How Performance Appraisals Shape Leadership:
A Multiple-Case Study of Canadian University Deans’ Reappointments

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

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Organizations tend to rely on performance appraisals to ensure that individual performance is improved and aligned with organizational goals. However, research suggests that these processes can be diverted from their intended use to further political agendas.

In Canadian universities, deans undergo processes similar to performance appraisals when seeking reappointment. Reappointments take place near the end of deans’ first terms in office and determine whether deans are afforded a second term. They are high stakes for deans and their faculties. Yet, despite their importance, decanal reappointments have, thus far, never been the object of empirical research.

This dissertation addresses this gap by examining how thirteen reappointed and one non-reappointed Canadian university deans experience and make sense of their reappointments. The study relies on the cross-analysis of these fourteen cases. A conceptual framework combining organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization theories guides its analyses.

Of interest, the findings reveal that deans experienced their reappointments as political
arenas. Political behaviour was pervasive, took on varying shapes, and came from different sources. Despite this politicization, reappointed deans experiences were generally positive, except in the cases of challenged, unsuccessful, or abandoned reappointments. In these instances, experiences were negative and suggest unjustifiable levels of duress. Also, deans understood their reappointments as measuring support or popularity. The analysis suggests that reappointments measured opposition, using it as a proxy for popularity and support. As well, reappointments were, in some instances, sources of strength for deans and their faculties, as they allowed for reflection and rallying. Finally, deans viewed their reappointments as mostly satisfactory, though they nonetheless considered them improvable, in particular with regards to resources involved, representativeness, criteria, and alignment with other evaluations.

With regards to the link between the evaluation of performance and managers’ leadership, this study found that reappointments played but a mild role in shaping deans’ leadership. Nonetheless, reappointments shaped the deanship iteratively, by ensuring that deans deemed unfit were prevented from having a lasting impact on their faculties.
Dedication

To my wife Yelitza, whose love sent me on this wonderful trajectory, and who simply makes me a better person.
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Several people deserve to be mentioned for their guiding, shoving, bearing with, reviewing, smiling and frowning at, and questioning my work. To start, my supervisor, Professor Nina Bascia, deserves the lion’s share of the credit. Though this may seem strange to some, I am more thankful for the things she opted not to say. There is value in letting students figure things out on their own and provide wisdom only when needed. This she does excellently and it helped me tremendously. One must walk the path.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The archer pulls the arrow and the bowstring tenses in return, stretching with a sigh of resistance. In the distance, a storm rages. Clouds have gathered and little time remains. Time is always of the essence it seems. A few paces from the archer, a small crowd has gathered. Most of them watch the archer with intent, but some less so, and some do not seem to pay attention. At the signal, the archer lets the arrow loose. Rising gradually, the arrow flies with a life of its own. Its direction and impetus seem clear, but gravity, resistance, and shifting winds conspire together and redraw the arc traced across the sky, until it sinks into the ground.

The crowd walks up to the arrow, gathering around the shaft pointing at the sky. One of them asks: “I am at a loss! Why are we all looking at the arrow? Were we not supposed to evaluate its flight?” To which, another replies: “No, we are to judge the archer’s style!” One more comments: “Wait! I didn’t watch the archer, nor do I know much about archery for that matter…” Then another adds: “Make up your minds! Is it the arrow, the flight, or the style? I
have other things to do!” Confusion is seeping through the crowd as voices rise in dismay, until one steps forth and declares with authority: “I am in charge and will lead us as we judge the archer! Now that the arrow has landed, let us discuss where we will paint the target.”

At the back, one person says softly: “I don’t care about the target. I will use my own criteria. Flight is what matters, not precision!” And another one mumbles: “I don’t like that archer…”

Watching from a distance, the archer winces, then sighs.

This tale of the archer without a target serves as an allegory. In the tale, a few things are amiss. For one, the crowd does not seem to know much, or care much, about archery, nor do they agree on what to judge. Secondly, even though the arrow hitting the target is to be the official criteria, some members of the crowd have decided to substitute their own criteria to those imposed. Finally, the target is positioned after the arrow has been shot and landed, as a result of a discussion.

Would any of us call an archery contest where targets are painted after arrows have been shot fair? Ethical? Accurate? Effective? More importantly, would any of us believe for one moment that such practices have no impact on those subjected to them, or on the very performance that is measured? Such a tale seems so incredible, so impossible, that one may rightfully doubt that such schemes are taking place in our organizations. Unfortunately, as this study reveals, there are many similarities between this tale of archery and Canadian university deans’ reappointments.

Decanal reappointments are critically important for the sound management of universities. They determine whether deans will be allowed to remain in their position and continue their managerial work. However, deans’ reappointments have never been, to this day, the object of empirical investigation. Suffice it to say, understanding decanal reappointments, their
processes and their outcomes, can provide relevant insights to researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners. This study does so by examining the experience and sense-making of thirteen reappointed and one non-reappointed deans.

In this first chapter, I introduce the reader to the broader problem of monitoring and controlling people invested with power in organizations and relate this problem to deans’ reappointments. I then explain the purpose of my thesis, which is to investigate the unintended consequences of managers’ performance appraisals on their leadership, and articulate its research questions. I close by explaining the significance of studying deans’ reappointments for research, policy, and practice.

1.1. Problem Statement

Outside the walls of academia, clouds have gathered and a strong wind of change sweeps across the landscape. In most countries, governments are reviewing their higher education arrangements, and renewed demands for accountability, rationalization, new governance, and new management are shaking the foundations of universities (Gumport, 2008). As this neoliberal wind blows across the world, with vastly different outcomes in each jurisdiction (Amaral, Jones, & Karseth, 2002b; Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, & Carvalho, 2010b; Musselin & Teixeira, 2014), the question is no longer whether universities will change, but to what extent, and in what way.

Meanwhile, inside the walls of academia, another kind of wind is blowing. Universities have increased in size and complexity and, accordingly, have been reviewing their internal arrangements. This growth started sharply, in the wake of the Second World War, and has now quieted, but not stopped (G. A. Jones, 2014). Universities have responded by creating new programs, new schools, and new services, but also by widening the footprint
of management activities (Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010). The important changes observed, however, do not take place at every level. Universities change rapidly where they can, and given their collegial governance arrangements, they change mainly outside of their core activities of teaching and research.

To make sense of this peculiar response to change, it is useful to understand universities not as single organizations, but as groupings of multiple smaller organizations, operating under different rules, norms, and cultures (C. Kerr, 1963/2001). Areas involving the Faculty can be understood as professional bureaucracies, where norms are entrenched and a great deal of regulatory power resides within the Faculty, while other areas, for example building services, are best described as machine bureaucracy, where power resides within management (Mintzberg, 1980). Central administrations can be described as machine bureaucracies (Davis, van Rensburg, & Venter, 2016), where power flows downwards. The complete university, given its current size and complexity, can be understood as a divisionalized form, where academic units and non-academic units act as widely different divisions. The challenge of universities is now to harmonize their divisions’ activities in a way that makes them greater, and not lesser, than the sum of their parts. And the hardest parts to harmonize are the ones with diffuse governance arrangements, namely, academic units where faculty holds the lion’s share of power.

1.1.1 Deans in the Middle

Within this divisional form, deans are located at the interstice between central administrations and academic or non-academic units. Academic deans are responsible for academic units, which include all the schools and faculties staffed with faculty members responsible for teaching and research. Accordingly, deans sit at the bottom of a machine bureaucracy, Central Administration, but also at the top of a professional bureaucracy,
Chapter 1. Introduction

The Faculty (Davis et al., 2016). Deans must coordinate the efforts of a wide array of subunits operating according to different rules, norms, and beliefs (Bolman & Gallos, 2010). It is an uneasy place to be (Gallos, 2002).

For universities hoping to align and coordinate their units’ efforts, the academic deanship is a critical position. By a similar extent, deans are also important to their units. They are responsible for representing their interests to Central Administration, other units, and groups outside the University. Furthermore, deans are also expected to mediate and conciliate the conflicting needs of the many groups found within their units. From within, and from without, the many voices of the University all converge on deans, along with great, perhaps impossible, expectations (Montez, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 2002; M. Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999).

In addition to their mediating roles, deans are also responsible for their units’ operations and play important managerial oversight roles such as budgeting, strategic planning, evaluations, renovations, and human resources (De Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Montez et al., 2002). The trend has been for these roles to steadily grow as a result of universities’ growth. Finally, as public funds become scarcer and expenditures are scrutinized more sharply, responsibilities related to accountability, fundraising, research, and external relations have increased significantly and pulled deans further away from their units (Seale & Cross, 2015).

Given their critical position and their complex and conflicting roles, one would hope new deans to be strongly supported and well prepared to take on their new role. Yet, the evidence points to the contrary. The transition to the deanship can be described as a trial by fire and a perilous journey of three to four years (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Gmelch, 2000a), for which newly appointed deans are both ill-prepared (Gmelch, 2000b) and ill-supported (Damico, Gmelch, Hopkins, & Mitchell, 2003; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Seale & Cross, 2015). More importantly, they have little experience in balancing on
the thin line between the machine and the professional bureaucracies, between Central Administration and the Faculty (Davis et al., 2016). On the other hand, deans are and remain faculty members. As such, they must be seen as legitimate leaders, first among equals, by the Faculty (Bolman & Gallos, 2010; Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002/2013).

Up to this point, I have described academia as an increasingly complex world, and the deanship as an increasingly complex role. I have further suggested that how deans are ill-prepared and ill-supported to face a challenging transition and take on their new roles, roles of critical importance for academic units and for universities. Accordingly, we would expect universities to protect and nurture their academic deans, in order to at least see this important human capital investment bear some fruits. However, as this thesis shows, this is hardly the case. Universities instead prefer to have their deans go through a reappointment process, a confirmation of sorts, just as they are finally settling in their role and have some kind of lasting impact. Deans, to put it bluntly, must reapply for their position once they have gotten a handle on it. To make things worse, in most Canadian universities, deans are appointed for three to six years, renewable once. As a result, deans can expect to lead their academic units for a maximum of 12 years, taking into account bureaucratic delays and extraordinary extensions, after which, they are expected to return to the Faculty.

These arrangements suggest an important level of mistrust towards administration and lasting influence. What impact do such policy arrangements have on universities? On deans? And on deans’ leadership? How do the conditions surrounding the deanship, its increasing complexity, its increasing importance, and the policy arrangements curtailing its operations, work together to support or to hinder universities in moving towards their goals? Also, how are these arrangements impacting the individuals taking on the deanship? And what impact do they have on deans’ leadership?
1.1.2 Granting Power and Taking it Away

This is the fundamental problem of power granting, under conditions, of the contract between those to whom power is granted and those who grant it. The problem is deceptively simple, yet its solution not so: to whom shall be granted the power to lead and who shall grant it, what should their responsibilities be, and what limits should be set upon their exercise of power? This fundamental problem finds echoes throughout humankind’s history, going at least as far back as Lao Tsu and Confucius (Russell, 1938/2004), resonating in Plato’s depiction of the philosopher tyrant (Plato, n.d.), in Locke’s rights of the led to depose tyrants (Locke, 1690/1980) in the wake of the Glorious Revolution, and in Marx and Engels’ call for workers of the world to unite (Engels & Marx, 1888/n.d.).

Though the problem remains, its proposed solutions are ever changing (Kellerman, 2010). Recent history suggests that the relation between the ones with the power to lead and the ones being led have shifted inexorably albeit slowly, towards equalization. The right to rule has eroded, cast away, a thin layer at a time, as rulers were found wanting, as people found their voice, and as new times continued to bring new ideas and new means of resistance (Kellerman, 2012).

In recent years, the mainstream narrative on leaders and leadership has been challenged. Its main failing: proposing ways of being a good leader, instead of ensuring good leadership. In other words, the literature argues that people in positions of authority are de facto leaders and subjects them to a litany of prescriptions. Leaders, it is argued, ought to be authentic, transparent, serving, inspiring, visionary, transformational, etc. However, moralistic prescriptions have not worked, because they do not work, not because we have not found the right moralistic prescription or delivered it the right way. They do not work, because they run counter to leaders’ self-preservation and are not enforced by policy
Sound leadership needs sound policy, not just sound, or worse, noise. Organizations need ways to grant power but also ways to control it (Pfeffer, 2015). Organizations need to monitor those in power, in order to make the right decisions about granting and controlling power. This is a more profound problem than the social contract between leaders and the led. The social contract problem assumes that one can know when those provided with authority have gone too far, that changes must be made. It does not, however, clarify how this knowledge is to be obtained.

1.1.3 Blunt Tools of Control

Performance appraisals can serve that purpose. Simply put, these organizational processes measure the performance of an individual in relation to set goals. The gap between performance and goals is used to inform decisions. The theory of action (see Knowlton & Phillips, 2012) behind performance appraisals is that by measuring individual performance against organizational goals, performance appraisals improve individual performance and thus, participate towards improving organizational performance (Luecke, 2006).

Performance appraisals can be construed to include a broad variety of tools and processes. They can rely on combinations of evaluations of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, behaviour, or satisfaction measures, and allow different groups of stakeholders to participate in the process, either as raters, analysts, or decision-makers (Deb, 2012; Luecke, 2006; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

However, performance appraisals rely on a number of taken for granted assumptions (Murphy, 2008), most of which being illogical or unrealistic (Coens & Jenkins, 2002). Performance appraisals assume that performance can be defined, that performance can
be measured, that standards of performance can be defined, that raters know how to identify and measure performance, that raters have access to performance, that raters provide ratings based on their perception of performance against organizational goals, and that those whose performance is appraised can modify their performance based on the feedback received (Law, 2007). Whether those assumptions prove true, and to what extent, and in what context, and for what type of work or whom, proves key to ensure sound organizational decisions. Yet, as each organization and each position has specific performance appraisal arrangements, there can be no unique, simple answer to this problem. As in most policy problem, the question is not to determine a solution, but a solution within a specific context for a specific set of actors (Pawson, 2006).

Of all the assumptions presented regarding performance appraisals, the one that seems least likely to be solved is the problem of raters’ goals. Raters are assumed to act as ideal raters, using performance appraisal tools to provide a rating based solely on their perception of performance. In other words, performance appraisals are deemed devoid of politics. However, my personal experience tells me they are not. I have worked several years as an associate dean and been evaluated several times. In each case, my supervisor used standard tools, which they adapted to suit their personal agendas. I have also participated in deans’ and presidents’ evaluations. During those, I have witnessed political maneuverings, coalitions, veiled as well as open conflict, and the use of performance appraisals to further personal agendas. Experiences similar to mine have been reported by scholars in recent years (e.g., Curtis, 2005; Gioia & Longenecker, 1994; Longenecker, Sims, & Gioia, 1987; Swanepoel, Botha, & Mangonyane, 2014). However, given the paucity of research on the topic and the absence of empirical research on deans’ reappointments, it would be perilous to generalize these clues into claims.

Earlier in this section, I mentioned that Canadian university deans’ roles have become more complex and require a broader set of skills, that new deans experience difficult
transitions, that it takes them years to feel comfortable and effective, and yet, that universities limit their mandates to five years, renewable once through reappointment processes. When compared to corporate managers’ arrangements, these arrangements can be described as cautious. Academic managers are provided with some limited measure of power over a limited period of time. What is less understood, however, is how universities decide to reappoint deans to a second term. Canadian universities strongly curtail the power they give to their deans, but how informed their decisions are, what shapes the process, and how the process in turn shapes deans’ leadership, remains unclear. To this day, there has been no empirical research conducted to provide answers to these questions.

Through this dissertation, I explore this fundamental problem of controlling and monitoring power and its impact on leadership. To do so, I investigate the reappointments of Canadian university academic deans. Understanding deans’ reappointments can provide us with important insights about the control and monitoring of power, as they involve an important variety of organizational stakeholders, have high stakes, and are applied to middle-managers performing multiple, complex, and conflicting roles.

1.2. Purpose

In the previous section, I described the broader problem of the thesis, specifically, how control and monitoring tools can have unintended consequences. As we appoint leaders and provide them with power, we wish to make sure that we can reign them in, should their direction or their appetite prove destructive. This tension between wanting someone in charge and needing to monitor and control their reach is one of trust. Yet, by controlling our formal leaders, are we not then exercising leadership? How much control is too much control, for what type of power, and in which situation?
Chapter 1. Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to clarify the extent to which tools of monitoring and control, namely performance appraisals, shape leadership. To do so, it examines the reappointments of deans in Canadian universities. First, the study aims to clarify what goes on during deans’ reappointments. The study also seeks to understand the role organizational politics play in deans’ reappointments.

In organizations, power is often assumed to flow down the organizational chart. This is certainly true of authority, but power does not reside solely in authority (French & Raven, 1959; Russell, 1938/2004). Political perspectives emphasize how groups can leverage power and disrupt or reverse its downward flow along assumed authority lines (Winkler, 2010). Political behaviour can potentially lead to the subjugation of organizational goals in favour of personal ones (Mayes & Allen, 1977). Certainly, colleges and universities see their share of political maneuverings (Baldridge, 1971a; Lumby, 2015). In this context, are performance appraisals as the mainstream literature suggest: neutral tools of controls that serve the organization by improving performance through its measurement? Or do they serve as tools of subjugation, used by coalitions to further their own agenda within the organization? By using a political lens, this study aims at clarifying the extent to which reappointments are politicized.

Finally, few studies have looked at performance appraisals from the perspective of the appraised. This study intends to give a voice to deans and, consequently, places them at the focal point of data collection. Given the challenges of the deanship and the potential unintended outcomes of reappointments, it is worthwhile to ask deans how they fare and what they think of the process.
1.3. Research Questions

To understand how performance appraisals shape leadership and contribute to the literature regarding power in organizations, this study examines the reappointments of academic deans in Canadian universities. Specifically, my dissertation proposes to answer two related research questions:

1. How do Canadian university academic deans experience their reappointments?

2. How do Canadian university academic deans make sense of their reappointments?

The research questions refer specifically to academic deans, experience, and sense-making. Let me clarify those terms. Academic deans are responsible for academic units in Canadian universities, such as the School of Business, as opposed to non-academic units, such as the School of Graduate Studies. The key difference between academic and non-academic deans is deans’ additional responsibilities for teaching and research activities, meaning overseeing faculty members and students.

Experiencing and sense-making are processes taking place within the individual. They are shaped by conscious and unconscious cognitive mechanisms, as well as by the events taking place around them. Experiencing is living through situations and perceiving events. Sense-making goes further. It refers to how these experiences are understood and given meanings. Experiencing is immediate, factual, and descriptive, while sense-making is retroactive and evaluative. I discuss experience and sense-making in more details in Section 4.3.
1.4. Significance

This investigation of Canadian university deans’ reappointments provides researchers, policy-makers, provosts, and deans with a wealth of relevant information. For researchers, this dissertation is the first empirical study of decanal reappointments. As such, it provides original findings and sets the stage for future research. The study also adds to previous research on deans’ transitions by including reappointments in the transition process. As well, the study’s focus on deans’ experience and sense-making allows the investigation of performance appraisals’ unintended outcomes. Also, by focusing on organizational politics, the dissertation clarifies how micro-politics play out in Canadian universities, and also, and perhaps more importantly, in the context of managers’ performance appraisals. More broadly, the thesis contributes to the scholarly debate on organizational control and monitoring by clarifying how performance appraisals shape leadership.

For policy-makers, the study highlights the strengths and weaknesses of current practices, as well as clarifies the outcomes, intended and unintended, of reappointment processes. These in turn can inform policy changes. Evidently, my investigation does not presume to solve the problem of power in Canadian universities. Nevertheless, it brings a healthy dose of empirical evidence to understand how current practices shape deans’ leadership.

Beyond its contributions to research and policy, my greatest hope is that this thesis proves useful to academic deans, who stand on the receiving end of these poorly understood tools of control. The fourteen cases analyzed provide key insights into the practice of academic leadership in the Canadian context, but also on the ways by which academic deans have successfully, or not, navigated the undertows of tumultuous reappointments. These lessons learned alone should prove immensely helpful to deans.

Ultimately, this dissertation provides a needed, if sobering, counter-narrative to the mainstream perspectives on leadership and performance appraisals. These perspectives
have taken hold of organizations. They reduce organizational life to simplistic and decontextualized conceptualizations and pretend to sell us tools of control that purportedly aim and fire true (see Le, Oh, Shaffer, & Schmidt, 2007); rosy recipes for leadership (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985) that dismiss management (see McConkey, 1989). By contrast, this dissertation does not aim to say what leadership is, even less what it should be. The time for prescriptive diatribes has passed, and what we need instead is to better understand leadership as it plays out in organizations, instead of dreaming up how it could play out (Kellerman, 2012; Pfeffer, 2015), and leave certainty behind (Grey, 2012).
Chapter 2

Literature Review

In this chapter I situate my dissertation within the broader research on university deans. Of the different themes covered by the research literature on deans, I have selected five for this review, which I consider strongly related to deans’ reappointments: roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation.

The process leading to the selection of the five themes here covered and the criteria used to select the publications reviewed is described in Appendix A. As well, in Appendix B I provide the reader with a general overview of the literature describing the themes explored, the methods, used, and the jurisdictions where the studies have taken place. To sum this bird’s eye view of the research literature, the works collected are fairly recent (80% after 2000), centre on behaviour and roles (85%), investigate North American deans (70%), and use surveys and interviews (79%).

In the following sections, I review, for each of the themes selected, the questions and methods used as well as the central findings. I then provide some comments on the assumptions and limitations of the research done to this date and provide some suggestions for future research. In closing, I return to the findings emerging from my review, identify
research gaps warranting further work, and situate my investigation of Canadian university deans’ reappointments within this literature.

2.1. Deans’ Roles

Roles are descriptions of what is expected from an individual (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). They can be formulated as tasks, duties, responsibilities, or expected behaviour. They can describe what ought to be done, how it ought to be done, or even what ought to happen. Roles can be formulated by different groups and they can be explicit or implicit. For example, in the case of deans, central administrations usually have explicit expectations about what deans ought to do or achieve, but they may also have implicit ones. Faculty members will also have expectations and these may or may not be explicitly conveyed to deans. Furthermore faculty expectations are likely to be different than those of central administrations. Worse, roles may also be in conflict with one another, forcing individuals to make choices.

Roles are closely related with qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation. Roles are related to qualifications to the extent that specialized roles often require specific qualifications. Roles are also descriptions of expected behaviour. As such, they are meant to influence how an individual acts. Also, roles are fundamentally related to transition, as transition is often defined as the period through which people learn and come to term with their role. Finally, evaluation is often based on comparing role performance with role expectations.
2.1.1 Areas of Investigation and Methods

Together with deans’ behaviour, deans’ roles have been studied more frequently than any other topic. In general, most studies have sought to clarify the relative importance of deans’ multiple roles. A number of studies have concentrated on deans’ understanding of their roles (Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b; Inman, 2007; Konrad, 1980; McDaniel, 2002; Mignot-Gérard, 2010; Montez et al., 2002; Sarros, Gmelch, & Tanewski, 1998; G. Scott, Coates, & Anderson, 2008; Williams, 2009), while others have instead asked their faculty members (Bray, 2008, 2010; Matczynski, Lasley, & Haberman, 1989; Smothers, Bing, White, Trocchia, & Absher, 2011), or their supervisors (Lasley & Haberman, 1987). Other studies still have compared these groups’ different perspectives (Dejnozka, 1978; Kapel & Dejnozka, 1979; Matczynski et al., 1989; Mignot-Gérard, 2010). Other studies have identified how deans’ universities define their roles in job descriptions (Boyko & Jones, 2010) and job advertisements (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Lavigne, 2016a, 2017a).

The great majority of these studies conceptualized deans’ roles as an inventory of tasks grouped in categories, such as: financial, external relations, personnel management, leadership, and academic administration, and asked participants to rate the importance of each task (Bray, 2008, 2010; Dejnozka, 1978; Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b; Inman, 2007; Kapel & Dejnozka, 1979; Lasley & Haberman, 1987; Lavigne, 2016a, 2017a; Matczynski et al., 1989; Montez et al., 2002; Sarros et al., 1998; G. Scott et al., 2008; Smothers et al., 2011). A number of studies framed deans’ roles as a tension between seemingly conflicting approaches: neoliberal and managerial against collegial leadership (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Hellawell & Hancock, 2001; Mignot-Gérard, 2010; Williams, 2009) and managers against leaders (Seale & Cross, 2015; Williams, 2009). A small set of studies used chose to investigate satisfaction and sense of success instead of priorities and importance (Konrad, 1980; Sarros et al., 1998; G. Scott et al., 2008; Verhoeven, 2010). Moving away from internal factors, another group of studies explored the impact of external factors, for
example decreased funding, on role expectations (G. Scott et al., 2008; Smothers et al., 2011; Williams, 2009). Finally, some researchers looked at how roles may conflict with one another (Sarros et al., 1998; G. Scott et al., 2008; M. Wolverton et al., 1999).

2.1.2 Key Findings

Research shows that deans’ roles have expanded and grown more complex over the years and include managerial and representational roles (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Mignot-Gérard, 2010; Montez et al., 2002; Seale & Cross, 2015). However, the reasons attributed for this increase differ. For some, this increase is attributed to a decentralization of responsibilities towards deans as a result of increased access and organizational growth (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Montez et al., 2002). For others, a neoliberal shift is responsible. State-induced regulations reduced the decentralization of power in universities and promoted managerial practices (Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Mignot-Gérard, 2010; Seale & Cross, 2015). Interestingly, Boyko and Jones (2010) show that concerns about managerial creep are not a new thing in Canadian higher education institutions, and can be found in the 70s and 80s. This suggests that managerialism may not be an emerging trend but a cyclical one. Nevertheless, the last ten years have seen an important number of states centralizing power in the hands of management. As a result, higher education institutions have gained in autonomy at the cost of increased accountability (Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago, & Carvalho, 2010a).

2.1.3 Commentary

Research on deans’ roles has failed to produce salient findings. Despite efforts to tease out the roles deans deem of greater importance, deans tend to give high ratings to almost all of them (Dejnozka, 1978; Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b; McDaniel, 2002; Montez et al.,
In other words, everything is important, or very important. Three reasons explain these findings: deans are studied in broad groups and results are averaged; deans are not required to prioritize tasks and can give high ratings to every task; and roles are defined based on managerial models and past studies, implying that the complete list of roles is known. However, deans appear to be sufficiently different across jurisdictions, university types, and faculty types, that grouping them in statistical studies of roles should be done in a way that preserves some of their intrinsic differences (Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b).

Despite these issues, researchers have grouped deans’ numerous roles into broader ones based on theoretical constructs (Dejnozka, 1978; McDaniel, 2002; G. Scott et al., 2008), practitioners’ reviews (McDaniel, 2002), or factorial analyses (Montez et al., 2002; Sarros et al., 1998; Smith & Wolverton, 2010). In general these groupings are quite different across studies, rendering comparisons difficult. For example, Dejnozka (1978) uses the broad roles: acting towards the Faculty, acting towards the profession, acting towards students, and other management activities. Montez et al. (2002), on the other hand, use: external and political relations, personal scholarship, leadership, resource management, internal productivity, and personnel. Meanwhile, Sarros et al. (1998) uses: leader, manager, scholar, and faculty developer. These disparate choices further hinder the usefulness of these studies, in particular since universities do not use those categories, relying instead on recognized human resource management rubrics.

Another important issue with the identification of deans’ roles is the use of factorial analysis. All of the studies using factorial analysis seem to have erred away from caution and prioritized loading factors over common sense. Gould (1996) warns of the dangers of using factorial analysis to fish out categories and the impact of samples’ compositions. These negative effects are clearly visible in Smith and Wolverton’s (2010) student affair role dimension, as well as in Montez et al.’s (2002) inclusion of the ‘represent college at
professional meetings’ role in the broader ‘leadership’ role. These procedural errors reduce the credibility of the findings.

Another important finding is that different groups of stakeholders prioritize roles quite differently (Kapel & Dejnozka, 1979; Lasley & Haberman, 1987; Matczynski et al., 1989; Mignot-Gérard, 2010). Central administrations tend to prioritize roles differently than deans, chairs and faculty, while chairs and faculty show similar priorities (Kapel & Dejnozka, 1979). In particular, central administrations focus on macro dimensions and tends to prioritize the hiring and retaining of faculty members and the development of broad initiatives (Lasley & Haberman, 1987), while faculty members focus on micro dimensions and tend to prioritize communication and the securing of resources for the Faculty (Matczynski et al., 1989). Also, Smothers et al. (2011) found important differences in how faculty members in American private business schools prioritized deans’ roles compared to public ones. Finally, in her study of French universities, Mignot-Gérard (2010) found that faculty members consider that deans should foremost represent the interests of the Faculty. However, the way central administrations viewed their deans’ role varied. More precisely, the author found great differences in how universities involved their deans in decision-making.

The role expectations investigated so far were implicit. They reside within individuals and can be discovered by observations, surveys, and interviews. Explicit role expectations, on the other hand, are found in official documents such as job descriptions or job advertisements. Two studies, both Canadian, looked at explicit roles conveyed in official documents (Boyko & Jones, 2010; Lavigne, 2016a).

In Canadian universities, job descriptions were found to be generally incomplete and focusing on a set of roles (Boyko & Jones, 2010). Taken together, however, these job descriptions tend to focus on managerial tasks such as human resource management and financial responsibilities. Other roles, such as internal and external networking,
communications, or students, are found in about one third or less of job descriptions. Explicit role expectations are also conveyed through job advertisements. These tend to be incomplete portrayals, yet they form a coherent picture when brought together, emphasizing particularly the roles of leadership, management, and internal and external representations (Lavigne, 2016a). Symbolic and human resources leadership roles (see Bolman & Gallos, 2010) tend to be emphasized, while references to political roles are rare (Lavigne, 2017a). Interestingly, Bolman and Deal (1991) found that deans reported using political frames most commonly and symbolic ones only infrequently. This suggests that advertised roles may have little to do with deans’ reality.

Taking a step back from specific roles, deans’ overarching role is generally depicted as maintaining the balance between the needs of the Faculty and those of the executive, or in navigating the tension between their collegial and managerial roles (Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b; Inman, 2007; Sarros et al., 1998; Seale & Cross, 2015; Williams, 2009; M. Wolverton et al., 1999). As such, the deanship is conceptualized as a posture between imperatives framed as incommensurables: those of Central Administration, deemed managerial, and those of the Faculty, deemed collegial. Whether we accept this managerial-collegial dichotomy or not, we can admit that the position is enshrined as the interface between conflicting groups. Whether this is an issue for deans, an untenable position, has however not been clearly demonstrated. In Belgium, deans, despite considering themselves as academics first, have fairly positive attitudes towards their managerial roles (Verhoeven, 2010). In France, deans see themselves as academics as well, but they are more cautious about their use of power (Mignot-Gérard, 2010). In the United States, the majority of education deans describe themselves as academics and administrators, a fair proportion as administrators, leaving a small proportion seeing themselves as academics (Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b). Also, research conducted on deans’ stress in relation to conflicting roles has identified only mild levels of conflict and mild levels of stress in Australia, the Netherlands, and the United States (Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010; Sarros et al.,
Overall, the research on deans’ roles shows that their role is great in scope and complexity and includes more managerial tasks than in the past, but the causes for this change remains an object of debate. What does not seem to be debated however, and probably should, is whether this is a good thing or not, and under what circumstances. A plausible reason for this one-sided view in empirical research is that academics investigating deans have a vested interest in the discussion. Indeed, increased management can spell decreased control by faculty. Nevertheless, what seems clear from the literature is that different jurisdictions have dealt with the same problems in different ways and obtained different results, about which different groups have different opinions. In other words, it depends. Future research would profit greatly from comparative research efforts towards that end. As long as deans are grouped massively across jurisdictions, university types, and faculty types, and as long as their specific context is ignored, discussions on roles are doomed to come up with long lists of tasks where everything is important and managerialism is the enemy of collegiality.

2.2. Deans’ Qualifications

Qualifications describe the requirements deemed necessary to fill in a position. Generally associated with employee selection, qualifications are closely related to roles and describe the capacities and past experiences necessary for candidates to play their organizational role successfully. As such, they act as early role signals (see Van Maanen & Schein, 1977).

Only two studies have examined deans’ qualifications. However, as qualifications are closely linked to roles and behaviour, and ultimately to performance evaluations and
reappointments, reviewing these studies’ findings is relevant.

### 2.2.1 Areas of Investigation and Methods

Qualifications have been studied examining deans’ background (Drange, 2015) and job advertisements (Lavigne, 2016a). In both cases, the research was exploratory and described the different types of capacities and experiences required for the position, but Drange focused on significant lived experiences, while Lavigne focused on generic experiences and expectations.

### 2.2.2 Key Findings

In her study of American deans, Drange (2015) found two key experiences deemed necessary for the deanship: high quality scholarship and some administrative experience, for example as department chair. The author identified a strong asymmetry between scholarly and administrative expectations. Scholarly qualifications provided deans with legitimacy, but the gist of their work remained administrative.

These findings are echoed in Lavigne (2016a), but to a lesser extent. There is a similar asymmetry between scholarly and administrative experience in Canadian university deans’ job advertisements, but it is less pronounced. Furthermore, job advertisements go beyond naming administrative experience and include some of the knowledge, skills, and capacities required. These include, in order of prevalence, leadership skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, knowledge of the sector, values, personality traits, vision, and fundraising experience. This suggests that Canadian universities may give more weight to administrative experience than American ones.
2.2.3 Commentary

Overall, the empirical evidence points to a strong focus on both scholarly and administrative experiences. This may seem in line with the conclusions of the preceding section, which defined deans’ broader role as balancing the needs of Central Administration with those of the Faculty, or of navigating the tension between managerial and collegial processes. However, if the link between past administrative experience and the ability to implement managerial processes seems clear at face value, the link between scholarly experience and the ability to implement collegial processes is not. In fact, administrative experience in higher education institutions is perhaps more likely to predict the successful implementation of both types of processes than scholarly experience. As such, scholarly experience does appear to be, as Drange (2015) suggests, a way to gain legitimacy or to control entry to the position. Whether legitimacy is required remains unclear.

Although there seems to be little interest in investigating deans’ qualifications, their study nevertheless provides a unique opportunity to investigate how the deanship changes over time. Nowadays, curriculum vitae and job advertisements are readily available and can be analyzed over time to determine whether requirements have changed. Such qualification profiles can serve to paint a more complete picture of deans’ roles and its evolution through time.

2.3. Deans’ Behaviour

While roles describe what ought to be done and how it should be done, behaviour describes what is being done and how it is being done. Roles are prescriptions and behaviour the result. Beyond role expectations, behaviour is also contingent on how those expectations are internalized and turned into actions based on interpretation, values, beliefs, capacity,
and external constraints.

Behaviour is a part of performance, along with results, but results are produced by the group, while behaviour is the product of the individual. Also, results more often describe what is done than how it is done. Behaviour, on the other hand, more often describes how things are done than what is being done, in particular for managerial positions, where specific tasks are harder to describe with precise observable operations. As such, research on deans’ behaviour is of great importance to the study of deans’ reappointments.

### 2.3.1 Areas of Investigation and Methods

The gist of the literature on deans’ behaviour focuses on their leadership activities (Beck-Frazier, White, & McFadden, 2007; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Del Favero, 2006a; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Hassan, 2013; Julius, Baldrige, & Pfeffer, 1999; Kimencu, 2011; G. Scott et al., 2008; Al-Shuaiby, 2009; Verdigets, 2008; Way, 2010; Wepner, D’Onofrio, & Wilhite, 2008; Wepner, D’Onofrio, & Wilhite, 2004; Wepner, D’Onofrio, Willis, & Wilhite, 2002; Wepner, Wilhite, & D’Onofrio, 2002, 2003). Studies have investigated how deans describe their leadership (Beck-Frazier et al., 2007; Del Favero, 2006a; Julius et al., 1999; Kimencu, 2011; G. Scott et al., 2008; Al-Shuaiby, 2009; Verdigets, 2008; Way, 2010) or how other groups describe their deans’ leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Hassan, 2013). Also, some studies went beyond the description of deans’ leadership and relate it to effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Hassan, 2013; Julius et al., 1999; G. Scott et al., 2008; Al-Shuaiby, 2009; Verdigets, 2008), position it within an existing framework (Beck-Frazier et al., 2007; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Del Favero, 2006a; Hassan, 2013; Kimencu, 2011; Al-Shuaiby, 2009; Verdigets, 2008; Way, 2010), or use it to develop a new framework (Wepner et al., 2008; Wepner et al., 2004; Wepner, D’Onofrio, Willis, & Wilhite, 2002; Wepner et al., 2002, 2003).
Research on leadership often relied on Bolman and Gallos’s (2010) structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frames (Beck-Frazier et al., 2007; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Kimencu, 2011) or used a slightly different set of frames adapted to academic administration: bureaucratic, collegial, political, and symbolic (Del Favero, 2006a; Way, 2010). A few studies used instead Burns’s (1978/2012) transformational leadership framework (Hassan, 2013; Al-Shuaiby, 2009; Verdigets, 2008). Also, research on leadership frames often determined whether multiple frames were being used (Beck-Frazier et al., 2007; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Del Favero, 2006a; Kimencu, 2011; Way, 2010), and to what extent disciplinary characteristics (see Biglan, 1973) explained the use of specific frames (Del Favero, 2006a; Way, 2010). Finally, research on effectiveness either asked deans to characterize their leadership as well as their effectiveness (Al-Shuaiby, 2009), or asked others about their deans’ effectiveness (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Hassan, 2013; Martin, 1993; Verdigets, 2008).

### 2.3.2 Key Findings

Overall, research on deans’ leadership behaviour suggests that different deans tend to favour different leadership frames. Results from research are contradictory. In Beck-Frazier et al.’s (2007) study, the human resources frame was slightly more often used, while Bolman and Deal (1991) found instead that the political frame was more prevalently used, and both studies found that the symbolic frame was less often referred to. Kimencu (2011) found differences between business and education deans’ preferred frames. As well, Del Favero (2006a), Kimencu (2011), and Way (2010) found differences based on deans’ disciplinary background and exposure to their disciplinary paradigms.

Results are also contradictory when using a transformational leadership framework (see Burns, 1978/2012). Hassan (2013) found Business deans found to have a transactional
style, but Verdigets (2008) found they had a transformational one, while Al-Shuaiby
(2009) found education deans to have a transformational style.

Also, most deans use more than one leadership frame (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Kimencu,
2011; Way, 2010), though an important proportion of them report rarely using any frame
in particular (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Kimencu, 2011; Way, 2010). That being said, the
criteria for determining whether a frame was used with some regularity were arbitrary
and varied across studies. Furthermore, the authors do not venture to explain what using
no frame really means. As a result, these results should be taken with some caution.

Of interest, several studies did not ask deans to describe their leadership, but presented
them instead with problematic situations, and asked them to explain the situations and
provide ways to solve them (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Wepner et al., 2008; Wepner et al., 2004;
Wepner, D’Onofrio, Willis, & Wilhite, 2002; Wepner et al., 2002, 2003). In particular,
Wepner et al. through a set of related studies (Wepner et al., 2008; Wepner et al., 2004;
Wepner, D’Onofrio, Willis, & Wilhite, 2002; Wepner et al., 2002, 2003), refined a model
conceptualizing academic leadership as problem solving, relying on intellectual, social,
emotional, and moral considerations. The authors found that deans tend to rely on
intellectual considerations first, then explore other aspects to build a complete picture
and devise solutions. The authors posit that the selection of situations shapes the types
of responses.

Studies investigating the link between leadership and effectiveness were for the most part
unconvincing or inconclusive. Al-Shuaiby (2009) found that educational deans had a
transformational leadership style and that their effectiveness was correlated to their use
of transformational leadership. However, deans were asked to self-report on both their
leadership style and their effectiveness, and both leadership and effectiveness surveys
asked leading questions. G. Scott et al. (2008) make the same mistake of asking deans
about their behaviour as well as their effectiveness to identify a relation between the two.
Other researchers avoided asking deans about their effectiveness and relied instead on the opinions of other stakeholders (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Hassan, 2013; Julius et al., 1999; Martin, 1993; Verdigets, 2008). However, these authors either failed to define effectiveness to their participants (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Hassan, 2013; Martin, 1993) or defined it based on best practices associated with transformational leadership (Hamlin & Patel, 2017; Verdigets, 2008). Finally, Martin (1993) and Julius et al. (1999), by drawing their results only from deans considered effective, failed to determine the extent to which the behaviour they associated with effectiveness was also present among deans deemed ineffective. Taleb (2010) describes this methodological error as the lack of silent evidence or the propensity of drawing inferences only from those who succeed, as those who fail are often ignored or hard to find.

These findings show that leadership frames may be relevant for categorizing leadership behaviour, but the extent to which general conclusions can be reached regarding deans’ leadership remains limited. One likely explanation and area of future research is that the context for leadership decisions needs to be properly described. Inasmuch as situations in higher education institutions are complex and require different and multiple approaches (Bolman & Gallos, 2010), research on leadership frames should seek to determine the particulars of situations and context to better understand deans’ leadership.

Also, with regards to the link between leadership behaviour and effectiveness, research is in need of a firmer definition of effectiveness, one that can be measured more objectively or at least from multiple and distinct standpoints, such as faculty members, staff members, students, and Central Administration.

Of note, studies on deans’ leadership behaviour did not find any convincing evidence of a link between behaviour and gender or experience (Bolman & Deal, 1991; Del Favero, 2006a; Al-Shuaiby, 2009), with the exception of Kimencu (2011) who found that experience predicted the preference for a human resources leadership frame. These results are
somewhat surprising given that qualitative research on gender (Acker, 2010, 2012, 2014; Chesterman, Ross-Smith, & Peters, 2005) and transition (see Section 2.4) suggests otherwise.

### 2.3.3 Other Studies on Deans’ Behaviour

Beyond leadership, a number of studies have explored other types of behaviour. These studies are only loosely related. They have described how deans deal with constraints (Beaupré-Lavallée, 2016; McClure & Teitelbaum, 2016), investigated the increase of managerial practices (David, 2011; Davis et al., 2016; Nuttall, 2012), or compared them with the activities of corporate executives (J. F. Jackson, 2002). Other studies still have focused on specific behaviour: collaboration (de Guzman & Hapan, 2013), ethical dilemmas (Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015), politics (Lumby, 2016), and transparency (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003).

According to these studies, deans operate in a setting that is changing due to external pressure, in particular reduced funding and budget cuts (Beaupré-Lavallée, 2016; David, 2011) and increased bureaucratization and top-down managerial pressure conflicting with bottom-up collegial pressure (Davis et al., 2016). Also, deans’ daily activities share the hectic pace of corporate managers and are characterized by a rapid pace, constant interruptions, numerous in-person interactions, and little time for reflection (J. F. Jackson, 2002).

Nevertheless, research shows that deans are not without agency in this context. They act as policy implementers, but also as policy interpreters and policy makers, using their position and influence to shape how external forces shape their faculty (Beaupré-Lavallée, 2016). They also reconfigure activities in light of financial constraints to find new sources of funding, recruit new students, cut costs, and offer new programs (McClure &
Teitelbaum, 2016). Despite these managerial shifts, deans continue to value and support collegiality within their units (David, 2011; Nuttall, 2012). They, however, distinguish activities requiring managerial approaches, over which they keep direct control, from those warranting collegial approaches, for which they relinquish control to establish committees (Nuttall, 2012).

In working with others, deans collaborate with others using four distinct personas (de Guzman & Hapan, 2013): as truth-seekers, they are value-driven and create or improve understanding; as opportunity providers, they are people-centered and empower others; as authoritative leaders, they are power-oriented and make followers of people; and as reflective practitioners, they are goal-driven and direct others. These ways of collaborating generally overlap, though the truth-seeker persona tends to play an anchoring role.

In combining the conflicting needs of their constituents, deans face ethical dilemmas, in particular when it comes to faculty members and students interactions. To solve them, deans dominantly refer to ethics of care, justice, and professionalism (Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015). In the same way that deans use multiple leadership frames (Bolman & Deal, 1991), leadership dimensions (Wepner et al., 2008), and collaborating personas (de Guzman & Hapan, 2013), deans also exhibit multiple ethical frames when facing ethical dilemmas. However, deans tend not to refer to an ethic of critique, in which arrangements between faculty and students are re-evaluated (Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015).

Finally, deans’ behaviour integrates political behaviour and a discretionary use of transparency. Deans are reluctant to use power, but nevertheless acknowledge its ubiquitousness in university processes. Deans use politics to manage decisional structures and the flow of information within their units to better influence the outcome of processes (Lumby, 2016). They also use discretion in sharing information with others, seeing transparency as a double-edged sword (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003; Lumby, 2015). Unsurprisingly,
deans report receiving the same treatment from their supervisors (Hancock & Hellawell, 2003).

### 2.3.4 Commentary

To sum, the literature on deans’ behaviour has to this point focused its attention on their leadership, but has provided very few findings of note. Partly, this is due to poor definitions. Leadership is still framed as an alternative to management in many studies, instead of as being a part of management (see Mintzberg, 2009). As well, effectiveness is not defined and, worse, the standpoint of the person measuring effectiveness is ignored, as though faculty members’ implicit views of effectiveness were the same as those of provosts.

Leadership research also tends to ignore deans’ context and continues its search for an overarching leadership pattern. But the type of institution, its size, its climate, the deans’ background and past experience and the particular situation at hand, should all be present when deans determine a course of action. Leadership is multifaceted and the frequency at which different types of leadership may be called for should differ significantly. In fact, it is likely that the type of situation being handled has more to do with the style of leadership to be used, than deans’ individual characteristics or those of their institutions.

The literature would also gain from an integrated view of leadership dimensions. The majority of studies use different frameworks, such as Bolman and Deal’s (1984/2013), but others use variations of that framework, other frameworks, or build their own. Yet all of them end up being quite similar to Bolman and Deal’s (1984/2013) framework. For example, de Guzman and Hapan’s (2013) four personas resemble Bolman and Deal’s (1984/2013) frames, and so do Wepner et al.’s (2008) four dimensions. Interestingly, Bolman and Deal admit that their model is also very similar to Quinn’s (1988) competing
values framework, which is also comprised of four dimensions, and present a table of conversion for the two frameworks (see Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 513).

Beyond this issue of using different but similar frameworks, a central problem remains: very few studies have observed deans in their work environment. Relying on existing framework to build surveys makes impossible the discovery of new behavioural patterns. The same way, relying on deans’ opinions to summarize their leadership approaches is bound to provide nothing but biased perceptions. Instead, studies observing deans in action, asking deans to solve hypothetical problems (see Bolman & Deal, 1991; Wepner et al., 2008; Wepner et al., 2004; Wepner, D’Onofrio, Willis, & Wilhite, 2002; Wepner et al., 2002, 2003), or asking deans and others to review past decisions (see Beaupré-Lavallée, 2016; Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015; Lumby, 2016) are more likely to shed new light on deans’ behaviour and guide further survey research.

2.4. Deans’ Transition

Transition is the passage from one situation to another and is usually associated with a learning experience, a change. Individuals going through a transition are generally defining new ways of being in light of a change in their situation. The literature on deans’ transition explores how deans change as they start in their new positions, what happens to them and how they learn their new roles. The central assumption behind transition is that deans change profoundly as they come to understand and enact their new roles.

Transition is strongly related to the previous categories in this literature review: roles, qualifications, behaviour, and evaluation. Transition describes how individuals develop an understanding of their new roles and behave in ways that are likely different than in their previous positions. Nevertheless, these previous positions, and the qualifications
they entail, shape how roles are understood and enacted. Also, as transition is generally a period of learning, previous qualifications also determine to what extent there is a lot to learn and what specifically needs to be learned.

The challenges of transition bear directly on deans’ yearly performance evaluations and their reappointments, which takes place towards the end of their first term in office. If transition is a period of learning one’s roles, then it can be argued that yearly performance reviews and reappointments shape to an extent how deans learn, internalize, and enact their new roles. Also, since reappointments take place at the end of deans’ first terms, they symbolize the end of the transition period.

2.4.1 Areas of Investigation and Methods

Research on deans’ transition has focused on shaping events and the phases deans go through as they move from the Faculty to the deanship (Castro & Tomás, 2012; Damico et al., 2003; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Gmelch, 2002b). Studies have used organizational socialization (Castro & Tomás, 2012; Damico et al., 2003; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Gmelch, 2002b) and anthropological (Damico et al., 2003; Gmelch, 2002b) frameworks to guide their efforts and qualitative methodologies to produce their findings, namely interviews (Castro & Tomás, 2012; Damico et al., 2003), longitudinal case studies (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007), and auto-ethnography (Gmelch, 2002b).

2.4.2 Key Findings

Research on deans’ transition has thus far positioned deans’ transitions within existing transition models: Castro and Tomás (2012) fitted deans’ transition into academics’ transition models (see Akerlind, 2008; Feixas, 2003; Kugel, 1993; Robertson, 1999);

Though studies have used different frameworks, they shared similar findings. They identified transition as going from an equilibrium stage as faculty member to a challenging period of adaptation to the new position, followed by a return to equilibrium, in which deans have internalized their new role and have acquired enough experience to move institutional agendas forward (Castro & Tomás, 2012; Damico et al., 2003; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Gmelch, 2002b).

Deans’ transition has more in common with the transition of corporate administrators than with that of faculty members (Castro & Tomás, 2012; Damico et al., 2003). Transition is a challenging period during which deans gradually come to term with their new identity. They let go of their faculty identity (Gmelch, 2002b) and face the reality of their new role, which they describe as more constraining, demanding, and frustrating (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Gmelch, 2002b). In the first stages, deans tend to base their decisions on past practices or in reaction to new problems (Castro & Tomás, 2012) and find both satisfaction and dissatisfaction in dealing with people, finances, and state politics (Damico et al., 2003). They feel ’stressed and pulled in too many directions’ (Damico et al., 2003, p. 6) and adjust their personal lives accordingly. Slowly, however, deans become familiar with their daily work and become more comfortable. They gain experience and rely on it to deal more assuredly with new situations (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007). Finally, deans internalize the requirements of the deanship and assume their new identity (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007), now feeling both comfortable and confident (Gmelch, 2002b). The early stages of transition are riddled with frustrations and a sense of inefficacy, leading down to what Gmelch (2002b) calls the “valley of despair” (p. 66). Follows generally a period of success and satisfaction, leading out of the valley, where deans meet with a measure of
success.

In every study, universities’ organizational tactics were found to be either non-existent, poorly organized (Damico et al., 2003; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Gmelch, 2002b), or informal and politicized (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007). Of particular interest, studies have found that deans do not simply stand on the receiving ends of socialization tactics, but are proactive in developing their capacity (Castro & Tomás, 2012; Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007). Deans develop an understanding of their units’ environmental contexts, as well as their units’ individual and group dynamics (Castro & Tomás, 2012), and they reach outside their institutions to create a network of support, particularly with other deans (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007). Also, as they go through transition, deans initially show a preoccupation towards building their personal capacity, then work towards increasing their units’ capacity. Finally, as they think of leaving their positions, deans’ concerns for their institutions grow more strongly (Castro & Tomás, 2012).

Of particular interest for my dissertation, Enomoto and Matsuoka’s (2007) study shares some similarities with decanal reappointments. In their study, the individual occupies an interim deanship and vies for a permanent one, a situation to some extent equivalent to seeking reappointment. In the case under study, the appointment of the interim Dean shook the University. Two groups, those in favour and those against the appointment, used their influence to sway the process. Political dynamics played a strong role in the individual’s transition. This further suggests that politics may also come into during reappointments and similarly shape how deans go through their transition and internalize their role.
2.4.3 Commentary

Overall, research on deans’ transition has explored the extent to which existing frameworks can be used to describe their transition and confirmed their usefulness. The studies also emphasized the importance of context and showed that sources of satisfaction for one dean may be sources of frustration for another.

However, studies on deans’ transition have to this point ignored the impact of early role signals, namely past experiences working with deans or job advertisements’ stated roles and qualifications. As well, the studies assume that individuals move from one state of equilibrium to another. However, the transition models used did not take failure into account. Failure in one position may lead to the desire to move on to another position. Deans may not all be satisfied with their faculty role as they transition to the deanship. Similarly, deans may not all reach a state of equilibrium after a few years in office and may remain forever in an uneasy state of transition, until they move on to another position. Though these situations are alluded to in the literature, they have not been investigated yet.

Finally, deans’ transition studies, with the exception of Enomoto and Matsuoka (2007), have ignored the role of performance reviews and reappointment processes in shaping deans’ transition. As Enomoto and Matsuoka’s study shows for the appointment of an interim dean, deans may be aware of factions vying in favour or against their staying in office. These political maneuverings likely shape how deans understand their conflicting roles and enact them. Transition studies should therefore integrate politics in their model.
2.5. Deans’ Evaluation

Deans’ evaluation entails the measurement of their performance against set standards and an appreciation of the results. They include both measurements and judgments. Deans’ evaluation relates to the previous categories inasmuch as performance can partially be described as the relation between behaviour and roles. Qualifications are the initial tools deans’ build on to meet the requirements of the position, to which they add the experience accumulated during their transition. Evaluation plays a central role in decanal reappointments. It is meant as the basis upon which universities determine whether to reappoint deans to a new term in office.

2.5.1 Areas of Investigation and Methods

The literature on deans’ evaluation pursued three main lines of inquiry: how to accurately evaluate deans’ performance using faculty and staff surveys (Heck, Johnsrud, & Rosser, 2000; Rosser, 2003; Rosser, Johnsrud, & Heck, 2003), to what extent can deans self-evaluate their level of competency (Vieira da Motta & Bolan, 2008), and what schemes are being used to evaluate deans’ performance (Hodges & Christ, 1987).

Studies relied on surveys of faculty and staff members (Heck et al., 2000; Rosser, 2003; Rosser et al., 2003) and of deans (Hodges & Christ, 1987; Vieira da Motta & Bolan, 2008). Also, studies were all limited in scope in one way or another. Heck et al. (2000), Rosser (2003), and Rosser et al. (2003) based their results on a survey of 22 deans distributed in a single research university. Similarly, Vieira da Motta and Bolan (2008) looked at 28 deans in a single private university. Hodges and Christ (1987), on the other hand, looked at multiple universities, but only at Nursing deans. Finally, all studies investigated American deans only. These limitations severely limit the generalizability of the conclusions drawn


2.5.2 Key Findings

Looking solely at American Nursing deans, Hodges and Christ (1987) found that evaluations are conducted in various ways and for different purposes. The great majority of deans were being evaluated, using job descriptions in most cases, but these evaluations were rarely enshrined in policy. Evaluations were more often related to merit-pay than for contract renewal purposes. As well, who was asked to rate deans also depended on the institution.

In developing improved statistical procedures for the evaluation of deans’ leadership effectiveness, Heck et al. (2000), Rosser (2003), and Rosser et al. (2003) surveyed faculty and staff members in a research university about their respective deans’ leadership. In their study, deans’ ratings had more to do with who evaluated than with who was being evaluated. Furthermore, group factors were also shown to influence deans’ ratings, invalidating the classic assumption of surveys that raters provide independent measurements (Rosser et al., 2003).

The study also suggests that increasing the number of raters and the number of items tends to increase the results’ accuracy (Heck et al., 2000). However, this hypothesis was only tested for random sets of questions. It remains plausible, since results exhibited strong internal coherence, that a summary question about deans’ effectiveness may be sufficiently reliable.

Of interest, the individual characteristics of raters did not significantly influence their ratings, except in the case of department chairs who tended to give deans higher ratings. Levels of funding within the unit also had no impact, but the size of the unit did, as well...
as the deans’ gender. For units of greater size and for female deans, the ratings were found to be significantly higher. Despite these findings, the authors nevertheless argue that individual differences can be construed as sources of errors and removed from the statistical analysis to produce accurate individual and group measures of deans’ leadership effectiveness (Rosser et al., 2003).

Moving away from faculty and staff evaluations, another study investigated instead deans’ capacity for self-evaluation. Vieira da Motta and Bolan (2008) asked deans to self-evaluate their levels of competency and found that deans tended to inflate their results, despite declaring being relatively aware of their strengths and weaknesses. The authors judged, based on discrepancies or contradictions in deans’ answers, that deans lacked the ability to correctly identify how well they were doing and whether they needed further training or support.

2.5.3 Commentary

Overall, the research on deans’ evaluation remains nascent. Only three studies investigated deans’ evaluations, and in very specific settings: Nursing deans (Hodges & Christ, 1987), one research university (Heck et al., 2000; Rosser, 2003; Rosser et al., 2003), and one private university (Vieira da Motta & Bolan, 2008). In addition, only Hodges and Christ (1987) investigated evaluations currently taking place, while Heck et al. (2000), Rosser (2003), and Rosser et al. (2003) investigated the reliability and validity of a potential evaluation survey, and Vieira da Motta and Bolan (2008) evaluated a potential self-evaluation model for training purposes.

At this stage, the literature suggests that deans’ evaluations are being conducted regularly using a variety of tools for different purposes. However, the quality of such processes and their outcomes on deans and their faculties have not been looked into. Furthermore, the
literature also suggests that faculty and staff ratings, as well as deans’ self-ratings, show important limitations and should be used with great caution. Finally, while studies have tried to measure reliability, they have taken for granted the validity of their instruments. Effectiveness is defined only in reference to theoretical constructs. If a survey deems a dean effective, there is no secondary measure used to determine whether the survey is valid. Evaluation instruments also do not explicitly take into account the standpoint of the rater or the purpose of the evaluation. Heck et al. (2000) recognize this problem when clarifying that their evaluation relies only on faculty and staff, and a role-based perspective, as opposed to outcome-based, standards-based, or structure-based perspectives, but they provide no solution to this problem of validity.

2.6. Conclusions of the Literature Review

I have reviewed in this chapter the research literature relevant to my investigation of deans’ reappointments, namely with regards to deans’ roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation. In this section, I take a step back from the specific findings in each section to draw broad conclusions about research on deans. To start, I wish to remind the reader that I selected the five categories of this review from a list of seventeen categories. There is therefore a lot more to be said about deans, but I consider that the five categories selected are sufficient to properly situate my work on reappointments within the existing literature.

The most important and obvious conclusion is that university decanal reappointments have never been the object of empirical research. Two studies have touched upon the topic, but only partially. The first study is that of Hodges and Christ (1987), who surveyed Nursing deans about their performance evaluation, but did not disaggregate reappointment results from other types of evaluation. In addition, as the authors were
trying to get a general sense of what type of evaluations were taking place and what criteria were used or should be used, they made little efforts to go beyond reporting proportions of Nursing deans for each type of evaluation.

The second study related to deans’ reappointments is that of Enomoto and Matsuoka (2007), who documented the case of an interim dean’s transition and appointment, which is similar in some ways to that of a reappointment, but also fundamentally different for two reasons. First, the interim Dean was considered alongside other candidates. Second, there was no evaluation of the deans’ performance conducted across the Faculty.

Reappointments and yearly performance reviews are systematically absent of studies of behaviour, even those who emphasize the importance of deans’ context in shaping behaviour. The underlying assumption is therefore that behaviour is internally driven and not negotiated between individuals and their organizations. But roles are determined by individuals. Nor do they are simply put on, in particular when roles signals are coming from different directions, are not always explicit, and may conflict with one another (see Section 3.3). As such, the investigation of reappointments will shed light on how their roles are valued and evaluated and on how this evaluation shapes their behaviour and come to term with their new role during their transition. This is the central gap in the literature that this dissertation addresses.

Another important conclusion I draw from the review is that the concept of effectiveness and its measure are being taken for granted in the literature and warrant important refinements. In defining effectiveness for research purposes, researchers would do well to distinguish it from the related but different concepts of efficacy and efficiency. I suggest that efficacy be seen as the minimal capacity to produce a result, effectiveness as the level of efficacy, and efficiency as a measure of efficiency in relation to resource expenditures. It should be clear, when evaluating performance, which of the three is being evaluated.
Additionally, effectiveness should be related to specified objects Heck et al. (2000). Effectiveness can relate to the achievement of set outcomes, the meeting of standards or targets, the enactment of roles, or the delivery of products or structures. Similarly, effectiveness would thus be related to measures of inputs, activities, or outputs. In addition, effectiveness could also be related to organizational norms such as collaboration or respect.

Finally, effectiveness should never be dissociated from the standpoint of the evaluator. What effectiveness looks like is contingent to a great extent on one’s standpoint. The research has clearly shown that what counts as performance for deans, central administrations, faculty members, faculty staff, alumni, students, or donours, will likely be different.

As a result of those misgivings, I suggest that future research on deans’ effectiveness clarifies the inputs, activities, and outputs that are being evaluated, along with the norms that are used to qualify effectiveness. For example, deans may be tasked with: increasing enrolments, while maintaining high admission standards; cutting costs, while maintaining a positive working climate; or increasing research outputs, while keeping costs constant. As can be seen from these examples, clarifying what is to be done and how it is to be done helps understand what one means by effectiveness. It also further allows us to see how different groups may see those items differently. As well, if we recognize that different groups will understand effectiveness differently, then it behooves researchers to tease out these differences in their analysis of deans’ effectiveness. Using the examples provided above, one can posit that faculty members and central administrations may not only disagree on what is important, but also on how it should be accomplished. Activities and norms are understood differently. Finally, effectiveness measures should always seek participants from multiple groups and keep in mind that the broader role of deans is to conciliate conflicting needs.
Though such measures would increase the validity of effectiveness measurements, they would still lack an objective point of comparison. To that end, researchers should further collect complementary data to triangulate their claims. From the examples provided above, researchers could tally enrolment figures, student distributions by incoming high school grades, yearly expenditure ratios, working climate surveys, and research output measures. Such data would provide researchers with a secondary measure of effectiveness, which they could use to establish their surveys’ validity.

The research literature on deans also tends to downplay the importance of context. Survey studies of roles and behaviour rarely clarify the context in which roles and behaviours are understood or the situations to which they refer. Is it more important to understand how deans behave in general, when faced with an open conflict between two faculty members, or when faced with reduced budgets? It seems obvious that how one understands and enacts a role has more to do with the situation involved and the context in which the situation takes place and the time at which it takes place. Again, do we expect deans to behave the same way if they are in a large-size faculty where students recently went on strike, in a smaller faculty that has accumulated deficit after deficit under the previous Dean, or in a professional health faculty in a province that is currently modifying its health-care system? As our overview of the literature suggests, there are just too many survey studies providing only aggregated results with little nuance. I suggest that future efforts focus on unveiling the subtle and complex ways by which deans solve problematic situations. To paraphrase Pawson (2002), it is not about finding what works, but what works for which dean, in which situation, in which context, and during which period?

Beyond these limitations and areas of future exploration, the literature nevertheless portrays deans with clear broad strokes, the first of which is the breadth and depth of their roles. Deans must be everything to everyone. Research shows that the deanship is comprised of leadership roles encompassing the areas of administration, budgets and
finance, communication, development, external and internal relations, strategy, and politics. How deans and others understand and prioritize these multiple and conflicting roles, however, varies significantly. In the same way, deans’ behaviour also varies significantly from one dean to the next, though they are generally depicted as active agents using their power to influence how internal and external forces shape their faculties. This, however, they tend to do in ways that are for the most part in line with expectations. They take collegiality seriously, though they generally ensure that some decision processes remain separate from the collegium.

What I have described is best summarized as a conciliatory role of middle-management. Deans come from the Faculty, but their role brings them at the confluence of a system of tensions emanating from the expectations of numerous groups. In addition, they must also conciliate the exigencies of two bureaucracies, an administrative and an academic one, with different logics, regulations, norms, rhythms, and values. Finally, deans are members of central administrations, which are generally characterized as top-down, while leading faculties where powers tend to flow upwards instead. Again, we see two competing logics which deans must conciliate.

To conclude, this review of the research literature demonstrates the importance of delving further into the context of academic leadership and understand how specific elements of the context shape the way university deans exercise their leadership. I propose, with this thesis, to contribute to the research literature by exploring how different deans in different contexts experience and make sense of their reappointments. In doing so, my aim is to bring to light how the measuring of deans’ performance impact their leadership as they move through their transition. The next chapter describes the framework guiding this exploration. It looks in particular at the links between politics, leadership, management, socialization, and the measure of performance.
Chapter 3

Conceptual Framework

This chapter clarifies the concepts and theories underpinning my study of Canadian university decanal reappointments. As a reminder, I start from the assumption that reappointments are about granting power and controlling its use (Section 1.1), a problem that has occupied humankind since the dawn of philosophy (Kellerman, 2010; Russell, 1938/2004). Reappointments act as periodical checks through which university deans’ power is evaluated and readjusted. To understand reappointments and identify their intended and unintended outcomes, I suggest we move away from rational perspectives that emphasize the role of formal structures, and instead select one that emphasizes the role of informal structures and addresses issues related to power in organizations, in particular with regards to leadership, management, and how managers learn their roles. Accordingly, I use a political perspective on organizations, leadership, and organizational socialization to frame my investigation. In what follows, I provide an overview of organizational politics and describe how they serve to enrich our understanding of power, control, and leadership in organizations. I then apply this perspective to the issues around organizational socialization, namely managers’ performance appraisals.
3.1. Organizational Politics

To understand organizations, scholars can use a growing number of frameworks, each shining a different light on a different set of characteristics (Grey, 2012; Hatch & Cunliffe, 2012; Morgan, 2006; W. R. Scott & Davis, 2015). Each framework acts as a lens and provides researchers with concepts, mechanisms, explanations, hypotheses, classic problems and classic solutions, as well as favoured methods of investigation, and leaves everything else in the realm of anomalies, where the germs of new frameworks fester in the darkest corners (Kuhn, 1962/1996).

A political perspective on organizations is such a framework. The field of organizational politics emerged from the lacunae found in rational models of organizations, as numerous scholars moved away from the formal structures of organizations, and towards its informal structures, recognizing in particular the role of individuals and their interactions with one another (W. R. Scott & Davis, 2015). In organizational politics, organizations are understood as political arenas (Mintzberg, 1985) where conflict is an integral part of how and why organizations operate as they do. The prevalence of conflict, brought about by diverging goals and interests, is the foundation of organizational politics, while political behaviour describes the actions of individuals and coalitions as they strive to further their goals and interests (Baldridge, 1971a; Bolman & Deal, 1984/2013; Ferris & Treadway, 2012; Morgan, 2006).

3.1.1 Conflict

Central to the understanding of organizations is the relation between conflict and decision-making (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974), power differences between actors (Eisenhardt & Bourgeois, 1988), and the enabling effect of ambiguous goals (W. R. Scott & Davis,
In essence, a political perspective on organizations recognizes that organizations are comprised of individuals grouped into units whose views and goals diverge (Baldridge, 1971a). Individuals and units understand and prioritize organizational goals differently (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2012). This is in great part due to the impossibility of completely and explicitly defining organizational goals (W. R. Scott & Davis, 2015), by the limitations set on rational behaviour (Simon, 1991), and by the competition between organizational and individual goals (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2011). This divergence of goals and interests leads in turn to conflict between individuals and units, and between individuals, units, and their organizations.

Conflict is a dynamic and complex state of disagreement between interdependent and interacting agents brought about by divergences of goals and interests (Thomas, 1992). It generally evolves through time as a result of conflicting parties’ actions (Manning, 2013). Conflict is generally resolved through the use of power within the context of negotiations and ultimately aims at influencing decisions made within the organization. Conflict resolution takes place following five logics: collaboration, where both parties work together to pursue gains; compromise, where both parties accept to suffer losses; accommodation, where one party accepts to suffer losses; competition, where one party pursues gains at the expense of the other party; and avoidance, where parties opt not to engage in negotiation and leave their issues unsettled (Thomas, 1992; Thomas & Pondy, 1977).

Paradoxically, conflict brings people together and helps to clarify values, interests, priorities, and objectives (Baldridge, 1971b). As such, conflict can help organizations in achieving their goals (Mintzberg, 1985) and better understand their purposes (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). On the other hand, conflict can also lead to distortion of information, delays, wasted opportunities, and personal antagonisms (Pfeffer, 1993). Finally, conflict festers. If handled poorly, it hinders the resolution of subsequent conflicts (Bolman &
3.1.2 Complexity, Uncertainty, and Resource-Dependency

Three factors facilitate the emergence of conflict and the reinforcing of organizational politics: complexity, uncertainty, and resource-dependency (Ouimet, 2008). Complexity results from the great number of organizational activities contributing to different extent towards performance. Related to complexity, uncertainty results from the limits of knowing. The more complex an organization, the harder it becomes to measure who did what, how, and what were the outcomes related to those actions. As complexity rises, so does uncertainty.

Complexity and uncertainty alone provide ample support for political behaviour in organizations (Ferris & Judge, 1991; Pfeffer, Salancik, & Leblebici, 1976), but it is the limited amount of resources available that provides momentum for political behaviour (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1974). Scarcity forces organizations to allocate resources, but complexity and uncertainty impede rational distribution. Accordingly, individuals and units, based on their understanding of organizational goals and their competing individual goals, enter conflict to influence decisions and, in turn, resource allocations (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977).

3.1.3 Political Behaviour

Organizational politics, at the level of the individual, translates into political behaviour. Political behaviour has been defined in several ways (Lepisto & Pratt, 2012), with a number of them concentrating on negative aspects and selfish goals such as promotion (e.g., Allen, Madison, Porter, Renwick, & Mayes, 1979) or defence of self-interests (e.g.,...
Ashforth & Lee (1990). These views tend to portrait politics as negative and harmful to organizations, like sand between the cogs. Other views recognize the positive role that organizational politics may also play (e.g., Hochwart, 2012; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). My preference is to use a definition that separates behaviour from moral outcomes (see Simon, 1990) and allows for positive and negative selfishness, as well as selflessness, in political behaviour.

For Mayes and Allen (1977), what constitutes political behaviour is contingent on the ends pursued in relation to the means used. Non-political behaviour includes all use of sanctioned means towards sanctioned goals, and political behaviour is the residual. Ouimet (2008) further classifies this residual into three categories. To use unsanctioned means towards sanctioned ends is political, but regarded as potentially positive behaviour, while using sanctioned means towards unsanctioned ends is also political, but regarded as insidious behaviour. Finally, the third category includes the use of non-sanctioned means towards non-sanctioned ends, and generally considered nefarious behaviour.

However, it is important to keep in mind that distinctions between sanctioned and unsanctioned means, and between sanctioned and unsanctioned ends, are arbitrary, contingent on organizational norms, and contestable. In other words, what is in the best interest of the organization is not always what the mandated authorities say it is (Simon, 1945/1997). Organizational decisions are neither rational, unbounded by cognitive limitations, nor free of organizational politics. Nevertheless, this categorization implies that political behaviour is not per se negative. It seeps through all processes and can contribute positively towards organizational effectiveness (Ammeter, Douglas, Gardner, Hochwart, & Ferris, 2002).
3.1.4 Power

Organizational politics also relate to the use of power. Power is the capacity to influence behaviour and produce social change (Ouimet, 2008). Power is shared, as no single individual or unit can lay claim on all critical organizational activities, but it is not shared equally (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). An individual’s power finds its source in the organization’s structure, its hierarchy and procedures. This power is legitimate, at least from the standpoint of the organization, as long as it is used towards sanctioned ends. The other source of power is based on the individual’s own sources of power. This power is always political, it falls outside of the organization’s structures and procedures. It draws from an individual’s personality and expertise, and is situated, contingent on contextual elements (Ouimet, 2008).

Ouimet associates legitimate power with managerial work and political power with leadership. The author further divides French and Raven’s (1959) bases of power according to this distinction between legitimate power and management, and political power and leadership. Legitimate power leverages the individual’s capacity to reward, coerce, and share information, but, in sanctioned ways and towards sanctioned goals.

Political power leverages that same capacity to reward, coerce, and share information, but in a discretionary manner, in unsanctioned ways, or towards unsanctioned goals. Political power also includes other bases of power not granted by the organization’s structure. It leverages relations with powerful individuals, representations, and reputation. To summarize, leadership and management use similar bases of power, but management refers to the application of recognized organizational processes to reward, coerce, and share information, while leadership refers to the use of discretion in using these same bases. In addition, leadership also make use of other personal bases, namely the individual’s network, his or her ability to frame issues, and his or her reputation.
Finally, Ouimet (2008) identifies two other personal sources of power, but separates them from political power, while categorizing them nonetheless within leadership. These are charismatic power, which draws his source from the individual’s personality, and expert power, which draws from the individual’s knowledge. As a result, leadership, in Ouimet’s framework, is distinct from management and relies on politics, charisma, and expertise. The next section looks at leadership theory in more depth and offers a slightly different model for leadership. In particular, it replaces management for administration and situates management as the combination of administration and leadership.

3.1.5 Organizational Politics and Higher Education Institutions

Scholars have applied organization theories to universities, with each perspective providing different insights on their workings (Manning, 2013). Chief among these are the bureaucratic and collegial perspectives, which focus on processes and structures (Baldridge, 1971a). However, in order to understand the stakes of deans’ reappointments and capture some of their unintended outcomes, I consider that it is preferable to cast reappointments as political arenas, while keeping collegial and bureaucratic perspectives one step removed.

Higher education institutions are not like most organizations and their distinguishing characteristics in turn shape their organizational politics. In universities, many decisions, in particular academic and policy decisions, are made through committee work, following collegial logics, while other decisions, such as budgets, follow bureaucratic ones, and others, such as admission, are a combination of both. As the majority of committees are staffed and controlled by faculty members, the power faculty members hold through these committees is far greater than their employee status would suggest, compared to most organizations (Bolman & Gallos, 2010).
Also of importance, participation in decision-making is highly fluid in universities. Faculty members on decision-making committees, as their participation is not mandatory and as their terms may start or end in the middle of longer-term decision-making, join and leave discussions at different times, which can be disruptive. They can also join discussions through other means such as open letters (Baldridge, 1971b; Manning, 2013). Furthermore, faculty members are protected by academic freedom, which protects their right to intervene and to dissent in the collegial institution (B. E. Hogan & Trotter, 2013). The end result is that decisions are often stalled, reviewed, or revisited multiple times. For good or bad, deciding takes time in higher education institutions (Manning, 2013).

Institutional conflict generally involves small interest groups rather than the majority of the Faculty (Baldridge, 1971a). In most cases, power is left in the hands of power elites, in particular administrators. However, when decisions start to impact academic life, they stir a broader response from a greater number of faculty members, who expect a collegial approach to decision-making.

Decision-making in the political, bureaucratic, and collegial organization can be understood as a game of chess and a game of go, played simultaneously. In the game of chess, the objective is to capture the king, whatever the means. This is akin, in organizations, to convincing the one who holds power over the issue, the Dean, for example. Once that individual is convinced, everything follows, as legitimate power is expressed and resources are made available. In the game of go, the objective is quite different. Players strive to control territory. They place stones on the board, which do not move, though the stones can be captured if isolated. In organizations, this is similar to controlling committees. Coalition members position themselves in multiple committees, where their numbers and positions allow them to control debates through committee control.

To sum, universities present several characteristics enabling the use of power between individuals and units to control decisions. That being said, this potential for control
is mitigated by their size and complexity, which prevent coalitions from controlling everything (Amaral, Jones, & Karseth, 2002a; Manning, 2013). There are just too many issues, too many committees, and too many formal and informal communities with shifting interests (C. Kerr, 1963/2001; Pennock, Jones, Leclerc, & Li, 2015).

### 3.2. Leadership

The preceding sections established a strong link between political behaviour and leadership, with the two processes being closely related, if not one and the same. Before going further, let me clarify what I mean by leadership and its relation to management and administration.

Though many definitions of leadership exist (Hughes, Ginnett, & Curphy, 2012) and evolve throughout our history (Kellerman, 2010, 2012), by focusing on interaction, we can nevertheless define leadership as the process by which individuals, the leaders, influence a group, the followers, towards acting in a specific way, while faced with a specific situation. Most definitions take, to an extent, three components into account: leaders, followers, and situations (Hughes et al., 2012).

Using the leaders, followers, situations triad we can better understand the numerous declination of leadership theories as differences in focus. Leadership theories constitute a microcosm of theories using various lenses on each of the corners of the triad or along their edges. Some, such as traits theories, focus on leaders, while others, such as leader-members exchange theories, on the relationship between leaders and followers. The resulting leadership literature is vast and broad, though the gist of it remains concentrated on leaders, on what makes a good leader, and on how to become one (Barker, 1997; Kellerman, 2012; Pfeffer, 2015).
In great part, the leadership literature suffers from being overly (a) celebratory, as it emphasizes and exaggerates the role of leaders in organizational performance (Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010; R. Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Kellerman, 2004, 2012; Meindl et al., 1985; Pfeffer, 2015; Simon, 1945/1997); (b) unrealistic, as it suggests that leadership skills can be taught within a short period of time (Barker, 1997; Kellerman, 2012; Pfeffer, 2015); (c) decontextualized, as it assumes that one type of leadership fits all leaders, followers, and situations (S. Kerr & Jermier, 1978; Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002); (d) misguided, as it is based on weak empirical research (Alvesson & Karreman, 2015; Lumby, 2016); (e) gendered and raced, as it reinforces past hegemonic patterns supporting white males as leaders (Acker, 2010; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-McGavin, 2011); (f) prescriptive, as it advocates moralistic behaviour based on moralistic conceptions instead of empirical evidence (Kellerman, 2012; Pfeffer, 2015); (g) wishful, as it emboldens leaders to act according to unsupported assumptions (Barker, 1997; Kellerman, 2012; Pfeffer, 2015); (h) idealistic, as it prescribes behaviour running contrary to leaders’ self-preservation (Maner & Mead, 2010; Pfeffer, 2015); and (i) rosy, as it obfuscates the darker realities of leadership in organizations (Burke, 2006; R. Hogan & Hogan, 2001; Kellerman, 2004; Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007).

As with organizational politics, I prefer to refrain from using moral arguments in defining the process of leadership, though some authors argue that they should not be distinguished (e.g., B. Jackson & Parry, 2011), thereby allowing for both positive and negative outcomes (see Simon, 1990). Also, I choose not to address whether the function of leadership is to infuse purpose or to improve performance (see Podolny, Khurana, & Besharov, 2010), but accept that different leadership arrangements may call for different functions, though, in most cases, it is likely that both infusing purpose and ensuring performance are deemed equally important.
3.2.1 Leadership, Administration, and Management

An important issue with leadership theory, and one for which I propose an alternate view, is the false distinction between leaders and managers. In a fair proportion of the literature (Edwards, Schedlitzki, Turnbull, & Gill, 2015), leaders and managers are represented as opposite ends of a continuum, with leaders being active and managers being reactive, and with leaders taking risks and managers preserving the status quo (e.g., Chiu, Balkundi, & Weinberg, 2017; McConkey, 1989; Ouimet, 2008; Selznick, 1957/2011; Zaleznik, 1977). This reducing view of leadership and management sings the praises of those in power, emboldens them to take more risks and to break more rules, but it confuses formal and informal power and neglects the strong links between leadership and management (Edwards et al., 2015). This depiction is also flawed because it asks whether an individual is a leader or a manager, and does not allow for the possibility that someone could or should be both. It also ignores followers and situations.

Mintzberg (2009) provides an alternate perspective, one based on extended empirical observations of managers in different settings. The author’s perspective rejects the dichotomy between leadership and management, recognizes the complexity and situatedness of managerial work, and includes leadership as a dimension of management. In this perspective, management is a construction of roles ensuring a unit’s functioning. It encompasses actions grouped on three planes controlled by strategy framing and time scheduling internal processes: the information plane, the people plane, and the action plane.

On the information plane, managers communicate within their units, with other units, upwards and downwards, and control their units’ activities. Control is achieved through decision-making, through design of strategies, structures, processes, and systems, through delegation and authorization, through distribution of resources, and through deeming
On the people plane, managers lead individuals in their units and link their units to people outside. Mintzberg defines leading as energizing and developing individuals, building and maintaining teams, and establishing and strengthening culture. Linking units to people outside refers to the outward focus of managers as they represent their units, convey needs or interests, convince others, network inside and outside their organizations, transmit information outward, and buffer information coming from outside.

Finally, on the action plane, managers act and directly manage or oversee specific operations. This is usually done to ensure success or to learn about processes. On that plane, Mintzberg also locates dealing with the outside, consolidating relations and coalitions, or negotiating directly with other units or with external stakeholders.

Mintzberg’s representation of management includes several activities generally associated with leadership. In this perspective, managers are not only responsible for routine decisions, but also meaning-making ones. This view contrasts with Selznick’s (1957/2011), who portrayed management and leadership as separate functions, though not necessarily embodied by separate individuals. For Mintzberg, managerial work involves leadership. There is no dichotomy between the two.

To conciliate these somewhat conflicting views, a more useful distinction can be made using administration instead of management. Administration is generally understood as the legitimate and sanctioned enactment of organizational processes of decision-making (Simon, 1945/1997). Using this definition, it is possible to recast managerial work as including both administration and leadership. The former focusing on the formal and the latter on the informal organization. Doing so allows us to bring Mintzberg’s (2009) and Ouimet’s (2008) perspectives together. Admittedly, both perspectives are centered on leaders’ activities, but for the purpose of this dissertation, which investigates deans’
experiences and sense-making, this focus on leaders is adequate.

3.2.2 Leadership, Management, and Organizational Politics

Mintzberg (2009) describes management, while Ouimet (2008) describes political behaviour, but both relate them to leadership. In the former, the focus is on activities, while in the latter, the focus is on means. Mintzberg uses planning, information, people, and action to organize the activities of managers, and positions leadership within that framework. Ouimet also positions managerial activities, but uses power bases for his framework, with leadership as a combination of professional, charismatic, and political power.

As such, since both refer to influence, leadership and politics are linked. Leaders often rely on politics and not solely on charisma, expertise (Ammeter et al., 2002; Ferris, Perrewé, Daniels, Lawong, & Holmes, 2017; Winkler, 2010), or traditions (Weber, 1921/2008) to anchor their power. However, the intrinsic link between politics and leadership remains mostly overlooked by leadership studies (Dinh et al., 2014).

Related to leadership, both authors refer to the use of authority. In Mintzberg’s framework, authority is implicit in administrative activities such as controlling, planning, or communicating. In Ouimet’s framework, authority is the use of legitimate power and the capacity to reward, punish, and inform. As such, both authors recognize that managerial work involves a combination of authority and leadership, with the use of authority generally tied to administrative tasks, though Ouimet also includes the possibility that leadership relies on the unsanctioned use of administrative processes.

Together, these two frameworks provide a portrait of leadership that adequately situates it within management and recognizes its inherent political aspects. In this combined
framework, leadership is one of the means by which managers perform their tasks. The framework also distinguishes between administration and leadership, within managerial work, with administration relying on the legitimate and sanctioned use of authority provided by the organization’s structural hierarchy, and leadership relying on informal and unsanctioned bases of power.

It is tempting to categorize Mintzberg’s tasks by their sources of power and directly associating leading with leadership, but the reality is more complex. All bases of power are related and work together in enabling task performance. In organizations, leadership is implicitly tied to authority, to structure (Cronshaw, 2012), though authority alone is not sufficient to ensure unit performance (Simon, 1945/1997). Are people reporting to a manager following that person because of his or her leadership, or is it in part because of the manager’s potential for authority, for reward, or for coercion? The sources of power, in relation to the enactment of tasks, must be understood not simply as being used, but as a potential, a capacity, which itself holds power without being enacted. Power does not need to be used to have an effect. In fact, using authority in some circumstances is akin to spending it and ultimately losing power. Followers may act according to how they experience a leadership situation, but that understanding takes place alongside the understanding of the consequences of not acting as expected. Managers may think that it is all about the way they handle people, but it is also about the legitimate power they wield and could potentially use.

3.2.3 Political Leadership and Decision-Making

Leadership as political behaviour takes place in a context that requires a specifically political characterization. To do so, I use and combine Ouimet’s (2008) and Ammeter et al.’s (2002) conceptualizations of political leadership and its context.
Ouimet (2008) positions the political dimensions of leadership within a context similar to our starting triad of leaders, followers, and situations. It differs by including managers’ supervisors and focuses on interests and political power to describe situations. Ouimet describes political strategies and tactics as stemming from an agent’s perception of his or her situation with regards to three dimensions: personal power, alignment of goals and interests with supervisor, and alignment of goals and interest with employees. Recognizing the underlying politics of a situation and selecting the appropriate tactics is what constitutes political skill (see Ferris & Treadway, 2012).

Ouimet’s framework for political leadership explicitly ties leadership strategy decisions with managers’ organizational environment. As such, it describes the ways by which managers should be going about their tasks, without implying that these tasks will get done. Instead, the model allows for strategies that are focused not on performance, but on survival, instead protecting the status quo or one’s career. The framework is prescriptive, but it associates strategies with dimensions other than moral purposes or managers’ will. Together with Ouimet’s (2008) description of leadership means and Mintzberg’s (2009) description of managerial tasks, this description provides a comprehensive framework to examine managers’ leadership through a political lens.

That being said, though Ouimet’s (2008) model is useful to analyze individual situations, it does not explicitly link them to past or future episodes, to agents’ characteristics other than their interests and goals, or to organizational culture. To complement the model and include these dimensions, we now turn to Ammeter et al.’s (2002) model.

For Ammeter et al. (2002), political leadership is presented as a context-antecedents-behaviour-outcomes cycle, where the outcomes of political behaviour join the antecedents of future political situations. In this model, the past serves to explain the future. As a result, Ammeter et al. draw our attention to leaders’ learning and the relevance of past experiences in informing behaviour. As well, the authors include in the antecedents of
political leadership leaders’ and followers’ characteristics such as cognition, skills, and will.

Figure 3.1 summarizes how I combine these two models to conceptualize managers’ leadership decisions within a political context. In this representation, managers, based on their perception of the situation, namely, their power and the alignment between their goals and interests with those of their supervisors and employees, decide on a leadership strategy. The outcomes of their choices then inform how they will handle future situations.

Figure 3.1: Representation of Managers’ Leadership Decision-Making and Feedback Loop

Ammeter et al.’s (2002) and Ouimet’s (2008) models go hand in hand, in that Ammeter et al. draw our attention to what surrounds political behaviour, in particular the effect of past behaviour on context and agents, and emphasize political development from one situation to the next, while Ouimet draws our attention on the balance of power, goals, and interests between leaders and followers, but also between leaders and their supervisors, and describes how this balance shapes their decisions. The former is helpful in describing the impact of time and personal characteristics, while the latter dissects with greater
detail leaders’ political decision-making.

Ouimet (2008) further combines managers’ power with the alignment between their goals and interests and those of their supervisors and employees into an eightfold taxonomy of political leadership strategies and tactics. Available power and alignment with followers’ interests dictate an agent’s choice between four broad political strategies: promotion, when power and alignment are both present; proposition, when power is missing; probation, when alignment is missing; and protection, when both power and alignment are missing.

These four strategies are further divided into eight based on managers’ alignment with their supervisors’ goals and interests. Alignment with supervisors turns promotion into consecration, proposition into confrontation, probation into construction, and protection into conservation. On the other hand, lack of alignment with supervisors’ goals and interests instead turns promotion into consolidation, proposition into coalition, probation into consultation, and protection into conjuration. Finally, Ouimet provides for each specific strategy five likely implementation tactics, or political games. By associating strategies with tactics, Ouimet integrates many previous lists of political tactics (e.g., Allen et al., 1979; Ferris, Munyon, Basik, & Buckley, 2008; Mintzberg, 1985; Pfeffer, 1993; Yazici, Nartgun, & Ozhan, 2015) into a coherent framework. Table 3.1 on the next page summarizes Ouimet’s (2008) taxonomy of strategies and tactics.

To sum, combining Mintzberg’s (2009), Ouimet’s (2008), and Ammeter et al.’s (2002) models provide a useful framework to guide research on management and leadership in organizations. In this integrated framework, leadership is a managerial role and uses political strategies and tactics. Leadership decisions are based on managers’ perceptions of their political situations and the outcomes of their decisions inform how their handling of future situations. Finally, this model, as it includes managers’ supervisors and allows for situations where managers are not supported or provided with little power, allows for the possibility that managers, despite their authority, find themselves powerless or, worse,
Table 3.1: Ouimet’s (2008) Taxonomy of Political Leadership Strategies and Tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad strategy</th>
<th>Specific strategy</th>
<th>Tactic</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Rituals</td>
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<td>Symbols</td>
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<td>Consecration</td>
<td>Fairness in victory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Calling to a higher purpose or moral imperatives</td>
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<td>Promoting fundamental organizational values</td>
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<td>Promotion</td>
<td>Building selective relations and avoidances</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Picking battles</td>
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<td>Consolidation</td>
<td>Being the scapegoat</td>
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<td>Rational demonstration</td>
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<td>Mentoring recruits</td>
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<td>Confrontation</td>
<td>Budgeting</td>
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<td>Playing the clock</td>
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<td>Choosing where</td>
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<td>Acting by-the-book or rule-evading</td>
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<td>Checking with the boss first</td>
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<td>Proposition</td>
<td>Using a go-between agent</td>
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<td>Coalition</td>
<td>Give-and-take</td>
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<td>Playing nice</td>
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<td>Asking for a personal favour</td>
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<td>Probation</td>
<td>Playing boy-scout</td>
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<td>Networking</td>
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<td>Construction</td>
<td>Piggybacking on a rising star</td>
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<td>Playing the report card game</td>
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<td>Playing the touting game</td>
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<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Choosing a powerful mentor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Placing friends in high places</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Selecting supportive employees</td>
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<td>Acting as the knight in shining armour</td>
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<td>Acting as the squeaky wheel</td>
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<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Giving a ticket-to-ride</td>
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<td>Focussing on the opportunities</td>
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<td>Focussing on the threats</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dropping it on someone else’s desk</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Acting as the company’s man</td>
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<td>Protection</td>
<td>Leading conversations to dead-ends</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Talking but not saying much</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conjuration</td>
<td>Playing dead in the hope of drawing pity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finding allies in unexpected places</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whistle blowing</td>
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*Note.* Managers’ broad leadership strategies are selected based on their power and the alignment between their goals and interests and those of their employees. Specific strategies are in turn contingent on managers’ alignment with their supervisors’ goals and interests.
oppressed by their supervisors or employees.

3.2.4 Leadership and Higher Education Institutions

When comparing universities with other, perhaps more conventional, organizations, the first thing that strikes many observers is the level of autonomy granted to faculty members and the tremendous collective power they hold (e.g., Bolman & Gallos, 2010). Accordingly, faculty members often see themselves as independent contractors sharing services, like doctors in a clinic, than as employees (Gmelch & Buller, 2015). As a result, management and leadership take new forms in higher education institutions, where legitimate power over faculty members is tenuous (S. Kerr & Jermier, 1978).

Another key difference between universities and other organizations shaping the nature of leadership is the distribution of legitimate power. Legitimate power in universities is separated between central management, the units or schools, and the departments, but it does not simply flow downwards. Managers’ domains of authority are heavily circumscribed by policy and a great number of decisions, in particular policy and academic ones, are made by broad committees. As a result, managers in higher education institutions often get to determine how things get done, but rarely what gets done. These arrangements further deplete the extent to which managers in higher education institutions can effectively use formal authority (Murray, Murray, & Summar, 2000).

In universities, academic units are generally under the responsibility of an academic dean, who is responsible for the overall running of the school or faculty. Given their position, deans occupy the pivotal middle management hierarchical position, or “critical fulcrum” (M. Wolverton, Gmelch, Montez, & Nies, 2001, p. 14), between Central Administration and the Faculty. Their position requires them to act as an extension of the provost, while also acting as an advocate for the Faculty. In addition, they are also tasked with
responsibilities regarding students and external stakeholders, such as donors, government officials, and, in some cases, accreditation agencies (Bolman & Deal, 1984/2013; Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002/2013; Roper & Deal, 2010). As a result, using a political perspective to study deans’ reappointments and its impact on their leadership allows me to better clarify how power can flow and aggregate in ways that are not included in rational or prescriptive leadership models.

In Canadian universities, deans are official managers within the institution, while chairs are generally considered faculty members (Boyko & Jones, 2010). However, Canadian university deans are in almost all cases former members of the Faculty and from Canadian universities. Of interest, less than half of Canadian university deans are reappointed for a second term (Lavigne, 2017b).

### 3.3. Organizational Socialization

In investigating deans’ reappointments in Canadian universities, my broader purpose is to clarify the impact of leader control processes, in particular performance appraisals, on their leadership. To this end, my framework includes organizational socialization. Organizational socialization allows me to position performance appraisals as tools that shape the way organizational agents negotiate their roles. In this section, I go over the basics of role negotiation and apply them to new managers learning their leadership roles. I then show how performance appraisals modify classic role negotiations and opens possibilities for political behaviour.
3.3.1 Role Negotiation

In organizations, positions are associated with sets of roles. Roles are formal and informal expectations about behaviour (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). These roles are multiple. They derive from an organization’s sector, a unit’s function within the organization, the hierarchical level of the position (Schein, 1993/2007), as well as from sectorial, organizational, and professional rules, norms, and beliefs (W. R. Scott, 2013). As such, roles tend to include not only tasks, but ways, approaches, and values (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977).

Individuals are expected to learn their roles as they transition into a new position. This socialization process involves an interaction between newcomers and their organizations and the internal processing of role signals (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). These can come from other individuals, documents describing the position, such as job advertisements and job descriptions, or formal training. Strategies to socialize newcomers can be categorized into seven dimensions: formal or informal, individual or collective, sequential or nonsequential, fixed or variable, tournament or contest, serial or disjunctive, and investiture or divestiture (Van Maanen, 1978).

Each dimension is a continuum and socialization tactics may span several dimensions. The formal or informal dimension refers to the extent to which the socialization tactic is used in a setting outside of the work environment, while the individual or collective dimension describes whether socialization tactics are administered to groups of newcomers or individually. Sequential or nonsequential has to do with the existence of determined stages by which a newcomer must pass first before reaching the next level. The fixed or variable dimension refers to the existence of fixed timeline for probation, while the tournament or contest dimension captures the consequences of failing at socialization, where some people are forever discarded if they are not promoted. Whether newcomers are
socialized by people occupying the same role, such as colleagues or retirees, is described by the serial or disjunctive dimension. Finally, the investiture or divestiture dimension describes the extent to which a newcomer’s former role is seen as a strength to be reinforced or a weakness to be shed away (G. R. Jones, 1986; Van Maanen, 1978; Van Maanen & Schein, 1977).

However, role signals are not always consistent across the organization, in particular when there are strong divergences in values across organizational units or across hierarchical levels (Schein, 2010). The multiplicity of signals sent and interpreted do not always paint a complete or coherent picture of the complete role a newcomer is expected to fill and gives rise to issues of role conflict and role ambiguity.

Bess, Dee, and Johnstone (2012) provide an overview of role conflict issues, categorizing them as person-role conflict, where newcomers understand their roles as different from the signals received; intersender conflict, where roles received from multiple sources are different and conflictual; intrasender conflict, where role signals received from a single source are conflictual; and inter-role conflict, where role expectations do not match the resources available.

Role ambiguity, on the other hand, refers imprecise expectations regarding what should be done, how it should be done, and to what level of accomplishment (M. Wolverton et al., 1999). Role ambiguity can be a result of misperception or misinterpretation, or it could be objectively present as expectations remain unstated (Bess et al., 2012).

Role conflict and role ambiguity interfere with newcomers’ understanding of their roles. However, even in the absence of role conflict and role ambiguity, roles are not necessarily internalized as they are sent. Newcomers process what they perceive and make choices. They bring with them their identity and reluctantly leave behind who they are, when integrating their new roles (Turner, 1978). Furthermore, newcomers are not passive. They
actively employ their own strategies to learn their new roles. These strategies include: seeking feedback, seeking information, building relations, informal mentorship, negotiating job changes, positive framing, involvement in informal work activities, managing behaviour, and observing and modelling (Griffin, Colella, & Goparaju, 2001).

Organizational socialization produces various tangible outcomes and shapes individuals’ job performance, job satisfaction, learning, organizational commitment, stress, retention, belonging, and integration (Berlew & Hall, 1966; Griffin et al., 2001). In other words, newcomers accept role signals and take a custodial stance or reject some characteristics, resulting in either content or process innovation, or, in the most extreme case, role innovation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977). It is not clear whether non-custodial stances come to be either sought or accepted by an organization, but such stances, as they challenge and jeopardize the institutional culture, are likely to involve confrontations between the newcomer and the organization’s members.

Taken together, the multitude of signals, their partial internalization, and newcomers’ own role seeking strategies produce a complex set of interactions and responses (Montgomery, 2000). In the case of managers, signals as received and internalized shape their management for years afterwards (Berlew & Hall, 1966). Figure 3.2 on the next page summarizes this process of role negotiation, in the case of newcomer managers, and how it in turn shapes how they enact their management roles.

To sum, organizational socialization can be modelled as a feedback loop going from role sending to role negotiation, role determination, and role enactment. Newcomers’ role enactment produces outcomes which are in turn interpreted by newcomers and their organizations, leading to adjusted role sendings and role determinations. This cycle can go on as long as newcomers remain in their positions. The cycle can converge towards a set of roles, or diverge from it. Converging cycles are indicative of a stabilization of roles as understood both by newcomers and their organizations, while diverging cycles will
Figure 3.2: Representation of the Role Negotiation Exchange Between Managers and their Organizations Resulting in Role Enactment

likely result in newcomers leaving their organizations or getting dismissed. Significant organizational or personal events are likely to disrupt established understandings and restart the process of socialization and converge towards or diverge away from a displaced set of roles. Figure 3.3 summarizes this socialization feedback loop, in the case of newcomer managers, and how their units’ outputs in turn serve to inform role negotiations.

Figure 3.3: Representation of the Role Feedback Loop of Managers’ Socialization

As this dissertation investigates deans’ perception and sense-making of their reappointments, with the broader purpose of clarifying how performance measurement processes shape leadership, and because reappointments are in many ways performance appraisals, the next section looks more closely at performance appraisals. In addition, as organiza-
tional socialization recognizes that roles are contested and the product of a negotiation between agents with different viewpoints, it also implies that socialization is shaped by organizational politics and that conflict, complexity, and power, are useful concepts to understand newcomers’ socialization. Accordingly, my description of performance appraisals explores their impact on leadership using a political perspective.

### 3.3.2 Organizational Socialization and Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals are formal organizational processes intended to measure the performance of individual employees and generally part of a broader performance management system (Deb, 2012; Luecke, 2006). Performance management systems encompass all organizational activities, formal and informal, and are geared towards improving organizational performance. They often include goal setting, continuous feedback, individual and organizational assessments, and rewards and sanctions (Luecke, 2006). In performance management systems, organizational goals are translated into individual goals, generally cascading from general ones for managers to specific ones for frontline workers (Deb, 2012; Luecke, 2006). Cascading goals assume that organizational performance is at least in part related to individual performance and that drawing attention to performance will in turn lead to improvements (Deb, 2012; Dooren, Bouckaert, & Halligan, 2010).

Performance appraisals can have both administrative and developmental purposes (Deb, 2012; Dooren et al., 2010; Luecke, 2006; Thornton III & Byham, 1982). The central purpose of performance appraisals is to focus the work of employees towards organizational goals and improve their performance in relation to these goals. Performance appraisals can also be used to compare and rank employees. They can guide career decisions such as training, renewal, promotion, pay increase, transfer, and severance. As well, performance appraisals can be used to guide professional development. Finally, performance appraisals
are considered to provide motivation to employees by setting appropriately challenging goals. As this list shows, performance appraisals are predominantly tools of control and high stakes processes (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995).

Importantly, because they formally and explicitly bring attention to organizational expectations, performance appraisals act as socialization strategies (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). They carry with them the formal values, norms, and beliefs of organizations. Using Van Maanen’s (1978) seven dimensions of socialization strategies (Section 3.3), performance appraisals can be categorized as: (a) formal, they constitute a distinct operation separate from work performance; (b) individual, unless whole units are being evaluated; (c) sequential, as they are required for contract renewing; (d) fixed, as they are scheduled; (e) tournament, as failed a performance appraisal generally means the employee is not kept or considered for future promotions; (f) disjunctive, as there is generally no formal guidance offered by co-workers; and (g) divestiture, as performance appraisals generally leave little space for anything other than expected roles.

However, even though performance appraisals are often described as effective tools to improve performance (e.g., Le et al., 2007), their effectiveness relies on assumptions that are rarely ensured or met, leading to poor links between performance ratings and performance (Grubb, 2007; R. G. Jones & Culbertson, 2011; Law, 2007; D. McGregor, 1957, May-June; Pulakos & O’Leary, 2011). Three broad currents have explored and posited explanations for this distance between ratings and performance: statistics, cognition, and organizational politics (Murphy, 2008). The first, statistics, explains differences between ratings and performance as the result of statistical errors tied to measurement instruments. This area of research assumes that raters are reliable and that tools can be perfected. The issues are technical and reducible, and using better measurement and statistical analysis will reduce errors.

The second field, cognition, explains differences by invoking factors related to perception
and internal processing of information. Cognition examines, for example, the impact of recall issues and the effect of time lags between observations and ratings. Ratings are deemed unreliable because raters are fallible or because performance is hard to observe and rate accurately. Issues are cognitive and can be reduced by using rater training and improving data collection protocols and instruments.

The third field is organizational politics. As this framework is central to this dissertation, the next section explores the relation between organizational politics and performance appraisals in more depth.

3.3.3 Organizational Politics and Performance Appraisals

The political perspective on performance appraisals altogether rejects the fundamental assumption that raters are trying to evaluate performance (Ferris & Judge, 1991). Instead, differences between ratings and performance are explained by raters pursuing goals that are different from or conflicting with rating performance (Murphy, 2008; Murphy, Cleveland, Skattebo, & Kinney, 2004). In this model, raters are deemed unreliable because they substitute their own goals with those of the appraisal. It is no longer about performance, but about what raters seek to achieve. They use sanctioned means, performance appraisals, towards unsanctioned ends (see Mayes & Allen, 1977). Accordingly, political issues are difficult to dampen or reduce.

Performance appraisals are generally perceived as embedded in politics by both employees (Poon, 2004; Salimäki & Jämsén, 2010; Swanepoel et al., 2014; Tziner, Murphy, Cleveland, Yavo, & Hayoon, 2008) and managers (Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017; Gioia & Longenecker, 1994; Longenecker et al., 1987), and both groups try to navigate them to their advantage (Hochwarter et al., 2007; Rosen, Kacmar, Harris, Gavin, & Hochwarter, 2017; Semadar, Robins, & Ferris, 2006; Wihler, Blickle, Ellen, Hochwarter, & Ferris, 2006).
When using performance appraisals to evaluate their employees, managers are often guided by other considerations, such as long-term relations with the employee and maintaining a positive climate within their units (Bol, 2011; Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017; Longenecker et al., 1987; Mero, Guidice, & Brownlee, 2007; Shore & Strauss, 2008; Spence & Keeping, 2009, 2011, 2013; Wang, Wong, & Kwong, 2010), as well as their own experience of performance appraisals and organizational politics (Du Plessis & Van Niekerk, 2017; Rosen et al., 2017; Spence & Keeping, 2009). When being evaluated, managers report significant levels of political behaviour as they move up the ladder (Longenecker, 1997). They witness their supervisors misusing their performance appraisals for selfish purposes (Kanyangale & Zvarevashe, 2013; Longenecker, 1997), to impose the achievement of targets at all costs (Kanyangale & Zvarevashe, 2013), and to control their behaviour and decisions (Gioia & Longenecker, 1994).

Inter- and intra-unit conflict, with regards to goals and interests, as well as the uncertainty and complexity inherent in an employee’s work, all contribute towards facilitating performance appraisals’ politicization. This is particularly true for managers, whose performance is ill-defined and hard to witness (Hammons & Guillory, 1990; Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988; Redman & Snape, 1992), compare (Ellington & Wilson, 2017), or distinguish from their units’ performance (Mintzberg, 2009). Finally, the use of employees’ feedback, for example through 360° evaluation schemes (see Bracken, Rose, & Church, 2016) has been criticized, in particular when these evaluations are used for career decisions and rely on anonymous comments (Antonioni, 1994; Bracken et al., 2016; Redman & Snape, 1992).
3.4. Organizational Politics, Performance Appraisals, and Managers’ Socialization

In the previous sections, I have explored the role of politics in understanding organizations, leadership, and socialization, in particular with regards to performance appraisals. In this section, I bring these conceptualizations together and explore how performance appraisals can be used to shape managers’ socialization, in particular their leadership decisions. The gist of my argument is that performance appraisals allow organizational agents to circumvent role negotiation and increase their leverage on managers’ leadership decisions.

Managers’ socialization, as figure 3.3 on page 68 summarizes, can be conceptualized as a feedback loop. As role signals are sent, sought, interpreted, evaluated, and internalized, they lead managers to build an understanding of their roles that evolves as they receive feedback about their units’ performance. Organizational agents, by the same extent, also receive feedback on their role sending, which may lead them to reinforce or weaken their signals. As discussed, this feedback should, in the absence of important events, stabilize towards a set of mutually accepted goals.

Performance appraisals, to the extent that they include criteria, also send role signals. These performance criteria explicitly signal what formal roles managers are expected to play. However, as they allow organizational agents to pronounce of managers’ performance, performance appraisals also provide additional opportunities to reinforce their own role signals, to the extent that they use the process not to measure performance based on established criteria, but instead substitute their own perspective.

Figure 3.4 on the next page summarizes how performance appraisals can be used to circumvent role negotiation. Performance appraisals collect information from organizational
agents, such as managers’ colleagues, employees, and supervisors, as well as information on their units’ performance. This information is collected and evaluated and leads to a judgment. Depending on their purposes, performance appraisals can affect managers’ performance, by providing them with formal performance feedback, but also managers themselves, as they can lead to high stake administrative career decisions, more precisely dismissals.

Figure 3.4: Representation of the Role Feedback Loop of Managers’ Socialization
Showing the Potential Bypassing of Normal Role Negotiation by Performance Appraisals

Through this double leverage on performance and career, organizational agents are provided with additional means, other than role negotiation, to shape their managers’ leadership decisions. The first is through controlling policy. Policy determines who participates as raters and decision-makers and the power they hold in the appraisal. It also sets the criteria and standards used to evaluate performance. As such, it defines, beforehand, who has formal power and what counts as performance. As a result, newcomer managers, by learning about the appraisal process, also learn about the people who will hold sway over their career, as well as what is expected of them.

Another way by which organizational agents can use performance appraisals to shape their
managers’ leadership is by participating in them. Performance appraisals, and in particular upward appraisals, shift the balance of power in organizations by modifying the normal structure for the purpose of the appraisal. As agents become raters or decision-makers, they can use their increased legitimate power to promote their goals and interests, using the process for their own ends. As a result, though there may be criteria and standards described by policy, little prevents agents from providing ratings furthering their goals and interests instead of measuring performance. This leverage is further increased when agents form coalitions.

Performance appraisals also shape managers’ leadership indirectly. Firstly, performance appraisals limit the amount of time managers remain in their position, unless their goals and interests align with those of those holding sway over the process. If they do not align, managers are swiftly replaced. Performance appraisals support revolving doors management, which generally ensures status quo.

Finally, another indirect way by which managers’ leadership can be shaped by performance appraisals is through example, showing managers what happens to others and could happen to them. Managers may witness other managers’ performance appraisals, either before they start in their position, or before their own performance appraisals. The way these witnessed performance appraisals are run and what their outcomes are provide important lessons to managers, which may potentially shape their decisions.

To sum, performance appraisals, when seen through a political lens, provide organizational agents with multiple ways to leverage power. As such, they circumvent the normal balance of power found in role negotiation. Importantly, performance appraisal policies, in determining what counts as performance, how it is measured, how it is evaluated, and how it will inform administrative rewards and sanctions, can increase or limit the capacity of organizational agents to control their managers through the process.
This framework suggests that performance appraisal policies providing vague criteria, standards, and procedures, are more likely to be used for political purposes. It also suggests that alignment plays a crucial role in cases where performance appraisals can be politicized. Finally, it predicts that other managers’ experience impact managers’ leadership by facilitating the selection and retention of aligned managers and by sending warning signals to future managers.

### 3.4.1 Performance Appraisals and Deans’ Reappointments

Canadian university deans’ reappointments share several characteristics with performance appraisals. They are described by policy and take place at predictable moments. They are evaluation of an individual’s performance in his or her role, and lead to performance feedback and administrative decisions.

Decanal reappointments can also easily become politicized. The first reason is that deans’ roles are, as I have described in Chapter [2](#) and in Section [3.2.4](#), multiple, complex, and conflicting. Accordingly, not only are their roles hard to define, but different constituents, for example Central Administration and the Faculty, will prioritize them differently. As such, deans’ roles are constantly contested.

Also, the structure of higher education institutions exacerbates the potential for political manipulation. Universities are host to numerous small groups with goals that are often at odds. This dynamic setting leads to overt and covert conflicts, where coalitions are formed to garner power and influence (Baldridge, 1971a; Manning, 2013). Therefore, the political nature of these institutions increases the likelihood that academic deans’ performance appraisals become subject to political manipulation.

Universities are also unique in the way power is diluted among their stakeholders. In
general, small power elites have control over well-circumscribed decisional areas, but they are also collegial and coalitions can gain control over a small decisional area with relative ease. Decisions are not made in a bureaucratic, predictable fashion, but are the result of compromises where coalitions garner and leverage power to influence power elites (Baldridge, 1971a; Manning, 2013). This has important implications for deans’ reappointments. A bureaucratic perspective of higher education institutions assumes that policies define who has power over decisions, but a political perspective challenges this assumption and recognizes the informal yet powerful agency of smaller groups. Also, a political perspective suggests that rational measurements of deans’ performance will have less impact on appraisals outcomes than political tactics.

To conclude, I have, in the preceding pages, clarified the conceptual framework underpinning my investigation of Canadian university deans’ reappointments. In a nutshell, my starting point is that reappointments can become politicized and used in unintended ways to shift the balance of power and thus shape their leadership.
Chapter 4

Methodology

This chapter describes my research standpoint and the methods used to investigate deans’ reappointments and distill my findings. In the previous chapters, I have set the stage by discussing the problem of granting and controlling power in universities, showing how little is known about reappointments, and providing the reader with a framework by which reappointments can be analyzed and understood. This done, I now clarify how I answered my research questions. I do so by discussing my research methods within my broader methodology.

In the first two sections, I describe my background in relation to the thesis and my take on social science research or, if you prefer, my theoretical framework. The third section explains the research methods I used. In it, I go over the specifics of multiple-case study methods and phenomenological interviewing, and explain how I have adapted them to answer my research questions. In particular, I discuss how ethical considerations shaped my methods, how deans were chosen and approached, and how data were collected and analyzed. I close by discussing the validity of my approach, its limitations, and the extent to which my findings can be generalized.
4.1. Positioning

As will soon become clear, it is by no accident that my theoretical framework aligns closely with critical realism, or that my research interests have gravitated inexorably towards higher education management and performance appraisals. In this section, I present personal elements, starting with my training, followed by my work experience, and discuss how they shape this dissertation.

My academic training is eclectic, to say the least. It includes physics and cognitive engineering, education, and management, different schools with vastly different world views. Such a plurality provides me with numerous standpoints from which to make sense of the world. I have taught physics and astrophysics, hard and pure sciences, and some history of science, for twelve years or so. This background is probably the first reason why I tend to naturally gravitate towards positivist world views.

However, my life experience has led me in the opposite direction, towards constructivism. This experience has shown me that different people experience the same situation differently, and none of them can claim a better standpoint, that context matters, that people lie, wittingly or not, and that people act differently when observed, including researchers. Worse, I now realize that, by naming a thing, we can reinforce it, weaken it, or even create it. For these reasons, I feel a sharp tug towards constructivist world views, despite my initial positivist allegiances.

Positivist and constructivist world views have been constructed by many as irreconcilable. Thankfully, some scholars have made space for a middle ground of sorts by reforging some of the rigid aspects of positivism to better account for the specificity of social life. Among these, I have found greater comfort in systemism (see Bunge, 2000), social realism (see Pawson, 2013), and critical realism (see Archer, Bhaskar, Collier, Lawson, & Norrie, 2013; Mueller, 2014). The following section discusses my theoretical framework with greater
detail. For now, my purpose is only to show the reader how and why I have come to belong to this particular chapter of social science research.

In addition to my initial engineering training and my life experience, my work experience also shaped this dissertation. I have worked 18 years in colleges, first as a college teacher then, for the last six years, as an academic administrator, in three colleges. In this last role, my key responsibilities have revolved around the management of faculty, academic departments, and academic programs. As I now explain, this experience drew me towards reappointments and performance appraisals, and made me select a political framework.

Becoming an associate dean, transitioning from a faculty role to an administrative one, was extremely challenging. What seemed at first like a promotion quickly felt like a trap. Looking back, it took me a few years to find the right place and the right posture and to turn what looked like failure into learning and ultimately success. I had not realized how much I needed to change, and refused to do so, or at least refused to do so on someone else’s terms. I eventually managed to find those terms, this balance, and found great fulfillment and happiness in this role.

Throughout my years as an academic administrator, I have witnessed first hand how higher education administration is driven by organizational politics as much as by anything else, and performance appraisals tick as organizations tick. During my years as Associate Dean, I have had several supervisors. All were very different individuals with very different views and approaches, and these in turn shaped how they evaluated my performance. All used similar tools provided by Human Resources and followed policy. Yet, each gave me different reviews. The reviews spoke more of their deanship than of my performance. When the deans were driven by the organizational mission, the evaluations focused on how my work had contributed towards improving student experience. Conversations were about learning, policy, and impact on students and faculty. On the other hand, with
the deans that were driven by ambition, for those that saw the deanship as a position of prestige or as a stepping stone, my evaluation centred on the impact of my work on their situation, their comfort, or the comfort of their bosses. Conversation revolved about perceptions, about face-saving, about not making trouble, and about not putting senior managers on the spot.

As a college faculty member as well as an administrator, I have participated in a number of reappointment processes, for deans and for presidents. In most cases, these were strongly influenced by the undertows of political maneuverings. Factions formed between unlikely allies, and criteria and processes were heavily debated even before they were implemented as stakeholders vied for power. It should therefore come as no surprise to the reader that I view mainstream leadership and performance appraisal theories with a healthy dose of skepticism. Such theories explain so very little of what I have seen in my work life.

To sum, how I came to select my research topic, my conceptual framework, as well as my theoretical framework, can be traced back to how I became who I am. My training and my life experience cannot be simply untangled from my research. They are embedded in it. By the same extent, they can also misguide my research and lead me to impose my own opinions on my data, creating meaning where there is none. At best, my position can be identified, recognized, taken into account, and made available to the reader.

4.2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework underpinning my research perspective is critical realism. In this section, I distill the considerable body of knowledge describing critical realism into a clear set of concepts for the reader. I then describe how this framework informs my research.
Perhaps the first thing that needs to be said about critical realism is that it aims at going beyond causality by providing an understanding of the deeper reality and the mechanisms at work in social settings (Mueller, 2014). As such, it assumes the existence of a single, deeper reality, but this reality is not directly perceived, for perception is always mediated. Therefore, there exist multiple equivalently valid accounts of this reality based on the types of mediations at work (Archer, 2013). Critical realism can be said to share many of its assumptions on the nature of reality with positivism, while also presenting a conception of knowledge that is commensurate with constructivism.

Three key characteristics distinguish critical realism from other theoretical frameworks: stratified reality, mediated perception, and generative mechanisms (Mueller, 2014; Wheelahan, 2012). For critical realists, reality is stratified into three strata: the empirical, the actual, and the real.

A real entity is one that has an impact or makes a difference (Fleetwood, 2004). Entities, such as beliefs, are real, though the object of that belief may not be. The author uses the example of faeries and beliefs about faeries to clarify what is a real entity and what is not: faeries are not real, but beliefs are.

Structures or entities in the real stratum produce events in the actual stratum by the way of mechanisms. As events combine to reinforce or neutralize one another, they lead to observable events in the empirical stratum (Miller & Tsang, 2011; Mueller, 2014; Outhwaite, 2013; Wheelahan, 2012). In other words, critical realism explains events observed in the empirical world as the result of mechanisms not readily observable, but inferred through observation. As a multitude of mechanisms take effect simultaneously, a mechanism may very well have an observable impact on events in one situation, yet otherwise be dampened, neutralized, or occulted in another situation.

The interaction of mechanisms has important implications for research. Social systems
are open, as opposed to closed. A closed system is one where all the variables can be controlled, which is generally the goal of experimentation research. In an open system, a seemingly infinite number of mechanisms generate events. In other words, when studying social systems, context matters. Context brings together a set of entities and their generated mechanisms. In each context, the set of entities and mechanisms is different and combine in unique ways, producing different observable results. Accordingly, methods that simulate closed systems, in the hope of isolating variables, modify the interplay of events and, as such, lose their predictive power in real social settings (Mueller, 2014). For critical realists, decontextualized experimentations are of limited value.

In addition to context, people matter too. The idea of context must be broadened to include the entities that inform individual human behaviour. In social settings, events and their perception are tied to human activity, and humans have agency. Individuals are subject to internal generative mechanisms which influences not only events, but how events are perceived. Characteristics such as meanings, beliefs, values, and intentions shape events and how individuals make sense of them (Maxwell, 2004). This combination of events and their perception also places experimental approaches in a difficult position, reminding us that people know they are being studied, and act accordingly.

A critical realist understanding of events and their perception also reminds us that researchers are individuals located within contexts influencing their perceptions. They, like their research participants, come with their own entities and mechanisms, which participate in shaping events and the sense they give to them. Perceived phenomena are contingent upon context and internal mechanisms of both participants and researchers. This double contingency, or double hermeneutics as Mueller (2014) prefers to call it, further shapes social research.

Double contingency, the fact that participants and researchers have agency and are influenced by internal and external mechanisms, in turn forces us to reconsider what truth
is in social science. There is a truth out there, but the complexity of social settings and human perception places it outside of our reach. Theories must therefore be understood as contextualized explanations, postulating at the existence of mechanisms generated by entities, and are themselves a product of the research context (Outhwaite, 2013).

Double contingency also leads to what I would like to call triple contingency. Social science research, in particular its products, is shaped by the social world, but, more importantly perhaps, it in turn shapes the social world. When theories about social reality are posited, when mechanisms are exposed, social reality is changed. This takes place through the propagation of discourse, whether it comes from appropriate producers of knowledge or other recognized authority. A byproduct of social research is therefore to modify social reality.

Critical realism also defines how quantitative and qualitative research methods relate to one another. For critical realists, these approaches are complementary and not interchangeable. They serve to answer different questions (Maxwell, 2004). Quantitative methods generally aim at either identifying causal relations or broader characteristics that are mostly true for a population, but their strength is also their weakness. While they point to potential relations, they fail at prediction. Nevertheless, the relations they point to serve as starting points for studying underlying mechanisms, a purpose for which qualitative methods are better suited (Miller & Tsang, 2011). Once identified, mechanisms can serve to generate theories and make predictions.

This brings us to another important distinction between critical realism and other theoretical frameworks. Critical realists understand causality differently than positivists. Given that context plays a central role in mediating what mechanisms will be reinforced and lead to observable events, searching for the regular reproduction of a pattern between inputs and outputs in the midst of decontextualized results is not necessary to infer causality. Instead, critical realists argue that, since their purpose is the identification of mechanisms,
a single case can be enough to infer causality (Maxwell, 2004).

Having described the basic tenets of critical realism, I now clarify how this theoretical framework shapes my research. First, my broader aim is to identify the intended and unintended outcomes of performance appraisals and to understand how they shape leadership. To identify underlying mechanisms, I have elected to conduct multiple case studies of deans’ reappointments. Case studies are congruent with critical realism and appropriate for identifying generative social mechanisms (Easton, 2010; Maxwell, 2012).

More particularly, my research questions focus on the perceptions of academic deans who sit on the receiving end of reappointment processes. As such, my research place the actors’ standpoints at the centre of the research. This approach is congruent with critical realist research, where social settings and actions are to be understood from the actors’ standpoints (Manicas, 2009). These questions are then moved away from their context, the reappointments of Canadian university deans, to inform the broader debate about the control and monitoring of power. However, this generalization must be done with caution. To situate “micro” knowledge within a “macro” understanding of society, one must also move to a broader sample of people and situations, an objective more easily reached either through quantitative methods (Manicas, 2009) or through the comprehensive synthesis of multiple studies clarifying “what works for whom in what circumstances” (Pawson, 2003, p. 474). Accordingly, my study means to contribute to the broader research on organizational leadership by focusing on a particular context, specifically Canadian university deans’ reappointments.

To sum, I have clarified, in this section, what critical realism is and how my research approach stems from and aligns with critical realist research. My critical realist perspective has led me to study a specific topic within a specific context from the perspectives of its central actors, namely deans’ reappointments in Canadian university as experienced by
deans. In the following section, I describe the research methods I have used with greater detail.

4.3. Methods

In describing my research methodology, I have thus far explained how my study of decanal reappointments draws from my personal experience and how my understanding of social science research shapes my selection of research questions and inquiry methods. This section now details the methods I have used to collect and analyze data.

4.3.1 Research Design

As I alluded to in the previous section, my interest is not only the identification of regular patterns, but also the identification of irregularities. Each dean’s reappointment is a single event, bounded by time and space, and located in a unique context: a set university, a set faculty, a set dean, a set provost, a set policy, and a set history. In other words, each reappointment is unique. As I explain in what follows, case study methods are well suited to capture this uniqueness, while revealing stable patterns across cases.

However, the investigation of decanal reappointments, in fact perhaps any study of power in organizations, irremediably poses risks to participants. As such, and as I will describe with greater depth shortly, going around and asking multiple stakeholders, such as provosts or faculty members, about reappointments, which would be a sensible approach for most case studies, could instead lead to the identification of the study’s participants and put them at risk. As a consequence, I opt, for this study, to rely solely on deans as human participants. This precaution in turn leads me to aim my research questions more precisely at deans’ experiences and sense-makings, to use specialized interviewing
approaches, namely phenomenological interviewing, and to rely on documentary analysis to provide corroborating data.

As the reader can see from this example, choosing to study power in organizations, while recognizing the importance of contextual differences, strongly shapes the study’s ethical considerations, research questions, and the methods used for data collection and analysis. Let us look at each of these in turn.

**Ethical Considerations**

This section covers the measures put in place to minimize the risk to participants, with respect to their involvement in the study, based on the Canadian Tri-council on Research Ethics policy statement on the study of human subjects (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, [2014]). In what follows, I describe the expected risk and benefits to the participants, how consent was obtained, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and confidentiality procedures. These measures were described to and accepted by the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board of the University of Toronto on June 20, 2016 (Appendix H) and extended for another year on June 6, 2017 (Appendix I).

In any study involving human participants, risks and benefits need to be carefully weighed. Risks can be categorized as psychological, emotional, and social. For the academic deans participating in the study, I considered psychological and emotional risks to be minimal and close to what is normal in their regular work. On the other hand, there are significant social risks to the participants. Given that the participants are asked to comment on organizational processes and the role of other members of the organization, their participation in the study, if revealed, could negatively impact them and their work.
To minimize these risks, their identities and their institutions were kept confidential and will remain so.

Furthermore, because of the small number of reappointed deans in Canadian universities, participating deans can easily be identified if enough of their characteristics, such as gender or faculty type, were provided. Accordingly, the findings of this study are presented in a manner that forbids the identification of individual participants. To do so, cases’ characteristics, such as university type, gender, or faculty type, are never divulged in combinations. Instead, they are presented in isolation. For example, instead of presenting ‘Dean Tree’ as a white female from a professional faculty in a research university and present her experience and sense-making of her reappointment, I disclose the number of female deans participating in the study, then the number of deans from research universities, then the number of deans from professional faculties, and then I look at the cases in an aggregated format. Unique experiences of deans are looked at without reference to multiple characteristics, as this would lead to their identification. Taken together, I believe these precautions sufficient to keep social risks at a minimal level.

Beyond risks, this study has several direct benefits for participants, university employees, and the scientific community. For academic deans, their participation in the study fosters a renewed understanding of the way they are evaluated and the way they evaluate others. The dissertation allows them to compare their case with other cases. Also, the research findings benefit the larger community of academic deans, faculty members, and supervisors. Members of Canadian universities can draw from the dissertation a better understanding of reappointments and performance appraisals. This in turn allows them to better navigate those processes or, if they are in a position to do so, modify current practices and improve their outcomes. In time, the investigation may extend to other appraisal processes, such as faculty or staff members evaluations, and beyond academia. More generally, this study benefits the scientific community by providing new findings on performance appraisals
and its impact on leadership. In turn, it may lead to new research efforts focusing on the unintended consequences of performance appraisals.

In selecting my participants, I relied on inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014, Chapter 4). Children, elderly people, vulnerable people, or people unable to offer free and informed consent were de facto excluded from the study. Inclusion in the study required participants: (a) to have served as dean of an academic unit in a Canadian university for a full term; (b) to have been through a reappointment process within the last five years; and (c) to have been either successful or unsuccessful in securing a reappointment. I chose to include non-reappointed deans in my study because their voices are as important as the voices of reappointed deans if not more. In particular, their standpoints might provide rival explanations or bring new ones to the fore.

Exclusion criteria relate to the purpose of the research, to issues of power, or to situations of conflict of interests. Excluded from the study were deans: (a) with whom I have worked in the past; and (b) who worked in a faculty where I have previously worked, studied, or where I have been contracted.

My study further protected its participants by ensuring their informed consent formally and explicitly by way of a written agreement (Appendix E). Participants were allowed to remove their consent at any point prior to the aggregation of data. As participants were not considered vulnerable or at risk, no special provision for debriefing was planned.

Finally, related to the safety of the participants is the safety of the data they provide. Several measures were implemented to ensure secure data collection, storage, and further use. First, a set of simple aliases was created for participants. These were masculine first names with their first letter ordered alphabetically: Andrew, Bernard, Charlie, Donovan, etc. These were used for every document located outside encrypted storage.
For publication, these alphabetically ordered names were replaced with Canadian tree names, such as Dean Oak, attributed randomly. Second, interview transcriptions were stripped of personal or contextual information, such as names, places, fields of study, etc. Third, all data where personal or contextual information could be found were stored on password-protected encrypted devices. Fourth, at the end of the research, the data files were moved to a secure server at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and removed from other devices. Fifth, audio recordings were destroyed after the study; only anonymized documents were kept. Finally, access by researchers outside the original team for secondary research shall be possible only for data containing no nominal information, as per Tri-Council’s guidelines (see Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014, Chapter 5).

**Multiple-Case Study Method**

Case study methods are best understood as a combination of other methods to investigate cases. A case can be an event, an individual, or an entity such as an organization (Yin, 2013). For each case, researchers collect different types of evidence based on their research questions. Each type of evidence, be it testimonials, reports, statistics, artefacts, or others, requires specific collection and analysis methods. Case studies thus bring together several tools of data collection to build an understanding of the case under study. The exact selection of suitable tools is determined by the researcher (Yin, 2013).

Case study methods are well suited to answer ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions about contemporary social phenomena, in particular when such phenomenon cannot be controlled in experimental or quasi-experimental settings (Yin, 2013). This is the case of deans’ reappointments. They cannot reliably be reproduced and observed in an experimental setting. They take place in complex settings that impact activities and outcomes. Of particular interest for this study, case study methods are well suited for critical realist
Chapter 4. Methodology

research as they take in the perspectives of participants to identify underlying mechanisms (Easton, 2010). Case study methods are also helpful for policy and program evaluations, as they allow researchers to test program theories within specific contexts and for specific individuals, as well as provide important testimonies about the complete set of outcomes generated by programs, two key purposes of realist program evaluations (Pawson & Tilley, 2008).

Multiple-case study methods are, simply put, the comparative study of several cases related to one another. Several relations are possible. Cases can be nested within cases or stand side by side. They can apply to different events, but to the same individuals, or vice-versa. The side-by-side comparison of cases allows further inferences to be made, consolidates the findings, and increases their generalizability (Yin, 2013).

To determine academic deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments, I conducted a multiple-case study of Canadian university academic deans’ reappointments and followed Yin’s (2013) prescriptions for case study research. Yin’s approach is more methodical than other authors, such as Merriam or Stakes (Brown, 2008), which suits my purpose. My research questions echo the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of case study methods, as they seek to understand what takes place during reappointments and why it takes place a certain way in one setting, and another way in another setting. Each case is a reappointment, for example, the reappointment of Dean B, and the multiple-case study puts each case against one another, highlighting what they have in common and what distinguishes them.

Phenomenological Interviewing

Yin (2013) makes few recommendations regarding interviewing methods, arguing only in favour of fluid in-depth interviews. However, as my research questions focus on the
experience and sense-making of deans, they closely align with Seidman’s (2012) in-depth phenomenological interviewing. In essence, her method relies on three separate interviews taking place over a week or two, with each interview focusing on a different theme.

In the first interview, participants are asked to go over their life history as it relates to the phenomenon. It provides researchers with a deep understanding of the participant’s context. Seidman advises researchers not to ask questions such as “Why did you become a dean?” but to ask instead “How did you become a dean?” in order to focus on the story and sequences of pivotal events.

The second interview examines participants’ lived experiences of the phenomenon, in this case, their reappointments. Participants are asked to provide details about their work, to reconstruct sequences of events related to the phenomenon. Seidman suggests asking participants to describe a specific day at work, instead of asking about a generic day, in order to move participants away from generalizations and towards rich detailing of events.

The last interview focuses on the meaning participants give to events. Questions often start with preambles such as: “Given what you have described happened during (...), how do you make sense of what happened next?” The questions ask participants to reflect on connections between events and their own lives, where they are as a result of where they came from.

Phenomenological interviewing uses the lived experience of participants, and their reconstruction of it, as lenses through which a researcher can observe phenomena. It recognizes the importance of understanding phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing them and emphasizes how individuals’ sense-making of events guide their decisions. In other words, the meaning they have attributed to events is what really matters, not what has happened. Though phenomenological interviewing is not explicitly related to
critical realism, it nonetheless recognizes that perception is mediated and that there is no objective standpoint. As such, the method is congruent with critical realist perspectives on social science research.

Scheduling three interviews signals to the participants that the researcher is respectful of their openness and genuinely interested in understanding their reality. It also helps build a stronger relationship and trust in preparation for the final interview. Finally, it provides participants with incubation periods between interviews and allows for deeper reflection (Seidman, 2012).

On the other hand, having three separate interviews over a two-week period can be problematic. Such an arrangement imposes significant logistical constraints, in particular if participants reside far from the researcher or if their role provides them with limited opportunities for in-depth interviews. In such cases, Seidman (2012) concedes that other arrangements or ways of communicating should be sought. Furthermore, deans have very busy schedules. As well, data collection took place in different provinces, with limited travel funds. Taken together, these constraints, for participants and for myself, led me to adapt Seidman’s method and condense the three interviews into a single one. To limit the impact of this decision and allow for some incubation to take place, I sent the interview guide well in advance of the interview.

To complement my interview and support the identification of mechanisms, I added a fourth part, in addition to Seidman’s three, to my interview guide, based on Pawson’s (1996) advice. Pawson argues that most participants try to determine what theories are being tested through the questions and reactions of interviewers. Accordingly, he suggests that researchers make explicit their conceptual framework during interviews, and allow participants to comment on whether or not, in their view, it bears on the phenomenon under study. This allows the mechanisms implied in the interview questions to be explicitly tested, and possibly refuted or adjusted. I consider this to be sound advice.
and added to my interview guide two questions meant to test some of my assumptions, in particular the impact of organizational politics and of interest groups.

Finally, Weiss (1995) offers guidelines for putting together interview guides. He suggests identifying themes of inquiry based on the researcher’s conceptual framework and formulating questions for each theme. The following themes were selected, based on my conceptual framework, and organized according to Seidman’s life history, experience, and sense-making structure: (a) becoming a dean; (b) learning one’s role; (c) deciding to renew; (d) going through the process; (e) evaluating the process; (f) being influenced by the process; (g) going back in time; (h) modifying the process; (i) evaluating the impact of organizational politics; and (j) evaluating the impact of groups. The interview guides are presented in the appendices (Appendix F and Appendix G).

**Document Analysis**

Document analysis serves to corroborate or complement the data provided during the interviews. As the thesis centres on experience and sense-making, it relies less on how the reappointment was meant to take place than on how it was lived through and made sense of. Nevertheless, policies and other documents provide a useful perspective into reappointments, in particular when it comes to clarifying the extent to which the process is strongly curtailed or not, and whether it refers to criteria or not. That being said, my document analysis borrows to an extent from S. L. T. McGregor’s (2003) critical discourse analysis, in particular in its focus on how discourse can serve to legitimize and support an existing balance of power: (a) Who is implied to have power? (b) Who is implied to be less powerful and passive? (c) What assumptions are implied? (d) What information or topics seem to have been deliberately avoided? (e) What words may have been chosen for their connotations?
Otherwise, the analysis used a structural framework for defining a program (see Dooren et al., 2010) and was done more to corroborate the data found in interviews and clarify the extent to which: (a) the purpose of the process was clarified; (b) the outputs and outcomes of the process were clarified; (c) the participants and their roles in the process were identified; (d) the process was clearly delineated; (e) the description of the process was complete; (f) the role of the dean in the process was clarified; (g) the evaluation criteria were mentioned; (h) the sources of evidence were mentioned; and (i) the decision process was explained.

4.3.2 Data Collection

Data collection took place in two phases, from July 2016 to June 2017. In the first phase, I identified, approached, and interviewed successfully reappointed deans and collected documentation for each case. In the second phase, I repeated the same operations, but for a non-reappointed dean. In what follows, I describe those steps.

Unit of Analysis and Case Definition

For this study focusing on Canadian university deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments, the unit of analysis, or case, is the individual dean’s reappointment. Each case is bounded in time and includes the events surrounding the reappointment, from the start of the deanship to the months that followed the start of the new term or, in the non-reappointment case, the return to the Faculty.

Also, each case encompasses a single academic unit, a faculty or a school located within a university. The academic unit relates mostly to the individuals located and operating within it, faculty, staff members, and students, and their perceived behaviour. The
University, on the other hand, is responsible for university-wide policies and is the locus of operation of board members, presidents, provosts, human resource officers, other deans, and faculty unions’ or associations’ officers.

More precisely, and given that the research questions centre on deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments, my study places each individual dean as the lens through which reappointment processes are seen and investigated. Each case is about an individual dean’s experience and sense-making of his or her reappointment process. As such, I am moving away from a comprehensive survey of the many actors involved in reappointments. This is done for two reasons. The first is to ensure my participants’ anonymity (see Section 4.3.1). The second is to place their perspectives at the forefront. This is related to the broader question to which my work seeks to contribute, namely the impact of performance appraisals on leadership. I posit that, to answer this broader question, I must consider the standpoint of those on the receiving end of the process, in my case, the deans. To reveal the impact of controlling mechanisms on managers, we need to hear their voices first.

**Identification of Participants**

To find participants, I started by identifying deans who had been successfully reappointed in recent years. Drawing from a previous study I conducted on deans’ demographics and career paths (see Lavigne, 2016b, 2017b), I built a list of 38 recently reappointed academic deans. Of this list, I contacted 29 deans, based on their faculty types and their geographical locations. Of the 29, I received two negative responses and thirteen positive ones, leaving fifteen who did not respond to my communications. All of the thirteen positive responses led to an interview and a case study reported here.

Once contacts were made and interviews scheduled, I proceeded to identify and contact
deans who did not get reappointed, despite going through a reappointment process. Non-reappointments are not advertised. As a result, identifying potential participants required a lot more research than for reappointed deans.

To find potential participants, I started with a list of four names provided by the reappointed participants during their interviews. Of those, one clarified that he did not seek a reappointment, while the others did not respond to my communication.

I then identified deans who either became deans in another institution or went back to their faculty after their initial mandate. To identify those deans, I first looked at very recently appointed deans and reviewed their faculty’s web page to find the name of the Dean who occupied the position prior to the recent appointment. I reasoned that to find deans who only completed one term, and given that I had only access to data going as far back as 2011, I needed to look at faculty’s web pages for each dean that had been recently appointed, in the hope of finding the name of the preceding Dean. These were sometimes mentioned in the appointment announcements in the following format: “Dean X takes over the work of Dean Y, who served...”

When I was able to find a name, I conducted a search for that person and looked at their career path to deduce the likelihood that they went through a reappointment, yet did not get reappointed. I found and contacted 19 such likely cases. Of those, three clarified that they did not seek a reappointment, 12 did not respond back, and two confirmed that they met the criteria, but did not wish to participate in the study, leaving one who confirmed having undergone the reappointment process and accepted to participate in the study. This person in turn became the fourteenth case.
Sample

The study used a random purposeful sampling method (Creswell, 2012), where cases were selected based on theory, with the addition of a contrasting case. Table 4.1 on the next page summarizes the makeup of the sample. The nomenclature draws, in the absence of an official Canadian nomenclature distinguishing between university types (Metcalfe et al., 2011), from the one used by the Canadian magazine *Maclean’s*¹ along with the list of members of U15², an association of Canadian research universities.

As described in Section 4.3.1, the small number of Canadian university reappointed deans prevent me from disclosing cross-tabulated information, for example, the number of female deans from research universities and arts and sciences faculties. Instead, each category is presented in isolation.

Overall, Table 4.1 shows that cases are evenly spread across categories, with some exceptions. The sample shows a greater proportion of male deans, of deans from professional faculties, and of deans from research intensive universities. For most of the deans in the study, this was their first reappointment, though several had been dean in another institution prior to their current deanship. Finally, all the deans in the study were white. This is expected, since only 3% of Canadian university reappointed deans belong to a racialized group (Lavigne, 2016b).

Instruments and Procedures

Potential participants were contacted by email with a letter of introduction (see Appendix C). A slightly different letter was sent to non-reappointed deans (see Appendix D). Upon accepting to participate in the study, participants further received a copy of the letter

¹https://www.macleans.ca/education-hub/
²http://u15.ca/our-members
Table 4.1: Distribution of Case Characteristics by Appointment Type, Faculty Type, Gender, Previous Reappointment Experience, Race, Reappointment Result, Time Between Reappointment and Interview, and University Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case characteristics</th>
<th>Cases (n = 14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointment type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From the Faculty</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From outside</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deanship experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First deanship</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second deanship or more</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and sciences</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous reappointment experience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First reappointment</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reappointed elsewhere before</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racialized</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reappointment result</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reappointed</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not reappointed</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time between reappointment and interview</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than one year</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between one and three years</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between three and five years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Type</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research intensive</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 4. Methodology

of informed consent (see Appendix E) and a copy of the interview guide (see Appendix F). The interview guide was adapted for non-reappointed deans (see Appendix G).

Interviews took place in person, between June 2016 and June 2017 and, in all cases except for one, in the participants’ offices. I first reviewed the content of the letter of informed consent with them. Both the participants and I kept a signed copy of the letter. All but one participant agreed to have their interviews recorded. The interviews lasted from 60 to 120 minutes. For the interview, I relied on an interview guide, which was built using my conceptual framework, as well as Seidman’s (2012), Weiss’s (1995), and Pawson’s (1996) prescriptions for interviews (see Section 4.3.1 for more details).

Interview recordings were saved using deans’ pseudonyms, and the recordings were subsequently transferred to an encrypted disk. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim. The interview transcripts were further processed to remove nominal information and sent back to deans for review. In parallel, documents, such as biographies and reappointment policies, were collected from the Internet or, in some cases, were provided by the participants. These documents were in turn stripped from any nominal information.

4.3.3 Data Analysis

Case study data analysis starts with the research questions (Yin, 2013). For each research question, researchers identify evidence within the data and draw tentative conclusions. Through multiple iterations and cross-analysis, a clearer picture forms. Yin presents four strategies to guide analysis and recommends using at least one. Of those, I have selected two for this study: relying on theoretical propositions and examining plausible rival explanations, in particular those relying on rational assumptions or unintended positive outcomes.
Theoretical Propositions

My study investigates deans’ reappointments. It is guided by research questions centring on deans’ experience and sense-making (see Section 1.3), and uses multiple-case study methods. For case studies, theoretical propositions are useful in guiding data collection and analysis (Yin, 2013). Theoretical propositions are statements based on the conceptual framework of the study. As we will see shortly, they are mainly used for pattern-matching between the propositions and the evidence found in the data (Yin, 2013). The conceptual framework for the study (see Chapter 3) emphasizes the role of politics, alongside the structure and process of reappointments, and suggests the following propositions:

1. Organizational politics shape academic deans’ experience and sense-making.
2. Institutional context shapes academic deans’ experience and sense-making.
3. Reappointment policies’ structures and procedures shape academic deans’ experience and sense-making.
4. Supervisor support shapes academic deans’ experience and sense-making.
5. Faculty and staff members’, students’, and external stakeholders’ support shapes academic deans’ experience and sense-making.

Instruments and Procedures

The main technique for case study analysis is pattern-matching (Yin, 2013). This deductive technique compares empirical patterns with theoretical propositions. However, deductive approaches are susceptible to selective biases (Yin, 2013). This issue can be addressed by using inductive techniques, such as explanation building, alongside deductive ones. In a loose combination, deductive techniques maintain the focus of the study, while inductive
techniques enrich the results by looking at rival explanations. Critical realist researchers have argued for the combination of deductive and inductive approaches (Mueller, 2014) and further argued for the use of a constant combination, in which every deductive movement is reinforced by an accompanied inductive moment (Easton, 2010).

I analyzed the interview transcripts and documents using the NVivo qualitative research software (version 11.4.1) (QSR International, 2017). The coding scheme used as a starting point the interview guide.

Each case was first categorized based on the following: (a) appointment type; (b) faculty type; (c) gender; (d) previous reappointment experience; (e) reappointment result; and (f) university type. The categories were later used to look for patterns based on case characteristics.

Coding was done in stages and drew from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2013). During coding, I used memos to keep track of and guide my process. I started using memos while interviewing to note how my thoughts were evolving. During coding, memos were mainly used to review codes and to check my process against two sources of bias. The first is my own experience. In Section 4.1, I have discussed my positioning, in particular my negative experience of performance appraisals and reappointments. I used memos to bring back my own biases to the surface and question my assumptions in light of the evidence. In doing so, my efforts were concentrated on ensuring that I did not selectively code the perspectives that supported my own experience and ensure that I showed both sides adequately.

My participants also had unique and personal perspectives. All of them were, as deans, senior managers. As such, their approaches, their opinions, and their discourse were likely to be shaped by that experience and by the ties between them and their organizations. Memoing served, in this instance, to check the extent to which these ties shaped the data
and to identify where I needed to challenge their perspectives. For example, I noticed that some deans, when interviewed, tended to speak in the third person, as though they acted as representatives of their universities during the interview. In other cases, deans first provided several examples of important issues with their reappointments, but when asked to reflect on the process, were highly supportive of it.

In the first stage, the transcripts were coded according to categories deducted from the interview guide. These codes in essence describe the topic being discussed: (a) becoming dean; (b) first challenges; (c) deciding to renew; (d) learning about the process; (e) disruption; (f) feedback; (g) provost; (h) faculty; (i) groups; (j) measuring performance; (k) redoing the process; (l) reinventing the process; (m) impact of the process on decisions; (n) politics; and (o) other reappointments.

Consistent with research questions, which focus on deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments, the second stage divided the references found into two categories: experience and sense-making. The former included descriptions, stories, and factual references to what had happened, while the latter included explanations, opinions, reflections, and causal inferences.

In the third stage, I examined the content for each code, looking first for patterns matching those of my theoretical framework or challenging it. For this stage, I relied on the theoretical propositions presented in the previous section and focused on the following: organizational politics, alignment with supervisors and other stakeholders, processual aims, strengths, or weaknesses, and context. The references identified were further refined based on whether they were shared by at least the majority of deans or, if they were not, were significant enough to warrant mention, as they had a potentially rare, yet nonetheless grave impact on reappointments or deans (see Taleb, 2010).

These codes were finalized based on the meaning I attributed to each, taking into account
whether deans disagreed, or whether something more general could be deduced from their references. This last stage resulted in the themes presented in Chapter 5 and discussed in Chapter 6.

Overall, and given the imperative to avoid describing individual cases with too much detail, lest a participant could be identified, the study used a cross-case comparison method. Using multiple cases provides a firmer ground in which to make claims (Yin, 2013) and allows differences in outcomes to be associated with differences in contexts and mechanisms (Manicas, 2009). Yet, the depth of each individual case conveys meaning and allows the reader to connect his or her experience with the case (Stake, 1978). Therefore, whenever possible, the specifics of each case were analyzed and described, as long as the description did not endanger the participants. Let us now consider the criteria used to evaluate case studies and the limitations of such methods.

**Generalizability, Criteria, and Limitations**

Let me start with an important clarification. The purpose of my study is not statistical generalization, but analytical generalization. Generalizability is a contested term in social science research and different theoretical framework will have different definitions and criteria for generalization (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). A positivist view of generalizability entails that a finding can be expected to be reproduced in other similar settings. To this end, researchers use broad samples and arrive at generalizations using statistical methods. Such a view downplays the importance of variations in favour of regular trends. Furthermore this approach is useful for pointing out regularities, but not for explaining them (Manicas, 2009).

Analytical generalizations, on the other hand, seek not to identify regularities, but to attach explanations to findings (Yin, 2013). They build upon deeply contextualized findings to
Chapter 4. Methodology

link context to mechanisms to outcomes (Pawson, 2013). Analytical generalizations tend to be made within specific situations, described in great detail, so that readers can draw appropriate conclusions about their own situations (Stake, 1978). Variations are not to be minimized, but to be sought.

As the purpose of this study is to provide analytical generalizations, the criteria used to evaluate the quality of the study differ significantly from those often presented for statistical survey methods. Cutler (2004) deplores that many case studies in his field lack rigour. Notwithstanding this problem, the author recognizes the value of methodologically sound case studies and suggests, in order to improve case studies’ quality, to apply Yin’s (2013) criteria for evaluating the quality of case studies: construct validity, internal and external validity, and reliability.

Construct validity refers to the use of proper methods to seek information about the constructs defined in the research. In my case, the question is whether statements made by participants serve as evidence in clarifying how reappointments shape deans’ leadership. My research design ensures construct validity by using multiple cases and multiple sources of data, memos describing how findings emerge from the analysis, and comparisons between theory and findings.

Internal validity is the appropriate making of associations when claiming causal relations. For the realist Maxwell (2004), causality can be inferred from a single observation, with the usual caveat that such claims always remain fallible. In complex settings, causality becomes local and refers to multiple effects or influences acting together (Miles et al., 2013), including how participants make sense of events (Maxwell, 2004). With this reframing of causality in mind, this study’s internal validity is supported by the use of pattern-matching techniques, inductive search for rival explanations, and making explicit my conceptual framework in the interview guide.
External validity refers to whether findings are generalizable. For Yin, this question is one of coherent alignment between methods and research questions. As we have discussed earlier, multiple-case study methods are well suited to answer “how” and “why” questions, which are aligned with the broader purpose of this study, namely understanding how performance appraisals shape leadership. As well, phenomenological interviewing methods are also explicitly suited to clarify the experience and sense-making of participants, which is the exact goal of my research questions.

Finally, reliability refers to the replicability of findings. To that aim, every step of my research is carefully documented, allowing other researchers to replicate my research. That being said, reliability also refers to perceived credibility, which is both reinforced and diminished by my working experience as Associate Dean. This experience lends me credibility, as it provides me with insight and grounded knowledge about the role of academic deans and the workings of higher education institutions. However, this same experience, in particular my negative experience of performance appraisals and reappointments, colours my initial assumptions and analysis. To that effect, an explicit positioning and a document analysis should confer added credibility to my findings.

Beyond analytical generalizability, my aim is to ensure “naturalistic generalization” (Stake, 1995, p. 7). Naturalistic generalization refers to the vicarious quality of in-depth accounts that allows readers to identify with the cases and transfer their findings to their own situations. It is my greatest hope that the findings presented in the following chapters resonate with the people working in Canadian higher education institutions and allow them to navigate through academia with a renewed understanding of its processes.

Having discussed the validity of my methods, I now turn to their limitations. The greatest limitation of this study is that it only takes in the perspectives of academic deans, and not those of provosts and faculty members, at the very least. From a critical realist’s perspective, validity requires multiple perspectives (Porter, 2007). However, I chose to
limit the study to academic deans first to ensure their safety and, second, because they are the recipients of reappointments. Accordingly, my account does not seek to identify the outcomes of performance appraisals, but what sense academic deans make of them.

Related, my findings rely on deans’ testimonials. I have not witnessed the events that are described to me. All I have to corroborate the accounts are the accounts of other deans and policy documents. Perhaps I should have walked the same halls as they during their reappointments? That would have solved the problem, but would have created greater ones. My walking would have influenced my participants’ behaviour, the behaviour of those around them, and would have posed a risk to the participants.

Also, my thesis limits itself to Canadian universities. Given how different jurisdictions organize and regulate their higher education differently (Meek, Goedegebuure, & De Boer, 2010), case studies taking place in other jurisdictions are likely to bring important nuances to my findings, in particular regarding the impact of particular arrangements and of culture.

As well, by opting for qualitative methods, I cannot determine the extent to which my findings can be extended to other universities. The study investigates fourteen reappointments in eight universities. Its results serve to reveal patterns, but they do not clarify the extent to which these patterns are prevalent in different settings. Quantitative survey studies could contribute to my findings by testing whether my participants’ experience and sense-making is shared by other deans.

Finally, I bring to the research a lifetime of experiences, and these shape how I see the data and what I conclude from it. This is both a good and a bad thing. Human insight has value, but it is perilous. To that effect, I have used positioning extensively and submitted my work to the scrutiny of my thesis committee.

Accordingly, and as is always the case, this thesis is full of holes. Indeed, a complete realist
research agenda, but one that requires for more resources than one doctoral dissertation allows, would take a broader view and focus not only on qualitative findings, from a broad set of organizational perspectives, but also include statistical methods (Easton, 2010). Such a comprehensive research agenda would eventually span multiple jurisdictions and organizational settings (Pawson, 2013), with the aim of identifying “what works for whom in what circumstances... and why?” (p. 15). However, such an ambitious project is beyond the scope of this thesis and can only serve as a map for future research work.

To sum, Brown (2008) explains that the challenge of case study methods is not their implementation, but the careful alignment of perspectives guiding their every aspect. In this chapter, I have endeavoured to make this alignment between my positioning, my theoretical framework, and my methods as explicit as possible. I have further shown how those were implemented during data collection and analysis. These decisions both support the value of the research, but also limit their generalizability.
Chapter 5

Analysis

This chapter presents the themes emerging from the analysis and their interpretation. The first part of the chapter clarifies how these themes were deduced from the data based on my research questions, my conceptual framework, combining organizational politics, leadership, and socialization theories, and my theoretical framework, critical realism. Consistent with my twofold research question focusing on deans' experience and sense-making of their reappointments, the presentation of the themes emerging from the analysis is divided into two parts. The first part examines the themes related to deans’ experience of their reappointments, and the second examines the themes related to their sense-making.

5.1. Description of the Analysis

The analysis was performed using four stages of coding, which are further discussed in Section 4.3.3. Importantly, as the theoretical framework and the research questions were used at the onset to shape the interview guide (Appendix F and Appendix G), they
figure prominently within the analysis cycles. As my research questions focus on deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments, these two categories have early on served to organize the codes and themes emerging from the analysis. These same two categories, experience and sense-making, are used here to organize the presentation of the analysis.

The theoretical framework developed for the study guide my development of the interview guides and my subsequent analysis of the data. Recall from Section 4.3.3 that the central components of my theoretical framework were translated into five theoretical propositions (see Yin, 2013) drawing attention to organizational politics and the role of context, process, and support. These propositions also shaped not only data collection, but the analysis.

The first stage of coding involved describing the topics discussed. In general, these codes described what deans were discussing. Examples of such initial codes include: becoming dean, learning about the process, receiving feedback, people interfering, discussions with provost, and interview with reappointment committees.

In the second stage, the excerpts coded were divided into experience and sense-making references. For example, references to receiving feedback were divided into references to what happened at the time and references to opinions about the feedback received.

The third stage involved reading segments related to experience and sense-making to identify themes based on three criteria. The first criterion was theoretical relevance, the second frequency, and the third significance. Theoretical relevance refers to the nature of the statement in relation to the conceptual framework, in particular as stated in the theoretical propositions. As such, references to organizational politics, other stakeholders’ roles, processes, and context were prioritized and examined for frequency or significance.
The criteria of frequency and significance were applied according to my theoretical framework, critical realism, which I described in Section 4.2. Critical realist research, in searching for patterns, looks not only for regularities, but also for irregularities, as those may provide insights into the mechanisms underlying observed phenomena. Accordingly, themes were deemed emerging when either more than half of the participants referred to them, or when few individuals made references that were either diametrically opposed to the majority or as having important repercussions and requiring policy or practice adjustments. An example of such themes is experiencing vitriolic feedback. Even though the number of deans reporting this is relatively small, even a single instance requires that it be mentioned and taken into account.

In the final stage, these codes were further refined into final themes through the analysis of their ultimate consequences. At this stage, I deduced a more abstract meaning from the codes. For example, in providing their thoughts on what is measured during reappointments, deans make references to different constructs. However, all of these constructs can be rearranged and related into a broader one: lack of opposition, which adequately describes their sense-making of what counts as performance in reappointments.

To sum, the research questions and the theoretical framework both served to organize data collection and analysis. In what follows, the final codes are presented along with quotes from the deans’ interviews. Deans’ quotes are presented to provide the reader with a better sense of the words used by the participants to describe their experience and sense-making and to show how themes were deduced from the data.

As stated in Section 4.3.1, the analysis is presented in a format that prevents the identification of the participants. To reiterate, as the number of reappointed deans in Canadian universities is relatively small, I have opted to present only cross-case analyses and aggregated the findings by themes. In addition, participants’ quotes have been interchanged in some instances to further prevent identification.
5.2. Analysis of Deans’ Experiences

This section presents the themes related to deans’ experience of their reappointments. Four themes emerged: reappointments share similar scripts across universities; deans generally feel confident while undergoing evaluation, though they also feel exposed and at risk; political behaviour is prevalent and diverse during reappointments; and deans have very different experiences of their reappointments, ranging from convivial to toxic. Related to the thesis’s conceptual framework, these themes center on organizational politics, stakeholders, processual features, and context found within deans’ experiences.

5.2.1 Universities Follow Similar Scripts

You know, we know what the criteria are. They’re just not very specific. You get a letter of appointment, you have fiduciary responsibility, you’re an officer of the University. So the role is defined. (Dean Juniper)

Eight universities, each with different policies and practices, are included within the fourteen cases under study. These universities, though they are nor required to do so, share very similar processes for reappointments.

Table 5.1 on page 114 shows the distribution of processual characteristics and proportion of universities sharing them. In most cases, decanal reappointments are enshrined in policies which clarify who participates in reappointments and what their roles are precisely. However, Canadian university reappointment policies rarely state what is to be evaluated and how it will be evaluated. In all cases, reappointment committees were put together by provosts. Committee members were either elected or selected by provosts, following calls for participation. Committees generally determined what to collect and how to interpret it. Again, in all cases, data collection included calls for input on reappointments that
extended beyond deans’ faculties, and, in several cases, beyond deans’ universities. As Dean Fir puts it: “They requested input from God and everybody.”

Also, in all cases, deans made a presentation to their reappointment committees and answered questions. Generally, these interviews focused on past achievements and future plans. Finally, reappointment committees reviewed the data gathered and made recommendations. These recommendations, with the exception of one university, were made to the provost and the president, who made the final decision. In one university, the recommendation required a vote of approval from a faculty-level committee to be forwarded to the president.

Deans’ reappointments also showed similar omissions. In all cases, universities did not ensure that committee members be trained, nor did they require experience in evaluating deans. Also, reappointment policies, with the exception of one, did not provide criteria for evaluating performance. Finally, with one exception, committees did not rely on quantitative surveys to collect data, but instead asked for written comments regarding the reappointment.

Despite these numerous similarities, there were also important differences. Reappointment processes were described in only half of the policies, suggesting that for the other half, processes were determined by committees. This further suggests a great potential for variations between reappointments, even within a single university. Also, some universities ensured anonymity, while others required signatures, though those were only seen by committee members, including provosts. In addition, in some universities, deans made public presentations.

Also of note, other evaluation processes ran parallel with reappointments. Every university in this study ran yearly provostial reviews, and some universities ran other additional review processes. These included 360 reviews and faculty union surveys.
Table 5.1: Distribution of Canadian University Reappointment Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared characteristics</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy is publicly available</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy describes a committee</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee is responsible for evaluation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee includes members from faculty, staff, and students</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee members are elected</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee makes recommendation to the president</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy describes a process</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy describes criteria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for input goes beyond the Faculty</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for input provides role or criteria</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for input includes a quantitative component</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants-raters are anonymous</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee interviews Dean</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean provides a self-appraisal to committee</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean makes a presentation to the Faculty</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly provostial evaluations run parallel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other evaluations run parallel</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New reappointment process is implemented</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These findings suggest that Canadian universities share an understanding of deans’ reappointments that includes the following components: provosts orchestrate the process on behalf of the University, representative committees oversee the evaluation and make recommendations, input is sought from the Faculty’s broader community, deans are provided with an opportunity to make their cases. These steps are summarized in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Common Sequence of Events of Canadian University Deans’ Reappointments
(Adapted from Lavigne (2018))

Overall, though they share common scripts, reappointment policies also share some critical omissions. Chief among those are the lack of evaluation criteria and standards, as well as
the absence of minimal expectations regarding data collection.

5.2.2 Deans Feel Confident, yet Exposed

I did not have formal discussions or meetings, but I did test the water. I talked to some of the people that had approached me originally for the Dean job to see what they thought, to see whether I should stay in the game or not. At the time, my sense was that people were generally satisfied and did not want disruption. (Dean Birch)

When seeking reappointments, deans felt confident. All of them, the non-reappointed Dean included, evaluated that reappointment was highly likely. For some, this confidence stemmed from explicit signals received from their provosts or their faculties, while others expressed a connection with their unit. They read the people around them as being satisfied.

There were plenty of signals that people were wanting me to do it; in fact, would be grateful to me if I did it, rather than saying: ‘You’re lucky to get this job,’ but: ‘We’re lucky that you are going to agree to take this job.’ (Dean Oak)

Some deans mentioned that they might not have sought reappointment had they not felt confident: “I don’t think I would have put my name up if I thought I didn’t have the support of the Faculty for that” (Dean Larch). They would not have taken chances.

Confidence came from the conviction that their actions were aligned with their provosts’ or their faculties’ goals and interests. As one dean mentions: “I don’t think I was in that position at this point where I was really pushing the Faculty to a place they didn’t want to go” (Dean Larch). Some deans explicitly asked key people how they felt about
their reappointments: “I’d been over to talk to people, they’d say that they felt it was a positive time” (Dean Cedar).

Several deans felt exposed during their reappointments. Despite their overall feeling of confidence, a number of deans expressed doubts. They were confident, but not overly confident. They felt that anything was possible, if unlikely. As Dean Cypress puts it: “I did certainly worry about it, although when I sat and looked at it rationally, it made no sense. It wouldn’t have been a very likely thing to happen” (Dean Cypress).

Some deans considered the risks involved:

I think that it’s perilous for a candidate who comes forward and isn’t successful in continuing their career in that context. . . . I think it would have been really hard to have gone through the process and been unsuccessful at that point. I think it was a real risk; a real gamble for my career here. (Dean Ash)

For others, returning to the Faculty was not seen as a risk, but as security, insurance: “A failed reappointment here means that I go back into the life of being a professor, which I loved. So, although a failed reappointment would be very disappointing, and I’m glad it didn’t happen, it wouldn’t have been catastrophic” (Dean Larch). For the first group, returning to The faculty was an aggravating factor, while for the second group, it was a mitigating one.

Finally, a few deans were uncomfortable with the level of public scrutiny that they were put through. For them, reappointments went a little too far in disclosing information to their faculties. They felt exposed not so much because they were at risk, but more because they were put under a very bright light: “As a person who went through it, I hated it. And had I really been aware of how I’d feel about it, I might actually have not chosen to be reappointed” (Dean Pine).
Overall, deans experienced a strong sense of confidence when seeking reappointment. This proved true as well for the Dean who did not obtain reappointment “it was going to be a very easy reappointment.” Generally, this sense of confidence drew from the conviction that their deanship was aligned with the expectations of their provosts and of their faculties. Nonetheless, several deans felt exposed and at risk.

5.2.3 Political Behaviour is Prevalent and Takes Different Shapes

There was, I think, only one individual who was openly trying to undermine it. I think there were probably two or three others on the fence, but they didn’t come out, I don’t think, and say: ‘We don’t want him back.’ So I think there was only one who was basically trying to really put the knife in. (Dean Alder)

Deans’ experiences revealed that political behaviour took place in several reappointments and takes different shapes. Interestingly, this behaviour was not always acknowledged as political behaviour by deans, in particular when it came to provosts’ behaviour, or their own. Political behaviour is often construed as selfish and disruptive or negative to the organization. As I define political behaviour based on Mayes and Allen’s (1977) definition (see Chapter 3), I consider any attempt at circumventing the intended process as political behaviour, without requiring that actions be selfish or nefarious. Hence, what deans saw as political behaviour often described only a portion of the political behaviour landscape under study.

Three particular sources of political behaviour emerged from deans’ experiences: central administrations, faculty members, and the deans themselves. Central administrations’ instances of political behaviour were foremost evident through the actions of their provosts.
And when it came time for renewal, I think that the president sent out a notification saying that I have been invited to renew. So that’s the first thing: you don’t always get invited. So, I guess there’s an appraisal component to that. (Dean Juniper)

Provosts interfered in the process mainly when they invited deans to seek reappointment, even though policy did not provide them with the power or privilege to do so. In most reappointment policies, provosts are expected to seek input to inform their decisions. By inviting, or not, deans to seek reappointment, provosts circumvented the intended process.

Central administrations also interfered with deans’ reappointments when changes were made to reappointments while deans were engaged in them. In two cases, the rules of the game were changed mid-process. Steps were added in one case, and the scope of the review was modified in the other. In both cases, deans felt exposed, unsupported, questioned the intentions of their administration, and considered withdrawing from the process. As one of them put it:

It felt like they were trying to find something wrong. . . . I mean you would think if there was some reason that they wanted to get rid of me they would have found a reason to get rid of me. They would have asked me not to apply to renew or whatever, because they had done that before to other people.

(Dean Poplar)

Another way central administrations interfered with reappointments was by using reappointments to push their agenda. As one dean reported: “it was [his/her] opportunity, with my renewal, to push some items” (Dean Elm). In this case, the Provost used the opportunity to put pressure on the Dean to move forward an agenda that the Dean and the Faculty had previously ignored.
Faculty members were also reported to interfere with deans’ reappointments. This political behaviour deans’ witnessed in their own and their colleagues’ reappointments.

The first way deans experienced faculty political behaviour was when faculty members maneuvered to obtain seats on their reappointment committees with the stated intent of supporting or preventing their reappointments:

You could tell the jockeying that was going on about the election process to select the review committee. . . . the stories I heard afterward about how people jockeyed to be on the committee and, of course, some who wanted to support me and some who didn’t. So you know that it’s not going to be a ‘slam dunk.’ You know that heading in. . . . one of those folks got on the review committee, and I’m not surprised. That’s just how it goes, and so I of course, don’t know the details of how the committee deliberations played out, but I heard it was vigorous, that there was lots of discussion. I haven’t heard that it was perilous, but that there was vigorous discussion. . . . (Dean Ash)

Faculty members also interfered by influencing the way other faculty members participated in the process:

. . . a few junior people came to me, not as a group, but one at a time, and said: ‘We didn’t put our names up when we saw they put their names up, because we’re afraid of them. And we were afraid that if we wrote in for you, there would be reprisal at the tenure level.’ That broke my heart. That was one of the most heartbreaking things. To hear that people didn’t think that they could honestly send remarks in. (Dean Spruce)

This form of political behaviour is more pernicious. It describes a culture of mistrust. It cannot easily be attributed to a single individual or a small group and is therefore harder to temper or control. Nonetheless, allowing committee members to associate the names
of the participants with their comments facilitates this form of political behaviour.

Deans also displayed political behaviour during their reappointments. This behaviour took three forms: identifying who made the comments, framing their past performance, and discussing their reappointments with key members of the Faculty. Though these generally constitute accepted behaviour, it is important to recognize them as political, since they interfere with the intended process.

As one Dean mentioned, it can be difficult, in some cases, to bring an issue forward without revealing one’s identity: “once the questions were asked, I knew exactly who they came from” (Dean Pine). Thus, participating in reappointments comes with a level of risk for faculty members, in particular untenured ones, as both committee members and deans may identify them, either by virtue of being committee members, or by inferring their identity from their comments.

Another way deans interfered with their reappointments is by discussing them with key members of their faculties. As one Dean describes: “I was going to people who I saw as the leaders. I said: ‘Guys, if you don’t want me, now is your time to tell me, because I don’t want to be in charge of people who don’t want me to be in charge’” (Dean Birch). Asking around to get a feel may be seen as justifiable, but, in so doing, deans also put certain individuals in uncomfortable positions and thus add unwanted and unwarranted pressure on their faculties.

Finally, deans interfered with their reappointments when they framed their past performance. This usually took place during their meetings with reappointment committees. While it is true that most reappointments provide deans with this opportunity, it remains important to recognize this as an opportunity for political behaviour, with regards to the intended process. Presentations allowed deans to paint their deanships according to their own criteria and standards, and not those of their universities or their faculties. That
being said, given that reappointment committees invite deans to frame their performance, I recognize that whether this framing should be considered political behaviour is debatable to a greater extent than other instances.

To sum, political behaviour was prevalent and took different shapes. Some of it was overt and easily recognizable as disruptive, but some of it was more covert, or took ambiguous forms, which can be argued as political or not based on how one defines politics.

5.2.4 Reappointments are Convivial for Some, but Toxic for Others

I had decanal colleagues who felt that they were victimized by the process and I think they felt victimized, in part, because of the ways in which representatives were chosen for the decanal review committees, and they felt victimized by the inefficiency of the process. So they felt that in their fifth year, their future for an entire year remained in question and that made it very difficult for them to be effective in their jobs, and it made it personally very challenging. (Dean Fir)

The great majority of the deans interviewed qualified their experience as mostly positive: “For me it was a pretty painless experience” (Dean Elm). In particular, they described the interviews with their reappointment committees as convivial, non-antagonistic, cordial, relaxed, supportive, or positive.

I can say that while I wasn’t looking forward to that, that much, it was actually a very positive experience and I left the room feeling really good. And so for me, that was probably the highlight of the whole experience. (Dean Hickory)
For a great number of deans, what tarnished their experience was not how they were treated by people, but by the process. In particular, for some of them, the central negative aspect was the duration of the process. They felt on hold and hanging for months. Otherwise, deans generally experienced a sense of support and fair treatment from the people involved in the process.

That being said, there were some important exceptions to this general rule, and these exceptions were of such a magnitude that they cannot be ignored, even though they likely take place more rarely, as their repercussions can be far-reaching.

... it is stressful. I lost sleep over it. ... I probably worried my family over it, and I think it was unnecessary. So I think there are downsides to it. I don’t think they’re benign procedures. I think they are nasty and they are set up to be that way because there’s a false premise that we start from. (Dean Cypress)

As this dissertation centers mainly on the perspectives of successfully reappointed deans, the results are likely skewed in light of the positive outcomes experienced by the participants. In fact, most of the negative comments referred to other deans’ reappointments: “I know former deans that were not reappointed. And I know they felt they had not been treated fairly; that they were sacrificial lambs” (Dean Birch).

Or as another dean put it:

I think I learned most about the process, to be honest with you, from my decanal colleagues, because they were going through the process and I noticed really how, I would say, uncomfortable, I think some of them were; how stressful it was for my colleagues going through the renewal. They really found it hard. There was real heightened stress with a lot of individuals. (Dean Hickory)
In a few cases, specific factors participated in negatively shaping deans’ experiences. These were: openly opposed faculty members on reappointment committees, ad hoc modifications to the process, and verbatim comments from faculty members. In all cases, these situations were associated with negative experiences ranging from helplessness to bitterness and loss of dignity.

When strongly opposed members of the Faculty sought to be included on reappointment committees, deans felt threatened. As Dean Ash reports above, deans can feel exposed and their reappointments may me shaped by the actions of a single individual. In the case of Dean Ash, the individual did not manage to control the outcome of the process, but he/she nevertheless shaped it and its outcomes.

Similarly, ad hoc changes to the process were perceived as threats. Because the changes came from their central administrations, deans felt further threatened than when the threats came for faculty members: “When something like that happens to a dean, you don’t really have anywhere to go, because you don’t have a union. You don’t have any kind of representation” (Dean Poplar). In this study, three cases were modified ad hoc and two deans expressed negative perceptions regarding these changes.

Finally, deans reported negative experiences when presented with the comments made by their faculty and staff members. Comments were generally collected by committees. In some cases, comments were not made available to deans. In other cases, they were handed to deans after having been summarized and aggregated. But in some rarer cases, the comments were simply stripped of nominal information and handed verbatim as a form of feedback. These comments, whether summarized or not, had negative outcomes: “I remember feeling, initially, quite hurt by some of the written feedback” (Dean Ash). In particular, for verbatim feedback, the data suggest even darker outcomes:

I started reading it and I felt like my knees were going to collapse under
me. So, there was no consequence to it, except that I knew that there was something particularly weird and creepy in my Faculty. It didn’t stop me from performing. . . . it just stopped me from reaching out to people in my Faculty because I didn’t know where it was coming from. . . . in the feedback that was received, I would say 90% of it was really positive and 10% of it was venomous, horrendous. . . . (Dean Spruce)

The previous comment is echoed in different ways by other deans, in reference to their reappointments or those of colleagues. What emerges from these comments is that reappointments were sometimes used by individuals to attack deans’ dignity. This was exacerbated by two factors: attacking individuals remain anonymous, which prevent attribution, rebuttal, retaliation, or even future precautions; and committee members, including provosts, have also read those comments, which make the conversation public, but one-way. A third factor contributing to the severity of this phenomenon is that deans have little recourse available to them: “When you are upwardly harassed and you’re out of rank, you have no protection. And then anything you do to fix it is reprisal or harassment” (Dean Spruce). In this case, supervisory authority only renders deans powerless against these attacks.

As mentioned above, several references to acute negative experiences were associated with failed reappointments. However, failed reappointments are often reframed.

We had a situation at one of our big faculties, where an individual, of course, a colleague of mine who I was working with closely, went into the renewal process, and it was clear it wasn’t going to be a successful one, and it ended with him not finishing the process. . . . (Dean Hickory)

When reappointments started to go wrong, they were often transformed. In the non-reappointment case under study, the Dean’s reappointments faced numerous delays and
covert resistance and enmity, which led the Dean to reconsider the need for such pain and trouble, and finally to withdraw altogether from the process, even though there were no signs of overt resistance. In this case, as in others described by other deans, there are no non-reappointments:

I’m gonna make an example of someone else who I think was seeking reappointment and the Faculty wasn’t supporting that reappointment, to a fairly big extent. I think that what came out of it was a bit of a negotiation; so that, not a full five-year reappointment, but a two-year appointment. And everybody saved face. At least, the Dean saved face. (Dean Juniper)

Deans simply cease to seek reappointment, or some short-term mandates are put together to save face. As a result, non-reappointments are difficult to identify and investigate.

Overall, the general experience of reappointed deans may be considered positive, but some of the cases highlight their harming potential. Though these cases may seem rarer, their prevalence is impossible to determine within the context of a case study. Regardless, even a single case of harm, through loss of dignity, is enough to question whether reappointments are handled appropriately.

5.3. Analysis of Deans’ Sense-Making

The previous section zeroed in on deans’ experiences of their reappointments. This section focuses instead on their sense-making: their understanding, interpretation, and evaluation of the events they experienced. Accordingly, while the previous section focused on described events, facts, and emotions, this section explores opinions, reflexions, attributions, and judgments.
As with the analysis of deans’ experience, the analysis of their sense-making relied on a conceptual framework combining organizational politics, leadership, and socialization theories applied to managers’ performance appraisals. The framework emphasizes the role of organizational politics, alignment with stakeholders, in particular provosts and faculty members, the characteristics of reappointment processes, and the role of contextual features.

Eight themes emerged from the analysis: deans seek reappointment to bring projects to terms, provosts play pivotal roles, reappointments measure performance by way of measuring faculty opposition, reappointments can serve as sources of strength, processes are satisfactory, but there is a lot of room for improvement, reappointment politics play complex roles and can be useful as well as problematic, reappointments do not directly impact deans’ leadership, and differences in context make a difference.

5.3.1 Five Years is Too Few and Ten is Too Many

Ten seems long, eight seems good, but five, especially four? To be able to say if I didn’t want to be reappointed? I’d be kind of a lame duck now, I would think. So, I think five years, especially when you come from another place, is sometimes just too short to fulfill a mandate. (Dean Hickory)

To understand deans’ reappointments, it is helpful to cast them into a broader perspective: how participants became deans and why they sought reappointment. From this broader perspective, three themes emerged. First, deans do not generally seek the deanship, but answer calls of duty. Second, deans find that five years is just not enough time to have an impact on their faculties. This leads us to the third theme: deans seek reappointment primarily to consolidate the work started during their first term.
I always said I would never, ever go to the ‘dark side’ and become an administrator. ... I suddenly realized that I was getting more success and more happiness from creating an environment in which my students and others could succeed, and realized that there was something to not doing it yourself, but to create an environment where others could do it, and that was much easier to replicate. (Dean Cypress)

For the majority of the deans interviewed, the decision to seek the deanship came at a later time in their career. Yet, most of them could point to a penchant towards service: “I have this kind of ethic or whatever, that if you’re working within the context of an institution that you care about, then if people ask you to do things, if you can, you should try to do them” (Dean Oak).

For others still, it was the types of problems or situations that always attracted their attention: “I think that my nature is not that of someone who just wants to work on one narrowly defined question. I’ve always, right from when I was a teenager, enjoyed having lots of balls in the air” (Dean Cedar).

Also, several deans mentioned a significant individual, whose actions and words triggered their career change: “... the Dean came to me and said: ‘Look, I need you.’ And I said: ‘Are you crazy?’ And the Dean said: ‘No, seriously, I need you’ (Dean Alder).

This suggests that deans, though they respond to a calling, also seem to have attributes that single them out to be called upon or make them more likely to answer the call positively. All of them understood the position as challenging, but many also saw it as a way to achieve greater things.

As to why deans sought reappointment, for all of them, it came down to their desire to see what they had started through and a conviction that they were now in a better position to move things forward:
... after three years, I just had a lot of balls in the air, and I wanted to see whether or not I was gonna catch them. I knew I wasn’t finished doing what I was doing. And I was beginning to feel kind of like I could connect the dots and move beyond that stumbling ‘round in the dark phase’, and that I had a little bit more of a grip on things. (Dean Juniper)

In some cases, deans felt that stopping at this point would have a negative impact on their faculties, primarily because they were in the middle of a broad and complex project that could no longer be abandoned, for example ambitious renovations or restructuring of the Faculty:

... it’s not that I think that I’m doing an amazing job as Dean, but I think it would have been quite disruptive for the Faculty if I had said: ‘No, I don’t want to do this anymore,’ and they had to seek somebody else, particularly if that person had ended up being an outsider and had to relearn everything that I had learned, in a quite critical moment... (Dean Elm)

In other words, some deans sought reappointment because of projects that needed continuous impetus to move forward, lest nothing would happen, and other deans sought reappointment because of projects that had accumulated an impetus of their own, and required steady steering, lest disaster struck. In the former, motivations are constructive and internal, driven mainly by the Dean, while in the latter, they are preventive and external, driven mainly by foreseen consequences.

Some deans also explained that they really enjoyed the work:

One, I liked the job. ... There are plenty of unpleasant things about being an academic administrator. Whatever you do, it’s the wrong thing in someone’s mind. People question your motives. People are willing to interpret an ambiguous situation in a way that paints you in the worst light and so
on. But, notwithstanding all of those things, the ability to be the guy who thinks: ‘Hey, what if we tried this?’ ‘What about this?’ That clearly is very exciting. I guess I must be the sort of person too who likes feeling the sense of responsibility. ... The second is that things weren’t finished. They’re never finished, but there were big things that were sort of in training that I thought that needed to get done. I’m not arrogant enough to think that I’m the only person who can do any of it, of course, that’s not the case. The graveyards are full of indispensable people, but, nonetheless, I felt a sense of responsibility. And the third is that people wanted me to. In fact, I’m quite sure I wouldn’t have done it if I hadn’t been wanted. (Dean Alder)

Finally, as is suggested by the desire to see projects come to maturity and integrated within their faculty, the ability to make a difference also played an important role in many deans’ decisions:

I believe the most satisfying thing in educational leadership, in my mind, is the opportunity to be a change agent, and the opportunity to bring faculty and staff together around an exciting vision. And if that’s how you define your role, you can’t get it done in five years. (Dean Fir)

Deans were of a single mind when it came to getting anything done in one term, but were of different minds when it came to how long deans should remain in their positions:

I think it’s a good thing to turn over deans. I think also that it’s a bad thing to turn them over too frequently. ... it’s a good thing to change over, but five years is often too short a time to really do it justice. Ten years may be okay, but, actually, they are ‘soul sucking’ jobs. They take a lot out of people. Ten years may be a little long. (Dean Cypress)

The majority of them recognized a potential staleness after ten years, and one of them
had actually experienced such feelings in a prior deanship. Deans also, as the previous quote expresses, noted how the deanship can take its toll on an individual. None of them suggested that the deanship be a longer term or a permanent position. However, five of the fourteen deans (see Table 4.1 on page 99) had been deans in other institutions prior to their current assignments and had thus become permanent administrators in a system that prohibits such career trajectories.

As for the minimum duration of the first term, again, opinions varied substantially. Most saw some advantages to a shorter three- to five-year term: “I don’t mind the idea of a five-year term, because then a person who is not suited to it can leave with dignity or go somewhere else” (Dean Spruce). For most, seven or eight years seemed like the right amount of time to achieve something meaningful and lasting.

5.3.2 Provosts Play Pivotal Roles

Provosts are critical in that they help to retain the fence, the balance, and a sense of momentum of the committee moving forward. ... and they can be very, very important, in this in dealing with a committee that starts to get dysfunctional. (Dean Cedar)

Throughout the interviews, the provost emerged as a powerful and shaping figure. Several deans mentioned a positive relationship and expressed feelings of trust in their provosts. They were portrayed as colleagues or allies, with few references to authority or hierarchy.

Provosts were provided with the greatest opportunities to control reappointments’ outcomes and play critical roles in preventing derailments. Provosts first shaped reappointments through their regular meetings, and more importantly their yearly reviews. This
relatively constant relationship and supervisory authority allowed provosts to strongly shape how reappointed deans understood performance.

However, provostial reviews remained structurally decoupled from reappointments:

... the funny thing about the renewal is that it’s somewhat removed from the annual performance review. Again, you can go through five performance reviews and have an excellent performance review, and then it’s quite a different group of people. (Dean Larch)

Provostial reviews were decoupled in two ways. First, they prioritized a perspective of performance aligned with their central administrations and generally focused on budgets, enrolments, or handling of faculty issues. Second, provostial reviews were not explicitly included in reappointments’ data collection. With the exception of one university, there were no expectations that provostial reviews be included and taken into account.

As mentioned in the earlier in reference to political behaviour, provosts also shaped reappointments by making the first appraisal:

... the Provost can intervene before you stick your neck out and then don’t get a second term. And so that’s a very important part of how this whole relationship works, and the Provost has to have the hand right on that tiller to help steer through that process. And then when you have been appointed for your second term, it means the Provost is still backing you with the President, with the Board, with your colleagues. Everyone can see you’ve got this person behind you, backing you, thinks you’re doing a good job. So that relationship is critical, and if you allow that relationship to unravel somehow in the process, then that can be very problematic, including not have the Provost chair the committee. ... The interesting thing is, what happens then if the Provost doesn’t think that the person should go forward for another term? The best
thing the Provost can do is to say: ‘You know what, I don’t think you should do it. I think you should just decide that you’re not going to go for a second term, that you should remove yourself from the process elegantly, with honour, I will celebrate your deanship. But you know what? I don’t think it’s going to work for a second term.’ (Dean Cedar)

Furthermore, provosts were provided with several ways to influence their committees’ proceedings. They were committee members and often chaired committee meetings. As such, they controlled to a great extent what data was brought to the committee. As well, provosts were often the only ones with previous reappointment experience. This potentially increased their influence. Finally, in all but one case, provosts received their committees’ recommendations. This final say further increased their influence within their committees.

Nevertheless, provosts could still lose control of the process:

So if the Provost wasn’t the kind of leader, for example, that [he/she] was. If [he/she] couldn’t manage that at the table, it could have fallen apart. A bully can drive a committee. It’s not like it’s a home-free process. There’s lots of opportunities, I think, for it not to work as well. (Dean Ash)

Deans understood provosts to have power, but not as having complete control: “... if you had a very political provost, for instance, one easily swayed by opinions. ... Do I think my process was political? No. But, at the University, we have an intensely reasonable and human provost, who is very very conscientious” (Dean Pine)

Deans also viewed committee deliberations as political arenas, where not only political skill, but political will, is key:

A weak provost; a provost who thinks: ‘Geez, the Faculty are up in arms, so
clearly, the Dean’s got to be wrong.’ And you might as well say: ‘Here’s the gasoline, here’s the bottle, here’s the rag and the matches. Go ahead and make them all a Molotov Cocktail.’ If the Faculty are up in arms, the Provost should ask why, and if there’s a valid reason, well then, let’s take action. But if it’s just because the Dean is doing the right things, but it so happens it’s pissed off a few of the loud mouths, then you call them on it. . . . So much depends on whether you’ve got a good Provost or not. . . . so it’s not the act of the appraisal in and of itself that gives too much power to faculty. I think it’s how the appraisal is used and how it’s heard. (Dean Alder)

It could be argued that provosts, because they have final say, can ignore their committees’ recommendations. However, as several deans pointed, vetoing a recommendation comes with a high political cost:

. . . [he/she] was not reappointed and was enormously embittered by the whole process. Riddled with politics. And [he/she] had the support of the Provost. [He/She] didn’t have the support of the committee. The Provost didn’t feel [he/she] could contravene the recommendations of the committee. So it can be more about politics than performance. (Dean Fir)

The deans who mentioned provosts’ right to veto were also of the mind that most provosts would opt not to do so. They were more likely to give prominence to the voice of the committee:

5.3.3 Reappointments Measure Faculty Opposition

I think you need to be savvy enough to bring people on side without compromising what you want to do. That’s the art of leading, I think. I see people
who lead very boldly and bluntly and nobody follows them. And in a lot of ways they are doing exactly what needs to be done. But it’s not what they do, it’s how they do it. (Dean Larch)

To this point, our analysis has revolved around the notion of performance without addressing it. This section delves into the core of decanal reappointments and explores how deans understand performance in relation to their reappointments.

The central issue surrounding the evaluation of performance is the elusive and contested definition of performance. Simply put, as individuals have different goals and different needs, they will view their dean’s performance through different lenses. Furthermore, as Dean Larch mentions in the previous quote, it is not only the actions that matter, but also the way they are done. As such, even if two individuals prioritized, for example, enrolment, they may evaluate an increase in enrolment differently based on the specific way this increase was achieved, for example, by dropping admission requirements.

Even deans, as they understand their role, may change the way they understand performance:

There’s a distinct difference between your academic role, and your academic freedom, and your decanal role as an officer of the University, who is part of a leadership team acting on behalf of the University. You’ve been appointed by the University to help the institution flourish. You haven’t been appointed by the University to help you personally flourish or your faculty necessarily to flourish at the cost of all other faculties. That’s not the game. The game is that you are now part of an institutional leadership team. You’re expected to play as a team member. (Dean Cedar)

Most of the deans interviewed mentioned the importance of being aligned with their universities, that their understanding of performance matched to a great extent that of
their provosts instead of their faculties. This is perhaps a new phenomenon, and perhaps more prevalent in some universities: “the role got different, because I think that deans saw their role as fighting for their faculties, and I think that now we’re all fighting for the University” (Dean Juniper).

In addition to having different definitions of performance, individuals may also have different knowledge of what is expected of deans and may not have opportunities to witness deans’ performance. In most reappointments under study, committees asked for input, but neither clarified criteria nor standards. They collected the opinions of individuals on something left undefined. As a result, reappointment participants were free to use their own definition of performance and evaluate based on their own understanding of the job and the few occasions they had to witness performance. Several deans felt that faculty members were ill-informed about their tasks, goals, and daily activities, yet were a primary source of data:

You are really an employee of the University and not of the Faculty. You are selected and you go through the process of getting the job on the basis of the job you are actually going to do, and that is to serve the University as a senior central administrator. But then when it comes to the review process, the balance is skewed, it seems to me, towards the Faculty. And the people that you are asking to evaluate the Dean’s performance, for the most part, don’t know what a dean does. They don’t know what the objectives of the Dean are. They don’t know what the Dean has been expected to do by the Provost and the President, and there isn’t really anything in the process, except for perhaps parts I didn’t see. (Dean Hickory)

In addition, to the same extent that the work of deans can be hard to define and observe, it is also hard to measure. As the work of deans is complex and its outcomes often take months or years to take shape, attributing outcomes to deans is a precarious exercise:
I would say yes, it’s important to have a performance review, and that fairly classic indicators of performance need to be involved in them, whether it’s research performance indicators or indicators of numbers of students or financial indicators; the usual sorts of things we use. But I think we all understand the limitations of those indicators. I do, the people on the panel did, the Provost did. Everyone knows that they are just that, they’re an indicator. And there are other less tangible things that you cannot put a number to, but you can nevertheless get feedback from. (Dean Elm)

Furthermore, not only is it difficult to measure deans’ performance and agree on metrics, but many deans were also of the mind that performance standards should not be the same for all deans, but reflect the particulars of their situations:

... the Provost is dealing with deans who, in one sense, are in a pool, but they’re not in a pool the way [researchers] are in a pool, where there are canons of judgment and levels of performance that can be shared and understood within that disciplinary framework. (Dean Oak)

For most deans, performance was tantamount to their ability to mobilize their faculties:

Things don’t get done, just because the boss says so. We’re bottom up institutions. Are things bubbling up from the bottom? If all the ideas and all the action have to come from the Dean’s Office, I don’t think that speaks very well to performance as a dean. (Dean Alder)

This is an important, yet perhaps obvious point. Leadership positions rely on leadership, which is, in essence, the capacity to mobilize:

It’s all relationship, the whole thing. So the performance appraisal has to get
at the quality of the relationship. If it doesn’t, then it’s not an appraisal of a performance that I understand as the kind of leadership a dean does. It might be the kind of leadership or the kind of work that someone does on an assembly line, but then it doesn’t pass muster. It’s gotta get at the quality of the relationships, because it is in a collegial governance context, the quality of the relationships to move things forward. (Dean Juniper)

Capacity, however, is not performance. It is a condition for performance. Furthermore, capacity to mobilize is also controversial, because it places at the core of performance a construct that resembles popularity.

Popularity. ... in an organization that has an element of collegial governance as we do, ... we’re not completely collegially governed, but it’s an important part of our ethos, you have to have a certain degree of popularity, but it shouldn’t just be a popularity contest. (Dean Alder)

Yet capacity, if not past performance, is potential for performance and, in deans’ cases, it comes and goes to an extent with the will of their faculties. In turn, this will to follow is in part contingent to how deans’ past performance is perceived and made sense of by their faculties. As a result, capacity for leadership is a result of past leadership. In deans’ cases, it served as a ‘good enough’ proxy, given the numerous issues with measuring performance. However, it also casts the deanship as a political exercise to gain and maintain support and loses sight of deans’ broader roles.

The important question, I think in a decanal review, is not primarily about the Provost’s appraisal of the Dean’s work, but about the acceptability of the Dean to continue leading in the context in which they are in, and if there isn’t support to continue leading at the grassroots level ... I think that some of the risk around that is mitigated when institutional purpose stays at the
core of our motivation. So why do we do a review process? It should serve an institutional purpose around conserving and developing leadership for the organization. It should be a check and balance around the impact of leadership at the faculty level, and even in weighing and vetting the varying kinds of feedback that you would get from faculty or staff or other stakeholders. So, to what extent does that feedback focus on institutional purpose and not just on personal quirks? (Dean Ash)

Accepting a narrow faculty-centered understanding of performance remains at odds and decoupled from university-centered perspectives. In deans’ reappointments, these different logics took precedence at different times and through different processes: faculty-centered perspectives prevailed during reappointments, while university-centered perspectives prevailed during yearly reviews. Also, these two logics favoured different measures of performance, with yearly reviews focusing more on measurable quantities such as enrolments or budgets. Quantifiable indicators played a role in reappointments, but a subdued one, unless important issues arose:

It’s not just opinion, because you could have somebody who is really popular for some kind of reason, and you were looking at a deficit that is growing. If you are the Provost, you can’t ignore that, even if people within the Faculty are not paying as much attention to it. (Dean Oak)

Nevertheless, measuring performance based on leadership capacity requires at least that a representative proportion of a faculty participates in the evaluation. However, in the cases under study, the means used by reappointment committees to collect data did not ensure such participation:

It measures the opinion, reasonably broadly, in the interested portions of the Faculty, because recognizing that 85% of the faculty members are focused
on teaching and research, they’re not really thinking about that. It is pretty remote. (Dean Oak)

Overall, deans understood reappointments to measure faculty support. However, when clarifying how faculty support was measured, deans described it as the absence of opposition, instead of as the presence of support, meaning that reappointments measured the absence of opposition as a proxy for support, itself a proxy for performance. They also recognized that their role and their performance were elusive and difficult to represent using metrics:

... in the human resource world, there’s an inclination to try to ... rationalize, formalize, specify appraisal processes. You write them down and there are forms, and you tick things, and you have meetings, and it’s all laid out, and this is what has to happen. There’s an appraisal process that goes on above, below, behind, all around that, that is in fact, in my opinion, far more important, and partly because of the necessity of human relations ... if you think of administrative people, you can’t take at face value, necessarily, the kinds of evaluations that are being formally made. So you could have somebody who is not performing well for a variety of reasons. It’s not going to be appropriate in a certain job ... I think the evaluation that I’m talking about is the deeper, broader process of assessment of a person in relationship to the job and to the organization. I think that’s the real appraisal process, and in a way you get closer to it, I think, as you go up the ranks, because the formal box ticking becomes less and less present, and yet the process [in my university], I think has muscle, and is a very powerful tool of evaluation. (Dean Oak)

And furthermore, deans were not entirely certain that, should such metrics be devised and used, they would hold weight:
if they didn’t think that I was the person who was going to lead them,
you can’t bring enough data in to show them you’re the person to lead them. I think it’s just that you have to try to structurally remove some of the volatile, emotion driven, politics from it. (Dean Larch)

To sum, in deans’ eyes, reappointments measured performance through faculty support, itself measured by the absence of strong opposition. As reappointments do not ensure representative participation, they, in essence, offer an opportunity for those opposed to the reappointment to mobilize and make their voices heard. As such, reappointments equate support with the absence of opposition and performance with the capacity to mobilize the Faculty during the next term, ability which relies on the lines of tension left by their first term: “So the evaluation is more of a confirmation, a system of confirmation of what you ought to know yourself, anyway” (Dean Oak).

5.3.4 Reappointments can Strengthen Deans and their Faculties

You know that there’s a policy and where to find it. You know there’s a resource person and who to go to and ask about it. There’s less of that sense of having to constantly learn from scratch, and I think that was a real comfort, maybe, in the second term. I can’t say I noticed a big difference immediately following reappointment. What I notice now, now that I have [a few] years left, is that I think, maybe in some ways, of driving harder, because I can see the clock. I know I’ve got [a few] years now to make . . . the difference that I’m going to make now. That’s the window for me. And so I think that I’m a little more impatient, which is not necessarily a good thing, around timing, and pressing for processes to get moved along, and for things to change. (Dean
The analysis of deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments has, to this point, highlighted some of its negative aspects. However, deans also found several ways by which reappointments had a positive impact on them and on their faculties. In several cases, reappointments were found to allow deans a useful period of self-reflection, to rally the Faculty around a common sense of purpose, to increase deans’ sense of legitimacy, and to liberate deans to be more authentic.

Decanal reappointments, because they required deans to make presentations to their reappointment committees and, in some cases, to their faculties, encouraged them to be reflective about their past, about what had been achieved, about how it had been achieved, and about their next term: where they were going and how they planned to get there:

I thought it was a valuable thing for me to do that. If I had just drifted on from year to year to year, I wouldn’t have had that reflection, because I would have been too busy doing other stuff, and so it’s forcing you to reflect. (Dean Cedar)

For many deans, this forced them out of the daily flow of business to take a moment to look back at a longer period of time than usual. Reappointments were useful in that they permitted deans and their faculties to take stock of the past and learn from it. They also enforced a moment to look forward and envision a future other than the result of unplanned daily activity. As such, reappointments acted as strategic planning efforts, but focused on fewer dimensions and centered on deans.

Related to self-reflection, decanal presentations also allowed deans to celebrate to their faculties their past achievements.
... [he/she] said that, when I was talking about a vision for the next five years, [his/her] pride in us as a team, and us as a school ... having this committee ... where it was all about me talking about my role as Dean and my dreams for the next five years, had, I think, an amazing effect on us as a collegial team, because I had never done that. And that it also made me realize that maybe I should be more expressive about my dreams for the school. But I think it has had, at least for me, it had an unintended consequence of bringing people on board with my vision. (Dean Pine)

As such, reappointments acted as platforms for deans to frame their past achievements and future plans. Compressing the past, building a coherent picture out of a list of achievements, and downplaying its darker moments, allowed deans to participate in building what Clark (1972) described as the faculties’ organizational sagas:

I think the public talk was hugely important in terms of bringing the community together around a common understanding of where [we] think we’ve been. Where [do we] think we’re going. And so, in that sense, the process set us up for the work we need to be doing together. It was an opportunity for us to get on the same page ... so I don’t know if it was hugely important to the decision, but arguably important to my ability to be successful in the second term; certainly, at the outset of the second term. I don’t know that the residual good feelings or whatever came out of that public talk. I don’t know that those are ... those aren’t going to be long-lasting, but they set us up for how we’re thinking together about the Dean’s second term, where [we are] headed, what our joint priorities need to be. So that was hugely important. (Dean Fir)

Reappointments also provided deans with a strengthened sense of legitimacy. They confirmed that, in the eyes of their provosts and their faculties, deans were accepted as
leaders for their next term: “it’s always good for the leader of an organization, I think, to understand that they have a strong mandate or not, or it’s a mixed mandate, or a fairly indifferent mandate” (Dean Elm).

Related to this renewed legitimacy, some deans also expressed a feeling of liberation: “Also, as I’m not up for reappointment, I feel less concerned about dealing with certain things, such as committees; less pressure. I feel lighter. I think I will be less reserved in my engagement” (Dean Birch). In most Canadian universities, deans are limited to two terms. No longer facing the prospect of having to seek reappointment again, some deans felt freer to push more, to be more vocal, or to simply be more authentic, as their future prospect was now clear: they would return to the Faculty or they would move on to a new position.

5.3.5 Reappointments are Satisfactory, yet Improvable

... my particular experience here was positive, but I don’t think it was positive because the process is good. I think the process is still flawed, in that it doesn’t necessarily encourage deans to be assessed on the basis of the real expectations that are placed upon them by the people they are accountable to, and that’s the President and the Provost and [the] Board and other senior administrators and [the] community, these sorts of things. ... But the Faculty as a whole and in particular any faculty members who have the skills and the interests and desire to organize can have a disproportionate influence on the process, and I think that could have happened to me and [it] didn’t, and I’m fortunate, but I’ve seen it happen to others. I think that’s a flaw in the system. (Dean Hickory)

Deans were overall satisfied with their reappointment processes. Deans’ general satisfaction
stemmed from their trust in the process and its collegiality, in particular that it prevented
them from securing another term without consultation. It gave power to faculties and
provosts in shaping reappointment outcomes and followed a collegial model of decision-
making.

So that is a pretty powerful evaluation process, and mostly you don’t notice
it if it’s positive in its outcome. You’re testing it when it’s negative. And
you can see how it actually works, and it does have muscle. And in that case,
it’s obviously more than just the Provost evaluating a dean. It’s the Provost
presiding over this process and gathering a lot of information, and relying
very heavily on the views of the committee members, whom you hope will be
acting very responsibly, carefully in aggregating and drawing in information,
assessing and weighing the whole thing. (Dean Oak)

Yet deans also found reappointments wanting: “I think, in part it’s taken so seriously, and
in part it’s not taken seriously enough” (Dean Spruce). Chief among the mentioned areas
of improvement were: wastefulness, lack of criteria and standards, participation issues,
negative starting assumptions, and lack of meaningful feedback.

The majority of deans commented on the resources involved in the process: “It just seems
like it is so colossally inefficient” (Dean Poplar). In particular, they questioned the need
for very large committees, the need to collect data outside of their faculties, the time
commitments required of deans and committee members, and the duration of the process,
which in some cases spanned close to a year:

So I think, at the end, it was quite supportive. Just long, gruelling and silly.

. . . I think if there was significant doubt about whether somebody should
be renewed, then I think a process like that makes sense. I don’t get the
impression that there was that amount of doubt when I sit and logically think
about it. And so what it did is, it distracted a remarkable group of [...] people to waste a ton of time studying a bunch of stuff. It took an incredible amount of time for our Provost to meet with all sorts of people. It took me an incredible amount of time, and worry, to prepare a document and to go through this ridiculous process. All for something that was probably 95% going to be yes, 5% no. That doesn’t make sense to me. (Dean Cypress)

Some deans also commented on the absence of criteria or standards provided to their faculties or their reappointment committees:

It does [measure performance]. But it doesn’t measure it against a set of criteria that are consistent, and so there’s no real yardstick . . . not that I think we need to do something like: ‘Who’s the best dean at the University,’ because that’s ridiculous. But I think it would be a good thing to have, at least, some commonality in what’s being looked at. . . . (Dean Poplar)

This important omission was found in almost all cases. It allowed individuals to choose whichever criteria suited their goals. Furthermore, it implicitly reinforced the idea that deans must be everything to everyone, since expectations about roles and performance were not explicitly stated, not only to the deans, but to those who evaluated them.

Another important area of improvement mentioned involved being evaluated by those furthest from their work, while those closest were not allowed meaningful participation:

I think the biggest issue here is that so much of the feedback that goes to a committee that is making a decision about whether or not to reappoint, so much of that data, so much of that feedback, is coming from people who don’t really fully know what the Dean does, and they might have very little contact with them. (Dean Hickory)
Meanwhile, the majority of people working closely with deans are not included on reappointment committees or have their voices mixed with those of the rest of the Faculty. Members of staff, associate deans, directors and managers of the Faculty, all had limited ways to participate. In the particular case of associate deans, their perspectives were generally lost among the voices of the rest of the Faculty. Furthermore, most directors and associate deans cannot sit on reappointment committees:

I interact on a day-to-day basis with Finance, and HR, lots, every day, for stuff. ... So they have a good insight to what I’m doing vis-À -vis their particular role in the Faculty and whether we’re doing a reasonably good job that’s helpful to them, or not. (Dean Elm)

As well, reappointments relied primarily on faculty members’ opinions who were rarely provided with criteria or standards. The prominent role of faculty members in their reappointments was further questioned by other deans, this time in relation to staff members:

... probably in every Canadian faculty or institution, the majority members are faculty members, and those of us who have grown up in the culture just reflect about it and think: ‘Well, that’s the way it should be.’ But if you step back and say: ‘Should it be that way. Why faculty members? Why shouldn’t the staff... we’re just transients, why shouldn’t they have an equal voice?’ There may be arguments, but we never ask the question. (Dean Alder)

Deans also questioned the role of faculty members in relation to the broader goals and values that should direct their daily work:

... if you look at who are the real stakeholders in the University, is it the Faculty? Not really, they’re employees. It’s the students, it’s the province, it’s much broader. And those two things can be at odds and I think we see
that at universities quite a bit . . . That’s why management is management.

(Dean Larch)

Taken together, these issues, in particular the absence of those who witness deans’ work first-hand, and the prominence of those who know little of deans’ work, suggest that reappointment committees were rarely provided with data from those who worked closely with deans, nor did they allow those same individuals to sit among them. The implication is that reappointment committees were generally ill-equipped and ill-informed to evaluate deans’ performance. Interestingly, deans did not explicitly mention department chairs. Their comments focused either on associate deans, directors, and faculty members. Deans’ perspectives regarding the role of chairs in their reappointments remains unclear.

That being said, participation was not understood the same way by all deans, and some of the deans saw participation not as an issue related to the process, but as a responsibility.

If you don’t vote, if you don’t engage with the democratic process. That’s the risk you run. You run the risk that a minority, vocal minority can then define the conversation. It’s your responsibility as a member of the institution to make sure you engage, and make sure your point of view is used and balanced against other points of view, and that’s how the democratic process is intended to really work. And so when a minority vocal faction seems to get disproportionately powerful, I don’t think it’s necessarily an indication of the failure of the system or the failure of the model. It’s maybe a failure of human nature, by people not engaging and not dealing with it. (Dean Cedar)

Related to this issue of participation was the issue of louder voices taking control of the process:

If you’re doing your job well as a dean, you have to make hard decisions and
that will put people off, inevitably, and that feeds into this whole question of the loud voices. My colleague, the Dean of [Faculty] here, I think [he/she]'s been a wonderful dean, but [he/she]'s made some very hard choices and there are many in [his/her] faculty: they were vile. ... the Dean got reappointed, but just barely. Not because there was any misfeasance or malfeasance but because there were a few really loud members of the Faculty who spoke up ... (Dean Alder)

For many deans, these louder faculty members did not represent their faculty. They pursued a personal and vindictive agenda: “So there’s been two that I can point out at this university where I very much believe that the committee was driven by a couple of malcontents. And the malcontents were able to get on the committee” (Dean Larch).

As I have mentioned earlier, in most cases, reappointment committees were advisory to provosts, yet provosts were also unlikely to veto their committees’ recommendations. As such, some deans argued in favour of increasing the power of their provosts:

I would change it quite radically. I think the Provost’s job is to make a decision that somebody should or shouldn’t be renewed. ... There is the outside chance that the Provost could be wrong. That I would totally be misleading the Provost about what a wonderful job I’ve been doing and totally blindfolded [him/her]. So [he/she] has to check on that, but I think he/she should be making the decision that 95% we are going to renew this person for the job. What [he/she] needs to have in place is a process that isn’t one that says: ‘Let’s go in with this 50/50 approach.’ (Dean Cypress)

In such arrangements, provosts would no longer rely on committee recommendations:

In a true management structure, if you’re coming down to the reappointment of the Dean, the people you are leading do need to want to follow you. And
so I think that’s really important, and they need to get their feedback. But whether they actually can hold that much sway over the reappointment or not devalues, a little bit, the senior management above the Dean. A role of the Provost and Vice President here should be to put together the best decanal team… (Dean Larch)

Another issue brought forth was the negative starting assumptions underlying reappointments:

I think the prevailing assumption is that it’s a choice, and there’s equal weight to either choice, which I think is actually the wrong assumption to be going in with. If that is the choice, then I don’t think you should have ever gotten to that point. If that is how much you doubt the applicant going in, it’s only 50/50 you’d give it to them, why in the world would you be even offering a chance for renewal? (Dean Cypress)

Reappointments constituted extensive enquiries that seemingly gave equal measures to all opinions. They started with deans being confident and provosts inviting them to seek reappointment, though they would eventually receive recommendations from their committees to confirm their initial position. In other words, they started with provosts and deans feeling confident. Yet, they involved an extensive, if not necessarily rigorous, gathering of data and allowed a selected set of individuals to question provosts’ initial positive assumptions. As some deans argued, this increases the likelihood that deans not get reappointed, as running more tests increases the overall probability of obtaining a false negative.

Instead, some deans suggested that reappointments be done in stages. The first stage would consist of a simpler surveying of the Faculty to identify if there are any major issues that require further attention, using a small set of general questions. If the simple survey
proves positive, then reappointment is granted. Otherwise, a more comprehensive enquiry, akin to the one currently taking place, follows. Such practice, preliminary testing using a robust general indicator, reduces the risk of false negatives and reduces the amount of resources involved.

Finally, several deans commented on the feedback received. As discussed earlier, one critical issue related to feedback was the handling of verbatim comments. In the cases where verbatim comments were used, deans’ experiences were strongly negative and raised concerns. However, in most cases, feedback was mostly absent, irrelevant, or meaningless:

\[\ldots\] there is a perception that this is the only time you can offer feedback, and the feedback, somehow, after that magical three hours of questioning, is somehow more important than the four or five years that you’ve gone through, where people question you all the time. You think about how to do things differently and you have immediate feedback on things that went well or things that did not go well. And so, I actually do think that there is a danger in taking that feedback more seriously than you should, because I actually don’t think it’s very good. I think it’s very old and stale, and it actually reflects biases that people have held for a while, depending on who’s around the table.

(Dean Cypress)

Feedback either went too far, becoming harmful, or not far enough, remaining useless.

### 5.3.6 Politics are Embedded, Essential, and Problematic

They’re very political, partly because they evoke politics in the Faculty. A process that doesn’t need to be political, starts becoming political because
there are cabals and people go office to office, and they knock on doors and ask: ‘What should I say?’ . . . and it becomes very subversive, even if they are going to say good things. It’s all done really hush, hush. And then I noticed how political it was, when people would knock and say: ‘I wrote a really nice note about you.’ I don’t need people to tell me that, but whether they would tell me or not was a political decision. Whether they would tell their colleagues or not was political. What they would disclose about who they are, in writing it, was political, and it didn’t need to be as political . . .

(Dean Spruce)

The role of politics in deans’ reappointments was complex and multifold. Reappointments’ politics were: embedded, essential, and problematic. In the first quote, Dean Spruce alludes to two ways by which politics were embedded. As reappointments were an opportunity for individuals to have a say on who would seek to lead them, they brought to the fore individuals’ goals and their opinions on what deans should be doing: “In a world where the Faculty feel that they rule the roost, there’s no question that politics play a role” (Dean Alder). As such, reappointments were inherently political, since they were based, in great part, on the opinions of a number of people invited to participate in their deans’ evaluation.

It’s always political, but I think, structurally, you need to try to put a structure in place where the performance is slightly more weighted, and it’s a little less arbitrary and a little bit more defined in terms of the process. Everything is political. (Dean Larch)

A second way was through representations. Individuals leveraged the political opportunities afforded by reappointments. They did this by signalling their intents to others, thereby positioning themselves to increase their status within their groups. The flip side of this was that individuals could have lost status if they went against the group, and if
they were identified. In the case of reappointments, anonymity was only partially ensured. In many universities, committee members saw the names of the participants. In some cases, deans were able to infer identity based on the nature of the comments. As such, participating in reappointments had political implications.

Politics were also embedded in the very structures and procedures of reappointments. I have argued elsewhere (Lavigne, 2018) that the features of performance appraisals signal, but also facilitate, political behaviour through role and performance reframing mechanisms, where what counts as performance can be contested and redefined, and through hierarchical inversions and coalition-building mechanisms, where individuals are provided with temporary authority over their supervisors and can form groups to leverage numbers.

Reappointment politics were also essential, inasmuch as the deanship is essentially a political position. Deans understood and valued faculty support. They had agency, not only during their reappointments, but during their term in office, leading up to their reappointments. As such, they were political agents, and understood the political nature of their role. The deanship provides but a modicum of authority. Deans recognized that their authority was strongly limited and that they needed to rely instead on other sources of power such as influence:

Now, it may sound Machiavellian, and perhaps it is, but I’ve always thought—because I’ve told you what I find most valuable about these jobs is being a change agent—I’ve always thought: If you’re going to be successful in these jobs, you have to know where you want to lead your faculty, but you also have to be sure that it becomes their destination. It’s not just your destination. In fact, hopefully they forget that you ever mentioned the idea . . . governance doesn’t work in a top down fashion in universities. It’s the surest route to failure. (Dean Fir)
Finally, reappointment politics were also problematic, as procedures were in some cases taken over or shaped by a few determined and vocal individuals.

I think one of the biggest problems, if you will, or one of the realities of the process is that if you ask [the Faculty], if you ask people about the Dean, a lot of people that are relatively content aren’t going to respond or if they do they aren’t going to say much. You don’t really know what to read into that, but you are going to hear more from those who are unhappy. . . . I think I was more afraid of that than I probably needed to be when it all came out in the wash and I saw what people responded. But that was my biggest concern: that people who were relatively happy, and whose departments are doing well, and all that sort of things, weren’t going to respond or were not going to say very much. (Dean Hickory)

5.3.7 Reappointments Shape Deans’ Leadership Indirectly

I actually think that, for me, and I think for most people who do these jobs, who are reasonably good at them, the reason you do a good job is not because of some external evaluation. That’s actually not why you do it and why you do it well. You do it because you are internally driven and you want to do the best job that you can do. And it’s fun, and it’s not fun to do a bad job. And so I actually think the checks and balances are more internal than external on these things. (Dean Cypress)

Whether and how reappointments shaped deans’ leadership is a central question of this dissertation. Deans’ sense-making of their reappointments suggest that reappointments did not shape deans’ leadership directly, but indirectly. Deans’ personal standards and their ability to return to the Faculty explained in part why reappointments did not directly
shape their leadership:

   It was a two-way street. I wasn’t gonna be somewhere where I knew I wasn’t gonna be effective, and I also wasn’t going to take on roles or mantles or things that I didn’t believe in. So, I wasn’t that committed to the job. (Dean Juniper)

Deans expressed strong views about reappointments impacting their leadership. For the majority of them, knowing that they would be later evaluated by their faculties did not shape their leadership. They saw their values, their ethics, or their standards as stronger anchors to ground their decisions than the desire to be reappointed:

   It never would. I wouldn’t be run by a performance appraisal, except my own internal performance appraisal. That sounds like I don’t give a shit, but I would never let a performance appraisal direct what I was doing in the go forward. I would let a performance appraisal be part of my appraisal in trying to do a better job... (Dean Pine)

That being said, a few deans considered the possibility: “So, I think in terms of bold leadership, this reappointment process might compromise. I’d like to think it didn’t in my case, but I think it could if you look at the broader sense” (Dean Larch).

Also, some deans identified a mild shaping effect, in particular when they witnessed other reappointments failing. Seeing another dean not get reappointed made them more cautious:

   It sort of reinforced the importance of not letting hubris control your behaviour. ... when that hubris was being performed, you saw the danger for that person and it reinforced your own sense of caution in not going down that road. So I think it made it more real. When I started out I could see the danger, but it
was a theoretical rather than a real danger, but then you saw someone else
who was actually in real danger as a consequence of that kind of behaviour.
It kind of reinforced . . . yeah, I can see that that really can happen. (Dean
Cedar)

These findings are congruent with deans expressing a sense of liberation in starting a
second mandate, where they felt freer to be more proactive and vocal. They also align
with deans’ central motivation to seek reappointments, which were seeing the projects
they had started being consolidated. However, these findings also contrast with the
feeling of liberation felt by some deans, who described being more vocal about projects,
given that they were reappointed and no longer seeking reappointment. Furthermore,
it is important to keep in mind that deans reflected on the impact on their leadership.
The impact on leadership in general, in particular in relation to subsequent deanships is
explored in Section 6.1.

5.3.8 Context Matters

I think performance, at the level of a dean running a faculty, is actually a bit
evasive. I’m not quite sure how I quantify that and what the metrics are. I
think it is environmental. It’s the art of what you can do sometimes, rather
than what you actually do. So there’s a lot of stuff that has to with the
context, and politics can always play a role in that. Universities are notorious
for it. (Dean Cypress)

In a few cases, deans associated their organizational context with the outcomes of their
reappointments, or of those they witnessed. Five contextual factors were identified:
internal appointments, change agendas, recent conflicts within the Faculty, size of the
Faculty, and organizational culture.
Deans appointed initially from within the Faculty noticed that the Faculty mobilization that took place, both in favour and against their reappointments, was linked to their initial appointments:

I don’t think I would have, at that point in my career, tried a decanal appointment somewhere else. For me it was a real advantage knowing what I was stepping into [...] especially around some of the difficult work culture issues at that point in time, and I think just knowing the context was really helpful, knowing the operating context of the University was really helpful, knowing the people here was really helpful, and I think the challenges around it is, again, you are at risk of dividing the Faculty further, because there were, of course, people who strongly opposed me and people who absolutely hated the idea of me coming forward as dean. (Dean Ash)

An ambitious agenda of change was also identified in some of the cases as increasing tensions and mobilization against deans’ reappointments: “... I knew I was facing a difficult situation, and there were all kinds of alliances ... I knew that there would have to be some culture shake up” (Dean Spruce).

On the other hand, past conflicts and failed reappointments were associated with lower ensuing levels of tension and mobilization: “I was lucky, because I had stepped into an aftermath of a period of sustained turbulence at the institution, and so the fact that I was sincere and earnest, I think it gave me an extended honeymoon period” (Dean Alder).

Deans also understood that the size of their faculty mattered. In particular, they noted that smaller faculties tended to draw less attention from provosts and were under less pressure to perform. In addition, smaller faculties that were not divided into departments suffered less from the usual tensions between departments vying for resources:
... we are a non-departmentalized faculty ... and I think departmentalized faculties are challenged in different ways, because departments are sort of like children trying to make sure you love them all equally. And if they feel they are not, then you get factions within the departments, and so we’re not ‘factioned’ that way, which I think does make it much easier for me as a dean to be renewed, because I don’t have a faction that says: ‘Oh, [he/she] hasn’t paid any attention to us.’ (Dean Larch)

Finally, culture also played an important role. In some cases, deans associated the positive outcomes of their reappointments with non-conflictual faculties:

It’s interesting because a few people who had been through renewals as provosts or as deans in other places talked to me about their lived experiences. And there were much larger elements of politics in them. And, you know, had we had a more divided or querulous faculty, it could have been more political than it was. (Dean Pine)

Or cohesive and involved faculties:

I need to say to you that I don’t take full credit for how positive the decanal review was. The culture [here] is really in many ways different from any place else I’ve experienced, in that every place else that I have been, there are faculty who believe that administrators by definition are evil. That administrators by definition have gone over to the dark side. And I’ve always felt that there is a small group of faculty who feel that it is their main job to police the administration and to make life as difficult as possible for administration. And they’ve never been the majority. They have always been few in number, but their influence has been enormous and the headaches they cause have been enormous at every other place I’ve been. There is no such contingent here ...
There’s a kind of camaraderie, there’s a kind of spirit that exists [here] that I have never seen elsewhere. It makes it very pleasant to work here. That doesn’t mean that everybody agrees with everything I think. That doesn’t mean I’m equally fond of all our faculty and staff. And that doesn’t mean that there isn’t occasionally interpersonal conflict. There is, as there is in any other community. But there’s a sense of common purpose. There’s a sense of camaraderie that I think makes my job here very satisfying, and I think that influenced the way in which the decanal review was handled. So, as I share with you how well it went, I shouldn’t let that go to my head either, because it’s as much a reflection on the community as it is a reflection on my own performance. (Dean Fir)

Overall, deans’ sense-making of their reappointments highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of reappointments, in the eyes of those on their receiving ends. For deans, reappointments arrive at a time where many projects are still up in the air, which acts as a central motivation to seek reappointment. Reappointments are strongly shaped by provosts, whose own leadership can make or break the process. As well, deans understand reappointments as measuring the support of their faculties, though reappointments measure lack of opposition instead of support. Reappointments are also moments for deans and their faculties to take stock and celebrate past achievements. They also increase deans’ legitimacy and, because they can no longer seek reappointment, enable them to be more active and vocal in moving forward.

Deans were for the most part satisfied with their reappointments, but nevertheless pointed to areas of improvements. Resources expended, participation, and control of politics were chief among their suggestions for change. Regarding politics, deans framed them as both embedded within the act of reappointment and the structure of reappointment processes, as essential, decanal appointments being centrally political, and as problematic, in light
of the maneuvering taking place. As to their leadership, deans were mostly internally driven to perform in their roles and saw the prospect of being reappointed as having little to no effect on their daily decisions. Finally, deans identified a few contextual variables partly explaining their experiences.

To conclude, this chapter has presented the main themes emerging from the analysis of Canadian university deans’ experience and sense-making of their reappointments. Politics are clearly embedded in reappointments, but whether they play positive or negative roles depends on the situation, the individuals involved, and their alignment. Furthermore, reappointments measure the lack of organized opposition more than deans’ performance. Finally, although successfully reappointed deans seem to have generally positive views on the process, they also see important flaws that require further reflection, more particularly with regards to procedural effectiveness and fluid participation. Of note, the evidence presented suggests that in some cases, reappointments can have very negative outcomes for some of the individuals involved, and in turn lead to deans’ withdrawal from the process.
Chapter 6

Discussion

In this chapter, I discuss the findings from the previous chapter and relate them to the research literature on deans (Chapter 2) and to my conceptual framework (Chapter 3). The discussion also draws from my theoretical framework, critical realism (see Section 4.2), which invites researchers to further interpret their results and identify generative mechanisms explaining their observations.

To that end, the first two sections interpret the findings to identify underlying generative mechanisms and identify outcomes. In the first section, I conceptualize decanal reappointments as the conciliation of two tensions. The first tension relates to the general complexity of measuring leader performance and the second tension to the balancing of collegial and managerial logics in universities.

The second section discusses the interplay between reappointments and leadership and posits how these processes in turn shape academic leadership. This section ties to the broad purpose of the thesis (see Section 1.2) namely understanding how performance appraisals shape leadership.
The third and fourth sections discuss the findings in relation to the research literature and the theory framing the research, and highlight this study’s contributions. In particular, the third section examines how the findings add up or challenge the existing literature on deans’ roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation, while the fourth section evaluates the relevance of the conceptual framework, which brings together organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization theories.

6.1. Deans’ Reappointments as Conciliating Tensions

In Chapter 5, I presented the emerging themes related to my analysis of deans’ experiences and sense-making of their reappointments. These findings were closely linked to deans’ accounts of their reappointments. In this section, I take a step back from deans’ perspectives and examine the results to understand current decanal reappointment arrangements.

To do so, I reframe the broader themes underlying reappointments as two tensions. The first tension describes the intrinsic challenge of measuring leader performance, while the second describes the implementation of managerial processes within collegial structures. When determining decanal reappointment arrangements, Canadian universities conciliate these tensions into policy. These arrangements, I argue, produce an environment conducive to both positive and negative organizational politics, which in turn results in both positive and negative outcomes for individuals, their academic units, and, more generally, the Canadian deanship.
6.1.1 Leader Performance Measurement Tensions

The first tension underlying reappointments refers to the nature of their work and the limitations of performance measurement. The characteristics of deans’ roles complexify circumscribing what counts as performance. Furthermore, evaluating leader performance presents its own limitations.

Deans’ work is hard to define and measure for several reasons. Firstly, evaluating leaders often means evaluating their leadership situation instead of their performance as leaders. Leaders are individuals, while leadership is the result of an interaction between leaders, followers, and contexts (Hughes et al., 2012). In Canadian universities, deans are provided with limited authority and limited resources to influence their academic units. Related, faculty members are provided with academic freedom and tenure, which participate in limiting deans’ influence. As well, the broader context of academic units also limits deans’ influence. For example, an ambitious change agenda supported by Central Administration, but rejected by the Faculty, financial cutbacks requiring hard choices, or sudden increases in enrolments, impact deans’ influence. As a result, deans’ performance as leaders is hard or impossible to distinguish from their broader leadership situations.

Secondly, deans’ performance is also indistinguishable from their units’ performance. If a unit performs well, if things are improving, is it because of the dean? Or is it in spite of the dean? Measuring performance often looks at units’ output quantity and quality, or their efficiency. These results depend in part on the leader, but also, and perhaps to a greater extent, on the work of followers, and the context they are in.

Thirdly, quantitative and qualitative indicators measuring leader performance are challenging to build. Managerial work is hard to pin down and define precisely. It involves acting and communicating within and without the unit and making decisions in a way that will shape their academic units’ outputs and culture (Mintzberg, 2009; Selznick, 1957/2011).
As well, managers are expected to adapt and use judgment. Therefore, their roles involve activities that are difficult to predict. They depend on what future events demand as much as they depend on current situations. These adaptative and judgment-based roles, though they likely matter more in evaluating managerial performance than, say, objective outputs, are hard to operationalize into meaningful measures.

As well, evaluations rely on the judgment of individuals who may not work closely with deans, may not know what their multiple roles are, may have different opinions about these roles, may prioritize them differently, and may have different opinions on how they should be enacted. Furthermore, individuals may also have agendas other than the sole evaluation of performance, agendas that may or may not shape their evaluations.

In this study, Canadian university deans understood that measuring their performance precisely is an impossible task. The analysis further revealed that their evaluations measured the absence of opposition as a proxy for performance. Instead of trying to solve the issue of measuring with precision deans’ performance, reappointments have instead embraced the tensions inherent in leadership and used qualitative measures to gather opinions and measure opposition. However, in so doing, Canadian universities also have to deal with another set of tensions, this one between managerial and collegial approaches to organizational processes. The following section explores this second tension.

6.1.2 Collegial and Managerial Policy Tensions

Canadian university deans’ reappointments can be understood as a tension between collegial and managerial organizational logics. As deans have expressed in this study, their reappointments obeyed in part to some of the imperatives of collegial organizations. Foremost, Canadian university reappointments are the embodiment of a “first among equals” type of leadership. Deans are chosen amongst faculty members and expected to
Chapter 6. Discussion

return to their scholarship after a set period. The extent of their impact on their academic units is further limited by the collective will of their constituents, through committee work, where faculty members figure prominently.

Second, reappointments allowed for broad participation, often reaching beyond the deans’ faculties, and involved loose decision-making processes. Their processes and procedures, as well as their criteria and standards, fell for the most part outside of policy and were determined ad hoc. Finally, reappointments rely on committees with representatives from different groups of stakeholders to make decisions.

Mostly running counter to these collegial logics were managerial logics, who too shaped decanal reappointments. First, managerial logics were evident in committee decisions being, in most cases, recommendations to Central Administration. Most reappointment committees under study were advisory to their provosts. Provosts, as supervisors, were provided with further privileges, which is congruent with managerial logics. Provosts performed yearly reviews of deans’ performance based on criteria they defined and measured as they deemed fit. They also invited deans to seek reappointments, determined who participated in reappointment committees, and chaired the proceedings.

This tension between collegial and managerial logics first played out in reappointment committees. These committees brought together representatives from Central Administration and the Faculty. As committees could only make recommendations, but as these recommendations could only be ignored at significant political costs, reappointment committees became political arena where different perspectives were debated and where the deanship was constructed. However, the central issue here is that this debate, though necessary, took place a posteriori, and with an individual’s career at stake.

Another important way this tension between collegial and managerial logics played out is through loose participation. As the analysis revealed, reappointment participation was
loose, both in terms of who evaluated performance and of who made decisions. With regards to who evaluated deans' performance, broad calls were sent out, but there were no efforts to ensure sufficient and representative participation, nor was there evidence that the opinions of those working closely with deans were sought or analyzed separately. In addition, though most universities asked for signed evaluations, some did not. There were also no indications that measures were taken against individuals whose comments proved to be false or harmful allegations. In fact, given that participants are often tenured and provided with academic freedom, taking measures against them for false or harmful allegations would likely result in further issues.

Related with the issue of loose participation is the issue of expertise, both with regards to deans' work and with evaluating performance. Collegial logics call for members of the collegium to rate, evaluate, and make decisions. However, the analysis showed that raters and committee members neither knew the nature of deans' work, nor did they possess the expertise to correctly evaluate it. Issues with participation were also identified with committee membership. Evidence showed that individuals maneuvered to get appointed on reappointment committees to further a specific agenda, prior to having been provided with a complete portrait of performance.

While managerial tendencies may be characterized as erring on the side of expediency, collegial ones erred on the side of exhaustivity. This explains in part the size of reappointment committees, which in some cases included more than twenty members, and the duration of the process, which in some cases lasted a year or so. As some deans mentioned, size and duration were often related, as larger meetings are notoriously harder to convene.

Finally, the combination of managerial logics also serves to partly explain the peculiar way by which several reappointments have dealt with comments and feedback. Here, several arrangements were identified, with the most problematic being the identification
of participants to the committee members, which prevents them from participating safely, and the providing of verbatim comments to deans, which allowed harmful comments to reach them.

To sum, the tension between collegial and managerial logics has led Canadian universities to favour peculiar arrangements for deans’ reappointments. These arrangements tended to respect collegial practices as they did not enforce participation or ensure accountability. Yet, despite their collegial underpinnings, reappointments remained, in most universities, under the purview of provosts, and thus obeyed managerial logics. The arrangements that resulted from these tensions were not ill-suited for evaluating deans’ performance. They did little to ensure representative participation or the collection of relevant data, nor did they favour expertise or experience in evaluating deans. As a result, even in the case that deans’ performance were precisely definable and measurable, which, as I argued, is not the case, the combination of collegial and managerial arrangements imposed its own limitations on the quality of reappointments.

So far, I have characterized reappointments as shaped by two tensions. The first tension is inherent to the measuring of leader performance. It cannot be dissociated from it and likely applies similarly regardless of the context. It is a functional limitation related to the elusiveness and situatedness of leadership. The second tension, on the other hand, is specific to universities and involves two conflicting logics that turn reappointments into political arenas. It involves the harmonizing of collegial and managerial logics and limits the extent to which Canadian universities can properly evaluate deans’ performance.

These two tensions combine and add to one another. Not only is the deanship inherently impossible to isolate and measure properly, but Canadian universities’ collegial and managerial arrangements exacerbate those limitations. Deans were evaluated based on metrics defined after their decision to seek reappointment and poorly communicated to deans, raters, and decision-makers. Data were collected from a small subset of
their constituencies and evaluated by committees who lacked expertise and experience. Accordingly, deans’ performance could be interpreted in any way one wished, with little objective and relevant data to support or dismantle any argument. Reappointments were but interpretations, and thus driven by politics. Finally, reappointment arrangements tended to overemphasize the darker and negative impressions of the vocal minority, instead of revealing the unexpressed greyness or lightness of the many. Interestingly, this state of affairs, however questionable, produced both positive and negative outcomes, which are explored next.

6.2. How Reappointments Shape the Canadian University Deanship

Having conceptualized decanal reappointments as the conciliation of two tensions, I now turn to their outcomes. To do this, I build on the findings presented in Chapter 5 and the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3 which conceptualizes how performance appraisals shape leadership based on organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization theories.

6.2.1 Positive Outcomes

The investigated reappointment arrangements honoured Canadian universities’ long-standing tradition of self-governance, while allowing for a negotiated level of steering from Central Administration. They limited the impact of individual leaders and concentrated power in the hands of the Faculty. Arrangements also provided universities with a measure of flexibility in evaluating their deans. This flexibility served Central Administration, who could, through their provosts, signal to deans whether or not to seek reappointment.
It also likely served the Faculty, as they could adapt their expectations according to their own priorities. Furthermore, committees brought to the fore the voices of varied stakeholders and provided them with a measure of leverage against the will of Central Administration.

In addition, the analysis revealed other positive, though unintended, consequences of reappointments. In particular, reappointments provided deans and their faculties with an opportunity to self-reflect and take stock of past accomplishments, and to plan the next five years. As deans were asked to look backward as well as forward, and as deans were given an opportunity to frame their units’ past achievements and their vision for the future, reappointments provided deans with an opportunity to celebrate their accomplishments and gather support for future projects.

### 6.2.2 Negative Outcomes

Reappointment tensions also produced negative outcomes. The analysis suggests that current arrangements can lead to questionable or damaging reappointments and non-reappointments. These cases may or may not be rare, as the methods selected here do not measure pervasiveness, but they certainly can have a grave impact on individuals and their faculties.

Foremost among these issues were the attacks on individuals and the corresponding loss of dignity. Reappointments, in some cases, allowed the unverified, unwarranted, and unfiltered opinions of a few vocal individuals to be channelled directly to deans, while their authors remained protected by anonymity, tenure, and academic freedom. As deans made clear, these comments had devastating impacts on individuals.

Three other negative outcomes resulted from the underlying tensions of reappointments.
Firstly, as reappointments made little effort to ensure proper sampling, they placed too much emphasis on the opinions of those who found the time and motivation to produce reviews.

Secondly, low participation made it easier for individuals aiming to influence reappointments to join reappointment committees. In some instances, committee membership was the result of a vote, while in others, it was based on provosts’ fiat, which in rare cases involved deans reviewing the list of candidates. Furthermore, junior faculty members or associate deans were, in some cases, excluded from reappointment committees, though these two groups often included individuals working closely with deans.

Thirdly, current arrangements hindered free participation. Reappointment arrangements protected the identity of participants, but only with regards to deans, not to committee members. As such, submitting a letter of evaluation became, for some, a political act, in particular in cases where there was no consensus within the Faculty. As became clear in the analysis, in light of this absence of real confidentiality, some faculty members, in particular non-tenured ones, fearing retaliation, opted not to participate.

The other negative outcomes of reappointments were produced by their extended duration. Reappointments spanned months and, in rare cases, close to a year. Their long duration was not problematic per se, only costly, but they exacerbated negative experiences and led to fatigue, resentment, and bitterness. For the non-reappointment, exhaustion played an important role and ultimately led the Dean to withdraw from the process. At the time of the decision, there were no indications of risks in getting reappointed. This suggests that the strain of being under evaluation for such a lengthy period of time has an impact and requires further examination.

Also related to their long duration is what some deans have coined as the “lame duck” period. In some cases, deans mentioned being reluctant, during their reappointments,
to make decisions that would in turn impact their potential successors. For deans who were uncertain, and for faculties who were divided regarding their deans’ reappointments, these periods were more likely to be devoid of significant or far-reaching decisions. As the majority of deans mentioned that their first terms were not long enough to see projects through, long reappointments, by extending an ambiguous period where difficult decisions were unlikely, limited deans’ impact on their faculties by cutting through their effective time in office.

### 6.2.3 Impact on the Canadian Deanship

Beyond their impact on individuals, reappointment arrangements also have an impact on the Canadian deanship. The analysis showed that reappointments had a modest and indirect impact on deans’ leadership. In their view, their moral compass guided their action to a greater extent than the prospect of not being reappointed. Nevertheless, reappointments have, through their milder impact on individual deans, a larger impact on the deanship, in particular when it is viewed over a longer period and a succession of deans.

Firstly, the findings suggest that deans’ perception of alignment with their faculties and their provosts played an important role in their decision to seek reappointment. The great majority of deans expressed a sense of alignment with their provosts and their faculties. While for most, the motivation to seek reappointment stemmed from unfinished projects, the decision was tied to this alignment. In fact, most of them mentioned that they would not have undergone the process had they not felt supported by their provosts and their faculties. In other words, the findings do not suggest that deans become aligned in light of wanting to be reappointed, but that aligned deans are more likely to seek reappointment.
Second, and related, reappointments limited the impact of individuals whose efforts did not align with either provostial or faculty goals and interests. As deans have mentioned, a single term in office was not enough to see important projects through. In addition to limiting the effectiveness of their last year in office, reappointments further limited deans’ impact on their faculties by preventing or hindering a second term in office. Furthermore, as evidenced, reappointments provided strongly opposed individuals with enhanced means to influence their deans’ reappointments.

The first two sections discussed the potential mechanisms explaining decanal reappointments and explored their positive and negative outcomes. Reappointments result from the conciliation of measurement and organizational logic tensions. The conciliating arrangements may present advantages, but they also have negative outcomes that call for adjustments to current practices. These I explore in the final chapter of the dissertation. For the moment, let us turn our attention to how the findings support and challenge the extent research on deans and the theories framing this study.

6.3. Contributions to Research

In this section, I discuss my findings in relation to the extent research literature on deans’ roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation (Chapter 2). As this study is the first to investigate decanal reappointments, its findings relate more indirectly than directly to the literature, as only two other studies have explored reappointments, and only indirectly. In the first, Hodges and Christ (1987) surveyed Nursing deans in the United States to determine what type of performance evaluation schemes were used and whether they were linked to reappointment decisions. In the second, Enomoto and Matsuoka (2007) investigated a single case study of an interim deans’ transition in an American university and included his formal appointment. Formalizations of interim appointments share
similarities with reappointments. However, in this case, other candidates were interviewed and there was no evaluation of performance. As such, Enomoto and Matsuoka’s case shared more similarities with appointments than with reappointments.

With regards to deans’ roles, the findings highlight the importance of considering standpoint in examining roles and role priorities, as is the case for Lasley and Haberman’s (1987) and Matczynski et al.’s (1989) studies. Several interviewed deans confirmed that different groups had different perspectives and prioritized their roles differently. Defining roles from deans’ standpoints may be useful, but also requires examining other standpoints to compare and contrast perspectives and clarify in what ways and to what extent deans’ roles can be conflicting.

Also related to deans’ roles, several studies identified a tension between deans’ roles expressed as a balancing of conflicting stakeholder needs or of conflicting managerial and collegial logics (Gmelch & Wolverton, 2002b; Inman, 2007; Sarros et al., 1998; Seale & Cross, 2015; Williams, 2009; M. Wolverton et al., 1999). These results were echoed in my study, as I found reappointments to be a combination of collegial and managerial processes, with committees decisions based for the most part on ill-informed and unexperienced perspectives. This tension I examined in greater detail above (see Section 6.1).

The second part of the literature review explored research on deans’ qualifications. To date, only two studies investigated this topic, which highlighted the prevalence of combined managerial and scholarly qualifications, at least for Canadian and American deans (Drange, 2015; Lavigne, 2016a). In my investigation, the quality of the alignment between deans and their provosts and faculty can be understood as being able to align with managerial and scholarly preoccupations. As this alignment played a significant role in deciding to seek reappointment and reducing opposition, it echoes these studies’ finding and the importance of selecting deans with dual backgrounds.
Research on deans’ behaviour, the third category, tended to focus on the relation between leadership approaches and effectiveness. Though the link with reappointments appears to be strong, in particular as reappointments are performance appraisals, two reasons prevent us from drawing connections between the present study and studies on behaviour. The first is that these behaviour studies lack clear definitions of effectiveness or that they construe effectiveness using a faculty-centered standpoint. As I mentioned in my review, the research on deans’ leadership behaviour requires further studies using definitions conceptualizing effectiveness from explicit and varied standpoints.

That being said, though a few deans pointed to the shaping role of contextual features, deans’ experiences and sense-makings do not seem to be shaped by university or faculty types. This is surprising, as the participating deans had vastly different realities with regards to the size of their faculties, the complexity of their work, and the programs they oversaw. In fact, their accounts show as more similarities than differences. This suggests that these characteristics may not be significant or that they simply facilitate other factors, in particular political mobilization.

The second reason why this study of deans’ reappointments cannot easily be compared to other studies is that reappointments, this study found, do not measure effectiveness or performance per se. Instead, reappointment decisions rely mostly on the absence of opposition, which stands as a proxy for performance. This result confirms the importance of a faculty-centric perspective on performance, but reappointments also relied on the perspectives of Central Administration, staff members, students, and state actors. Though faculty members seemed to have strong decisional power, reducing deans’ performance to their sole perspectives is neither realistic nor purposeful, as deans are expected to conciliate multiple perspectives.

Nevertheless, by showing how deans maneuvered the complexities of their reappointments, this study confirms that their agency in the process, as Beaupré-Lavallée (2016) and
McClure and Teitelbaum (2016) have revealed with regards to other types of constraints. As well, the study found in deans’ discourses a balance between collegial and managerial considerations and a commitment to collegiality, despite its perceived limitations, as did David (2011) and Nuttall (2012) in their investigation of Canadian university deans.

Finally, with regards to behaviour, the investigation revealed that political behaviour is embedded in universities, not only with regards to reappointments, but also to leadership in general. As many deans expressed during their interviews, their roles involved politics, suggesting that political frameworks would prove useful to investigate deans’ behaviour. Frameworks, such as Bolman and Deal’s (1984/2013) structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frames, or Wepner et al.’s (2008) intellectual, social, emotional, and moral considerations, may prove useful to determine the stated priorities of academic leaders or analyze their decision-making patterns. However, the findings suggest that political considerations may play a more important role in leadership than multi-dimensional frameworks suggest.

With regards to transition, this investigation asked participants how and why they became deans and what were their initial challenges. Though these questions were meant to provide context, they nevertheless inform research on deans’ transition. In describing their becoming, deans described it as a transformation. Deans did not change their identity from faculty members to managers, but added and internalized a managerial identity to their faculty identity. Castro and Tomás (2012), Damico et al. (2003), Enomoto and Matsuoka (2007), and Gmelch (2002a) describe a similar process, where a managerial identity is gradually added to deans’ faculty identity. However, the deans in the study did not mention going through what Damico et al. (2003) and Gmelch (2002b) labelled as the “Valley of Despair.” Their transitions seemed not to include such dramatic episodes. Finally, the findings echo Enomoto and Matsuoka’s (2007), confirming the role of politics in influencing appointment decisions.
As for evaluation, recall from Section 2.5 that studies explored potential evaluation schemes instead of implemented ones. Nevertheless, as the study reveals the extent to which politics can play a big part in reappointments, it can serve to explain why individual factors counted for more than deans’ performance in faculty ratings (see Heck et al., 2000; Rosser, 2003; Rosser et al., 2003). As Murphy (2008) explains and Murphy et al. (2004) show, raters with different agendas tend to provide different ratings.

To sum, the findings of this investigation support and complement, for the most part, the extent research literature on deans. Importantly, they draw attention to purpose in investigating roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation, in particular in distinguishing between formative and administrative purposes. As purpose varies, so do the stakes, for deans, but also for other stakeholders. Accordingly, research frameworks must include detailed political perspectives to a greater extent, lest they fail to grasp what is truly at stake in determining what matters in the deanship.

6.4. Contributions to Theory

This section extends the discussion by exploring how the findings in turn inform the conceptual framework that underpinned the analysis. Recall from Chapter 3 that the framework draws from organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization theories. These perspectives are combined and applied to the problem of measuring and evaluating performance for career decisions, more particularly managers’ performance appraisals. Let us turn to each of these perspectives in turn, starting with organizational politics.
6.4.1 Organizational Politics

Foremost, the study showed that politics play an important role in decanal reappointments. In Chapter 5, we deduced that asking individuals to pronounce on their deans elicited political responses. As well, political behaviour was common and took on different shapes, though agents did not always consider their behaviour political. Also, the procedural laxity of reappointments and their emphasis on opinions facilitated political behaviour, though politics did not always play a negative role.

The findings confirm that a focus on conflict, power, and political behaviour provides an adequate perspective to understand how deans experience and make sense of their reappointments. Complexity, uncertainty, and resource-dependency to a lesser extent, act as enablers in the performance measuring and logics conciliating tensions described earlier (Section 6.1.1). Not only does the measurement of leadership performance present a challenge, but the complexity and uncertainty associated with it facilitate its politicization.

With regards to political behaviour, the study used Mayes and Allen’s (1977) distinction between sanctioned and unsanctioned use of sanctioned and unsanctioned means. This distinction has proven useful in determining what behaviour should be considered political. For example, given that committees are expected to make recommendations, then provostial pre-appraisals, in encouraging deans to seek reappointments is political, even though deans and provosts are unlikely to consider it as such.

As organizational politics have proven useful to understand reappointments, their investigation in turns highlights some remaining challenges in organizational politics. For instance, the balance of power or the outcomes of political behaviour remain hard to identify and measure, let alone predict. This study revealed that, in some cases, individuals maneuvered to prevent their deans’ reappointments, but also that their efforts proved
fruitless. Why and how political behaviour works is hard to clarify, as observing highly motivated and highly skilled individuals interfere is challenging, in part because they tend to remain offstage. Furthermore, inferring causality between behaviour and outcomes also presents its set of challenges. Political situations are complex, involving multiple actors. Finally, the findings suggest that reappointments, as designed, elicit political behaviour by signalling and facilitating it. This impact of processual features in turn challenges the current focus on individuals in organizational politics. I explore the role of processes in organizational politics in further details in Lavigne (2018).

Organizational politics have provided important insights in understanding reappointments and their outcomes. As for leadership and organizational socialization theories, the other components of the conceptual framework, recall that they were framed in Chapter 3 using a political perspective. As a result, the discussion of organizational politics seeps into the next sections.

6.4.2 Leadership

The second piece of the conceptual framework, leadership, can be described from a multiplicity of theoretical standpoints (Winkler, 2010). For this study, I combined two leadership theories focusing on organizational politics (see Section 3.2). In particular, Ouimet (2008) focuses on leaders’ decision-making and Ammeter et al. (2002) on leaders’ and followers’ characteristics and the role of past episodes.

These political perspectives on leadership proved useful to investigate decanal reappointments, firstly in understanding the role of alignment with provosts and faculty members. Most deans perceived a high level of alignment with their provosts. In Ouimet’s taxonomy, this is an optimal political situation, which leads to promotion strategies. As well, the majority were also strongly aligned with their faculty members, which, combined with
supervisor support, leads to consecration- or consolidation-type tactics (see Table 3.1 on page 62 for a complete list).

Deans’ descriptions of their strategies matches relatively well this taxonomy. All deans felt supported by their provosts, but their alignment with faculty members varied and could be qualified as either strong, modest, or uncertain. Accordingly, when deans felt strongly supported by their faculty, their strategies tended to describe consecration-type tactics. For example, their presentations celebrated past achievements and focused on ambitious future projects. In cases where support was modest, some deans focused on relations with new faculty members, while others mentioned being careful in dealing with problematic faculty members or difficult topics. All of these tactics closely match consolidation ones. When deans were uncertain of their faculty support, they chose tactics to seek and measure support or faculty opposition. These were generally described as good intentioned tactics. Deans declared not wishing to lead if they were not welcomed or that they would gladly leave their place if someone else wished to step in. These comments reinforce the idea that deans often come to the deanship with short-term expectations.

However, in rarer cases, deans’ strategies did not match Ouimet’s (2008) taxonomy. In those, deans knowingly took risks instead of opting for a more adequate strategy. They knew that the projects they were tackling would likely foster some resentment, which could in turn jeopardize their reappointments. They described that, at the time, they simply thought that it needed to be done. This behaviour suggests that decisions are not always politically rational and that other factors, such as political will or risk-aversion, may also play a role in shaping decisions. This risk-taking behaviour is perhaps supported by the fact that deans are expected to return eventually to the Faculty, that they are tenured, or by the fact that they had different bases of power, for instance expertise in handling politically sensitive projects. Interestingly, these deans were all successfully reappointed.
Also, strategies were different when deans felt misaligned with their closest associates, for example their associate deans or their executive assistants. In general, misalignment was perceived early in their first year and quickly led to tensions. In these cases, deans either found common ground, replaced the associate, or, in cases where replacements were not possible, waited for their associates’ appointments to end.

This difference between how deans dealt with associates and faculty members when there were differences in alignment, along with the way they dealt or avoided dealing with individual faculty members, suggest that what is categorized as followers, reports, or employees, cannot easily be generalized, and that there exists not only different categories of dyadic relations between deans and followers based on individual characteristics, but also on organizational positioning, as different positions allow for different ways of handling conflict. These dyadic relations are at the heart of leaders-members exchange theory (Winkler, 2010) and figure prominently in Ouimet’s (2008) model, alignment is the sum of dyadic alignments. For deans, their formal power increased with the position of the follower. Issues of alignment were therefore easier to fix with individuals ranking closest to deans than with individual faculty members. This difference was further exacerbated by reappointments ignoring or muffling the voices of deans’ associates. They either prevented them from participating or confused their voices with the rest of the Faculty, most of whom rarely worked with their deans.

The findings reflect back on leadership models. In most of them, leadership is conceptualized as the interaction between leaders, followers, and situations. Situations generally include contextual features and do not include individuals. However, in Ouimet’s (2008) model, situations are replaced by or summarized as supervisor support. The model mostly ignores context, though contextual features, in particular collegiality and tenured, are necessary to understand the politics of deans’ reappointments. On the other hand, supervisors also figured prominently in this investigation, suggesting that the triangle of
leadership (Hughes et al., 2012) needs to be redesigned to include leaders’ leaders. Most leaders are also following someone else. Managers report to others and the quality of their alignment with their supervisors impacts their leadership, at least as much, as their alignment with their followers or the specific context they are in.

As well, leadership models tend to de-emphasize followers’ agency, reducing it to deciding whether to follow or not. Yet, this was not the case for reappointments. Faculty members could ignore or resist being led and could in turn threaten reappointments. A political perspective on leadership, where followers are understood as having informal agency, allows followers to become informal leaders even in formal settings. This perspective is more apt at capturing the leadership situations unfolding in universities.

That being said, Ouimet’s (2008) model was also found lacking, particularly with regards to faculty pressure on provosts. In Ouimet’s model, supervisors and followers are independent. However, in this study, deans understood provostial support as a political act that could be modified through faculty pressure on reappointment committees. In particular, deans were of the mind that provosts could not refuse a negative recommendation, as the political cost would be too high. As such, provostial support becomes a function of faculty opposition, instead of being independent. As such, there are situations where followers can find leverage on their managers through pressuring their supervisors, who in turn must evaluate their political situation and decide whether to support their managers.

This relation between supervisors and followers can also go in the other direction. In the case of reappointments, deans considered that provosts were key in controlling reappointments. They could potentially keep individual interests from taking over. Accordingly, the balance of power and support can shift as actors interact with one another. Managers’ political decisions are shaped beyond their power and the alignment between their goals and interests and those of their supervisors and followers. Their understanding of the interactions between followers and supervisors and the potential
power shifts that may occur as a result of their mutual influence also shapes their
decisions.

As managers have supervisors, followers also have followers, but this study did not reveal
any downward interaction between followers and their followers, unless junior faculty
members are understood as followers of senior ones. As junior faculty members rely on
senior ones to get tenured, they may be construed as such. In this study, some non-
tenured faculty members felt pressured to act in solidarity with tenured faculty members.
They considered that being perceived as acting against tenured faculty members could
potentially threaten their own future tenure process. Internal power arrangements within
the group shaped how the group behaved and the extent to which individuals could
freely participate in the process. This internal power structure is not explicitly present in
Ouimet’s (2008) model.

Finally, the model does not clarify whether support comes in sequence. In this study,
deans followed a sequence in making their decision to seek reappointment. They first
sought or received provostial support, and only then, did they consider other factors. This
suggests that, in the absence of provostial support, deans would not have pursued their
reflexions. Provostial support was a sine qua non condition, instead of a variable to be
considered alongside others. This also means that deans would potentially never consider
protection or probation strategies which are usually selected when supervisor support is
missing.

My conceptual framework also included Ammeter et al.’s (2002) model, which focuses
on individual characteristics and experience from previous episodes. These additional
dimensions provided important insights for understanding deans’ reappointments. In
particular, the findings suggest that deans were highly self-driven and that their moral
compass often made them choose riskier paths. In other words, values, will, and risk-taking
shaped their decisions, perhaps more so than the threat of not being reappointed. As
I discuss above, this behaviour was not easily described using Ouimet’s (2008) more detailed, but also stricter, model.

Experience also played roles in ways different than those described by Ammeter et al. (2002). Three of the deans interviewed had undergone reappointments in other universities (Table 4.1). As such, there was, for the majority of them, no experience to build on or learn from. For the three with experience, that experience was described as positive and no references were made to suggest that it informed their current reappointments. Nevertheless, deans had accumulated experience through their first terms. In their comments, they exhibited an in depth understanding of the groups and individuals involved in their reappointments and the power balance in their faculties. This experience, though not directly related to their reappointments, likely informed their actions.

As well, Ammeter et al. (2002) describe how past experiences influence current decisions, but they discuss those as internal experiences. However, this experience should be broadened to include the witnessing of others’ experiences. Past situations lived by and through others can shape how current situations are handled. In the study, deans experienced unsuccessful or difficult reappointments through their colleagues. They had strong opinions about their experiences, tending not to refer to the ones that went well, but to those that went badly. Therefore, past episodes included not only those where deans were directly involved and had agency, but also episodes experienced by others. The way these experiences were lived varied. Some deans sat on other deans’ reappointments and were privy to their deliberations, while others were close to the deans going through reappointment and were privy instead to their experience and sense-making. In some cases, the negative experiences witnessed gave deans some level of pause. For others, the conditions leading to these experiences were judged too different and not integrated as likely scenario requiring adjustments.

Together, Ouimet’s (2008) and Ammeter et al.’s (2002) models provided a comprehensive
framework of political leadership that adequately supported the study. In turn, the study’s findings showed how these models could be improved by including political behaviour between supervisors and followers and between followers and followers, by placing decision-making as a sequence of stages instead of a holistic view of the situation, by emphasizing the role of witnessed episodes, and by exploring further the role of values, will, and risk-taking in making decisions. However, two important findings, fatigue and loss of dignity, remain inadequately covered by this framework.

The first findings not adequately taken into account by the conceptual framework is fatigue. Fatigue is hinted at in many deans’ comments and identified by some as an important factor. Most deans thought that their reappointments were too extended in time. Some deans mentioned that their provosts were making efforts to shorten the length of the process, but that these efforts were not entirely successful. Lengthy processes, in particular those that are delayed, seemed to take a toll on deans. The second finding is loss dignity. Most deans either witnessed or experienced a worrying level of toxicity related to attacks at their dignity. In all cases, these were conveyed through anonymous comments, in particular when these comments were provided unedited. The impact of fatigue and loss of dignity on deans and their leadership remains unclear and warrants further conceptualization and investigation. Promising frameworks include ego depletion theory (e.g., Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998) and destructive leadership (e.g., Padilla et al., 2007), keeping in mind that, in the case of decanal reappointments, deans appeared to play the role of the oppressed, not of the oppressors.

6.4.3 Organizational Socialization and Performance Appraisals

Earlier in Section 6.2, I concluded that deans’ reappointments had a modest direct impact on their leadership. Performance appraisals are meant to monitor and guide performance,
they can be considered as socializing, but this thesis found very little to suggest that they are effective in doing so, at least for Canadian university decanal reappointments. Recall that the majority of deans saw no link between their exercise of leadership and upcoming reappointments. At best, a few deans recognized that they exercised a bit more caution as a result. In other words, they adjusted the way they did things, but not what they did. This in turns challenges the extent to which deans’ reappointments, and by extension performance appraisals, can be understood as socialization tactics. The bypassing of normal role negotiation posited in Section 3.4 was not observed to have taken place often and, when it did, it had only a mild impact.

A few things may explain the modest socializing impact of reappointments. These are deans’ faculty socialization, provostial evaluations, and the format of reappointments. Firstly, deans all came from the ranks of faculty members. They were experienced and successful scholars in their fields. Thus, they all were extensively socialized as faculty members and understood their new decanal roles from that initial perspective. Deans added a managerial identity to their existing faculty identity. This first socialization as faculty members may have served as a foundation, with other socializing aspects added. As faculty members, tenure and academic freedom, play an integral role in their scholarship. It is possible that these acted as identity anchors that shaped how they viewed their deanship and the necessity to adjust their behaviour. As well, their faculty identity likely helped them evaluate how they stood with regards to their faculties, as they understood faculty perspectives.

The second factor is periodic provostial evaluations. Deans reported having regular meetings with their provosts and yearly formal performance reviews. It is highly likely that these periodic discussions and performance feedback had a more lasting impact than their distant reappointments. In addition, deans commented positively on their provosts and seemed strongly bonded to them, which in turn suggest a strong mutual influence.
Finally, provostial evaluations ensured that deans knew to a great extent where they stood with regards to Central Administration. They clarified what counted as performance, at least as far as their provosts were concerned.

The third factor potentially explaining the low socializing impact of reappointments was their arrangements. Among these, two stood out in particular: their lack of criteria and their career outcomes. As reappointments were shown to provide, in almost all cases, no information on what counted as performance, deans had to rely on other informal sources. It is likely that their experience as faculty members informed their understanding of their roles, as well as their provostial reviews. As such, the lack of criteria likely reinforced the impact of deans’ first socialization as faculty and the impact of their provostial evaluations.

Also, though the stakes were relatively high, deans were provided with tenure. Accordingly, non-reappointments meant returning to the Faculty, instead of losing a job.

To be clear, though there is little to suggest that reappointments shaped socialization and role negotiation, several of deans’ comments suggest that socialization and role negotiation took place. Deans’ comments show that they had to learn new methods and new approaches to deal with problems, old and new. They also were of different minds with some of their colleagues, in particular their closest associates, which often required them to adjust their perspectives and behaviour.

Despite the lack of evidence to suggest that reappointments had a socializing function, there is nevertheless one way by which reappointments can be understood as socializing process, but it requires us to adjust our model of socialization. Generally, socialization is framed as a role learning episode, with an emphasis on the transformation of the newcomer when exposed to role signals. When an individual rejects socialization or is unable to meet expectations, then socialization becomes a filtering process instead of an integrating one. Van Maanen (1978) explores this possibility, but their assumption is that those roles signals are clear, non-conflicting, and stable. In this study, reappointments rarely
described criteria or standards. Also, the membership of reappointment committees was for the most part unknown during deans’ transition. What was known, however, was that it would include stakeholders with very different perspectives and expectations. As a result, reappointment role signals were unclear, conflicting, and unstable, leaving no chance for role learning. Accordingly, reappointments are filtering processes, at least with regards to socialization.

Filtering, in the case of decanal reappointments, is problematic because no mechanism ensures that it converges towards a set of characteristics. Two related reasons explain this. The first is that there are no explicit criteria provided. The second is that the individuals participating in appointments and reappointments are rarely the same. Together, these two factors suggest that criteria remain informal and changing, which in turn prevents convergence or stability.

With regards to performance appraisals, the findings suggest that they do not always meet their monitoring and controlling purposes. In particular, the fundamental assumption that measuring performance will improve it is, in the case of this study, not verified. As well, several other fundamental assumptions were not met. Lack of performance criteria, lack of performance standards, lack of rater training, lack of systematic data collection, lack of decision-maker training, fluid participation, and inversion of hierarchical relations participated in transforming the measuring of performance into a measuring of political opposition. It does not mean that reappointments are not effective in filtering out unfit deans, but it means that what constitutes being unfit is easily contested and forever fluid.

Also with regards to performance appraisals, the investigation confirmed that political behaviour occurs in different ways. In particular, reappointments relied on committees for data analysis and decision-making. As these committees included stakeholders with different perspectives and with little to no expertise or experience in performance evaluations,
they often became political arenas.

As well, the study showed the role processes play in facilitating their politicization. In this study, reappointments’ processual features, the way by which individuals are allowed to participate and the procedures followed, were understood to facilitate politicization. Political performance appraisal theories have focused on people to understand politicization and processual features have been generally associated with statistical and cognitive perspectives. However, the findings suggest that processual features should not be taken for granted or ignored in explaining the extent to which decanal reappointments are politicized. I explore this issue further in Lavigne (2018).

Finally, performance appraisals are also generally viewed as non-intrusive measurements and that the act of observing and measuring does not cause harm. The outcomes associated with their outputs, for example job satisfaction in relation to receiving bad performance ratings, are often examined, but not the outcomes resulting from their implementation. In reappointments, the procedure of collecting data exposed deans to harm, as the data collected was shared with them before being analyzed and filtered. As well, the length of the process took a toll on deans and introduced fatigue. The intrusive nature of performance appraisals is not correctly understood and requires further research.

To conclude, this chapter discussed the findings presented in Chapter 5 in relation to the study’s conceptual and theoretical frameworks, as well as the research literature on deans. Specifically, the first section explained reappointments as the result of tension mechanisms tied to the limitations inherent in measuring leadership performance and the balance of collegial and managerial logics in universities, while the following section explored how deans’ reappointments shape their leadership. The third section discussed the study’s contributions to the research literature on deans with regards to roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation. Finally, the last section reviewed how the findings are supported and in turn reinforce organizational politics, leadership, and organizational
socialization theories.

Overall, reappointments can be understood as the result of conciliating the tensions related to measuring leadership performance and balancing managerial and collegial logics. Though reappointed deans mostly recall their reappointments as positive experiences, they remain heavy processes that focus too strongly on faculty opposition and allow for political behaviour and personal attacks. Reappointments have but a modest socializing impact on deans. They instead shape the Canadian deanship through an iterative process that facilitates the removal of deans deemed unfit. However, lack of criteria and fluid committee and rating participation prevent clear and stable definitions for fitness. With regards to research, the findings generally align with other research’s findings. However, they also show that further attention should be given to political considerations regarding roles, behaviour, and evaluation. As for theory, the conclusion is that combining organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization theories provided a comprehensive and useful conceptual framework to make sense of the data. The focus on conflict, power, political decision-making, and performance appraisals’ socialization function provided numerous insights, such as the role and power of supervisors and followers during reappointments. In turn, the findings show that those theories require adjustments and should include concepts such as sequentiality, supervisor-followers interactions, experiences lived through others, fatigue, and toxicity.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

This chapter concludes my dissertation by reviewing in broad strokes its foundations, findings, and central argument. It then explores the study’s implications for research, policy, and practice. Follows a discussion of the research’s limitations and the opportunities these open for future research work. In closing, I provide a personal opinion on the issue of measuring and controlling leadership and return to the introductory story of the archer.

7.1. Summary of the Thesis and Answer to Research Questions

The problem addressed by this investigation of Canadian university decanal reappointments is the “very ancient” problem of “taming of power” (Russell, 1938/2004, p. 224). More precisely, this dissertation clarifies how the monitoring and controlling of organizational leaders shape their leadership; in other words, whether leader performance evaluations work, for whom, and in what context.
To this end, I focused my attention on the perspectives of Canadian university deans, namely how they experience and make sense of their reappointments. In Canadian universities, reappointments are extensive processes spanning months. Specially appointed committees evaluate their deans and recommend whether to renew their terms in office. Reappointments are high stakes processes of “power taming” for all faculty stakeholders.

Deans’ experience and sense-making became the focus of my dissertation. Their perspectives I considered primordial in understanding the impact of reappointments of deans’ leadership and, more broadly, the impact of performance evaluations on leadership. Accordingly, I chose to formulate my research questions around their experience and their sense-making.

There was no previous research to directly build upon. A review of the literature revealed that, though numerous studies had investigated deans, none had looked at their reappointments. I broadened my review beyond reappointments to include related themes, namely roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation. The research literature portrays deans as located between Central Administration and the Faculty. They are required to conciliate the needs of their many and varied constituents and the managerial and collegial logics of universities. It is a delicate position, which exacerbates issues of role conflict. These issues are centrally important to reappointments, as they imply that different stakeholders will have different perspectives on what counts as performance.

Given that there had been no previous study of deans’ reappointments, the possibilities were endless. I opted to anchor my investigation using a body of literature that resonated strongly with my work experience in higher education and with reappointments: organizational politics. Organizational politics describe organizations as coalitions with different goals and interests. These coalitions compete for decisional power over limited resources. Organizational politics emphasize the role of informal structures and individuals
in understanding organizations. In addition, this perspective has yielded relevant insights in past studies of higher education institutions.

My conceptual framework used organizational politics as a foundation and combined leadership and organizational socialization theories integrating political behaviour. Leadership theory allowed me to conceptualize leader behaviour in a politically sensitive context, while organizational socialization provided me with tools to conceptualize the learning and transformative potential of reappointments. Together, these perspectives allowed me to investigate reappointments as political arenas where power is exercised in unintended ways to further individual goals and interests. In particular, the framework suggested that reappointments are not about performance and that evaluations may have more to do with personal or collective agendas. The implication was that reappointments allow individuals to bypass normal socialization by providing them with means to threaten deans’ careers.

To answer how Canadian university deans experience and make sense of their reappointments, I conducted a multiple-case study of fourteen deans’ reappointments. The sample included thirteen reappointments and one non-reappointment from eight universities located in four provinces. The deans interviewed belonged to different types of university and faculty and included men and women in similar proportions. Case descriptions relied centrally on interviews with deans. Policy documents, in particular reappointment policies, were used in addition. Given the research questions’ focus on deans’ experience and sense-making, interviews with reappointed and non-reappointed deans were deemed appropriate. Other stakeholders were not interviewed, as it would have threatened confidentiality and likely impacted participation as well as the information provided.

This issue of confidentiality in turn shaped the analysis. As reappointed deans are fairly uncommon in Canadian universities, providing cross-references for each case would too threaten confidentiality. As a result, the analysis focused on commonalities and differences
across cases, instead of focusing on each case’s narrative.

Coding was done iteratively using the research questions and the theoretical framework. The analysis first categorized what deans were discussing, for example feedback, then organized them as experiences, where deans explained what had happened, and sense-makings, where deans provided explanations or opinions. Emerging themes were selected based on whether they were common across cases or whether they were uncommon yet of consequence for deans or their reappointments.

7.1.1 Answer to First Research Question: How do Canadian University Deans Experience their Reappointments?

Deans shared similar experiences when it came to process. The universities under study all had very similar reappointment processes with regards to sequence of activities and participation modalities. All started with provosts providing their pre-appraisals, reappointment committees were put together, which issued calls for input. Committees interviewed their deans and issued recommendations. In a few cases, deans made additional public presentations. Recommendations were generally made to provosts, but, in rarer cases, they were made to faculty councils. In almost every case, deans did not know how they would be evaluated and data collection did not refer to criteria nor to performance standards.

Reappointed deans’ experience was overall positive. They felt confident about their reappointments, in great part because they felt aligned with their provosts and their faculties. For the non-reappointed Dean, as well as for those deans whose reappointments were witnessed by participants, experiences were negative to highly negative. In those cases, deans felt victimized. Fatigue and loss of dignity were experienced. A few reappointed deans had had similar experiences, albeit to a lesser extent. The vehicles for victimization
were usually personal attacks formulated through the call for input, ad hoc changes in
the procedure, and extended delays.

When reappointments were straightforward affairs and handled swiftly, they went well,
but when they were opposed, when faculty members were divided, or when the process
was handled poorly, they led to inappropriate behaviour, which resulted in harm; harm
that could have been avoided.

All deans witnessed at least one form of political behaviour during their reappointments.
Political behaviour, understood strictly as the use of unsanctioned means towards sanc-
tioned or unsanctioned ends (see Section 5.2.3) and not as inherently negative or positive,
came from different sources and took on different shapes. Most reappointments became
political arenas where power was leveraged to influence their outcomes. In none of the
cases did this behaviour lead to a non-reappointment. Not all forms of political behaviour
were attempts to prevent deans reappointments. In some cases, individuals campaigned
in favour of their deans’ reappointments. Deans and provosts too were political agents.
Provosts, for example, bypassed process by inviting deans to seek reappointments.

To sum, deans experienced their reappointments as political arenas where individuals vied
in favour or against their reappointments. They sought reappointments with the explicit
support of their provosts and a perception of their faculties’ support. As no criteria or
performance standards were explicitly used, deans remained unclear as to what was to be
evaluated. In the case of difficult, unsuccessful, or abandoned reappointments, the results
suggest that several deans experienced unexpected levels of harm.
7.1.2 Answer to Second Research Question: How do Canadian University Deans Make Sense of their Reappointments?

Overall, deans understood their reappointments as formal procedures measuring the support of their faculty members, at least once provostial support was granted. Deans often used the word popularity to describe what they thought was measured, though most recognized that popularity was important for their leadership. In many cases, deans associated their performance more strongly with keeping everyone happy than achieving ambitious goals, though some were nonetheless pursuing such ambitious goals.

The great majority of deans sought reappointment to finish the work started in their first terms. Five years just was not enough and reappointment became necessary to see projects bear fruit or become irreversible. By the same extent, some deans also recognized two terms as a good maximum to ensure that new ideas come in.

Deans recognized and valued the importance of collegiality and saw reappointments as collegial processes. That being said, several questioned the amount of power afforded to faculty members, given that they knew little about their work and had few opportunities to witness their performance. In particular, some deans were concerned with vocal individuals taking hold of the process.

Several deans noted that their reappointments had unintended positive outcomes. They served as opportunities for reflexion by forcing them to make a pause and take stock. In addition, reappointments acted as rallying opportunities; a moment to celebrate past achievements and portray ambitious futures.

Deans recognized and valued the role their provosts played in their reappointments. In their view, provosts had the highest level of control over reappointments. Provosts generally determined timing and committee membership. They generally chaired com-
mittee meetings, had previous experience conducting reappointments, and received their committees’ recommendations. Furthermore, provosts shaped deans’ understanding of their roles and their performance through their regular meetings and yearly evaluations. Finally, provosts had first say about deans’ reappointments, being the ones inviting them to seek reappointment in the first place. Provostial support was mandatory to even envisage reappointment.

Interestingly, though deans referred extensively to their yearly provostial reviews, they made no mention of other commonly held evaluations which are in some universities done in relation with deans’ appointments and reappointments such as external evaluations of deans’ faculties or quality assurance processes. This suggests another lost opportunity to bring together evaluation processes that could at least clarify the Faculty’s performance, if not the Dean’s contribution to it.

Though deans deemed reappointments important and generally satisfactory, they pointed out several issues about these processes. Foremost was their heaviness. Reappointments took months to unfold, involved in excess of twelve individuals, and sought the opinions of people reaching far beyond the walls of faculties and universities. Deans, for the most part, considered these arrangements to be excessive and wasteful. Deans also questioned the role of faculty members. For most, their input was vital, but deans also took note of how ill-informed they were about their deanship. Related to this, some deans noted that criteria or standards of performance were missing from the process. Neither they, nor other participants, were provided with a clear picture of what the expectations were. Finally, deans were critical regarding the ease with which louder faculty voices could sway the process.

Most deans viewed their reappointments as political arenas, but for different reasons and in different ways. Some saw their role as eminently political. Their reappointments were an extension of those politics. For others, it was the structure and the purpose of
reappointments, in particular lack of criteria, loose and uninformed participation, and
the endowing of formal power to a single individual, that elicited political behaviour. As
well, for an important number deans, and in particular for those who underwent difficult
reappointments, reappointment politics were negative, self-serving, and harmful.

Some deans associated context with their reappointment experience. They pointed to the
specificity of university arrangements, in particular collegiality, as strongly shaping how
their reappointments unfolded. Other contextual characteristics noted by deans were a
positive culture of participation, a small faculty, being appointed internally, being given a
change agenda from Central Administration, and recent conflict episodes.

Ultimately, deans did not see their leadership as strongly shaped by a desire to be
reappointed or by role signals conveyed through reappointments. For the great majority,
having to face reappointment did not shape their leadership. Most deans described that
their sense of what needed to be done superseded the potential impact their decisions
may have on their career. At best, it changed the way they did things, but not what
they did. Most of them commented that they chose to become deans to help, to serve, to
answer a call, or to fix problems. Their contracts provided them with tenure after their
appointments. As a result, most of them seemed more attached to getting things done
than to maintain a career path.

7.1.3 Reappointments and the Canadian Deanship

Taken together, these findings suggest that Canadian university reappointments are the
result of conciliating leader performance measurement and managerial and collegial logics
tensions. Leader performance measurement tensions result from the impossibility of
witnessing and measuring leadership activities and outcomes. Managerial and collegial
logics tensions arise as Canadian universities combine processes in ways that conciliate
managerial logics, such as provosts receiving recommendations, and collegial ones, such as reappointment committees made up of a wide number of members without experience or expertise in reappointments, yet making far-reaching career recommendations.

Overall, reappointments seem to have a more important impact on the deanship than on individual deans. Canadian university deans are recruited from the Faculty and are initially socialized as such, while reappointments ensure that deans deemed unfit are not provided with the means to shape their faculties. Furthermore, as reappointments do not provide criteria or performance standards, but determine them ad hoc, and as committee participation remains fluid, what unfit means remains implicit, shifting, and easily contested.

7.2. Implications

Having reviewed the findings about deans’ reappointments, this section now examines how they in turn inform research, policy and practice.

7.2.1 Implications for Research

With regards to the extant research literature on deans, recall that this study is the first to directly investigate deans’ reappointments and, as such, its findings are only indirectly related to the literature. That being said, for the most part, the findings align with other studies, in particular with regards to role conflict issues, to deans scholarly and managerial dual identities, to their agency, and to the importance of political behaviour. With regards to political behaviour however, the findings suggest that research should pay greater attention to politics when investigating academic leadership. Current research on deans tends to either deemphasize or consider equally the political roles of deans. However, in
this research, there was clear evidence of political behaviour. Furthermore, this behaviour was created by different agents, using different means, and pursuing different goals. As such, the results call for a reframing of political considerations in both higher education management and organizational research. This reframing should not only extend to the focus of research, but to the theoretical frameworks being used, which tends to give politics equal footing with other dimensions (e.g., Bolman & Gallos, 2010; Wepner et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the available political frameworks conceptualizing organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization, though generally satisfactory, would nevertheless profit from being further integrated and extended. This study’s conceptual framework, a combination of organizational politics, leadership, and organizational socialization theories, provided important insights. In particular, the framework allowed me to understand deans’ political decisions in relation to their perception of alignment with their provosts’ and faculty members’ goals and interests, as well as their past experience. These frameworks should, however, conceptualize managers as leaders with supervisors and include reciprocal influence between followers and supervisors and its impact on managers, experiences lived through others, and managers’ values and risk-taking.

Of note, two areas of concern, fatigue and harm, emerged from the analysis. These were not part of the initial conceptual framework. Performance appraisals are often considered non-intrusive processes. However, several deans’ reactions and their depictions of other deans’ experience suggest that reappointments in particular, and performance appraisals in general, may be more intrusive than theorized. They impact the target of their measurement not only in light of the decisions that are made, but as a result of measuring over a longer period of time and providing raters’ comments verbatim. In the case of deans’ reappointments, there was clear evidence of fatigue and harm, which in part explained why the non-reappointed Dean decided to withdraw halfway through the
process. These negative outcomes should be integrated in organizational socialization and performance appraisal political models.

Finally, the participation of a non-reappointed dean proved pivotal in triangulating the results, exploring rival explanations, identifying unintended outcomes, and showing both sides of reappointments. In the investigation of organizations and organizational processes, it is obviously easier to work with those who are there, but they are the ones that made it through and their experiences may be skewed, partial, or incomplete. Working with those who stayed only tells half of the story. Identifying, reaching out, and securing the participation of a non-reappointed dean has proven challenging, but yielded critical insights. Researchers should make every effort to identify those rendered invisible, those that have been put aside, and those that are no longer there (Taleb, 2010) and give them a voice. Certainly their tales will likely be skewed, partial, and incomplete, just as the tales of the successful.

7.2.2 Implications for Policy

The investigation has shown that, to a great extent, reappointed deans found their experience satisfactory. Nevertheless, they identified several issues requiring further attention and adjustments. In addition, the experience of non-reappointed deans brought to light other issues requiring important changes. Though there is value in the balancing of collegial and managerial logics in Canadian universities, the current arrangements are best described as conciliatory in favour of collegiality. Given some of the issues highlighted in this study, universities should readjust their reappointment arrangements towards managerialism by better protecting their deans during the process and improve their measurement of performance.

Deans require increased protection during reappointments to prevent issues related to
fatigue and harm. Reappointments were, as the findings revealed, traumatic events for some. Ad hoc changes in procedures, extended delays, and personal attacks were associated with deans displaying doubt, resentment, or exhaustion, which in turn seems to have led some of them to review their decision to seek reappointments. I can see no valid reason to rationalize such levels of pressure and negative outcomes. Managerial positions are challenging in themselves. There is no need for reappointments to further test deans’ resilience. It has no relation to regular roles and reappointments should not, by the burden they impose, make deans reconsider their decision to seek reappointments. Other factors should. Accordingly, policy should ensure that comments are not given verbatim to deans, but filtered and summarized to provide constructive and helpful feedback.

Also, reappointments’ expected and longest tolerable durations should be prescribed by policy, with the possibility that reappointments be automatically granted in the event of unreasonable delays for which deans cannot be held responsible. Policy should also provide deans with ways to challenge and contest changes to procedures or inappropriate behaviour that falls outside universities’ hierarchical structures. This could be done through an ombudsperson.

If all these changes appear complicated or bothersome, they pale in comparison to what deans may endure during their reappointments. The evidence is clear that reappointments can become harmful to deans, and universities should feel compelled to adjust their procedures to better protect their deans’ health and dignity.

As for measuring performance, policy arrangements were in general severely lacking with regards to performance criteria and standards. Several books and studies include extensive lists of roles and behaviour for deans could serve as starting points (e.g., Gmelch & Buller, 2015; G. Scott et al., 2008). Though current practices may seem like flexible and useful arrangements, it can be argued that they facilitate reappointments’ politicization. They allow participants to determine what counts as performance according to their
personal agendas. Most deans understood their reappointments as measuring their popularity, but popularity is only one part, arguably an important one, of their leadership performance.

Regarding popularity, reappointments were not in fact measuring popularity, as almost all of them did not ensure representative participation in the evaluation. Instead, reappointments were more sensitive to opposition than popularity. The issue with measuring opposition instead of popularity is that it makes it easier for small groups to control perceptions by appearing numerous among the few comments received. For this reason, reappointments are more likely to produce false negatives. Universities should make use of short surveys, periodic reminders, alongside minimal rates of participation, to ensure representativeness in measuring performance.

Also, the lack of explicit criteria or performance standards leaves deans in the dark with regards to what is expected of them. Certainly, there are implicit assumptions about their roles, but leaving them unstated means that deans have no formal way of knowing if what they are doing is what is expected of them, and that these expectations will serve as the basis for deciding whether they will be reappointed. This allows for individuals or other processes to set the tone and influence deans unduly. Reappointments, as they solely determine deans’ careers, should have precedence over other role signals. To do so, they must send explicit role signals. Deans should know where their targets are, beforehand.

Related, provostial evaluations were not included explicitly in reappointments. Given the lack of criteria and standards, it gives provostial evaluations prominence over reappointments in shaping deans’ understanding of their roles. This runs counter to collegial logics, in which deans’ roles should be to conciliate the needs of the Faculty with those of Central Administration. As such, the lack of criteria seems to serve the interests of Central Administration. Furthermore, as provostial evaluations are not included in the process,
their criteria are not defined by the faculties and provosts may decide not to present them or committees may decide to ignore them. As a result, the only compass deans have to set their course and measure their performance may prove useless. In the current scenario, five years of positive evaluations may lead to a failed reappointment. This makes little sense and universities should integrate provostial evaluations into their policy framework to harmonize their procedures, criteria, and performance standards.

Finally, reappointments were deemed too heavy, with deans using quite negative images to qualify the efforts put into them. Policy should therefore consider less intrusive, but also less cumbersome formats. Reappointments, almost without exceptions, started with a positive appraisal by the provost, based on four or five consecutive positive yearly reviews. However, this was then followed by a thorough investigation that neither assumed that deans were performing nor that they were not. Policy-makers should re-evaluate the need to perform such a thorough investigation when provostial support is strong. For example, they should evaluate the value of using short surveys asking stakeholders whether they support their deans’ reappointments, whether their deans have fulfilled each of their stated roles and defined goals, and whether they have committed reprehensible acts. Negative or unconvincing survey results would lead to thorough investigations, while positive results would lead to positive reappointment recommendations.

Overall, the aforementioned changes only require from Canadian universities slight posture shifts to better measure performance and to do so in a way that protects the participating individuals. These changes should not overly modify the balance of power, but instead improve the process and its outcomes for all parties involved. Doing so should not, however, lead to reduce participation to filling up surveys and compiling quantitative indicators. As expressed in the discussion, the measure of leader performance and leadership is elusive and cannot be brought down to a set of indicators. Furthermore, leadership is in part political. Accordingly, policy adjustments should endeavour to maintain a delicate balance
between qualitative and quantitative measures, as well as allow for broad and flexible participation.

### 7.2.3 Implications for Practice

As long as Canadian universities do not adjust their reappointment policies, the implications for policy described above can be applied to practice. Most policies provide provosts and reappointment committees with wide discretionary margins. Therefore, most of the recommendations made for policy can be implemented ad hoc during reappointments, with the exception of in advance references to criteria and harmonization of provostial evaluations.

For provosts, the findings have highlighted their pivotal roles. Consequently, provosts should exercise an important measure of control over reappointments to ensure they go swiftly and smoothly. Also, they should consult with their deans before finalizing their reappointment committees to identify potential membership issues. As well, they should present the results of yearly evaluations to their committees and include in those yearly evaluations indicators of faculty support. Ultimately, reappointments should be the culmination of five years of provostial evaluations, instead of inconsistent and uncoupled processes. Similarly, the findings indicate that other evaluation processes, such as external evaluations of faculties or quality assessment processes, do not play an important role in deans’ reappointments, at least as far as deans are concerned. These processes could serve to provide reappointment criteria explicitly stated to deans and their faculties resulting from external assessments.

As for deans, by extension to the previous points, deans should remain wary of accepting change agendas for their first term, particularly when faculty members are clearly opposed to these changes, even if they feel appropriately supported by their provosts. Provosts, as
deans, change, and their terms in office usually overlap deans’ terms. As reappointments can easily become politicized and tend to measure opposition, and as provosts are unlikely to go against their committees’ recommendations, deans are, in effect, on their own. Consequently, change agenda should be pursued either in the second term or when their faculties are favourable. It is likely less of consequence for deans to delay change agendas with their provosts as it is to champion them in spite of their faculties. Reappointments are not built to support such tactics.

In addition, deans should keep in mind that their projects are unlikely to bear fruit or prove sustainable within their first terms. For most deans, this was a strong incentive to seek reappointments. Incoming deans should plan accordingly or prepare differently. In their first term, they may wish to push things forward and have it all done by their fourth year or, if this seems unlikely, to slow down and prepare the ground, focusing on alignment between themselves and their faculties. Projects can then be moved forward steadily once their reappointments are confirmed.

More specifically, deans seeking reappointments should take advantage of the opportunities their reappointments offer and make a pause to evaluate past challenges and accomplishments, envision what the future may look like, as well as rally their faculty and staff colleagues. Reappointments can be strengthening for themselves and for their faculties, and should be viewed as an opportunity for celebration and saga building (Clark, 1972).

Finally, reappointed deans and non-reappointed deans should show solidarity to one another and not let themselves be isolated. Deans’ formal or informal meetings can prove helpful through sharing of experiences, strategies, and in particular towards getting reappointments changed. Not all deans are performing as they should, but neither are they tested in the same conditions. Deans can unite to better understand and explain to their provosts the unique characteristics of their faculties and be judged according
to adjusted standards. Deans are perhaps the most suited to identify what criteria and performance standards should be used to evaluate them. By working together, they may make their voices heard and improve policy.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research

In what follows, I review the study’s limitations and highlight the opportunities for future research offered in turn. To do so, I rely on Brutus, Aguinis, and Wassmer’s (2013) model, definitions, and recommendations. Brutus et al. distinguish between internal validity, external validity, construct validity, statistical conclusion validity, and theory issues, and enjoin researchers to explicitly link their studies’ limitations with future research opportunities.

7.3.1 Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the ways by which the study inferred causal relations and distinguished between alternative explanations. This study explored causal relations as deans inferred them when explaining their experiences and providing opinions. As such, its findings rely on attributions, which present several limitations. Notably, it is likely that deans underestimated or underplayed their responsibility for certain outcomes and overplayed it for others.

The study makes several causal claims, inferred from deans’ attributions and experiences. The first is that organizational politics explain the outcomes of reappointments. The extent to which this is the case and whether this phenomenon is prevalent falls outside the scope of this study. Future investigations could explore alternative explanations or clarify the role of organizational politics by performing observations of reappointments,
as they unfold, or by involving participants from different groups, for example provosts, faculty and staff members, as well as students.

A second causal claim is that reappointment arrangements are the result of leader performance measurement tensions combined with collegial-managerial tensions. This claim requires further investigations as it is solely substantiated by the cross-analysis of deans’ experience and sense-making. Doing so would likely involve comparing this study’s results with similar investigations of other managers in other settings. The differences in the level of clarity in managerial work and the different balance of collegial and managerial considerations would clarify whether different arrangements can similarly be explained.

A third causal claim is that difficult or non-reappointments may lead to more negative experiences or even harm. The extent to which this association is true is, in this study, based on one non-reappointed and two reappointed deans’ direct account, as well as four deans’ indirect accounts of other deans’ reappointments. Further investigation of difficult or non-reappointments could delve into these issues and identify alternate ways to link these outcomes to negative or harmful experiences.

The last causal claim is that reappointments shape the deanship indirectly. The absence of direct causal relations is surprising and runs counter to theoretical arguments. As this counter-intuitive conclusion is based on deans’ attributions, which may very well be skewed, it requires further research to confirm it. To determine more precisely whether reappointments shape deans’ leadership, future research could investigate universities without performance evaluation schemes or with different ones.

Research could also investigate the effect of other characteristics such as different parallel evaluation schemes, for example settings without provostial evaluations, or different deans’ attributes, for example deans with different motivations for becoming deans, or greater
stakes, for example deanships without tenure.

7.3.2 External Validity

While internal validity refers to the internal coherence of a study, external validity evaluates the extent to which the findings can be generalized. This study does not pretend that its findings can be generalized beyond the study’s sample. The study’s goal is to generate a sufficiently rich account of its participants’ experience that could serve towards “naturalistic generalization” (p. 7 Stake, 1995), where the reader can connect the experiences described to his or her situation. Accordingly, future research, moving forward, could aim at identifying the extent to which the experiences described here are shared among Canadian university deans, among deans in other universities, among managers in other settings, and eventually among different types of workers in other settings. These cumulated studies would participate towards providing a complete picture of policy outcomes in relation to individual and contextual differences (Pawson, 2002).

7.3.3 Construct Validity

Construct validity relates to the close linkage between the indicator being measured, for example individuals describing their being harmed, and its associated construct, in this example harm. This study made central claims about deans’ experience and sense-making. Recall that these were its two research questions. As the main sources of data were reappointed deans and as interview guides were built in order to ask about their experience and to ask about the meaning they gave to these descriptions, two central issues remain. The first issue is sampling. The study based its results on thirteen reappointments and one non-reappointments. Though the sample was varied, it predominantly included research intensive universities and professional faculties. As well, deans from racialized groups
were not included in the sample. Finally, only one non-reappointed deans was included in the sample, with an interrupted reappointment. As such, size and representativeness are two important areas of improvement. Future research could, based on this study, survey the extent to which the experiences and sense-making reported here are shared within a broader sample. As well, narrower work could be done with one category of deans, such as non-reappointed deans, to explore the differences within one group. Finally, future studies could instead choose one variable, such as gender, and use a different framework to look at inter-group differences.

The second issue is the interval between the events and the interviews. As the study’s findings rely mainly on deans’ attributions, their recollections are likely to be impacted by memory lapses. As the interviews took place between one and five years after deans’ reappointments, this means that their terms in office started somewhere between five and ten years before their interviews took place. As such, longitudinal studies investigating deans and their reappointments can be useful to evaluate the impact of time between events and interviews and confirm or challenge my findings.

In addition, this dissertation makes claims with regards to politicization and harm. Politicization was inferred based on evidence of political behaviour, which itself was based on conceptual definitions (Mayes & Allen, 1977; Ouimet, 2008). As such, it is likely that different definitions would operationalize political behaviour differently and may lead to new insights. Harm, on the other hand, was not an expected findings and, accordingly, was not part of the conceptual framework. It emerged from the findings. That being said, the mention of being harmed is not an indicator of harm, but of perception of harm. A first step would be to more thoroughly conceptualize harm and differentiate different types of harm and different ways of harming. Then, either observation or another method of triangulating participants’ accounts, likely other accounts or evidence of behaviour resulting from harm could be used to clarify the link between reappointments
and harm.

7.3.4 Statistical Conclusion Validity

Statistical conclusion validity evaluates whether the data presented meets minimal statistical standards to support its claims. In this study, I purposefully moved away from statistical inferences as my goal was to describe a wide variety of potential outcomes instead of measuring their pervasiveness or likelihood. To that end, I made a conscious effort to qualify my observations and not quantify them. With a sample of fourteen participants, which included a single non-reappointed deans, I deemed misleading the presentation of quantitative data.

As a result, more work remains to build on the study’s findings. The study identifies a number of outcomes. From this list, research can go in multiple directions. Firstly, it can seek to identify the extent to which these situations occur in Canadian universities. Next, it can seek to relate set outcomes, such as political behaviour to undermine, with another variable, for example university type. However, given the size of the Canadian university system, such correlation studies are unlikely to come up with representative samples unless the study covers a wide period. Nevertheless, descriptive statistics may go a long way towards influencing policy-makers and clarifying whether the positive and negative scenarios are rare or common, which in turn would prove helpful for provosts and deans in negotiating reappointments.

7.3.5 Theory Issues

The last category of limitations, theory issues, relates to the conceptual framework selected and the extent to which other frameworks would prove useful. Section 6.4
discusses the usefulness of the framework and finds two important omissions: fatigue and harm. Accordingly, as these important results were not well integrated, future investigations could use as a starting point a framework focused on understanding harm in organizations or the effect of fatigue on resilience.

Two dimensions examined in recent studies of academic leadership are gender and race (Kezar et al., 2011). The present study did not include these dimensions for two reasons. Firstly, there were no reappointed deans belonging to racialized groups in the sample. This is a normal, yet unfortunate consequence of the current distribution of reappointed deans in Canada. There are simply very few reappointed deans belonging to racialized groups (Lavigne, 2017b). Secondly, the study did not find any differences between male and female deans’ experience and sense-making. This does not mean that there were no differences. Simply, it means that the study was not equipped to find differences.

However, Lavigne’s (2017b) shows that, in Canadian universities, the distribution of female deans is 35% for deans, but 24% for reappointed deans, while the distribution of racialized deans is 12% for deans, but 2% for reappointed deans. These results suggest that there should be differences between male and female deans and between racialized and non-racialized deans. Future work, building on gender- or race-based frameworks (e.g., Acker, 2010), could build on the present study and further investigate these differences. That being said, such investigations would profit from not solely including reappointed and non-reappointed deans, but broaden their investigation by including deans who opted not to seek reappointment in the first place.
7.4. Final Words

During the summer of my first year as a doctoral student, a memorandum was sent from the Vice-President and Provost to all members of the Faculty letting them know that their Dean was seeking reappointment, the membership of the committee, and that the committee sought feedback. What surprised me was that nothing else came along. No description, no criteria, no target by which individuals could give an opinion as to whether the Faculty should reappoint their dean.

This seemed to me, at the time fundamentally wrong. Not the fact that I was asked to contribute. I was greatly impressed that the committee was broadening participation to include students. No, what felt inappropriate is that I was not provided with any form of guidance. What also struck me at the time was the lack of procedural clarity. In the communication I had received, there was no description of what other data would be collected and how the data would be used. (Ironically, the memorandum announced that the Dean was no longer seeking reappointment and would be leaving included a list of accomplishments, which were not included in the initial memorandum asking for feedback.)

I wondered how one would feel, being evaluated with criteria invented after the fact, and with criteria that would likely be different from one individual to the next, and with the possibility that anyone with an axe to grind could simply grind that axe.

That and other things, in particular my personal experience of performance appraisals and the lack of research on the subject, have led me to pursue the work that is presented here, where I give deans a voice to express what current reappointment practices have going for them, how they could be improved, and what absolutely must be improved.

Going back to the allegory of the archer presented in Chapter 1 reappointments are in
dire need of change, but the good news is that small modifications should probably suffice. The archer needs a target, be it broad. As well, the target should be in sight before arrows are sent flying. Setting the right types of targets can in turn shape the way practitioners think of their practice, train, determine what requires improvement. It can also shape the way the audience think of the practice and evaluate performance. Finally, archers should feel safe while performing and while being judged. These two things, criteria and safety, should be the starting points of a renewed conversation about deans’ reappointments in Canadian universities. To be clear, this is not to say that reappointments should be revised in order to remove agency. Politics were shown to be embedded in reappointments and play a necessary role, in particular as leadership is in great measure a political act, though they remain problematic. Accordingly, a balance should be found in structuring reappointments; one that allows both the purposeful participation of the Faculty and the safety of its participants.
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REFERENCES


REFERENCES


REFERENCES


REFERENCES


REFERENCES


REFERENCES


Higher Education Dynamics.


REFERENCES


Appendix A

Notes on the Organization of the Literature Review

In putting together the publications, I constructed a list of publications on academic deans and academic leadership. This list was first created using search engines, then expanded by gathering works cited and works citing those publications. This exercise produced a list of well over a hundred publications. To further narrow this list, I grouped the selected works by category and selected only those clearly related to academic deans’ reappointments. Table A.1 on the next page presents my initial list, the decision for each category, and the final list of categories for this literature review.

To narrow down the review, I removed, from the seventeen initial categories, eight that were not closely related to deans’ reappointments, or for which there has been little or no empirical work: appointments, careers, challenges, darker sides, development, gender, race, and reappointments. The literature on appointments was removed because it focuses on more on processes and the influence of recruiting firms. Career research tended to document deans’ demographics and career ladders. The literature identifying the
Table A.1: Literature Review Initial Categories, Decisions, and Final Categories

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<th>Decision</th>
<th>Final category</th>
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<td>integrated</td>
<td>(Behaviour and roles)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Darker sides</td>
<td>removed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>removed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>removed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>integrated</td>
<td>(Behaviour and roles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>integrated</td>
<td>(Behaviour)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>Qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>removed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reappointments</td>
<td>removed</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role stress</td>
<td>integrated</td>
<td>(Roles)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>Roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>kept</td>
<td>Transition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
challenges of deans is limited to lists of current trends in higher education. As for deans’
darker sides, the literature is minimal and for the most part based on isolated cases and
opinions. The research on deans’ development was removed because it looked at current
development programs. Also, the literature investigating gender issues is relatively small
and focuses on career paths and the specific challenges experienced by female deans.
Finally, race and reappointments were removed from the list simply because I was unable
to find empirical studies investigating those dimensions.

Further analyzing the literature, I discovered a certain level of confusion with the ter-
minology used by the researchers. In many cases, the use of the words roles, behaviour,
competencies, performance, and leadership in publications’ titles was often unhelpful or
misleading. The terms are used somewhat loosely in the literature. To prevent confusion,
I define them here. For the purpose of this review of the literature, I define roles as ones’
duties and responsibilities, while behaviour describes the actions and tasks undertaken by
a person. The former refers to what deans ought to be doing; the latter to what deans
are doing. Qualifications refer to the skills and experiences considered necessary to take
on the position. As such, qualifications should be akin to competencies, which reflect
the capacity of someone to perform a task, but, as it turns out, studies on competencies
explored instead deans’ behaviour or roles.

As to leadership and performance studies, they were generally found as part of roles or
behaviour studies. With regards to performance, some studies looked at what roles are
associated with performance, while other studies tried to associate leadership behaviour
with performance outcomes. As a result, it is impossible to disentangle performance and
leadership from roles and behaviour and analyze them as separate categories. Instead, I
have opted to keep them within behaviour and roles categories.

The five remaining categories are closely related. Roles describe organizational expecta-
tions, while qualifications describe capacity signals based on experience. Behaviour is
Appendix A. Notes on the Organization of the Literature Review

in part related to role expectations and qualifications and describes what is being done. Transition explores the change deans undergo in their first years in office as they come to term with their roles, leverage their qualifications, and adapt their behaviour. Finally, evaluation measures and judges behaviour and results in light of role expectations, during and at the end of transition, potentially impacting behaviour. The following sections cover these categories in depth and follow this sequence: roles, qualifications, behaviour, transition, and evaluation.

Finally, as the focus of this chapter is to review the empirical evidence on academic deans related to their reappointments, I applied a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria to hone in on empirical studies, shown in table A.2 on page 246. As a result, I kept away from stories about or prescriptions on academic leadership. I also removed works subsequently republished, such as the doctoral dissertations of J. F. Jackson (2000) and Seale (2015), which were later republished. Similarly, the following publications: Gmelch (2000a); Gmelch (2000b); Gmelch (2000c); Gmelch (2002c); Gmelch and Wolverton (2002a); Gmelch, Wolverton, and Wolverton (1999); and Gmelch, Wolverton, Wolverton, and Sarros (1999); were later republished in: Damico et al. (2003); Gmelch (2002b); Gmelch and Wolverton (2002b); Montez et al. (2002); and M. Wolverton et al. (1999).

The final list of publications related to deans’ reappointments examined in this review of the research literature numbers 61 publications, ranging from 1978 to 2017. Table A.3 lists those publications, along with their categories, methods, and jurisdictions.

Table A.3: Studies Covered by the Literature Review and their Categories, Methods, and Jurisdictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Al-Shuaiby (2009)*</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beaupré-Lavallée (2016)*</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beck-Frazier et al. (2007)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on next page
**Table A.3 – Continued from previous page**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Bolman and Deal (1991)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boyko and Jones (2010)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray (2008)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bray (2010)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castro and Tomás (2012)</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catacutan and de Guzman (2015)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damico et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David (2011)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis et al. (2016)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>de Guzman and Hapan (2013)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dejnozka (1978)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Del Favero (2006b)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drange (2015)</td>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Document analysis and interviewing</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enomoto and Matsuoka (2007)</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gmelch (2002b)</td>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>Auto-ethnography</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gmelch and Wolverton (20025)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlin and Patel (2017)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>Hancock and Hellawell (2003)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hassan (2013)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Aggregated jurisdictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Heck et al. (2000)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hellawell and Hancock (2001)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodges and Christ (1987)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
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</table>

*Continued on next page*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inman (2007)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. F. Jackson (2002)†</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julius et al. (1999)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapel and Dejnozka (1979)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimencu (2011)*</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konrad (1980)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lasley and Haberman (1987)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavigne (2016a)†</td>
<td>Qualifications, roles</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavigne (2017a)†</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumby (2015)†</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin (1993)†</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matczynski et al. (1989)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McClure and Teitelbaum (2016)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Survey and interviewing</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDaniel (2002)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meek, Goedegebure, and De Boer (2010)†</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Australia, the Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mignot-Gérard (2010)†</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montez et al. (2002)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuttall (2012)*</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosser et al. (2003)</td>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarros et al. (1998)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A.3—Continued from previous page

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G. Scott et al. (2008)†</td>
<td>Behaviour, roles</td>
<td>Survey and interviewing</td>
<td>Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale and Cross (2015)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith and Wolverton (2010)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smothers et al. (2011)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verdigets (2008)†</td>
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<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Verhoeven (2010)‡</td>
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<td>Survey</td>
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<td>Way (2010)∗</td>
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<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wepner et al. (2004)</td>
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<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>Wepner et al. (2008)</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wepner, D’Onofrio, Willis, and Wilhite (2002)</td>
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<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
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<td>Wepner et al. (2002)</td>
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<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williams (2009)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Wolverton et al. (1999)</td>
<td>Roles</td>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. All works cited are from peer-reviewed journals, with the following exceptions:  
* doctoral or master’s dissertations;  
† conference papers; and  
‡ reports, books, or book chapters.
Table A.2: Literature Review Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inclusion criteria</th>
<th>Exclusion criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Peer-reviewed journal articles;</td>
<td>• Items from the inclusion list lacking empirical evidence;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research reports mandated by a recognized organization;</td>
<td>• Literature reviews;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Peer-reviewed books or book chapters;</td>
<td>• Publications covering community-college deans exclusively;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Masters or doctoral dissertations;</td>
<td>• Deans’ life stories;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conference papers.</td>
<td>• How-to books on academic leadership;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How-to books for deans;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Duplicates.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix B

Overview of the Research Literature on University Deans

To provide a bird’s eye view of the literature, I further tabulated the distributions and frequencies of publications by category, jurisdiction, method, publication type, and year. Table B.1 on page 250 shows the results of these tabulations.

Among the categories selected for this review, the study of deans’ behaviour (44%) and roles (41%) figure prominently. As I have remarked earlier, roles are defined somewhat loosely in most studies and a number of studies claiming to investigate roles are in fact investigating behaviour. Of note, a very small proportion of studies (3%) investigated topics related to more than one category in relation to one another: roles and behaviour (G. Scott et al., 2008), and roles and qualifications (Lavigne, 2016a). Simply put, the research has thus far focused on deans’ expected roles and enacted behaviour, but the important issues of deans’ qualifications, their transition to the deanship, and the evaluation of their performance have so far received scant attention.

Table B.1 on page 250 shows that studies on university deans are mainly taking place
in the United States (57%). Canada (13%), the United Kingdom (8%), and Australia (5%) come next, but their relatively low proportions do not stand out compared to all the other jurisdictions. Beyond the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, only six other countries are represented in the sample, but with one or two publications only.

Two studies examined multiple jurisdictions. Hassan (2013) investigated deans’ behaviour in nine different jurisdictions, but kept his results aggregated. Meek, Goedegebuure, and De Boer (2010) compared deans in Australia and the Netherlands. As such, this is the only comparative study included in this review. Of note, their study is part of a collection of studies investigating the changing role of middle managers in higher education (Meek et al., 2010b). As such, the set of studies can be considered a broad comparative study. However, the objects of study and the methods used varied greatly across the studies. Furthermore, a number of studies looked at changes in state-level arrangements and surmised potential changes based on the researchers’ opinions (Boffo, 2010; Carvalho & Santiago, 2010; Marheim Larsen, 2010; Pechar, 2010; Schuster, 2010; Trowler, 2010). Accordingly, these studies are not included in this review.

As more than half of the sample’s publications investigate American deans, the inevitable conclusion is that further research in other jurisdictions, as well as comparative studies, is needed to clarify the extent to which deans of different jurisdictions share similar realities.

From table B.1 we can also note that research has tended to rely mainly on surveys (50%) and interviews (30%), and that a small number used case studies (11%) or relied on documents for their analyses (8%). Also of note, few studies (8%) combined methods. Two of them used surveys and interviews (McClure & Teitelbaum, 2016; G. Scott et al., 2008), while the other combined document analysis with interviews (Drange, 2015). That being said, the reader should keep in mind that case studies are generally based on
a combination of methods, more often interviews and document analyses (Yin, 2013). Counting those as combining methods brings their proportion to 19%.

The publications included in the review are comprised for the most part of peer-reviewed journal articles (62%), followed by dissertations (16%), peer-reviewed books and book chapters (15%), and conference papers (7%). As mentioned previously, a fair number of conference papers were removed from the list as they were subsequently republished in other formats. This does not seem to be the case for dissertations.

Finally, the sample shows an uneven distribution over the years. A number of studies from the early 1990s deplored the lack of research on academic deans. The important increase in publications in the years that followed suggests that this call did not go unheeded. In fact, it can be argued that calls for further research now need to be narrowed down to specific categories, jurisdictions, and methods.

To that end, this bird’s eye view of the research literature suggests that further research is needed to investigate deans’ qualifications, evaluation, and transition. Also, methods should continue to be diverse and include both quantitative and qualitative approaches. As well, studies of deans are needed in jurisdictions other than the United States.

As this dissertation investigates Canadian deans, I tabulated distributions specifically for Canadian deans’ studies. Hassan’s (2013) dissertation was removed from the sample, as it does not disaggregate Canadian results. This left me with eight publications.

Table B.2 on page 252 shows the number and proportions of Canadian publications in this review. Though the number of publications remains small, a few things still stand out. First, only deans’ behaviour (50%) and roles (50%) have been investigated, with the exception of Lavigne (2016a), who investigated both roles and qualifications. Also, document analyses have been used more often (38%) than interviews (25%) and surveys (25%). As well, dissertations count for a large proportion of studies on deans (38%) and
### Table B.1: Distribution of Publications by Category, Jurisdiction, Method, Publication Type, and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
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<td>Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roles</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple-theme study</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
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<td>France</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>The Netherlands</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative study</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Method</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case study</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document analysis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnography</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Interviewing</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple-method study</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publication type</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-reviewed journal article</td>
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<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report, book or book chapter</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference paper</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation</td>
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<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Before 1981</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1981-1990</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>2001-2010</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
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</table>

*Note.* Aggregated jurisdiction studies are not tabulated.
have not, to this day, been republished as books or journal articles. Finally, the majority of the Canadian literature (76%) has been published after 2000, suggesting a growing interest in investigating the Canadian deanship. Overall, the literature on Canadian deans is nascent and further research, in particular in areas other than behaviour and roles, will be of value.
## Table B.2: Distribution of Canadian Publications by Category, Method, Publication Type, and Year

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<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Aggregated jurisdiction studies are not tabulated.
Appendix C

Letter of Introduction to Reappointed Deans
Dear Dr. [Last Name of Candidate],

My name is Eric Lavigne, I am a doctoral candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), in the Higher Education Program of the Leadership, Adult and Higher Education Department. I am conducting the data collection phase of my dissertation: How performance appraisals shape academic leadership: A multiple case study of academic deans of Canadian universities. This work is supervised by Dr. Nina Bascia, Chair of the department. I am writing to kindly request your participation in this study as an academic dean who underwent a formal performance appraisal.

The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand the impact of performance appraisals on academic deans. Between eight and sixteen academic deans from Canadian universities will be participating in this study. Little is known about performance appraisal practices in Canadian universities or about their outcomes. The findings from the study, which emphasizes academic deans’ voices, will provide valuable information to policy-makers to adjust appraisal policies, as well as bridge the existing gap between research on transition to the deanship and research on deans’ performance appraisals.

You were identified as having sought a renewal of your mandate and undergone a formal performance appraisal in relation to this renewal. Your perspective on how performance appraisals are lived by academic deans and their intended and unintended outcomes is unique and can serve to shed light on an understudied yet relevant aspect of academic leadership.

To limit as much as possible the demand on your time, a single face-to-face interview of an hour or two should prove sufficient. At your request, a second follow-up interview can be arranged. The data collected will inform my doctoral thesis, but also subsequent conference papers and research articles. I also intend to make this information available to Canadian deans’ associations.

During the interview you will be asked questions about your work and how you became a dean, about your experience of the performance appraisal, and about how you make sense of your performance appraisal’s experience and outcomes. As the interview proceeds, I may ask clarification questions, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and reflections. I will also write brief notes to help me remember the interview.
Your participation in the study will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any individual within your institution. All data will be kept in strict confidence and stored at a secure location. Each interview will be recorded and later transcribed to paper. Transcripts will be stripped of nominal information and aliases will replace names of participants and their institutions. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, institutions, and other groups cannot be identified.

Your transcripts will be sent to you to read in order for you to add any further information or to correct any misinterpretations. In addition, I will send you a copy of my preliminary analysis of your case and allow you to provide me with your further comments. Finally, I will send you a copy of my dissertation once it has been successfully defended and made available by the University.

You may, at any time during the interview, refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process. After the interview, you may choose to withdraw until I have aggregated the data from my cases together for cross-case analysis. You may request that any information be eliminated from the study. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the study and your involvement with it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at eric.lavigne@mail.utoronto.ca or at [redacted]. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Nina Bascia at [redacted]. Finally, you may also contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or at [redacted].

Please let me know by return email whether you are willing to participate in the study and be interviewed.

Sincerely,

Eric Lavigne
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education Program
Department of Leadership, Adult and Higher Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Higher Education, University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street W., 6th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6
Appendix D

Letter of Introduction to Non-Reappointed Deans
Dear Dr. [Last Name of Candidate],

My name is Eric Lavigne, I am a doctoral candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), in the Higher Education Program of the Leadership, Adult and Higher Education Department. I am conducting the data collection phase of my dissertation: How performance appraisals shape academic leadership. A multiple case study of academic deans of Canadian universities. This work is supervised by Dr. Nina Bascia, Chair of the department. I am writing to kindly request your participation in this study as an academic dean who underwent a formal performance appraisal.

The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand the impact of performance appraisals on academic deans. Between eight and sixteen academic deans from Canadian universities will be participating in this study. Little is known about performance appraisal practices in Canadian universities or about their outcomes. The findings from the study, which emphasizes academic deans’ voices, will provide valuable information to policy-makers to adjust appraisal policies, as well as bridge the existing gap between research on transition to the deanship and research on deans’ performance appraisals.

You were identified as having potentially sought a renewal of your deanship at some point in your career and undergone a formal performance appraisal in relation to this renewal. Your perspective on how performance appraisals are lived by academic deans and their intended and unintended outcomes is unique and can serve to shed light on an understudied yet relevant aspect of academic leadership.

To limit as much as possible the demand on your time, a single face-to-face interview of an hour or two should prove sufficient. At your request, a second follow-up interview can be arranged. The data collected will inform my doctoral thesis, but also subsequent conference papers and research articles. I also intend to make this information available to Canadian deans’ associations.

During the interview you will be asked questions about your work and how you became a dean, about your experience of the performance appraisal, and about how you make sense of your performance appraisal’s experience and outcomes. As the interview proceeds, I may ask clarification questions, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and reflections. I will also write brief notes to help me remember the interview.
Your participation in the study will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any individual within your institution. All data will be kept in strict confidence and stored at a secure location. Each interview will be recorded and later transcribed to paper. Transcripts will be stripped of nominal information and aliases will replace names of participants and their institutions. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, institutions, and other groups cannot be identified.

Your transcripts will be sent to you to read in order for you to add any further information or to correct any misinterpretations. In addition, I will send you a copy of my preliminary analysis of your case and allow you to provide me with your further comments. Finally, I will send you a copy of my dissertation once it has been successfully defended and made available by the University.

You may, at any time during the interview, refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process. After the interview, you may choose to withdraw until I have aggregated the data from my cases together for cross-case analysis. You may request that any information be eliminated from the study. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the study and your involvement with it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at eric.lavigne@mail.utoronto.ca or at 514-994-4902. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Nina Bascia at 416-978-1159.

Finally, you may also contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or at 416-946-3273.

Please let me know by return email whether you are willing to participate in the study and be interviewed.

Sincerely,

Eric Lavigne
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education Program
Department of Leadership, Adult and Higher Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Higher Education, University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street W., 6th Floor,
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6

eric.lavigne@mail.utoronto.ca
Appendix E

Informed Consent Letter
Dear Participant,

My name is Eric Lavigne, I am a doctoral candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT), in the Higher Education Program of the Leadership, Adult and Higher Education Department. I am conducting the data collection phase of my dissertation: How performance appraisals shape academic leadership: A multiple case study of academic deans of Canadian universities. This work is supervised by Dr. Nina Bascia, Chair of the department. I am writing to kindly request your participation in this study as an academic dean who underwent a formal performance appraisal.

The purpose of this multiple case study is to understand the impact of performance appraisals on academic deans. Between eight and sixteen academic deans from Canadian universities will be participating in this study. Little is known about performance appraisal practices in Canadian universities or about their outcomes. The findings from the study, which emphasizes academic deans’ voices, will provide valuable information to policy-makers to adjust appraisal policies, as well as bridge the existing gap between research on transition to the deanship and research on deans’ performance appraisals.

You were identified as having sought a renewal of your mandate and undergone a formal performance appraisal in relation to this renewal. Your perspective on how performance appraisals are lived by academic deans and their intended and unintended outcomes is unique and can serve to shed light on an understudied yet relevant aspect of academic leadership.

To limit as much as possible the demand on your time, a single face-to-face interview of an hour or two should prove sufficient. At your request, a second follow-up interview can be arranged. The data collected will inform my doctoral thesis, but also subsequent conference papers and research articles. I also intend to make this information available to Canadian deans’ associations.

During the interview you will be asked questions about your work and how you became a dean, about your experience of the performance appraisal, and about how you make sense of your performance appraisal’s experience and outcomes. As the interview proceeds, I may ask clarification questions, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and reflections. I will also write brief notes to help me remember the interview.

Also, you may provide me with documents to allow me to better understand your situation such as policies, procedures, memos, communications, agenda outlines, or reports.

Your participation in the study will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to any individual within your institution. All data will be kept in strict confidence and stored at a secure location. Each interview will be recorded and later transcribed to paper. Transcripts and written documents will be stripped of nominal information and
aliases will replace names of participants and their institutions. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons, institutions, and other groups cannot be identified.

Your transcripts will be sent to you to read in order for you to add any further information or to correct any misinterpretations. In addition, I will send you a copy of my preliminary analysis of your case and allow you to provide me with your further comments. Finally, I will send you a copy of my dissertation once it has been successfully defended and made available by the University.

You may, at any time during the interview, refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process. After the interview, you may choose to withdraw until I have aggregated the data from my cases together for cross-case analysis. You may request that any information be eliminated from the study. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses. Finally, you are free to ask any questions about the study and your involvement with it.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [********] or at [********]. You may also contact my supervisor, Dr. Nina Bascia at [********]. Finally, you may also contact the University of Toronto Office of Research Ethics for questions about your rights as a research participant at [********].

I thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Eric Lavigne
Doctoral Candidate, Higher Education Program
Department of Leadership, Adult and Higher Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Higher Education, University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street W., 6th Floor,
Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V6
[********]

By signing below, you indicate your willingness to participate in the study, that you have received a second signed copy of this letter for your records, and that you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Printed name: __________________________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ______________

Initial if you agree for your interview to be recorded: _______
Appendix F

Interview Guide for Reappointed Deans
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview (60-90 minutes)

Part I - Background

1. Tell me, how did you become a dean?
   Probe: Could you describe for me some of the key moments that brought you to become a dean?

2. And how were your first few months as academic dean?
   Probe: Could you tell me more about some of the first challenges you faced?

Part II - Experience

I now wish for you to go back in time to determine what was your experience of the performance appraisal.

3. What made you decide to seek a renewal of your mandate?
   Probe: What happened at that time?
   Probe: How are things different now that you are renewed?

4. When did you first learn that there would be a performance appraisal?
   Probe: What information were you given about the process?
   Probe: At that time, how confident did you feel about your renewal?

5. Can you run me through what happened during the performance appraisal?
   Probe: Did anyone discuss your upcoming performance appraisal with you?
   Probe: What happened during those conversations?
   Probe: What kind of input were you allowed to provide during the process?
   Probe: As far as you know, were some people actively trying to support or jeopardize your renewal?

6. Once the appraisal had taken place, what happened next?
   Probe: What kind of feedback were you given?
   Probe: How did you feel about the feedback or the way you received it?
Part III - Sense-making

In this part, I would like for you to reflect back on your performance appraisal and see what sense you make of it. Let me start by asking:

7. Given what you’ve told me about your experience, what do you think of evaluating the performance of deans?
   Probe: To what extent would you say it achieves its intended purpose?
   Probe: Why do you think it does not reach it or reaches it partially?

8. Looking back at your experience; as a new dean who will be evaluated at the end of his mandate, how would you say your expectations about your upcoming performance appraisal changed the way you worked? In other words, how did knowing that you would be evaluated in the future changed the way you worked?
   Probe: How does that make you feel?

9. If you could go back and go through the process again, what would you do differently?

10. If you had the chance, what would you change about the process?
    Probe: What about the criteria or the decision-making process?
    Probe: What about the role of your supervisor, of faculty, staff, or students?

Part IV - Confronting Theory

This is the last part of the interview. I will ask you questions to determine the extent to which you feel specific theories about performance appraisals apply to your situation.

11. Some scholars suggest that performance appraisals are more about politics than about performance. What do you think of such claims?
    Probe: In what way do you feel they reflect your own performance appraisal?

12. Other scholars suggest that performance appraisals give too much power to certain groups and compromise the leadership of deans. What do you think of such claims?
    Probe: In what way do you feel they reflect your own performance appraisal?

Part V - Closing

13. We’ve reached the end of the interview. Is there anything you feel I’ve forgotten to ask, or some final comment you would like to make?

14. Do you have any other question?
Appendix G

Interview Guide for Non-Reappointed Deans
INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview (60-90 minutes)

Part I - Background

1. Tell me, how did you become a dean?
   Probe: Could you describe for me some of the key moments that brought you to become a dean?

2. And how were your first few months as academic dean?
   Probe: Could you tell me more about some of the first challenges you faced?

Part II - Experience

I now wish for you to go back in time to determine what was your experience of the reappointment process.

3. What made you decide to seek a renewal of your mandate?
   Probe: What happened at that time?

4. When did you first learn that there would be a reappointment process?
   Probe: What information were you given about the process?
   Probe: At that time, how confident did you feel about your renewal?

5. Can you run me through what happened during the process?
   Probe: Did anyone discuss your upcoming reappointment process with you?
   Probe: What happened during those conversations?
   Probe: What kind of input were you allowed to provide during the process?
   Probe: As far as you know, were some people actively trying to support or jeopardize your renewal?

6. Once the process had taken place, what happened next?
   Probe: What kind of feedback were you given?
   Probe: How did you feel about the feedback or the way you received it?
Part III - Sense-making

In this part, I would like for you to reflect back on your experience of the process and see what sense you make of it. Let me start by asking:

7. Given what you’ve told me about your experience, what do you think of evaluating the performance of deans?
   Probe: To what extent would you say it achieves its intended purpose?
   Probe: Why do you think it does not reach it or reaches it partially?

8. Looking back at your experience; as a new dean who will be evaluated at the end of his mandate, how would you say your expectations about your upcoming reappointment changed the way you worked? In other words, how did knowing that you would be evaluated in the future changed the way you worked?
   Probe: How does that make you feel?

9. If you could go back and go through the process again, what would you do differently?

10. If you had the chance, what would you change about the process?
   Probe: What about the criteria or the decision-making process?
   Probe: What about the role of your supervisor, of faculty, staff, or students?

Part IV - Confronting Theory

This is the last part of the interview. I will ask you questions to determine the extent to which you feel specific theories about reappointments and performance appraisals apply to your situation.

11. Some scholars suggest that performance appraisals are more about politics than about performance. What do you think of such claims?
    Probe: In what way do you feel they reflect your own experience?

12. Other scholars suggest that performance appraisals give too much power to certain groups and compromise the leadership of deans. What do you think of such claims?
    Probe: In what way do you feel they reflect your own experience?

Part V - Closing

13. We’ve reached the end of the interview. Is there anything you feel I’ve forgotten to ask, or some final comment you would like to make?

14. Do you have any other question?
Appendix H

Research Ethics Board Approval Letter
Dear Dr. Bascia and Mr. Eric Lavigne,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "How performance appraisals shape academic leadership: A multiple case study of academic deans in Canadian universities"

We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB’s delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of one year and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research Ethics as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Annual Renewal Form or a Study Completion Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that annual renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Brower, Ph.D.
REB Chair

Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation
Research Oversight and Compliance Office - Human Research Ethics Program
McMurrich Building, 12 Queen's Park Crescent West, 2nd Floor, Toronto, ON M5S 1S8 Canada
Tel: +1 416 946-3273 Fax: +1 416 946-5763 ethics.review@utoronto.ca http://www.research.utoronto.ca/for-researchers-administrators/ethics/
Appendix I

Research Ethics Board Renewal Letter
Dear Dr. Bascia and Mr. Eric Lavigne,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, “How performance appraisals shape academic leadership: A multiple case study of academic deans in Canadian universities”

We are writing to advise you that you have been granted annual renewal of ethics approval to the above-referenced research protocol through the Research Ethics Board (REB) delegated process. Please note that all protocols involving ongoing data collection or interaction with human participants are subject to re-evaluation after 5 years. Ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events should be reported to the Research Oversight and Compliance - Human Research Ethics Program as soon as possible. If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Please ensure that you submit an Ethics Renewal Form or a Study Completion/Closure Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your protocol. Note that ethics renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry as per our guidelines.

Please note, all approved research studies are eligible for a routine Post-Approval Review (PAR) site visit. If chosen, you will receive a notification letter from our office. For information on PAR, please see http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/documents/2014/09/PAR-Program-Description-1.pdf.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Matthew Brower, Ph.D.
REB Chair

Research Oversight and Compliance Office - Human Research Ethics Program
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Tel: +1 416 946-3273 Fax: +1 416 946-5763 ethics.review@utoronto.ca http://www.research.utoronto.ca/for-researchers-administrators/ethics/