics. Parliamentarians' access to the political field was resultant of their personal habitus and the habitus of the parliament. MSPs experienced a gendered habitus through which they were socialised into politics that coincided with the softening of hegemonic masculinity in left-wing political circles (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2020). MSPs' former careers provided sites of leadership learning which informed a different political habitus from those assumed in pre-established parliaments. Former careers typically resided in public-sector roles such as teaching. As such, the findings show that this influenced their unifying project as politicians for societal change that is motivated by care for their community. Indeed, a central feature of MSPs' leadership identities was the importance placed on their constituency. Here, leadership practice is characterised by ethical, value-led leadership where the wellbeing of leaders' communities is prioritised. Discursively, MSPs discuss their perceived ordinariness and render class as an irrelevant factor in their political trajectory which speaks to authenticity as leadership capital (Adamson and Johansson, 2021; Liu, 2017). Consequently, this created a common habitus that was shared among new (left-wing) politicians and, in alignment with the founding principles of the parliament, developed a feminised field-specific habitus.

In turn, the feminised field-specific habitus presented a new set of leadership capitals that were valued in the parliament. Indeed, both men and women demonstrated that they value and embody feminine coded leadership capitals, or styles, such as care and empathy (Erikson and Josefsson, 2020). In the early years of devolution collegiate, cross-party leadership practices were valued as MSPs carved out a new political culture that challenged dominant masculine political cultures elsewhere (Mackay, 2014). However, gendered conditions of the political landscape can alter the leadership practice within the parliament. An example of this was during the 2014 Scottish Independence campaign where the

divisiveness of the debate permeated parliamentary leadership practices and more aggressive political styles were displayed. Retrospectively, such practices are widely condemned by MSPs and were said to be actively rejected by both men and women in the parliament. Men demonstrated the ways in which they mediated their masculinity and adopted 'softer' approaches to leadership that were valued in the parliament.

A common theme throughout the findings was that of the reluctant politician. Whilst this was an enduring feature throughout women's leadership trajectories from their selection and election. Both men and women MSPs asserted that they were often 'thrust' into senior positions despite a lack of desire or will and opposes the assumption that politicians are careerist and self-fulfilling (Allan and Cairney, 2017). There were multiple examples within the data that demonstrated the glass cliff scenario where women were elected to leadership positions during times of difficulty. These 'glass cliffs' included party-specific electoral challenges and challenges presented by the political landscape. New findings from this research unveil that both men and women's leadership promotion were marked by reluctance and duty. Where men spoke of political ambition it was tied evoking change, namely challenging dominant, masculine forms of leadership and the redistribution of leadership to minoritised groups. This casts new and valuable light on both men and women's political leadership trajectories that shows there was a reluctance that accompanied leadership promotion, and that crisis was a common factor for both men and women's leadership. Among the cohort of interviewees, leadership ambition and desire were novel.

How MSPs identify their role(s) is based on institutional expectations based on their position, who they interact with and situational contexts (van Vonno, 2012). For Bourdieu, there are 'intangible assets' that contribute to leaders' capital and power in the field; these are used strategically by MSPs such as dress, speech, behaviour, education, and skills. As findings from this research have shown, these 'intangible assets' are tangibly gendered; specifically, there are different gendered expectations on leaders' dress and behaviours. The embodied expectations that MSPs experience demonstrate that the hexis is gendered. Women respond to internalised perceptions that their pre-parliamentary hexis does not 'fit' with the political habitus, and often make attempts to 'neutralise' their appearance and appear more 'formal' and thus legitimise their leadership. This demonstrates one of the ways in which the presence of feminine workplace ideals that exist in tension with masculine workplace practices.

Another significant factor that emphasises the masculine rules of the parliament as a gendered workplace is the disproportionate impacts that its incompatibilities with caring responsibilities impact women. Women were eager to present themselves as the 'ideal' worker, possessing the ability to balance their work and personal lives (Mavin *et al.* 2023). This involved numerous gendered strategies that required significant planning and emotional labour. Men, on the other hand, also presented themselves as unencumbered workers and did not reflect on the parliament in the context of their own family lives; instead, discussions of the parliament's family friendliness were detached (Acker, 1990; Sinclair, 2014). This demonstrates the ways in which wider societal expectations of women as primary caregivers permeate the parliamentary workplace and the gendered consequences of parliamentary rules that do not mitigate this (Crawford and Pini, 2011).

The ways in which the leadership practice is reproduced and maintained is tied to the social history and identity of the parliament. In their everyday leadership practices, MSPs are cognisant of, and embody the parliament's founding principles. This acts as an informal way of informal leadership training where MSPs learn to lead via osmosis in the absence of formal leadership training. In both political fields (the parliament and constituencies), MSPs embody accessibility and openness. This leadership practice is reproduced by the doxa, the enshrined ways of thought and behaviour in the parliament, and the gendered 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen, 1989). There is also evidence of organisational enchantment and a romanticism of the Scottish Parliament that encourages organisational reproduction.

The leadership practice developed in this thesis is not necessarily prescriptive and does not suggest that all MSPs subscribe to this leadership practice, although it demonstrates the ways in which leadership is learned via osmosis. Indeed, it is a leadership practice that has been developed based on the findings. This could be explained by the interview sample that were predominantly Scottish Labour former and current MSPs. Those from other parties also predominantly occupied the left of the political spectrum. Thus, conclusions reflect the experiences of the research sample at a specific moment in time. Consequently, future research that maps the evolution of the leadership practice would be beneficial to understanding the ways it is resultant on the habitus of newer MSPs and the context-specific leadership capitals that are valued in the parliament that reflect wider gendered conditions of the political context (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

Lastly, it is important to reflect on the dichotomies, tensions and contradictions presented in the findings and how these contribute to understandings of leadership. The working lives

of politicians are complex, and their leadership identities and roles are multifaceted. Throughout the three findings chapters, a series of dichotomies were presented and explored through MSPs' reflections that placed emphasis on subjectivity and diversity of experience of being a political leader. Chapter Four highlighted the challenges that can surface when interviewing politicians, particularly that of political spin (Odendahl and Shaw, 2011). Indeed, the majority of MSPs spoke positively about the parliament, however tensions came through their experiences. As such, this unearthed a series of contradictions that ultimately cannot be untangled; rather, these contradictions sit in juxtaposition to each other, and divergent perspectives illuminate different aspects of parliamentary life and leadership. Such tensions included: ambition vs. reluctance, agency vs. osmosis, and the parliamentary building vs. the actors within it. Taken together, these share the foundations of agency vs. structure and situate leaders in the (gendered) regimes in which they operate and by which they are bound. Several dichotomies and tensions were unveiled throughout the findings that point to the complexities in leadership experiences and the extent to which these are gendered. Erikson and Josefsson (2023) cite similar contradictions in the Swedish Riksdag, they attribute this to the gender balance achieved in the parliament and feminine leadership ideals are valued, yet it remains a gendered workplace that has masculine practices that has gendered impacts on leadership.

To conclude, in this chapter I discussed the main findings of this thesis and the implications the findings have on existing literature. Throughout, conclusions have pointed to the importance of political context, or gendered conditions, on political leadership and speaks to the 'institutional turn' in politics and gender study. Simultaneously, this thesis has reintroduced the importance of individual leaders' experiences, histories and trajectories that offer a greater understanding of how gender impacts on leadership practice. The theory of practice also contributes to this broad understanding and acts as a 'catch all' theoretical framing that encompasses multiple aspects of leadership.

In the following chapter, I present my concluding remarks. In sum, the broad scope of this thesis has enabled a strong contribution to literature, theoretically, empirically, and methodologically. These contributions will be explored in more depth as I reflect on this research. This involves addressing the limitations of this research and exploring possible avenues for future research to unveil further issues around gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament that this study does not offer.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

The final chapter of this thesis allows for concluding remarks. The first section looks backwards by reflecting on this research, its attempts to bridge two distinct disciplines, its theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions, and the limitations of its scope. Limitations of this study are also discussed that contribute to a prospective research agenda to address areas of study that go beyond the scope of this thesis. The second section of this chapter looks forward at the present state of global political leadership and the need for an anti-racist feminist intervention in leadership scholarship in light of significant international challenges – namely climate change and a rise in right-wing populism. The chapter concludes by pondering the future of the Scottish Parliament as it reaches its quarter-century anniversary, and the implications for the study of political leadership within the Scottish context.

9.1. Part One: Reflections on this Research

9.1.1. Theoretical Contributions

Women's access to political leadership positions has increased globally (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023). Yet, among feminist political researchers, it is widely acknowledged that too little is known about how political leadership processes are gendered and how political leaders experience leadership as gendered actors (Waylen, 2021). Furthermore, little attention is given to the importance of context that has fundamental implications for political leadership (Knights, 2022). Literature on gender and political leadership within parliaments as gendered workplaces is emerging in scholarship. The explicit conceptualisation of parliaments as gendered workplaces is a new phenomenon, led by a specific cohort of scholars that use Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organisations and have developed new understandings of leadership in gendered parliamentary workplaces (Erikson and Josefsson 2019; 2023). By examining MSPs' political leadership from both micro and macro perspectives, this research has responded to the call for greater insight on this subject. It does so whilst contributing to knowledge on political leadership in a 'maturing' parliament and one that has enjoyed relative success on women's representation (St Denny, 2020).

Childs and Krooks (2009: 144) suggest researchers take a 'joined up' analytical approach to study 'all aspects' of gendered parliamentary contexts which 'may be gendered [and] affect the behaviour of representatives'. As the first study to do so, this has provided a broad understanding of gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament. As such, it conceptualises all MSPs as leaders and has explored multiple aspects of leadership from

habitus to field. This study is a critical intervention in leadership theory that consistently emphasises incongruity between leadership and femininity (Elliott and Stead, 2018). It redirects attention away from binary constructions of leadership that are reductive, and instead highlights the complexity of leadership as a gendered activity.

The thesis develops theoretical framing that combines Bourdieusian concepts and Feminist Institutionalised conceptualisation of parliaments as gendered workplaces. To summarise, this thesis argues that MSPs elected between 1999 and 2021 developed a distinctive leadership practice that is constituted by relationships between the Bourdieusian concepts of habitus, capitals, field, hexis, doxa *and* gender. This leadership practice is characterised by feminised leadership ideals such as care, empathy and collegiality. However, this feminised political habitus sits in tandem with masculine workplace practices that have disproportionate impacts on women's leadership. The findings have illuminated that both men and women, particularly on the left of the political spectrum, developed a political habitus prior to devolution. Women's inclusion in the trade movement led to a feminised, collegiate parliamentary habitus in early devolution that was embedded in parliamentary culture (Mackay and McAllister, 2012). During this time, leadership capital was tied to capabilities and policy influence. However, over time valued leadership capitals have evolved and have coincided with the personalisation of politics where leadership styles are valued as capital (Pederson, 2016; Higgins and McKay, 2016). Particularly during the 2014 Independence Referendum, alternative leadership capitals disrupted the political habitus and the divisive political landscape created antagonistic leadership expectations.

Again, over time, findings showed that this has been disrupted and MSPs emphasised the ways in which they embody collegiate, caring and power-sharing leadership. FI analysis uncovered MSPs' leadership styles and the ways in which MSPs lead were perceived to challenge masculinised political cultures (Norris, 1996; Hibb, 2022). Both men and women employ gendered strategies that resist combative, aggressive politics. This has been found in literature elsewhere where women attempt to exemplify the 'different voice ideology' (Cameron and Shaw, 2020). This research extends the feminisation of politics (Lovenduski, 2012; Mackay and McAllister, 2012) to the feminisation of political leadership and unearths the ways in which men contribute to this feminisation through Bourdieu's concept of capital. The parliamentary setting, however, reveals how workplace rules have gendered outcomes for women's leadership, particularly its incompatibilities with caring responsibilities and unveils tension between the feminine leadership ideals and the masculine parliamentary workplace rules (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023).

The findings from this research have several theoretical implications that inform current theory. The thesis brings together two complementary theoretical conceptual frameworks.

Bourdieu's conceptual tools have been used in both organisational and political literature; however, FI has not been adopted by organisational scholars. Used in isolation, Bourdieusian and FI analysis of political leadership is subject to critique. Institutional approaches to leadership risk focusing on the context of leadership and overlook leadership itself (Helms, 2014). Conversely, it has been argued that biographical analysis of political leaders is generally under theorised, descriptive, and limited for purposes of comparison (Walter, 2014). By using Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, this research has contributed this 'under theorised' biographical analysis of political leaders. It has demonstrated that leaders' personal histories are impactful on their leadership trajectories and the ways that they lead in the parliament.

Using both theoretical lenses together, enables thorough exploration of both the (gendered) institution and the actors within it. Such an undertaking had not been explored. Feminist Institutionalism has been used in hybrid approaches in conjunction with other theories to explain gendered phenomena, including Acker (Josefsson and Erikson, 2020) and Butler (Miller, 2018). However, Bourdieu and FI had not been combined. An enduring critique of Bourdieu's scholarship is gender blindness (Skeggs, 1997; Huppatz, 2012). As such, this research contributes to the body of theoretical literature that uses Bourdieu's concepts through an analytical lens that focuses on gender. By combining these Bourdieusian thinking tools with FI, this approach has built on the feminist interventions in Bourdieusian literature within the traditionally masculine political field. By developing a theory of practice, this study is replicable in other areas of gender and leadership research. The theoretical framing used is malleable and can be used in multiple configurations to suit the research setting. It demonstrates the ways in which leaders respond to, and are shaped by, gendered conditions.

This thesis is motivated by the shifts in leadership studies that have developed understandings of how leaders operate in contextual settings (Bennister *et al.* 2017). However, the institutional turn in leadership literature that focuses on the importance of context has risked overlooking the importance of personal histories on leadership. Indeed, it could be argued that many institutionalist perspectives on political leadership have focused more on the context in which politicians lead, and less on leadership itself (Helms, 2014). To address both aspects, micro analyses of leadership prioritise leaders' biographies, trajectories and styles, while macro analyses consider the environmental settings in which leadership occurs. These perspectives oscillate between structure and agency. Chapter Three outlined the need for integrated theoretical framing that marries dialogue between these perspectives whilst centring on the impacts of both gender and the

gendered parliamentary workplace on leadership. By interviewing current and former MSPs in the Scottish Parliament, this research focused on leadership both inwardly and outwardly to achieve micro and macro understandings of political leadership.

Bridging Disciplines

A significant aim of this thesis was to bridge understandings of gender and leadership from organisational and political scholarship. This was motivated by the 'minimal interaction' between the bodies of literature (Wilson, 2013). As such, this thesis offers a fuller understanding of political leadership that has been informed by organisational scholarship, particularly Acker's (1990) conceptualisation of gendered organisations. Using an interdisciplinary approach that utilised appropriate and complementary methods and approaches from both disciplines, this thesis offers a critical synthesis. This research extends understandings of Scottish political leadership and the Scottish Parliament through a gender lens, where there is currently limited literature on gender and political leadership. This has contributed to both the study of leadership and the study of the parliament as a gendered organisation.

Although many advise against interdisciplinarity for reasons of incompatibility, this thesis has demonstrated that there is significant value to be gained by integrating approaches from different disciplines. By leaning into organisational literature whilst attempting to contextualise and explain the inner workings of the parliament, greater insights were uncovered and made available. This includes understanding institutional maintenance (and change) through organisational enchantment that is a theory that resides in organisational and management studies. Further, organisational research often consults new institutionalism, yet has not yielded the benefits of Feminist Institutionalism to develop 'fine grained' gender analyses of organisations (Lovenduski, 2011). Bourdieusian approaches also emphasise the importance of retaining experiential narratives from leaders that explore their personal histories and how these inform leadership practice.

The interdisciplinarity of this thesis encourages a broad audience. The nature of the research questions offers valuable insight into different facets of gender and political leadership within a parliamentary context. It is intended that the insights offered will be appealing to both organisational and political scholars that work in the field of leadership. It also has practical benefits that contribute towards gender sensitive parliament recommendations that include broader leadership training that promote inclusive and progressive leadership practices.

9.1.2. Empirical and Methodological Contributions

Empirically, this thesis marks a notable intervention in the study of gender and leadership in the Scottish context. Parliaments with centuries of history are settings for the extensive scholarship on the inner workings of parliaments. However, the Scottish Parliament remains a relatively new and understudied parliament compared to other parliaments. Whilst this research is informed by the impactful work on women's representation (Mackay, 2004; 2014; Mackay and Kenny, 2007; 2020), in its short history of 24 years, there had not been research conducted explicitly on gender and leadership. Instead, biographical accounts of party leaders have been written on a number of party leaders that cast light on personal histories (Leydier, 2015).

This research further contributes to the study of political leadership through a gendered lens that has interviewed both men and women MSPs. Since its conception, there also has not been academic research conducted into political masculinities in the Scottish Parliament. This thesis goes some way in addressing this omission in existing literature and seeks to inspire further study that prioritises both men and women's experiences. It also contributes to the limited work on new parliaments and parliaments within small countries where proximity to political power is closer than other in nations.

Dominant approaches to leadership research are largely quantitative studies from a positivist position. Leadership has been viewed as an objective, timeless tenet of social organisation (Wilson, 2013; Klenke, 2016). Yet, interpretivist approaches to the study of leadership offer new possibilities in developing understandings of leadership, particularly in parliamentary settings (Bennister, 2021). By undertaking an interpretivist approach, this study places importance on political leaders' experiences, and does so by prioritising their voices through elite interviews. As highlighted throughout, political context is central to understanding experiences of political leadership, in the absence of ethnographic methods, this was explored through interviewees' narratives.

The interview sample contributed to the holistic nature of the study; respondents were from different parties, elected at different points since devolution, professional backgrounds, personal situations regarding care, and geographical locations. Each of these factors, alongside gender, impacted their leadership experiences. The research sample was not limited solely to women's experiences, nor a singular political party, as is the case in other

research (Celis and Childs, 2012; Webb and Childs, 2012, cited in Hibbs, 2022). Indeed, MSPs were from across the party spectrum - the Scottish Labour Party, SNP, Scottish Liberal Democrats, Scottish Greens, Scottish Socialist Party, and the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party. Moreover, literature on elite interviews with politicians is awash with cautionary advice on power dynamics and access (Puwar, 2002). My elite interviewing experience refutes much of this literature – I found MSPs to be accessible, welcoming, generous, and kind. While there were obvious access and sampling challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as discussed in Chapter Three, MSPs frequently said that they are open to academic research requests as openness is a key characteristic of the Scottish Parliament.

This research also makes a methodological contribution in its demonstration of methodological adaptability. Although I could not use intended methods to conduct a parliamentary ethnography, I continued to use an actor-centred approach, and accessed the context of the Scottish Parliament through online interviews. It offers an example of how a research approach might be reframed due to extenuating circumstances, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, and how it is possible to retain the foundational tenets to achieve similar outcomes. In light of this, the following section considers the limitations of this research, some of which stem from the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

9.1.3. Limitations of this Research

All research is bound by time and is reflective of the period in which it is written. The primary limitations of this research principally stem from the impact caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Had this research taken place at another time, this thesis would illustrate a significantly different research project. Consequently, my limited use of intended ethnographic methods used in this research leaves opportunities for further methodological innovation in this area of study. There has not been a parliamentary ethnography undertaken in the Scottish Parliament that has explicitly focused on gender since Malley's 2012 thesis on institutionalised gendered norms and women's substantive representation. As the intended methodology showed, there are numerous advantageous tenets of using ethnographic methods to study both leadership and parliaments. As such, the Scottish Parliament remains an eminent research setting for both political and organisational scholars.

The ambiguous and unwieldy nature of leadership made for a challenging research project. Identifying all MSPs as leaders was a challenge as politics is a hierarchical environment. As such, not all MSPs identified themselves as leaders despite describing the everyday leadership activities they undertook in their role. As the first study on political leadership in the parliament, the data gathered offers a holistic, wide-ranging view of political leadership through a gendered lens. However, this leaves opportunity for critique, particularly from an FI perspective. Childs and Krook (2009) suggest mapping institutional norms and processes within political settings to interrogate their gendered implications. Parliamentary ethnography is another common method used by those that engage with FI (Childs, 2004; Crewe, 2012; Malley, 2012; Miller, 2018). Informed by historical institutionalism, process tracing is another way in which gendered institutional change is commonly studied (Kenny, 2013). Ultimately, the method of elite interviewing was in alignment with the intended research project. At the time, there was great uncertainty regarding the possibility and future of this research project; this had consequences on the available and usable methods during the context of a global lockdown. Nonetheless, the methodological approach taken produced compelling and comprehensive data on men and women's experience of political leadership within the parliamentary context. With greater availability of methods and access to the parliament, future study into gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament might focus on specific aspects of leadership.

As detailed in Chapter Four, my research method and sample changed during my fieldwork, from shadowing and interviewing women MSPs to conducting online and telephone interviews with men and women MSPs. Telephone and virtual interviews are often deemed inferior to in-person interviews. The flow of conversation and establishment of rapport can be limited in virtual settings (see Appendix 4 for comparison between a day shadowing an MSP and virtual interviews). Conversations with MSPs at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic were frequently diverted into discussions of the pandemic, its handling and how the parliament was responding. Whilst this is not necessarily a limitation, its dominance in discussions overshadowed the purpose of the interview at times which was to discuss experiences of political leadership.

Continuing to reflect on the methodology, whilst the purpose of this research is not to obtain the truth or authenticity of my interviews, it is necessary to reflect on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on interview responses. During this time effective leaders were commonly classified as those who displayed empathy and compassion, commonly associated with women's leadership characteristics, opposed to traditionally masculine characteristics (Johnson and Williams, 2020). Viewing the data critically, this may have influenced MSPs

responses as global political leadership was under a spotlight during a time where ethical leadership was valued. Although interviewees were asked how leadership had changed in the parliament since 1999 to develop retrospective insights, it would be compelling to have a comparative dataset that was not captured during this extraordinary time for political leadership globally.

Lastly, a further limitation of this thesis concerns the research sample, particularly regarding intersectionality and cross-party representation. In terms of party representation, whilst I interviewed at least one MSP from each political party from each political party that has been elected, ethical decisions to preserve anonymity did not permit the exploration of political leadership within the context of political parties, rather it was the parliament that was the focal context. Considering intersectionality limitations, although there were disabled, working class and LGBTQI+ MSPs interviewed, this research does not go far enough to in using intersectionality as the primary axis for analysis was gender. At the time of interviewing, there had not been any women of colour elected to the Scottish Parliament. Only two men of colour were elected, neither of whom accepted my invitation to be part of this research. Literature on race and leadership emphasise that whilst gender destabilises privilege of white women, the destabilisation of privilege for women of colour is compounded by both race and gender (Atewologun and Sealy, 2014, cited in Mavin *et al.* 2023). As such, it would be valuable to explore intersectionality in relation to gender and leadership in future research in the parliament. Taking this into account, the next section of this chapter considers how these limitations can be addressed in recommendations for future research as it is important that leadership scholarship does not simply illustrate 'life history possibilities of only an elite few' that contributes to an enduring 'blind spot' in this field (Calás *et al.* 2017, cited in Mavin *et al.* 2023).

9.2. Part Two: Looking Forward: Directions for Future Research

To finish, this section looks forward to the future of both leadership study and leadership practice. I begin by offering recommendations for future research based on my findings, specifically identifying possible areas of exploration in a Scottish context, and political leadership more widely. I return to the literature on leadership exploring 'utopian' futures that are embedded in anti-racist, feminist interventions in leadership. I then turn to the possible lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic that put a spotlight on gender and crisis leadership where feminised styles of leadership were valued. Finally, I speculatively contemplate the future of the Scottish Parliament, and indeed Scotland, as we face both domestic and global challenges, namely the growth of global populism, recovery from the

Covid-19 pandemic, and the possibility of a second Scottish Independence Referendum, and the leadership required to face such challenges.

9.2.1. Recommendations for Future Research

The study of political leadership is not an easy endeavour; at times it is a concept that is elusive, misunderstood, and ambiguous. Although this research has responded to calls in the field for greater research on gender and political research, underexplored avenues for research remain. As Josefsson and Erikson (2021) have identified, more research is required that examines political leadership through a Feminist Institutionalist perspective. More specifically, they suggest analysing how leadership is appointed and performed, gendered leadership norms and parliamentary/party policies. Erikson and Josefsson (2023) are particularly interested in extending study into gender-balanced political settings and the implications on leadership; this could be applied to the current Cabinet and specific parties (Scottish Labour, SNP, and Scottish Greens). In a similar light, Knights (2022), a key scholar on masculinities and leadership, argues that leadership studies are narrowly preoccupied with leaders' individual attributes such as personality traits, decision making skills and drive, and thus fail to recognise the importance of contextualising leadership. This thesis has gone some way to respond to such demands by simultaneously exploring individuals' leadership experience and the context in which leadership is practised.

This thesis casts valuable light on how all politicians exercise leadership and places emphasis on their experience of leadership, whether that is from the frontbenches of government, backbenches of parliament, or party leaders. In my interviews, MSPs themselves had difficulty defining leadership, seeing themselves as leaders and acknowledging others as leaders. As set out earlier, there is little research that acknowledges all elected politicians as political leaders. Such an undertaking would be replicable in other political settings and parliaments and would contribute to the shift away from reserving the title of 'leader' for those most senior. Such an approach is also valuable in political environments where the most senior positions are held by men. By reframing the criteria for who counts as a leader, it gives attention to underrepresented and minority groups' experiences of political leadership. Consequently, this unveils more nuanced and unseen accounts of political leadership that are not necessarily accessible or visible.

This thesis has cast a wide net on gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament since devolution, addressing ascension to leadership, prior careers, leadership styles, gendered challenges to leadership, and the Scottish Parliament as a gendered organisation. Future research might focus on specific aspects of leadership to gain more

intimate understandings of each. Specific events since devolution such as the 2014 Independence Referendum and the Covid-19 pandemic might be another way in which to explore leadership and the gendered conditions that may be produced within the parliament. In addition, whilst this thesis has focused on parliamentary political leadership, the study of gender and political leadership in other spheres of politics also remains understudied in the Scottish context. This includes local government, party politics and the Cabinet, thus offering scope for similar research projects and widening understandings of political leadership in Scotland across the political sphere.

Another way in which this research could be taken forward is the possibility of comparative research. Indeed, several studies on gender and politics involving the Scottish Parliament undertake a comparative approach, whereby two political environments are studied and compared. Examples include the Scottish Parliament and the House of Commons (Malley, 2012), the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd (Mackay and McAllister, 2012), and informal comparisons between the Scottish Parliament, New Zealand (Curtin, 2008) and Nordic parliaments (Erikson and Freidenvall, 2023). Whilst comparisons with other parliaments are beyond the scope of this research, comparative parliamentary studies present several opportunities. There are numerous ways in which the Scottish Parliament could be compared either with parliaments alike or those that differ. Comparisons on likeness and dissimilarity could relate to parliamentary characteristics such as the parliament's age or gender balance, or national characteristics such as population size. Both the Welsh Senedd and the Northern Ireland Assembly are a similar age and have similar histories. The pro-devolution women's movement in Wales during the 1990s resembles that of the women's movement in Scotland and has achieved greater gender balance than the Scottish Parliament (Chaney, 2000). Scotland also had ambitions of a 'Scandinavian-style' parliament, thus comparisons could be drawn with Nordic countries (Arter, 2004). Given the context-specific nature of gender and political leadership, comparisons with other parliaments might unveil the different (or same) gendered parliamentary rules that impact gendered experiences of leadership. Thus, possibilities are abundant.

The significance of the parliament estate and its space on political leadership is a further possible avenue for exploration and is an emerging focal point for leadership researchers (Ropo and Salovaara 2018; 2019). Whilst this research has attributed importance to parliamentary culture, namely formal and informal rules, the parliamentary socio-material space has not received equal attention. In neither organisational nor political literature, the concept of 'spacing leadership' also has also not been explored through a gendered lens,

which may unveil and contribute to Puwar's (2004) conceptualisation of 'space invaders' that was explored in Chapter Two. This would further expand on Malley's (2012) thesis on gender and feelings of inclusion and exclusion in the Scottish Parliament that explores both the cultural ceremonial aspects of the parliament and the physical building. The following section considers how prospective research in the parliament could adequately address intersectionality in light of greater diverse representation following the 2021 election.

9.2.2. Improving Diversity and Representation in the Scottish Parliament: Insights from the 2021 Cohort of MSPs and the Gender Sensitive Audit

As this thesis has demonstrated, time and political context are vital to understandings of how leadership is understood and experienced by MSPs. January 2021 marked the end of my fieldwork and future research may seek to go beyond this period of time. In May 2021, the Scottish Parliament was 'rejuvenated' as 25% of existing MSPs stood down and were replaced by newly elected MSPs (Garavelli, 2021). Greater efforts were put into the use of quota measures to improve diversity, and as a result, the most diverse cohort of MSPs was elected, including the first two women of colour (Kaukab Stewart MSP and Pam Gosal MSP) and first permanent wheelchair user (Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP). This parliamentary term has also seen more MSPs openly discuss their disabilities and neurodiversity. To gain insight beyond the scope of this research, I have attended events with some of the new women MSPs and have heard their experiences of parliamentary life; their stories are largely reminiscent of that of my interviewees'. However, their reflections demonstrate that thorough intersectional analyses in this thesis are largely absent due to a lack of diverse voices and a focus solely on gender.

In March 2023, I attended a University of Glasgow event, *Gendering Multi-Level Parliamentary Democracy*, where Kaukab Stewart MSP and Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP shared their experiences as new MSPs. Elected in 2021, MSP Stewart, having first stood for election to the Scottish Parliament in 1999, spoke of her experience as a woman of colour; she said 'race equality is not embedded in the system. [...] The fact that it has taken me 20 years shows the multitude of barriers that there are', also commenting on the financial and caring responsibility barriers that she experienced during this time. Stewart went on to say that she is 'mindful' of her image and makes an actively symbolic choice to wear traditional Pakistani clothing to signal to other Pakistani women that they are represented in parliament.

In addition, Pam Duncan-Glancy MSP spoke of her experience as the first permanent wheelchair user in the Scottish Parliament. She praised the responsiveness of the parliament in making the necessary accessibility adjustments; she spoke of how she had just left the building when the election results were announced when a member of staff at the parliament called and asked her about her accessibility needs. This contrasted her experience as a member of staff in the House of Lords when she was once asked 'where do you think you are going?' when she was in a lift. MSP Duncan-Glancy was also mindful of the way she dressed in the parliament. Upon the advice to 'look the part', she recalled that she would get dressed three times in the mornings when she was first elected as she was anxious about the appropriateness of her dresses being too short in her wheelchair, reflecting on the archetype the able-bodied male politician. Discussing her working-class background, MSP Duncan-Glancy spoke of how the parliament is a microcosm of society and that the same issues that affect working class women in society are mirrored in parliament, specifically having your voice heard. Both reflections from these new MSPs demonstrate the importance of intersectional experience that looks beyond gender. They also emphasised the need for quota systems that reserve seats for both disabled and BAME candidates as a systematic method to ensure access to the political field.

In November 2022, I attended an Elect Her webinar, *Her Life in Politics*, that consisted of three cross-party women MSPs discussing their experience in parliament, two of which were new MSPs (Pam Gosal MSP and Ariane Burgess MSP). It was insightful to hear their fresh, new perspectives on parliamentary life. Some of the experiences echoed the stories shared with me during my interviews. However, one difference that resonated was the emphasis placed on empathy-led leadership. They spoke of how PO Alison Johnstone sets the tone with her empathetic, supportive leadership style. From the front of the chamber, she 'gets the best out of people', smiles encouragingly at MSPs during their speeches, and attempts to create a less combative atmosphere for parliamentary debates. Taken together, these brief reflections from new MSPs capture important aspects of parliamentary life in the Scottish Parliament that are yet to be fully explored, particularly regarding intersectionality. Ultimately, the Scottish Parliament remains an exciting research site for feminist researchers and scholars. With such new insight, prioritising newly elected MSPs' voices in future research would be imperative.

New institutional norms have been promoted internationally for the last ten years by scholars in the field of gender sensitive parliaments (Childs, 2016; Palmieri, 2019, Palmieri and Baker, 2022). In March 2023, the 135-page report *A Parliament for All* was published on the results from the Scottish Parliament gender sensitive audit (The Scottish Parliament, 2023). The report sets out over 30 recommendations for best practice and avenues for

parliamentary reform to improve gender equality. It highlights that due to fluctuations in numbers of women in formal leadership roles, gender equality is not embedded in the parliament, nor is it guaranteed. As this thesis has shown, MSPs' promotion into formal leadership is at the discretion of party leaders, demonstrating that the need for gender equality to be embedded in formal parliamentary rules. Among the recommendations, recommendation 30 suggests SPICe surveys MSPs on leadership opportunities, new MSP socialisation, perceptions of gender sensitivity and inclusion (including childcare provision), and inappropriate behaviour – all which impact experiences of MSPs' leadership. Additional recommendations include a ban on single sex parliamentary committees, the establishment of a cross-party women's forum, and the permanent introduction of proxy voting. Also demonstrating the importance of intersectionality, the report highlights that women are not a homogenous group, and that intersectionality should be a key focus for the parliament.

The gender sensitive audit is a critical undertaking that has potential to shape the future of gender equality in the Scottish Parliament. It is a gender equality tool that attempts to remove the onus on women to assimilate into masculine political environments by addressing structural issues. The report recommends the creation of the Scottish Parliament Gender Sensitive Parliament Advisory Group to lead on the implementation of the proposed recommendations and reform. From 'insider' knowledge, I am aware that women MSPs will be receiving leadership training, specifically focusing on how to deliver and receive interventions in the chamber. This is in response to findings that show gendered differences in how men and women MSPs exercise interventions, which are a key communicative tool, and can demonstrate political leadership in the debating chamber. There are also a number of recommendations on workplace rules that include a review of hybrid working and sitting hours (The Scottish Parliament, 2023). Going forward, it will be of interest to observe how this report carries momentum and impacts the gender equality trajectory of the parliament and gender mainstreaming that has been led by the current PO Alison Johnstone. The report cites the importance of formally enshrining such recommendations so that such interventions are not dependent on the will of feminist actors.

9.2.3. Gender, Leadership, and Crisis: Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic

'[To] care for one another is a political act, and it's not too late to return to a pandemic response that is based on shared values of safety, respect [and] collective responsibility' (Alder-Bolton, 2023).

This thesis was written at a unique and critical period in our contemporary history. The revitalisation of political leadership literature has coincided with contemporary global

events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, that has put a spotlight on political leadership. During this time, political leadership in the context of crises was macroscopic and leaders' abilities were (re)assessed daily. Thus, it would be an oversight to omit discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic that demanded ongoing crisis leadership. According to the Centre for Economic Policy and Research and the World Economic Forum, countries with women leaders had 'systematically and significantly better' Covid-19 outcomes than those led by men (Garikipati and Kambhampati, 2021). In light of the pandemic, and in a post-Covid world that is increasingly fraught with more crises, scholars have placed emphasis on the ways in which crises have gendered impacts on political leadership. Such analyses move beyond the glass cliff that has dominated the coupling of gender and leadership and crises. As such, we are urged to 'think crisis, think gender' and the broader implications for leaders as gendered actors (O'Brien and Piscopo, 2023).

During the pandemic, Scotland was just one of 28 countries that was headed by a woman head of state and/or government (UN Women, 2021). Throughout, FM Nicola Sturgeon gave daily televised briefings, updating the public on key statistics, guidance, and information, admitted the mistakes made by her government, and spoke of how the Covid-19 pandemic personally affected her. Kwan *et al* (2020) provide a gendered analysis of leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic, including FM Nicola Sturgeon. Throughout, similarities between former PM New Zealand Jacinda Ardern and FM Sturgeon's leadership are detailed. New Zealand had some of the strictest global Covid-19 measures and some of the lowest case rates in the world. Kwan *et al* (2020) detail how both leaders achieved transparency and assertiveness. Unlike the tough expressions posed by male leaders, FM Sturgeon expressed how tired she was and how difficult the decisions were that she undertook. Kwan *et al* (2020) further detail how FM Sturgeon 'chose to show empathy, humility and resilience'.

As detailed throughout, the timing of my fieldwork coincided with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Naturally, conversations arose surrounding the pandemic and its handling by leaders. As such, MSPs shared real-time observations of political leadership from a unique vantage point. Whilst some MSPs critiqued FM Nicola Sturgeon's handling of the pandemic, highlighting her perceived mistakes, others praised her approach, drawing on leadership qualities such as care and empathy.

Nicola Sturgeon has managed to secure the trust of the public in a very very difficult crisis at the moment, and she's managed to secure the trust of more than just SNP or independence supporters. She's done that whilst talking about values like empathy, solidarity and love. That's quite a rare thing¹³⁶.

¹³⁶ Interview 28; man.

Johnson and Williams (2020) provide further analyses of the ways in which responses to Covid-19 were gendered, using the concepts of 'protective masculinity' and 'protective femininity' that were mobilised during the crisis. They highlight how men and women political leaders crafted stereotypically gendered styles of leadership that gave women political leverage. Conforming to gender stereotypes, male political leaders would often militarise their language in their response to the Covid-19 pandemic, depicting themselves as protectors from threat (Johnson and Williams, 2020). Both President Donald Trump and PM Boris Johnson used war metaphors to describe the offence against the virus. Indeed, Knights (2021) argues that politicians' mismanagement of the pandemic was 'partly a result of their attachment to their masculine identities', specifically characteristics including bravado, machoism, and narcissism. In contrast, women leaders such as former New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern would display empathy and care to also evoke protectiveness. Former PM Ardern, Finland PM Sanna Marin and FM Nicola Sturgeon all addressed children in their Covid-19 briefings. As aforementioned, it is traditionally feminine leadership styles that are favoured in times of crisis.

This was a critical time for obtaining and maintaining public trust. Public trust in political actors was seen as a key mitigation against the Covid-19 pandemic by encouraging the public to policy compliance, vaccination uptake and rejection of conspiracy theories (Devine *et al.* 2022). Data from 2020 showed that 74% of Scottish adults trusted the Scottish Government (Scottish Household Survey, 2020). Furthermore, uptake of the first Covid-19 vaccination was 95% (UK Government, 2023). During the pandemic, 78% of the Scottish public said that the Scottish Government handled the crisis so far (May 2020), compared to 34% who said the same about the UK Government (Gray and Mulholland, 2020). As restrictions on social distancing and mask mandates eased, there was discussion of 'building back better' and applying learning from the pandemic to make meaningful societal change. However, whether this has been achieved remains to be seen. Evidently, the 'strongmen' leaders that led several countries during the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g. Trump, Johnson, and Bolsonaro) have failed to maintain their leadership positions post-pandemic, following electoral defeat (Williams, 2020).

However, in early 2023, three prominent national political women leaders who led during the pandemic left office: Nicola Sturgeon, Jacinda Ardern and Sanna Marin. Gendered commentary on Sturgeon's resignation echoed that of Jacinda Ardern's resignation that occurred a month prior, both of whom said that they knew when they had reached their limits both personally and politically in the top job in their respective countries. Both resignations were unexpected, but both chose to resign on their own terms, at times of their choosing. Nicola Sturgeon, like Jacinda Ardern, received cross-party and international

commendation for her time in office from other politicians, many from opposition parties, spoke highly of her leadership, particularly her communication skills, political astuteness, kindness, empathy and being a feminist role model. The following month (April 2023), Finnish PM Sanna Marin was voted out of office in a general election due to an electoral shift that favoured right-wing parties, prompting headlines such as 'Finland's Sanna Marin Voted Out: Are Female Leaders Becoming an Endangered Species?' (Fordham, 2023). Campbell (2023) suggested that a hostile and polarised political environment is ultimately forcing 'good people out of politics' and will have negative consequences on the quality of political debate and legislation (cited in Davies, 2023). Echoed in interviews with MSPs, such a political environment also prevents newcomers, particularly women, from entering formal politics.

Former New Zealand Jacinda Ardern was widely commended for her leadership style, both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Contributing to this discussion, during an interview one MSP spoke of her first-hand observation of Ardern's leadership having spent time with her during an election. She argues that Ardern's approach to leadership is significant to disrupting populist ideologies and contrasting populist leadership styles.

I think the best example of female leadership that exists now is Jacinda Ardern [...] I'm really fortunate to know her; we have a good friend in common and I spent some time with her in New Zealand during the 2017 election [and] she is just as brilliant as she looks. What she combines is strength and empathy. It's a potent political combination. I think it's possibly the key to tackling populism and the increasing binary tribal nature of politics, which I really, really worry about¹³⁷.

The Covid-19 pandemic shone a spotlight on populist ideologies. Anti-vaccination, misinformation, conspiracy theories and non-compliance with Covid-19 measures during the pandemic created the fight against the concurrent 'infodemic' (Eberl *et al.* 2021). Connections have been made between the rise of populism and the hyper-masculinity displayed by leaders such as Boris Johnson and Donald Trump (Waylen, 2021). Drawing on the rise of populism, the following section of this chapter highlights the demand for an anti-racist feminist intervention in leadership practice that draws on concepts of care that was exemplified by women political leaders during the Covid-19 pandemic.

9.2.4. Developing Interventions in Leadership Research: Feminist Agendas for Contemporary Issues

¹³⁷ Interview 18; woman.

'By design of our colonial history and capitalist logic, leadership has been regarded as the preserve of straight cis-gender able-bodied white men' (Liu, 2020).

Progress towards gender equality in politics is not linear. Political leaders are not detached from the social, economic or political contexts in which they sit. Instead, they operate in broader systems of power and ideologies (e.g. patriarchy and capitalism) (Liu, 2020). Benschop (2021) argues that the contemporary grand challenges require feminist answers. Feminist theory opposes the dominant epistemic culture in management and organisational research of objectivity and neutrality that conceals the gendered nature of organisations (Benschop, 2021). Although Benschop (2021) refers to challenges that face organisations, namely inequalities, technology and climate change, the messages are applicable to parliamentary settings and political leadership. This also reflects the key tenets of this thesis that highlight the need for interdisciplinary approaches to explore complex phenomena like leadership. Benschop (2021) draws on eco-feminist theories that emphasise values of compassion, community, care, empathy, and love – values that have been a key feature of this chapter – in tandem with an overarching goal of achieving social justice (Allison, 2017).

Since 2013, there have been notable shifts towards right-wing populism and a growth of discontent that rejects the (perceived) dominant social, political and economic discourse (Bezio and Goethals, 2018). Populism is the 'perceived destruction of national cultures, ways of life and values', 'anxieties related to deprivation', 'high levels of political distrust' and 'dealignment' in voters' loyalty to political parties (Goodwin and Milazzo, 2015). Although mainstream discussions 'rarely problematise how populism and populist leadership are gendered', feminist understandings of right-wing populism highlight that it is a gendered political movement and ideology that encourages masculinist identity politics (Waylen, 2021: 1160; Sauer, 2020). In addition, populist parties are commonly referred to as 'men's parties' (Sauer, 2020).

At the time of writing this thesis and conducting fieldwork, global leaders included UK PM Boris Johnson and US President Donald Trump, both of whom would be considered populist 'macho leaders' (Mactaggart, 2020). Populism is fundamentally the politics of grievance, where traditionally dominant forms White patriarchal power is perceived to be under threat (May, 2022). Such negative emotions manifest in the form of blaming others for societal problems (e.g. institutions or groups in society). Under patriarchy and capitalism, relationships between leaders and followers are based on competition and control. Populism offers a competing mode to democracy that gives rise to unorthodox leaders and alternative parties (Flinders and Hinterleitner, 2022). As such, we have witnessed leaders

in several countries roll back women's reproductive rights, reject transgender people's rights, oppose same-sex marriage, impose anti-immigration laws, and deny climate change. However, critically, as the softening of hegemonic masculinity in Scotland at the end of the 20th century exemplifies (as discussed in Chapter Eight), national articulations of hegemonic masculinity and the ways in which this can impact positively leadership have been demonstrated (Gibbs and Scothorne, 2021).

There are ongoing demands for a critical intervention in leadership literature. In frustration by the lack of progress made in leadership literature that refute the romanticism that surrounds individual leaders, a smaller number of leadership scholars (Liu, 2020; Wilson, 2013) are calling for a scholarly revolution. In her book, *Redeeming Leadership: An Antiracist Feminist Intervention*, Liu (2020) critiques the ways in which White men continue to dominate leadership positions in the Global North (Regno, 2020). In tandem is a critique of leadership literature that persistently romanticise European colonial ideals of what it is to be a leader. Since Weber's (1947) post-war conceptualisation of 'charismatic leadership' there has been an enduring focus on charismatic leadership, individualism and personality (Liu 2020a). This prevails not only in leadership literature but 'remains an obstinate feature of our public imagination' (Liu, 2020a). While it would appear that there has been a shift away from traditional heroic leadership literature, it has been replaced with one that is tied to ideals of neoliberalism that has been said to overemphasise agency and overlook gendered structural issues (Wilson, 2013).

Liu (2020) defines leadership as a socially constructed process that is inseparable from imperialist, White supremacist, capitalist, and patriarchal power. Illustrated by the fantasy that has been constructed and reproduced, an 'elite masculinity' that penetrates leadership glorifies both dominance and control. Further, leadership itself continues to enable oppression, inequalities, and injustices through ongoing practices of control and exclusion. Rooted in the European colonial project, Liu (2020) argues that the hegemonic ideal leader was born with the idea of the White, colonising saviour that was depicted as exercising his superior insight and intellect. Within this patriarchal project, Liu (2020) argues that women's advancement has been subject to the terms set by imperialist, White supremacist and capitalist ideologies that emphasise the 'body count' of women leaders, rather than how women's presence challenges the norm. As such, this research has attempted to move away from the numeric totalling of women leaders in an attempt to explore gender as a dynamic and nuanced process. Further, emphasis is continuously placed on women's caring and nurturing capabilities both in line with colonial ideals of women's innocence and purity, and to minimise women's agentic abilities.

To reimagine leadership often provokes images of rebellion that continue to centre around masculine ideals of strength, bravery, and individualism. Liu's (2020) book sets out numerous proposals for interventions in both leadership literature and the practice. Not only should leaders be actively anti racist, but leaders should also adopt feminist practice by actively challenging patriarchal and White supremacist power. This draws on connotations of care, collegiality, and power-sharing – the most common leadership styles cited by MSPs.

In Scotland, the public has electorally rejected the few populist parties that exist (Hassan, 2021). This lack of support contrasts other European countries where right-wing populist parties have been successful in gaining larger shares of the vote and more seats in parliament, as seen in recent Swedish and Italian elections (Silver, 2022). Indeed, MSPs have demonstrated that more masculine styles of leadership in the Scottish Parliament are not currently valued. However, progressiveness cannot be taken for granted as the global political landscape is ever-changing. Upon this, the following final section of this chapter ponders the uncertain future of Scotland and the Scottish Parliament.

9.2.5. The Future of Scotland, the Scottish Parliament and Leadership

A week in politics is a long time. Having completed a PhD thesis on political leadership over the course of five years, much has changed, and as shown, time and context are fundamental to experiences of political leadership. Thus, a key question remains: *what does the future of political leadership in Scotland look like?* The Scottish Parliament, and indeed Scotland, is at a critical juncture. As this chapter has demonstrated, progress is not linear and cannot be taken for granted. The parliament has been in existence for almost a quarter of a century and is entering maturity (St Denny, 2020). In 2019, two decades after devolution, former FM Sturgeon claimed that 'Scotland is a feminist place to be' (Servera and Musson, 2019). Yet, as this thesis has demonstrated throughout, tensions exist in conjunction to this statement and the feminist status of the parliament. Scotland faces grand challenges both nationally and globally; climate and nature crises pose existential threat, levels of poverty are rising, and life expectancy is stagnating (Hunter, 2022).

During the final months of completing this thesis, Nicola Sturgeon resigned as First Minister of Scotland and leader of the SNP. As one of the original '99'ers', she served as FM for 8 years, and as DFM for 8 years prior. With an extensive political CV that spanned four

decades, Sturgeon was one of the most experienced political leaders in Scotland. It marked a shift in Scottish politics that had enjoyed relative stability for some time. In her resignation speech, Sturgeon spoke of the ‘brutality’ of politics where she had ‘virtually no privacy’ (Sturgeon, 2023). She has since spoken of the negative effects of polarised Scottish party politics; these are contrary to the aims of the Scottish Parliament reestablishment. In her final speech to parliament, she left office with a message that spoke to the importance of women’s political representation, both descriptively and substantively.

‘As the first woman to hold this office, advancing gender equality has always been close to my heart. My Cabinet has always been gender balanced. This Parliament legislated for free period products and strengthened the law on domestic abuse. And less tangibly perhaps, but just as important, no girl in our country now has any doubt that a woman can hold the highest office in the land. I heard a phrase the other day that struck a chord – when women lift, girls rise’ (Sturgeon, 2023).

In March 2023, Humza Yousaf MSP was elected leader of the SNP and First Minister of Scotland. He became the first person of colour and Muslim First Minister. Whilst this is an undisputed success, his ascension from election in 2011 to FM in 2023 contrasts the reality for women of colour in Scottish politics, where it took until 2021 for a woman of colour to be first elected to parliament. He also became the first FM to be a father to young children (under 5), commenting that Bute House had to be ‘child proofed’; ‘Bute House has never had that before – it’s all about adapting’ (Yousaf cited in Webster, 2023). This experience is also at odds with the numerous women who have resigned as MSPs due to incompatibilities with family life and echoes the gendered ‘motherhood penalty’ and ‘fatherhood bonus’ that politicians experience (Budig, 2014). As party leader, he joins the six out of six party leaders that are men, again contrasting the period between 2015 and 2017 where five out of six party leaders were women. This demonstrates the unpredictability of women’s representation and leadership in parliament. In the appointment of MSP Shona Robinson as Deputy First Minister, FM Yousaf nodded to the importance of insight from those that were elected in 1999. DFM Robinson was politically socialised among those in the youth wing of SNP pre-devolution such as former FM Sturgeon and former Cabinet Secretary Fiona Hyslop. Both Glasgow University alumni, the current FM and DFM both illustrate the ‘typical’ trajectory of the Scottish political elite (Torrance, 2016) (as explored in Chapter Two, part three).

With the SNP and the Scottish Greens currently in government, there is the possibility of a second Scottish Independence Referendum, where, if voted for, the Scottish political landscape could change dramatically. The Scottish Parliament may go from a sub-national parliament to a national parliament and would no longer be grouped in UK analyses. The

number of political leaders may shrink; we would no longer elect 59 MPs to the UK House of Commons. Yet, we may elect MEPs to the European Parliament once again. The Scottish Parliament would gain legislative power over all policy areas.

With regard to gender and political leadership, independence would give the Scottish Government the legislative competency to introduce legislative electoral gender quotas as set out in both the Scottish National Party and the Scottish Greens' manifestos. This could legally ensure that all parties adhere to prescribed gender quotas and, if implemented correctly, could embed gender equality in the parliament by law. Greater legislative power would also allow the Scottish Government to mandate that all political parties must publish data on candidates and elected representatives' protected characteristics. This would highlight the underrepresentation that exists beyond gender. However, as the literature on substantive representation suggests, gender balance by numbers only goes so far. This thesis has highlighted the importance of parliamentary culture (formal and informal rules) to achieve greater workplace equality by becoming a gender sensitive parliament. In its relative newness where tenets of gender equality have been embedded, the Scottish Parliament has the ability to become 'the gold standard' (Palmieri and Childs, 2022).

Another way in which political leadership in Scotland may evolve is through the decentralisation of power. Scotland is a small country with a population of just 5 million, and it has been made clear that MSPs feel personal connections to their constituencies and communities. As there is less physical proximity between the political sphere and the public, small countries can present greater opportunities for citizens to exert leadership and influence policy. In 2019, FM Sturgeon announced that the first national Citizens' Assembly would be convened (Elstub *et al.* 2022). The Citizens' Assembly brought together 104 members of the public to principally address the question 'what kind of country are we seeking to build?'. Citizens' assemblies attempt to decentralise power. It follows models of 'deliberative democracy' from other countries including Ireland and Canada that aim to empower the public to inform political decisions beyond voting in election cycles (Lang, 2007). Unlike other global citizens' assemblies, in an attempt to engage a cross-section of Scottish society, members have their expenses covered to attend and are given a £200 stipend (Cahillane, 2020). Research analysing the first Scottish Citizens' Assembly showed that members found the process to be rewarding, there was an increased interest and enthusiasm for political activity and members felt empowered (Elstub *et al.* 2022). Pondering the future of political leadership in Scotland, one MSP spoke of his hopes for a more collective approach to achieve societal change.

[Referring to climate change] If we are going to successfully transform society to meet the challenges of the 21st century, it's not going to work because a government

decides 'this is what we are doing'. It's only going to work if we inspire a collective belief in our future. I hope that is the approach that Scotland would want from its political leadership in the future'¹³⁸.

In a similar light, for several years there has been an alternative narrative surrounding the Scottish economy. For much of the twentieth century, the measure of social progress was assessed through Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and has become a proxy to benchmark societal health and prosperity (Wallace, 2019). By contrast, a wellbeing economy is 'an economic system which delivers social justice on a healthy planet: a system in which the economy works for the people, not the other way around' (Deas, 2020). In a wellbeing economy, both personal and societal wellbeing are prioritised. Indeed, Scotland is the founding member of the Wellbeing Economy Governments partnerships that includes New Zealand, Finland, Canada, Iceland, and Wales (Hunter, 2022). The National Performance Framework that steers policy also has wellbeing at its foundations (Scottish Government, 2022). Referring to the wellbeing economy, one MSP commented that this shift away from GDP should be mirrored by a move away from dominant leadership styles.

I think that if we are going to be a country that wants to evolve away from GDP and towards being a wellbeing economy, then we're going to have to think about what that means for those [aggressive, dominant] styles [of leadership]¹³⁹.

For the majority of MSPs, it is compassion, care and community that motivated their political leadership trajectories and maintained their political pursuits. Particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, care and empathy were capitals that were valued, promoted, and legitimised and should be embedded as the norm in displays of leadership outwith crises. Such evolutions of valued capital evoke hope for the future of political leadership.

9.3. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, this thesis is the culmination of five years of study into gender and political leadership in the Scottish Parliament since devolution. It has offered a nuanced, interpretivist approach to political leadership that has revealed the importance of political context, gendered conditions (Erikson and Josefsson, 2023), and the gendered impacts on both men and women's leadership. As demonstrated, existing literature conceptualises political leadership into binary stereotypes with little regard for context, yet MSPs' identities in relation to gendering processes are complex and context dependent. To fully understand

¹³⁸ Interview 28; man.

¹³⁹ Interview 2; woman.

and explore political leadership and gender, it is important to move away from 'static approaches' and be more attentive to political and workplace contexts (Smith, 2019). Binary gendered understandings of leadership can be reductive and harmful, and findings showed that whilst MSPs often rejected gendered leadership characteristics, they operate within wider contexts that continue to stereotype leaders such as party cultures, voter expectations and the media.

This thesis joins a chorus of scholars that study gender and Scottish politics and offers a unique insight into political leadership. It also contributes to demands for the parliament to extend its commitment to gender equality. The Scottish Parliament, whilst it has enjoyed a degree of success on women's representation, has the opportunity to embed progressive practices into its statutory rules to ensure a gender sensitive parliament. This would remove the reliance on discretion to appoint gender balanced Cabinets and use of gender quotas. Efforts to create an inclusive working culture that considers MSPs' diverse personal lives (The Scottish Parliament, 2023). Greater training and development opportunities should place emphasis on leadership expectations that encourage inclusivity, kindness and empathy – leadership qualities that MSPs have shown to embody and value.

Appendices

1. Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

Below is the semi-structured interview schedule that I followed during interviews with current and former MSPs. Questions were informed by the overarching research questions and were selected and/or adapted as appropriate to the development of conversations.

1. What does/did political leadership look like to you in the Scottish Parliament?
2. Can you tell me about your political trajectory, how you got involved in politics, and the elected different positions you have held?
3. How did you learn and develop your leadership?
4. How did you rise to prominence within the Parliament and your party?¹⁴⁰
5. What do you think are the qualities required to be a political leader?
6. What were your first impressions of the Scottish Parliament as a working environment? How did you adapt?
7. Would you say you ever changed, or felt pressure to change, anything about the ways in which you present yourself?
8. How has the working environment changed in the last x years?
9. What are/were the different contexts in which you exercise leadership? How does/did your leadership differ between contexts?
10. What are the different leadership styles you have observed within the parliament? Have you noticed any gender differences?
11. The media attention given to women in politics often focuses on their appearance, dress, or speech. Does this align with your experience?
12. As women only make up 36% of MSPs in the chamber, would you say you notice the gender imbalance? What impact does that have?
13. In your experience, what are the challenges to progressing as a political leader? Do these differ for men and women?
14. What would you say defines/defined your leadership in the Scottish Parliament?

¹⁴⁰ If applicable

2. Interview Timetable

Respondent	Date	MSP Status ¹⁴¹	Interview Medium/Location	Length (minutes)
1	07/02/2020	Current	In person (CO) ¹⁴²	55m
2	14/02/2020	Current	In person (CO)	32m
3	17/02/2020	Current	In person (CO)	34m
4	20/02/2020	Current	In person (SP) ¹⁴³	57m & day of shadowing
5	04/03/2020	Current	In person (SP)	55m
6	12/03/2020	Current	In person (SP)	41m
7	19/03/2020	Current	Telephone	29m
8	20/05/2020	Current	Telephone	34m
9	01/06/2020	Former	Zoom	49m
10	28/07/2020	Former	Zoom	44m
11	11/08/2020	Former	Zoom	39m
12	21/08/2020	Current	Zoom	44m
13	03/02/2020	Former	Telephone	54m
14	11/09/2020	Current	Zoom	51m
15	08/10/2020	Current	Zoom	53m
16	13/10/2020	Current	Zoom	64m
17	14/10/2020	Current	Zoom	27m
18	15/10/2020	Former	Zoom	29m
19	19/10/2020	Current	Zoom	47m
20	20/10/2020	Current	Zoom	52m
21	28/10/2020	Current	Telephone	54m
22	02/11/2020	Former	Zoom	59m
23	02/11/2020	Former	Zoom	63m
24	03/11/2020	Current	Zoom	54m
25	04/10/2020	Current	Zoom	56m
26	09/11/2020	Current	Zoom	47m
27	18/11/2020	Current	Zoom	55m
28	19/11/2020	Former	Zoom	54m
29	24/11/2020	Former	Zoom	54m
30	02/12/2020	Former	Zoom	56m
31	12/01/2021	Former	Telephone	60m

Table 10. Interview timetable

¹⁴¹ NB: 'Current' reflects MSPs' positions at the time of interview; some MSPs subsequently resigned or lost their seat in the 2021 Scottish Parliament election.

¹⁴² CO – Constituency Office.

¹⁴³ SP – Scottish Parliament.

3. Interview Sample Characteristics

The interview sample comprised former and current MSPs from every political party elected to the Scottish Parliament since 1999. MSPs held varying leadership roles from a First Minister to backbenchers and were elected across different parliamentary sessions. Table 11 provides a breakdown of the sample by gender.

	Men	Women	Total
<u>Party</u>			
Scottish Labour Party	5	8	13
Scottish National Party	4	6	10
Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party	2	1	3
Scottish Green Party	1	1	2
Scottish Liberal Democrats	2	-	2
Scottish Socialist Party	1	-	1
<u>Highest Leadership Position Held</u>			
First Minister	1	-	1
Deputy First Minister	1	-	1
[Deputy] Presiding Officer	1	1	2
Party Leader	3	3	6
Cabinet Secretary	3	4	7
Junior Minister	2	3	5
Opposition Shadow Cabinet	2	2	4
Backbencher	4	3	7
<u>Parliamentary Session (first elected)</u>			
Session 1 (1999-2003)	8	9	17
Session 2 (2003-2007)	2	-	2
Session 3 (2007-2011)	-	1	1
Session 4 (2011-2016)	2	3	5
Session 5 (2016-2021)	3	3	6
<u>MSP Status</u>			
Former MSP	5	6	11
Current MSP	10	10	20
Total	15	16	31

Table 11. Interview sample characteristics

4. Methodological Note: Reflections on Shadowing an MSP in the Scottish Parliament

The purpose of this appendix chapter, a methodological note, is to reflect on my brief time in the parliament. Although interviews are the primary source of this research, it would be wasteful to discount the generous time given to me by the MSP that invited to the parliament to shadow her for a day. I therefore provide a reflective account of my experience and observations to give a sense of leadership in practice within the physical building.

In February 2020, I was invited to attend the Scottish Parliament to shadow an MSP for a day. For the purposes of this reflection, I will refer to her as Helen¹⁴⁴, a pseudonym. It was a day of many firsts. Although it was my fourth interview, it was my first interview to take place in the parliament itself. I had been in the parliament several times prior as a spectator at events, but this was my first time going 'behind the scenes' as a researcher. It was also the first time that I had felt more excited than nervous during my fieldwork. Inspired by many parliamentary ethnographies that centre gender in their analyses (Malley, 2012; Busby, 2013; Miller, 2018), I had hoped that it would be the first of many days using ethnographic methods to observe and study leadership in the parliament, little did I know that it would be the first and only full day in the parliament.

Thursdays are the busiest days in parliament, and according to a staff member, it was a 'typically' busy day for Helen. I was able to attend several different events throughout the day where Helen demonstrated political leadership, including a committee meeting, attending FMQs, and three different public engagement sessions. These were interspersed with two recorded interviews, informal conversations, a coffee break, and lunch in the staff dining area with her parliamentary team.

I went to reception and said I was here to meet with Helen; I was given a visitor's pass and was asked to sit in the waiting area and someone would come to get me. In the waiting room, there was someone I had met at various Parliament Project events, demonstrating that Scotland, particularly Scottish politics, and even more so in feminist circles, is a small place. I was taken by Helen's parliamentary researcher to find Helen as she was on her way to a committee meeting. Outside the committee room, we were introduced. As I stood in a group of other observers awaiting to enter the committee meeting room, FM Nicola Sturgeon walked past and humbly smiled in our direction. MSP committee members entered and took their seats before we were invited in. Interactions between MSPs were polite, civil and productive as they debated a topic pertinent to the remit of the committee.

After the meeting, I was taken to Helen's office. MSPs offices were grouped by party and had a semi open plan feel as glass walls separate the corridors and the staff offices and MSP offices. The MSPs' office space is a welcoming, modern, and unpretentious space. The informality of the office setting was apparent. Through the glass walls, you could see MSPs working and alluded to an open-door culture. Colourful posters and party merchandise differentiated the designated party areas. In Helen's office, there were immediate decorative indications of which party she belonged to. Her office was adorned by charity posters that had both personal and political significance to her. Such imagery

¹⁴⁴ Interview 4.

signalled Helen's political leadership and motivations as some posters referenced a proposed Bill that she had previously introduced to parliament.

In the bathrooms and communal staff areas, I noticed numerous signs about how to report and receive support if you experience or witness inappropriate behaviour in the parliamentary workplace (see Appendix 6 for photo). This echoed interviews where MSPs spoke of these visual cues that attempted to create cultural and systemic changes within parliament.

FMQs dominate the agenda on a Thursday in parliament. It is a free ticketed event that is usually sold-out weeks in advance, so I sat in Helen's office which had a little screen that live-streamed Parliament TV. I noted that it was a confrontational, heated debate where MSPs resorted to shouting throughout. Awaiting Helen's return, we engaged in conversation about Helen's leadership, and that of other MSPs. One noted 'I think Nicola Sturgeon sets the tone', and 'there are a lot of old male backbenchers, but you have your pick of powerful women'. There was consensus between the two parliamentary staffers that it was a 'nice place to work'.

Later, there was an opportunity to accompany Helen during public engagement events. The first was an event held by the Scottish Parliament and United Against Extremism. It was a relaxed event where MSPs would come and go, depending on their schedule. Our stay was brief. In her next public engagement meeting, Helen briefly greeted a group of school students from the US and mentioned that welcoming school students to the parliament was a common occurrence. This would be something I would go onto to hear a lot – the importance of MSPs' engagement with school children.

The last public engagement event was a charity demonstration outside the parliament that was attempting to gain political support and increase awareness. Before we went outside, a member of Helen's staff briefed her on the background of the charity and their aims, exemplifying how public leaders are reliant on others. There was a photo opportunity outside for Helen to show public support to the demonstrators. A member of Helen's communications team posted the photos on social media, noting the importance of showing the public what an MSPs' working life looks like.

Later in the afternoon, we went to the Garden Lobby for a coffee where we chatted and I asked my prepared interview questions. At one point, we were interrupted by another MSP from a different party. She asked Helen to take a photo of her and a school student that she had with her for work experience. Conversation between the MSPs was familiar and friendly as they were arranging to temporarily swap a hairdryer for an electric bike. It was an example of a cross-party friendship between two women MSPs that many of my interviewees mentioned and valued (see Chapter 5). Our interview was cut short when the bell sounded to indicate the start of decision time. Our day ended with another recorded interview before we both left. It was intended that I would shadow Helen again and employ further ethnographic methods, however the closure of the parliament prevented this from happening.

In the few subsequent interviews that took place in the parliament, I was invited by one MSP to shadow her in her constituency, where she placed her leadership as having the most significance. She spoke of herself as the bridge between her community and the parliament, and she wanted to specifically show constituency-based political leadership in action. This

would have offered this thesis alternative insights into how leadership is experienced in different political settings. Another MSP invited me to sit in her office to do work whenever I was visiting the parliament or in Edinburgh. Again, the Covid-19 pandemic did not allow this to go ahead.

Although I only experienced a fraction of my intended time in parliament, moments in real time exemplified descriptions of parliamentary life that MSPs relayed to me in interviews. It was an invaluable experience that informed my interviews that followed.

5. Images of Gendered Media Commentary

Below are two images that show gendered headlines of newspaper articles, both of which include former FM Nicola Sturgeon. Figure 5 illustrates gendered commentary that focuses on the appearance of women politicians, whilst Figure 7 exemplifies gender media commentary on women leaders' parenthood status.



Figure 5. Daily Mail: Never mind Brexit, who won Legs-it!



Figure 6. Newstatesman: The motherhood trap

6. Images of the Scottish Parliament Estate

The significance of the Scottish Parliamentary estate was a feature throughout this thesis. This appendix provides a series of images, both of the interior and exterior, that help envision and contextualise the parliamentary spaces in which MSPs work.



Figure 7. The Scottish Parliament building and outdoor space



Figure 8. The Scottish Parliament building from above

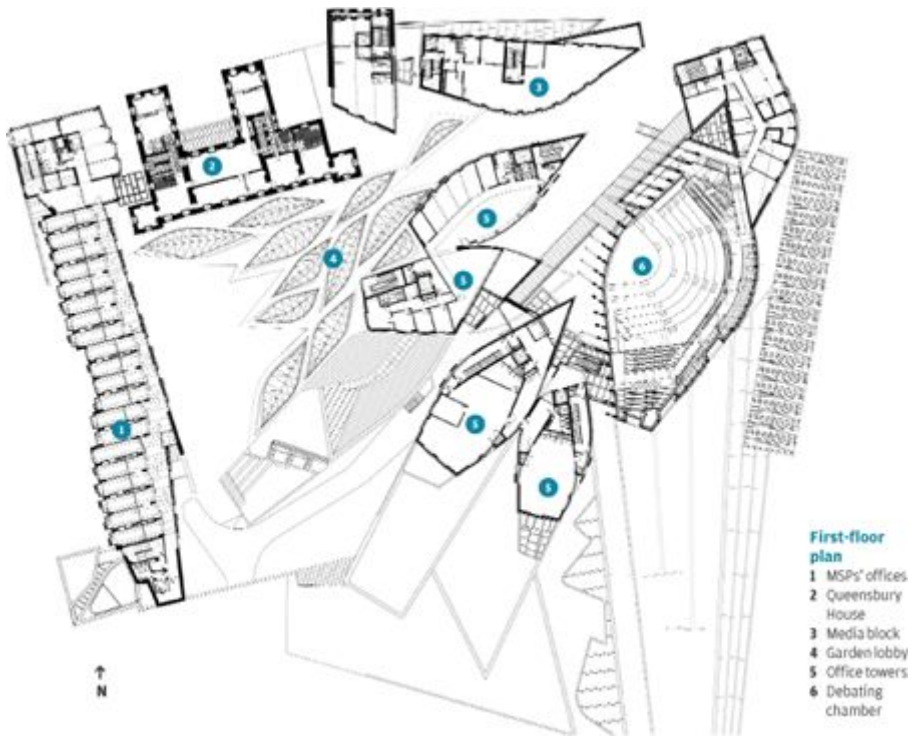


Figure 9. The Scottish Parliament situation plan

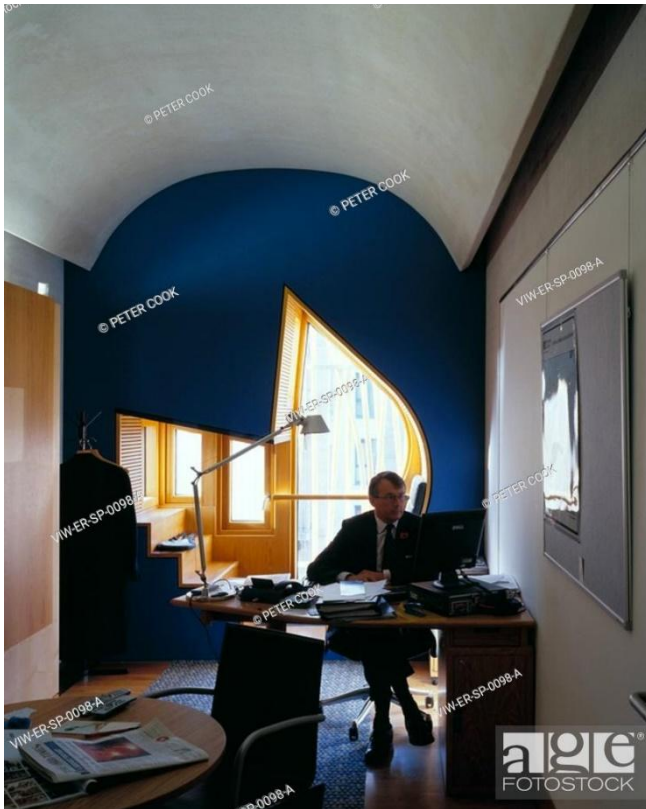


Figure 10. Example of MSP's office



Figure 11. Scottish Parliament debating chamber

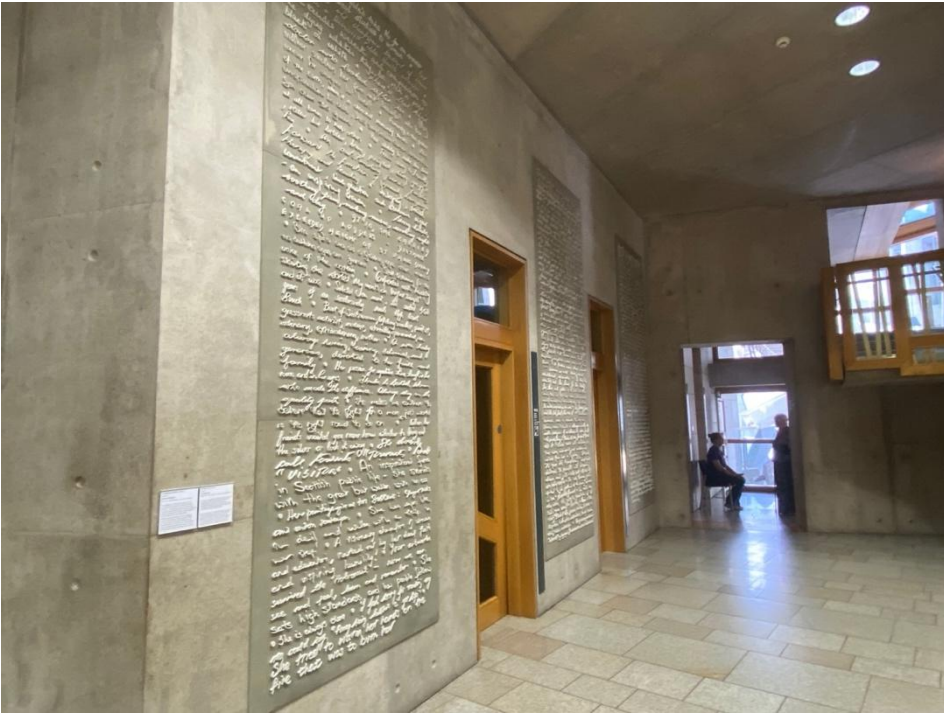


Figure 12. Travelling the Distance, Shauna McMullan (2006), Scottish Parliament (author's photographs)



Figure 13. Scottish Parliament Garden Lobby



Figure 14. Sexual harassment advice and support information, women's bathroom (author's photograph)

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