

CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

OWAIN SMOLOVIC JONES

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FORMAL LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE UK AND NEW ZEALAND
PUBLIC SECTORS

CRANFIELD DEFENCE AND SECURITY

PhD THESIS
Academic year: 2010 – 11

Supervisors: Michael Dunn and Keith Grint
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Abstract

This thesis examines whether formal leadership development programmes can improve the delivery of leadership within the context of four specific sectors. These are UK local government, the UK Fire and Rescue Service, the UK armed services and the New Zealand public services. Theories of leadership development are linked to theories of leadership, with the conclusion drawn that leadership development perspectives are influenced and follow principles of leadership theory. Two broad foci of leadership development are identified, 'individual' and 'collective'. Within these, four particular 'schools' of leadership development are discussed in order to establish a guide to consider what may constitute an effective leadership development process - behavioural, authentic, coalition and experiential. These four theoretical models are presented with a view to further testing in the field.

It is suggested that a research method which values and gives voice to the subjective constructions of actors in the process of leadership development should be adopted. The case is made for an ethnographic method – specifically citing its capacity for rich, deep descriptions, data capture over an extended period of time and within a range of settings.

Results are presented offering support for three of the four models presented – authentic, coalition and experiential, but not for behavioural leadership development. The case is made that leadership development programmes, from the perspective of participants and their colleagues, do improve the practice of leadership – at least to a degree. It is stated, however, that it is a basic principle of ethnography that such a finding will always be bound by the context within which the data was gathered.

Furthermore, it is noted that there was evidence present of more than one of the models presented co-existing within leadership development programmes. In fact, where this happened, participants believed a more dramatic improvement had taken place. With this in mind, a synthesis model is suggested, which seeks to view leadership development as a sensemaking process, rather than as a series of separate events.

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An ethnographic exploration of the effectiveness of formal leadership development programmes within the context of the UK and New Zealand public sectors.

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1. Introduction

This chapter will firstly address the context of the thesis, touching on the ambiguity of 'leadership' in relation to a world marked by uncertainty and anxiety. Secondly, it discusses the academic and theoretical context and study value of the research. Thirdly, the chapter offers the research question to be investigated and provides a discussion and justification. The chapter makes some initial comments regarding the research methodology and design issues of the work. Finally, this initial chapter offers a summary of each chapter and a summary of the study's findings.

Macro context

An uncertain world

The political, economic and social context of today's world is one of uncertainty and anxiety, as we attempt to recover from global recession, the scars created by divisive armed conflicts and our attempts to comprehend and deal with potentially significant environmental issues. The public discourse at times like these is often to call for more of something labelled 'leadership'. For example, a recent edition of *The Economist* (24 March 2011 'Japan's disaster: a crisis of leadership, too') reported that the citizens of Japan were dissatisfied with the 'leadership' displayed by their political leaders in the aftermath of the earthquake crisis. This echoes a broader phenomenon: that what we often mean by 'leadership' more closely resembles disaster management and command.

This is not always the case, of course, as many view the challenge of leadership as the generation of more collective action in order to resolve what are viewed as more tricky, 'wicked' (Grint 2005b), systemic problems (Senge et al 2009; Verweij 2000).

It is perhaps unfortunate that this phenomenon of 'leadership' we are all keen to see more of is also something that few can define with any certainty (Ladkin 2010). Perhaps when many make the familiar call for 'leadership', they actually mean 'command' (Grint 2005b; Grint 2009), that they would like some mystically endowed Other, to resolve problems for which we, as individuals, seem helpless to fully understand, let alone solve. Others may acknowledge that we, as ordinary individuals, or even as managers of organisations, ought to do more to contribute to 'leadership' but that we are not quite sure where to begin.

If we are uncertain about the concept of 'leadership', then it is also the case that we are unsure as to how to approach its development. Even a cursory glance at the literature yields a variety of positions, with some offering certainty and formulas for successful leadership development (e.g. Adair 2005). These often involve a 'magic number' of required 'steps' to fulfil, the reward for which will be much improved 'leadership'. Others are less sanguine, constructing leadership development as less easily quantifiable, more complex (e.g. Ford et al 2008; Kempster 2009).

While it could be argued that many of the real-world problems discussed above were created by the actions of private companies and private individuals, as much as public bodies and politicians, it is the public realm that people more often than not turn to for leadership answers. This is clearly not always the case, as is evidenced through an increasing academic discourse surrounding the power of global corporations to effect change. Yet it is undoubtedly the case that public bodies, and public leaders, are well positioned, to enact leadership on pressing public issues – through legislation, the enactment of policy, the inspiration of grassroots action and a privileged position in terms of potential for media attention. Such a position makes a study of leadership development within the context of the public sector particularly valid.

This academic debate draws the discussion towards a more detailed treatment of the theoretical context to the research.

Research context

PhD studentship context

The researcher gained funding for this research through a PhD studentship and the basic parameters were therefore established prior to the commencement of the work.

The research proposal was entitled *Lost in translation: looking for leadership under the lamplight*. The basic case made was that the academic literature seems to be stuck in a positivist rut, whereby it is overly concerned with discovering 'correct' formulas for the development of leadership. It makes the comparison to a drunk who has lost her/his keys and is looking for them under a street lamp because that is the only area visible to him/her. The case is made that perhaps we have been looking for the answer to the problem of leadership development in the wrong place. Perhaps leadership development has less to do with lists and quantifiable behaviours suitable for particular definable situations, and is more related to assisting leaders grapple with the social construction of issues and the complexity of leadership problems. If this is the case, our fetish for leadership development recipes, such as Emotional Intelligence (1996), is misplaced. We should reconceptualise our notion of leadership development as a transmission exercise, whereby a speaker transmits 'knowledge' unproblematically to a vessel (and singular) leader, who, in turn, pulls the appropriate behavioural levers at work, thus enacting change. If the reality of enacting change is more problematic than this, then so will be our definition of leadership development.

In this sense, the thesis was framed in initially negative terms, born from dissatisfaction with behavioural explanations for leadership development.

Theoretical context

Dissatisfaction with behavioural leadership development

The research was rooted in a felt discontent with behavioural perspectives (e.g. Bolden and Gosling 2006), with their roots in a positivist ontology, and the belief that there are a series of 'best practice' tools available for the delivery of leadership development. The assumption, in short, is that by prescribing a series of 'rational' scientifically verifiable, 'accurate' competencies, such desirable traits and behaviours are capable of transmission from instructor to subject. The assumption behind this is that leadership is a possession of individuals, who, in turn, merely need to 'transmit' a series of messages to others (followers) for leadership to be created. Such a presumption might explain our addiction to leadership fads and the explanations of management gurus (Jackson 2001). One year, our managers are expected to be 'transformational' leaders, the next 'systems thinkers'. Such contradictory messages make sense within a framework that dehumanises individuals and expects them to respond passively to the next series of transmitted broadcasts.

Research suggests that this is an unrealistic reading of human behaviour, that as humans we are far from rational creatures (e.g. Ariely 2008). A growing body of literature suggests that leadership may be more of a process than a possession, one defined by relationships of power, with power viewed as an active, constructive force (for example, Townley 2008). This suggests a far more complex and political leadership environment than suggested by the behavioural movement. It may be that what constitutes good leadership will be dependent on a confluence of factors, actors and a discourse operating locally, in context, and that such a network, a coalition of interests, is subject to constant change.

Moreover, an assumption that competency frameworks and best practice methods are established due to objective reasoning may be dishonest. A reading of Foucault (1977 and 1997) implies that such programmes may exist as a form of disciplining participants to a particular way of leading. Such a reading veers dangerously close to the development of a

'cultish' organisation (as described by Tourish and Pinnington 2002), where the cult at play is a misplaced belief in a one-true-way science, the unending quest for accuracy in a unitary, definable world (Townley 1994). Perhaps it is also the case that such systems of discipline exist to maintain a status quo of leadership, one premised on the principles of sacredness – silence, sacrifice and distance (Grint 2010). This suggests that leadership development, in perpetuating a dominant discourse, may be serving the purpose of ensuring the effective, if customary act of management.

The purpose of this thesis is to go beyond a quest for a perfect syllabus, the 'correct' traits of a leadership development programme. It seeks to view leadership development as a process, exploring an interplay between several actors, who jostle for prominence and compete to imbue leadership development with meaning. It attempts to make sense of the process and of the actions of those individuals at play within it. If power and complexity are major factors within leadership development, as well as leadership, then the way in which we describe and manage the translation of leadership theory to leadership practice will be profoundly altered. It means that we must pay greater attention to the *context* of leadership development.

Considering the above discussion the research can be said to be of some value, both academically and to practitioners. From an academic perspective, the value lies in providing a further empirical contribution to justify or challenge particular theories of leadership development. From a practice perspective, the hope is that the findings of the thesis could assist practitioners in their design of formal leadership development programmes, and, indeed, to consider whether investment in such programmes is a worthwhile use of resources. Additionally, it is hoped that practicing leaders may gain a clearer idea of whether enrolment in a leadership development programme is appropriate for them, a constructive use of their limited time.

There was no automatic assumption within the research that the researcher would conclude that behavioural forms of leadership development were faulty. Rather, the challenge was to form a series of research questions and a research strategy to explore whether leadership

development programmes, adopting a range of theoretical models, or none at all, seemed to generate improvements in leadership practice.

The research question

Aims and objectives

The objective of the research question was to explore whether formal leadership development programmes were of particular use in the development of leadership within the context of the research setting. In this sense, the question had to open the possibility of exploring the delivery of such programmes and their effect in terms of subsequent behaviour and change in practice.

The question, therefore, ought to allow for the possibility that leadership development programmes could affect change, or not, or produce effects somewhere in between. Allowing for the possibility that these programmes are effective in some form, it was the task of the questions to explore how the effects of change were achieved. Academically, it was of value to explore the theoretical basis for methods deployed by individual programmes. Moreover, to allow for the possibility that leadership development involves more than the transmitting of individual, ideal behaviours, it was necessary to construct the question in such a way as to allow for the exploration of broader organisational and social influences on leadership development.

With this in mind, the question was framed as follows.

- *To what extent can we explain whether leadership development programmes improve practiced leadership in the context of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, UK local government, the UK defence sector and New Zealand public sector?*

Justification: The research question recognised the difficulty in stating with authority that a particular developmental intervention was definitively responsible for a particular change in behaviour. Rather, it accommodated the position that, in examining the data, we would be dealing with the subjective views of participants and others as to any improved change in leadership practice. Findings would always therefore be particular to the data set examined.

Nevertheless, the purpose was to explore what goes on within the workings of a leadership development programme that alters – or does not alter at all – practiced leadership. This was rooted in a theoretical concern to explore and test a model, or models, of leadership development, as presented in the literature. It was an invitation to look for explanations in the literature as to why a programme may or may not be successful in generating better leadership.

The concern here was to avoid two potential pitfalls. The first was to design some form of ‘ideal’ leadership development syllabus. To do so would be to assume that all leadership development challenges are alike, capable of being addressed by the same leadership theory. Another trap to be avoided was the construction of some form of ‘neutral’ measurement device for particular tools of leadership development. It was felt that to follow such a course would be to imitate the behavioural logic of presenting a one best way. Rather, it would be left to the range of subjective participant voices to express what they experienced as an effective process. Moreover, the question was worded so that it would leave open the range of theories available for analysis within the field of leadership development. Its purpose was not to restrict the discussion to one particular field of leadership development study.

The question has a practical, as well as theoretical colour. If leadership development programmes are not effective in generating better leadership, then resources would be better channelled towards alternative initiatives. If they do seem to have an effect, questions are raised about the extent of this change and how programmes manage to deliver such change. In either case, further questions are justified – to explore how we

might present an alternative to leadership development programmes or how we might improve existing programmes.

Methodological and research design issues

The methodological challenge as briefly presented by the above discussion leaves open various possibilities for the strategic direction of the research process. It may be the case, for example, that behavioural methods of leadership development result in transformational change in practice, in which case the task for the researcher may be to generate lists of pedagogic methods and to describe their relationship to particular practiced competencies. Yet it is also possible that leadership development is more akin to a sensemaking process, in which case a research strategy capable of tracking a range of influences and subjective constructions over a period of time becomes necessary.

The design of the initial research proposition, made prior to the researcher's enrolment as a student, required the collection of data during two distinct phases of leadership development and in two distinct settings. Firstly, data would be collected during the formal leadership development programme. Secondly, work would be conducted in the workplace of selected participants, in an attempt to track the effect of the leadership development programme. Although this suggested a longitudinal research strategy, it by no means bound the design to a qualitative or quantitative logic.

A more tangible restriction could be said to exist in the nature of the case studies. For example, if one of the case studies being studied characterised leadership as largely socially constructed, then pursuing a survey method, adopting a positivist view of leadership development, would be fruitless, as the tenor of such a programme would draw the discourse of leadership away from such constructions. From a positivist position, it would be unreliable as the sample would be biased, in an epistemological sense, towards behavioural formulas for leadership. In the case of studying a largely behavioural programme, a positivist methodological outlook may result in limited, narrow research findings, far from

the purpose of the research, which is aimed at exploring the possibility that effective leadership development may be more than a transmission exercise. A phenomenological perspective need not dismiss the possibility that leadership development is best enacted through behavioural competencies.

Summary of chapters

Literature review

The chapter begins by presenting a summary of the evolution of leadership studies. It claims that the field of leadership has matured to a position where a body of work has emerged that interprets leadership as socially constructed and seeks to analyse its operation within the context of a complex environment. Grint's (2010) model of a 'sacred' leadership is examined and the question posed as to whether we are ready to accept a radical change in the way we practice leadership.

The chapter states that work in the field of leadership development has mimicked work on leadership, only recently taking a more process-oriented view. This is evidenced by a paucity of work which seeks to analyse leadership development holistically, in the context of a disputed and complex environment. Works on leadership development are categorised as either individual or collective in focus. Within each of these foci, two distinct schools of leadership development are explored.

An 'individual' leadership development focus addresses personal development aimed at the development subject.

First, the behavioural school of leadership development is criticised as a collective form of control masquerading as an individualistic form of development. Yet it is stated that this school of development maintains that accuracy in definition of problems and 'appropriate'

behaviour and the clear communication of these competencies is what makes for an effective leadership development experience.

Second, the authentic leadership development school is considered as an alternative, with its focus on treating each individual participant as unique. It is stated that such an emphasis holds that a successful process will be dependent upon participants discovering more about their own unique and personal set of unconscious values.

Next, a more collective focus on leadership development is explored.

A 'coalition' school is described adopting Actor Network Theory (ANT) as a mode of analysis. Although these writers have not explicitly addressed leadership development, it is stated that such an interpretation encourages us to view the process of development as an *engagement* with theory – that success will depend on the ability of participants to construct highly political coalitions of meaning around leadership theory. Thus, a wide range of actors will need to commit to the process of leadership development and change in leadership practice.

The experiential school of leadership development, rooted in a constructionist view of leadership, is defined as a series of methods which assist participants in translating leadership theory into leadership practice, rooted in constructionist views of leadership. A range of methods are examined, such as executive coaching and action learning. The theory of prototyping (Hogg and Terry 2000; Hogg 2001) is examined, with its power to influence a development process highlighted. The notion of a community of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1999) is discussed. It is stated that this school of leadership development holds that for any process to be successful, it needs to be closely linked with real work problems.

The approaches outlined above represent four distinct theoretical models to be tested in the field.

Methodology

An initial discussion is offered, stating that leadership development seems to be a field that lends itself to a phenomenological reading, examining it as a social phenomenon that exists within a value-laden environment where meaning is negotiated through relationships of power. A discussion is presented, differentiating between qualitative and quantitative research methods. The researcher's belief that leadership development requires a longitudinal, qualitative research strategy is offered. A range of specific qualitative research methodologies are discussed, with their comparative strengths and weaknesses, in the context of the present study, weighed.

Ethnography is justified as an appropriate research strategy. Its emphasis on the research context is offered as valuable for a study of a disputed phenomenon such as leadership development. The capacity of ethnography to value and give voice to the subjective perspectives of actors is highlighted. Its capacity for presenting a depth of analysis, with a range of scenes and perspectives gained over time, is discussed. The challenges presented by ethnography, in particular, the limitations of a subjective strategy, are discussed.

The research design is described and the method of analysis discussed. It is stated that the research findings will be bound by the context within which the ethnography was pursued but that this is regarded as acceptable and valuable research by ethnographers. The theoretical framework offered in the literature review is used as the basis for a discussion on the strategy for data analysis. The selection criteria for inclusion in the thesis and the lens of analysis are established. The chapter concludes with a discussion of an appropriate ethical framework for the research.

Results

The results section is presented utilising the theoretical framework established in the literature review.

1. Individual-focused leadership development

a. Behavioural development:

Data is presented from two exercises on two separate programmes, based around the results of psychometric testing. It is stated that participants experienced little practical leadership improvement as a result of behavioural forms of development. The data demonstrates that the effect of these exercises was the generation of amusement, rebellion or ambivalence – but not engagement and change.

b. Authentic leadership development:

The section offers support for authentic leadership development and individuation in generating deep personal insights. The data shows how this form of leadership development can help participants reflect upon their personal values and develop a clearer sense of purpose. This section considers a lack of emphasis on personal leadership development within some of the programmes observed. It is stated that in the absence of a formalised framework as part of a development programme, leaders generate their own personal visions, based on their own 'crucible' experiences, which later act as powerful prototype images when these leaders reflect upon their leadership values.

2. Collectively-focused leadership development

a. Coalition leadership development:

The section considers how participants responded to theory in the context of a political coalition of leadership development. It states that theories with most resonance for participants appear to be ones which address issues of power and complexity. It states that a successful engagement with theory requires the enrolment of a coalition of support for change at work – with a transition made from leadership development to leadership coalition. It presents examples of failure in meaning generation, where aspects of the coalition of leadership development ‘betray’ the process.

b. Experiential leadership development:

This states that successful instances of this form of leadership development are caused through the generation of trust and a safe ‘space’ for dialogue; addressing work problems; providing support and critical challenge for participants, from peers and programme organisers; enabling a willingness on the part of participants to ‘expose’ their fears and weaknesses, and; placing a premium on learning through, as well as from, others. Women are found to gain *particular* value from experiential learning.

Experiential learning is seen to fail when it avoids the discussion of work issues and when actors within the leadership coalition of participants fail to engage in the process of ‘advanced’ leadership development.

An additional point is made. Namely, that these schools of leadership development were not observed in isolation. In two of the programmes observed, they were viewed operating in tandem with other models of leadership development. From the perspective of participants, these were seen as the most successful programmes in terms of generating

leadership change. The least significant programmes were those which consisted of a single successful theoretical model. This suggests that effective models of development are complementary and the workings of one may contribute to the success of others. Thus it is stated that the potential exists to construct a synthesis model of a process of leadership development.

Discussion and conclusion

Reflections upon the research design and strategy adopted are made, with weaknesses and challenges of the process highlighted.

The findings of the research are summarised and re-examined in the context of the literature review, again using the theoretical frameworks presented in the literature review (behavioural, authentic, coalition and experiential) as a basis for the analysis. The potential for a synthesis model is examined in greater detail. It is stated that, on the strength of the findings presented earlier, the model may represent greater value than the sum of its parts in isolation. It would suggest that effective leadership development should be concerned with managing a sensemaking process, where various theoretical perspectives will enrich and inform each other. It is stated that the synthesis model holds the potential for assisting organisations and participants in changing the way leadership is practiced. In turn, however, this may threaten the sacredness of leadership. It is hypothesised that this may be one reason why there seems to be a scarcity of writing and practical examples of such a process focus. The analysis portion of the chapter concludes by offering a lifecycle metaphor thought suitable for conceptualising the challenge of designing an effective formal leadership development experience, before some thoughts on appropriate future research are offered.

2. Literature review

Introduction

The purpose of a literature review, according to Bryman (2004, p.526) is to engage in a search of the existing literature in the chosen field in order to discover what is already known about the area of study; to discover which concepts and theories are relevant; to explore which research methods have been adopted by published writers; to understand points of controversy and disagreement; to explore inconsistencies in findings, and; to determine whether there are any unanswered questions. The final reason offered suggests that the ultimate goal of a literature review is to enable the construction of theory, which can be tested through field research.

This chapter represents a survey of the leadership development literature to search for explanations as to what may constitute an effective leadership development process.

It begins with a brief consideration of the leadership literature. Without defining how the researcher interprets the concept of 'leadership', it would be difficult to discuss its development. It concludes that more recent interpretations of leadership view this phenomenon as a contested process, rather than an individual possession. It is stated that leadership development theory has tended to follow leadership theory. Most studies of leadership development choose to focus on one particular element. These are explored in terms of an 'individual' and 'collective' focus. Each focus is described as containing two distinct schools of thought. These are discussed in turn.

First, individual-focused leadership development is explored. The behavioural school of development is described, with a critique offered that it represents an overly unitarist view of leadership development, delivered through a classroom, 'transmission' pedagogy and overlooks the contested nature of leadership. With this in mind, the 'authentic' school of leadership development is explored. It is stated that this school views personal development

as vital but only in as much as it offers a means for leaders to explore their individuality, rather than encouraging conformity to a particular behavioural type.

Second, the chapter explores a more collective interpretation of leadership development. This offers an alternative view of how theory is disseminated within leadership development. Where the first section questioned the utility of a classroom, 'transmission' model, this section offers an alternative view. The learning organisation model views leadership development as a systemic issue, where innovation, garnered through classroom experiences or other sources, is capable of surfacing from many points within a collective. This model is criticised for its naivety concerning the role of power and politics in the development of leadership. With this in mind, Actor Network Theory (ANT) is proposed as a means of reconceptualising systemic learning as coalition learning, where the process is viewed as systemic, yet highly politicised. Hence, a coalition school is described.

Remaining within the collective focus, the chapter explores the experiential school of leadership development, which is rooted in a constructionist belief that power, identity and therefore leadership is developed in specific locales of action, the sites where the construction of meaning takes place. The various methods of experiential learning are discussed.

Third, the chapter explores the few process views of leadership development presented in the literature. It is stated that these explanations of leadership development are currently underdeveloped.

Finally, a summary of the positions offered by the various schools of leadership development are offered as a basis for testing in the field.

Leadership theory as a basis for leadership development theory

To present a discussion, and ultimately a model, of effective leadership development without a discussion on the very concept which is to be developed, 'leadership', would lack credibility. This section will provide a brief overview of the history of leadership studies – from early trait theories to constructionist views of leadership.

Trait theories of leadership

The dominant view of leadership, prior to the explosion of interest in the psychology of leadership following the Second World War (Grint 2011), was represented by a belief that leadership was synonymous with particular individuals of exceptional talent. Trait theories of leadership assert that leaders are “born not made” (Bryman, 1992, p.2), that there is “something remarkable about the character of the leader that makes him or her a leader” (Grint 2001, p.2). For trait theorists, leadership as a concept is inseparable from the individual leader. This body of theory suggests that, regardless of context, certain individuals will always make better leaders than the rest of us. The individual leader is representative of 'leadership' as a whole, and other factors, such as followers and the political, social, and economic environment are viewed as a passive backdrop. Trait theory has been widely criticised on two fronts (Bratton, Grint and Nelson 2005). The first is that it is an elitist view of leadership, assuming that only a certain kind of individual (usually male) could possibly hope to aspire to the heights of leading. This ignores the fact that a list of leadership traits will always be particular to a local culture. Secondly, the theory overlooks the role of context within leadership.

Contingency and behavioural perspectives of leadership

The next step in the evolution of leadership theory was a move towards more behaviourally-focused theory. Rooted in organisational psychology, this school of leadership highlighted the importance of the situation to leadership. The trait approach was questioned by Stogdill (1948), who found that it was difficult to generalise effective leadership requirements across situations. Building on this, Fiedler (1964) theorised that an 'appropriate' leadership response could be offered according to the relationship of the leader to her/his followers, the degree of power possessed by the leader and the degree of structure required by the task.

These behavioural theories of leadership find their theoretical roots in the principles of scientific management (Grint 2005a). For scientific management writers (Taylor 1967 and Fayol 1984) the responsibility of leading involved applying boundaries and rules to a task in order that it may be tackled as efficiently as possible by a follower. Within such thinking the role of a manager is predetermined by the indexation of knowledge and practice, depending on the situation, "the establishment of many rules, laws and formulae which replace the judgement of the individual workman and which can be effectively used only after having been systematically recorded, indexed etc" (Taylor 1967, p.37). This assumes an ontological unitarism, where the nature of the environment is considered to be independently and scientifically verifiable, rather than socially contested and constructed. The contingency school highlights the importance of the situation, stating that a leader will need to adapt leadership behaviour according to the demands of the environment. The role of leadership is to analyze a particular situation and to prescribe requisite behaviours, to pass instruction down a hierarchy of command, to transmit information. This is a "deficit" model of leadership, where "failings" of individuals are contrasted to a stable environment and repaired (James and Ladkin 2008, p.14).

This emphasis on the situation and, even, on individual characteristics within leadership theory, has found expression in behavioural and competency methods of leadership development, to be discussed in the next section.

Systemic leadership

Systems theory, while not explicitly a theory of leadership, has been influential in the development of leadership theory. Indeed, one of its main advocates (Senge 1999) uses the term 'leadership' freely. Systems theory has sought to introduce the complexity of the situation as a central concern within organisation studies. Through attempting to make connections between organisations, departments and individuals, systems theory emphasises what it views as the interdependent nature of leadership. It thus recognises the inherent complexity of leading systems that stretch the thinking and perspectives of leaders. According to Senge (1999, p.7), we tend to view the world in a series of snapshots, due to our own unique and subjective perspectives and fail to consider the interrelations and webs of activity that contribute to what we think of as leadership. In other words, "most players see their job as 'managing their position' in isolation from the rest of the system". Systems theorists often draw comparisons between systems in the workplace and natural, biological systems (Kellner-Rogers 2006). The suggestion here is that systems leadership is a 'natural' way of doing business.

A contrast between 'reductionist' thinking and 'systems' thinking is drawn by theorists in the field. The presupposition is that most leadership thinking involves analysing components, rather than connections (Chapman 2004, p.35). A duality is therefore established. Leadership is encapsulated within the complexity of systems, rather than in the 'simplicity' of components. For Chapman, the process of systems leadership involves going up a "level of abstraction", to see the larger picture. This provides, he says, a more "holistic" view of leadership. Complexity that is initially viewed as threatening can therefore be mapped and some sense made of it. The role of leaders within this logic, Senge says, is as "designers, stewards, and teachers" (1999, p.340).

As desirable as this form of leadership sounds, maybe we should be suspicious of systems theory. At heart, perhaps it does not differ greatly from behavioural theories of leadership. The behavioural school is rooted in a view of the business environment as static and scientifically verifiable. Equally, systems theory holds nature as a model of a 'natural',

'correct' way of development. In other words, systems theory too often assumes that individuals are 'naturally' driven by the desire to do good and to strive for the wellbeing of the whole. The impression given to the reader is that were it not for the unnatural imposition of modern-day machinery, human beings would more effectively collaborate in a 'natural', sustainable and satisfying system. Might systems theory thus present us with another normative view of leadership? These issues will be further explored later, when we consider the development vehicle of systems theory, that of the learning organisation.

Feminism within leadership studies

Feminist scholars have drawn our attention to the fact that in many of the normative accounts of leadership, what we construct as 'leader' may, in fact, more closely resemble a male leader. Rosener (1995) describes typical constructions of good leaders as possessing qualities such as 'strength', 'rationality', 'independence', 'linear thinking', 'aggression' and 'competitiveness'. She points out that these qualities could also be described as 'male'. Women, in this case, could be marginalised within leadership studies. A body of work, drawing on the apparent patriarchal tendency within leadership studies has developed, highlighting the strengths of more 'feminine' leadership, suggesting that women may be better suited to certain kinds of leadership challenges (for example, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt 2001; Eagly and Carli 2003), particularly when a more transformational style is required. Other authors have concentrated on the 'double bind' that women leaders find themselves placed within (Carli and Eagly 1991; Bryans and Mavin 2003; Bligh and Kohles 2008). The suggestion here is that when women attempt to imitate 'male' behaviours at work, such as aggression and competitiveness, they tend to be constructed as destructive and deviant figures. The alternative, to express more nurturing characteristics, can lead to women being overlooked at work and being constructed as a 'push over' or overly 'soft'. Feminist leadership development is an under-explored area and one must draw inferences from the work on leadership studies in order to consider how such theories may translate into a specific development process – for example, all-women cohorts, individualised coaching, confidence building and the shadowing of successful women leaders at work. In

fact, one such study (Roan and Rooney 2006) demonstrates that women may successfully develop leadership ability and confidence through the shadowing of successful women role models.

Charismatic and transformational accounts of leadership

It is a more 'nurturing' side of leadership that is promoted by transformational leadership writers. Rooted in the charismatic leadership theory of Weber (1978), these writers suggest that an important aspect of leadership lies in the ability of leaders to inspire extraordinary acts on the part of their followers. Weber (1978, p.241) characterised charismatic leadership as:

... a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a "leader".

In other words, this was a specific and quite extraordinary meeting of personal qualities and environmental circumstances. For Weber, charismatic leadership marked a radical break with the past and its investment in traditional and legal forms of authority. For charismatic leadership to prove effective, however, Weber stated that followers had to be prepared to accept the irrational sacrifices required of them, hence a period of crisis was usually necessary. Moreover, the leader would be required to continually reproduce successful outcomes in order for his/her followers to continue to obey. Beyer (1999) states that Weber placed great importance on the role of followers within charismatic leadership, as their willingness to accept sacrifice largely determined the longevity and success of charismatic leaders. Furthermore, the author states that by following an exclusively psychological focus, transformational leaders overlook the contextual factors that are so crucial in the success or failure of charismatic leadership.

Transformational leadership can be characterised as a diluted form of charismatic leadership, concerned with the interpersonal aspects of leadership, rather than the socially constructed interplay between followers and leaders. MacGregor Burns (1978) is frequently cited as the founder of transformational leadership, highlighting a difference between what he saw as transformational and transactional leadership, the former concerning the ability of leaders to produce results through inspiration and intrinsic motivation, the latter through financial and other rewards. The author, a political scientist by trade, took a broader, more sociological view of leadership. Yet his concept of transactional and transformational leaders was deployed by Bass (1985) as a psychological tool for measuring the transformative nature of leaders through his Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. This questionnaire sought to represent leaders along a continuum, from transactional to transformative, rather than as either one type of leader or another (Conger 2011). Following from this, Conger and Kanungo (1999) added an element of context to the analysis, stating that a transformative leader will need to take a measure of her/his followers and environment before coming to a judgment on the level of transformational leadership possible.

The common critique of transformational leadership is that it simply represents a return to the trait and behavioural models already discussed (Bratton, Grint and Nelson 2005). Through attempting to isolate certain effective leadership characteristics, transformative leadership may be seen as similar to the trait school. Later developments, emphasising 'appropriate' leader behaviours according to contextual demands, are an echo of the contingency school of leadership. The modes of development in these cases are no different – with questionnaires and desirable competencies acting as the vehicle.

Constructionist writing on leadership

It is in response to these constructs of ideal types of leadership, according to a positivist view of the world, that constructionist leadership writers have offered an alternative. These writers draw much of their inspiration from the work of Foucault and his view of power. At the heart of this analysis is a conception of power as a relationship. For Foucault (1977), power does not reside in the possession of an individual, nor is it contained neatly within a position of authority. Instead, power is a collectively negotiated phenomenon. It is formed as subjects both inscribe others with discourse identities and are in turn inscribed by others. "Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising it (Foucault 1977, p.98)." It is a fluid process, forever changing according to the shifting positions of discursive alignments. Thus, power is only observable locally, in the moment. Power, therefore, is an active phenomenon, as it creates identity through the means of a constant negotiation between actors, "neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather exercised, and that it only exists in action (Foucault 1977, p.88)." This contradicts the trend in the mainstream organisational literature, which, as Morrell and Hartley (2006, p.283) state, too frequently operationalises power as a "discrete subset of behaviours" possessed by individuals, to be wielded as another tool of management.

A redefinition of power from destructive possession to constructive process offers the potential for a reframing of leadership, in terms of how followers may be subjugated by a seemingly 'rational' discourse (Townley 2008), through to the potential of leaders to redefine leadership meaning (Grint 2001 and 2005a), thus using power as a positive, constructive force.

The constructionist school of leadership allows us to explore and to question notions we may previously have taken for granted. For example, Collinson (2006 and 2011) urges us to reconsider how we construct followers within the leadership equation. He states that we tend to view followers in rather two-dimensional terms, overlooking the fact that their

support and resistance is far more nuanced than we at first realise. In a similar vein, Grint (2005a) states that it is followers who often determine the success or failure of leaders. In offering destructive consent, followers may quietly allow leaders to fail, whereas, by offering a robust constructive dissent, they may exercise their ability to choose and shape the future by guiding their leaders in the appropriate direction.

It is this potential for the active nature of power to shape perceptions that has been most recently drawn upon within leadership studies. Grint (2005b and 2009) brings a constructionist perspective to bear on how we construct problems within leadership. He differentiates between three forms of problem construction – ‘Tame’, ‘Crisis’ and ‘Wicked’. Tame problems are constructed as issues for which we know the answer, no matter whether the solution is technically sophisticated or not – these are management, rather than leadership, issues. Crisis problems are constructed as emergencies which require decisive and strong action – a command response. Wicked problems are constructed as difficult issues for which there may be no definitive solution. These problems are often social and systemic in nature and cross organisational boundaries. When a problem is constructed in this way, Grint states, the suggestion is that leadership is required. A solution to such a problem may not be simple, or elegant, but will draw on several perspectives, and will be ‘clumsy’.

Although many constructionist studies solely choose to highlight the subjugation and control of followers, the above discussion highlights the fact that such a perspective may be put to use in generating a more creative and positive discussion of the potential of leadership to reframe our perceptions of the possible. In this vein, Grint and Jackson (2010) have called for a socially constructive form of social constructionism, drawing on the strengths of many schools of leadership in order to develop theories that may benefit society at large. Similarly, Tourish and Barge (2010) have expressed their frustration that too many constructionist writers seem content to limit their work to a critique of the status quo without offering alternative solutions. They suggest that constructionist work should be judged in light of its potential to improve leadership in practice.

From the perspective of the researcher, it ought to be stated that he favours a socially constructive, social constructionist position on leadership. It would be insufficient if this study were to simply act as a critique of dominant perspectives on leadership development. This does not mean that the researcher believes all other perspectives on leadership should be overlooked. It is hoped that the ensuing discussion will draw on the strengths of several perspectives on leadership and leadership development in order to develop a socially useful model of leadership development.

Connecting leadership and leadership development theory

As will become apparent in the following discussion, it is possible to make a connection between each movement of leadership theory with a particular field of leadership development theory. In this sense, it may be said that leadership development has followed in the steps of the development of leadership theory.

This is recognised by Day (2001), who differentiates between ‘leader’ development and ‘leadership’ development. His position is that early theories of leadership development mimicked early theories of leadership, concentrating their efforts on an individual leader in the belief that such development activity would equate to the development of leadership for an entire organisation. As leadership theory has progressed, early trait and contingency theories of leadership have been increasingly questioned, with more systemic views of leadership offered. As our understanding of leadership has matured Day (2001) argues that so must our understanding of leadership development. Hence, we must view leadership development more as a means of developing collective leadership capacity.

Ten years after making his original plea for more research on *leadership*, not *leader*, development, Day (2011) again stated his belief that too few studies in the field examine leadership development as a collective process. A dearth of such studies has held back the field as a whole, he states. This may, in part, be due to the fact that individual-focused work within leadership studies continues apace, regardless of developments elsewhere in the

field. This may be seen as a symptom of a silo mentality within leadership studies and a failure of leadership scholars, from various schools of thought, to draw upon the strengths of their respective works in order to improve the practice of leadership (Grint and Jackson 2010). Regardless of the reason, leadership development theory, like leadership theory, seems to concentrate on either one or another aspect of the process. Our understanding of what makes a successful leadership development theory will therefore vary according to where we look in the literature.

This chapter will address each of these 'schools' of leadership development in turn. Each school, it is stated, can be located within a particular focus of leadership development. For the purposes of this work, the author has divided the literature into two distinct sections – individual and collective. Other choices would have been valid – for example, critical and unitary or realist and constructionist. Similarities and differences between schools exist within each of these dichotomies. It was felt, however, that the individual/collective separation best represented the broad evolution of leadership, and leadership development, theory. Ultimately, the division should be viewed as an organising tool, rather than a statement of epistemological and ontological positioning.

First, individual interpretations of leadership development will be examined. This will begin with a view of the behavioural school of leadership development. The chapter will provide a critique of such methods, stating that they may be interpreted, not as individualistic, but as a collectivising means of control. The 'authentic' school of leadership development, rooted in the Jungian theory of individuation, will be examined as an emancipatory alternative.

Second, the chapter will consider collective views of development.

Systems theorists have made a significant contribution within this focus, with their model of a learning organisation. The learning organisation will be criticised, however, for a lack of an emphasis provided of the politics involved in any form of collective development. ANT will be examined as an alternative means of conceptualising leadership development – with any engagement with theory viewed as a political process occurring inside a coalition of development. This school will be labelled the 'coalition school'.

Finally, within the collective focus, the experiential learning school will be explored. It will be stated that this school of development is rooted in constructionist views of leadership and a belief that power is an active force, something which creates meaning. Various methods of experiential learning are examined. It is stated that a danger of such a view of leadership development is that it might encourage a narrow view of leadership and exclude potentially valuable outside innovation.

Each school of leadership development can be viewed as offering alternative interpretations of what it means to experience successful leadership development. These differing versions are summarised as a basis for testing in the field.

Throughout the chapter, a table will be offered, summarising each 'school' of leadership. This will act as a reminder of the ground covered and as a heuristic device for conceptualising the alternative propositions made by the perspectives highlighted.

Recap – Thus far we have briefly explored the development of leadership theory as a subject of academic study. It was stated that leadership theory has, in broad terms, evolved from an individual-focused discipline, to one which encapsulates a more sophisticated view of leadership as a collectively owned, and political, process. It was stated that leadership development theory has mimicked leadership theory, with more studies over time viewing power and collective sensemaking as crucial.

Yet the perseverance, it was noted, of individual-focused explanations of leadership, is echoed in the development literature. It was noted that individual and collective explanations of leadership development coalesce side by side. Four alternative explanations for a successful leadership development process are offered – behavioural, authentic, coalition and experiential. These explanations will be used as a basis for testing in the field.

The chapter now moves on to consider the first broad focus – individual-focused perspectives on leadership development.

i. Individual-focused perspectives on leadership development

This section will first examine the behavioural theory of leadership development. The section will move on to discuss 'authentic', Jungian development. Finally, a summary of these perspectives will be offered as a means for testing 'effective' leadership development in the field.

a. The behavioural school of leadership development

This section will consider how theories of behavioural and trait leadership translate into leadership development, through the mapping and development of leadership competencies and 'types'. The section will conclude with a critique questioning the utility and the purpose served by these practices, as offered by social constructionist writers.

As stated in the earlier discussion of trait and contingency leadership theories, behavioural theories of leadership development are rooted in scientific positivism, a belief in a definite, scientifically verifiable, stable world. They posit that it is possible to pinpoint an appropriate series of leadership behaviours that will be effective within the context of particular leadership challenges. It is a realist perspective, which states that a definitive view of the leadership environment, and therefore required leadership behaviour, exists in truth, and ignores the possibility that such perspectives may be inherently subjective and socially constructed. The theories thus assume a stability and verifiability of environment, which is taken to exist empirically and independently of its actors. Furthermore, they bestow a linear and unitary value to meaning, maintaining that a given series of behaviours will match the needs of this knowable world.

Leadership development, within this logic, is presumed to best take place through the construction of abstract principles and competencies, which can serve as a template for development. The defining feature of this school of development theory is its belief that

leadership theory is something to be transmitted from an expert source to an essentially passive vessel, namely, the participant.

Leadership development competencies

The competency model of leadership development was introduced into popular parlance by Boyatzis (1982), who describes the science of the design of 'appropriate' behaviours and traits required for leading in a particular situation or environment. These competencies may require discipline and transmission through development methods such as classroom learning, coaching, psychological profiling and mentoring, where the benefits of these competencies are 'correctly' explained to participant leaders. It is an attempt to impose an order and independently verifiable science upon the tacit knowledge and practice traditions that permeate organisations. This is a functionalist view of organisations – the view that a particular set of behaviours and traits lead to certain results; in other words, a belief in linearity. This is a school of thought that dehumanises the role of leadership development where, seemingly, even the status of the participants as human beings seems optional:

The specific results required by the job occur because "specific actions" have been taken. Technically, these actions may be demonstrated by a person, a droid (i.e. a robot) or a machine... The individual's competencies represent the capability that he or she brings to the job situation. When the responsibilities of the job to produce the desired results require the demonstration of specific actions, the individual draws from his or her inner resources for the capability to respond. These requirements of the job can be considered the job's demands on the person. (Boyatzis 1982, p.12).

Such a framework must, logically, Boyatzis asserts, lead to required performance. It is the belief that the requirements of leadership development are capable of measurement and definition and that these competencies will be relatively stable over time and space. The task of development therefore is to shape leaders according to a predefined set of competencies identified as suitable to the task or leadership role. A process of developing

competencies is thus established (Boyatzis 1982, p.253), whereby competencies are relayed, transmitted to managers and executed. The skill here is 'understanding' the 'correctness' of the competency, to engage in self-surveillance (self-assessment and feedback), ensuring the competency is being adhered to and to correct 'inaccuracy'. Other examples of the search for 'correct' leadership competencies pervade the extant literature. For example, Wong et al (2003) highlight what they believe to be six 'meta-competencies' that are essential for successful military leadership. Rather than questioning the epistemological basis of competencies, they seek to discover more 'accurate' development needs. In a similar vein Yeung and Ready (1995) hypothesise that particular forums of leadership development – classroom, experiential etc – might be more appropriate depending on the leadership competencies to be developed.

Yet nowhere in these models is there a questioning of who defines the 'required' competency or why a particular set of skills and behaviours is judged to be more suitable than another, alternative, set. To temporarily suspend a constructionist critique and apply a technical criticism, therefore, this constitutes an incomplete feedback loop.

It is this approach of pre-prescribed behaviours for particular situations that dominates the work of Adair (1988 and 2005). Adair (2005) is critical of the trait model of leadership because it is impossible to systematically acquire innate leadership qualities. Yet he proceeds to state that some qualities are necessary – such as enthusiasm, confidence and humanity – and thus becomes trapped in the same tick-list logic discussed earlier. This logic pervades the rest of his work on development, rooted as it is in the competency movement. Indeed, Adair claims (2005, p.97) to have "led the way" in the competency school and sets out generic behaviours that will, he believes, prove effective in a range of environments. These 45 behaviours form the basis of what he regards as good leadership, yet constantly teeter on the edge of banal generality – with recommendations (such as the need for a leader to analyse problems) being so obvious and broad as to be of little use as a practical guide to leadership development.

Separation from the working milieu

The behavioural and competency schools pay little heed to the here and now of the workplace power dynamic. Instead, attention is paid to developing an increasingly 'accurate' framework of competencies, discovering a knowable and universal 'truth of leadership (e.g. Holton and Lynham 2000). Therefore, there is no need, in this form, for development activity to have much relation at all to the working environment. Leaders can, and indeed, should, be developed in isolation from colleagues and professional milieu, within a classroom, for example. For Adair (1988) the challenge is not one of a fundamental pedagogic nature but of tinkering around the edges of the classroom format. This form of development advocates role play in a 'safe', 'separated' environment. Adair (1988, p.36) recommends variety and participation – but only within the isolated environment of the classroom – not in the seemingly irrelevant context of the actual leadership situation. This development philosophy requires that Adair's three circles theory of leadership (which highlights the interrelationship of 'task', 'team' and 'individual' within leadership) is taught to specific, pre-established, rigid rules. Any deficiency in development is attributed to a failure of development practitioners to adhere to the script. In reporting on a visit to the Fire and Rescue Service development programme for its leaders, Adair is disturbed to discover that his original principles of leadership have been adapted:

Officers from the Fire Service Staff College at Moreton-in-the-Marsh visited Sandhurst in 1965 or 1966 and adopted the functional leadership course for their own use. Many hundreds of students pass through that college every year, and so it soon became a major use of the course. Visiting Moreton-in-the-Marsh some twenty years later, in order to talk to the staff about leadership training I found that the three circles was still taught but distortion had crept in to the content, the method had become watered down and there was a lack of staff training (Adair 1988, p.91).

Again, therefore, the preoccupation here is with a lack of 'accuracy' in methods of transmission, rather than questioning the model of analysis in and of itself. In the case above, it is assumed that competency leadership development is delivered through the

vehicle of classroom instruction. This need not be the case. We therefore turn to a consideration of other modes of competency delivery: executive coaching and psychological profiling.

Executive coaching and psychological profiling

Psychological profiling:

Profiling is a practice which seeks to place participants within psychological categories, with the aim of aiding self-knowledge. Inspired by Jung's (1977) *Psychological Types*, participants are required to complete a survey, the results of which will indicate whether they are more inclined to extraversion or introversion, intuition or sensation-seeking, for example. The most commonly utilised model is the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), although others, such as Firo B, and a profiling tool modelled around Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (1996) are also frequently deployed. They are often used at the beginning of development programmes in parallel with 360-degree feedback from colleagues. Required competencies can thus be compared to profiling scores at the selection stage or during formal development, providing a template for addressing 'deficiencies'. The MBTI seeks to mimic Jung's typology by stating that each individual's personality will consist of a dominant psychological "function" (Stevens 1994, p.85) and a shadow function. The theory is that each of us represses a particular aspect of our personality, a shadow side, and therefore we are all living, walking contradictions. Another major 'lesson' practitioners seek to draw from psychological typing, other than self knowledge, is that an organisation will be comprised of numerous different personality 'types', each with the capacity to add a different perspective to the leadership of the organisation. Any internet search for MBTI providers reveals a host of options, indicating that the deployment of this tool has become almost industrial in scale. OPP, for example, an international business psychology consultancy, states that the purpose of the MBTI is that it "sorts individuals into psychological 'types' so that they can identify how they are similar to some people and different to others, and how they can improve

their working and personal relationships in a positive and constructive way”

(http://www.opp.eu.com/mbti?gclid=COng4Mjd2qYCFUQTfAod_Q-f6A).

Most academic contributions to the debate surrounding the use of psychological profiling concentrate on improving the ‘accuracy’ of such tools rather than questioning their utility and purpose in the first place. For example, Leary et al (2009) seek to cross-reference MBTI and Emotional Intelligence scores in order to find similarities between personality ‘types’. English (2006) states that the MBTI “adds value” at “various stages of the development process”, which will provide HR departments “with a clear structure to work with for employees at different stages of their career”. James (2003) is less enthusiastic, advising caution in the use of such profiling tools, especially when drawing conclusions from “slight” scores, but concludes that practitioners “should not throw the baby out with the bath water” and that the challenge is one of accuracy, not of validity.

The most significant critique of such tools lies in the body of constructionist work to be discussed below. Such criticisms are captured by Ford et al (2008, p.75), who highlight the “intuitive appeal” of these instruments, which, they state, may lie in their “tautologous”, contradictory nature, sharing much in common with horoscopes, yet holding more weight due to their “claim to scientific integrity”. The criticism is that these tools, rather than promoting a diversity of discourses, programme organisational members according to the dominant discourse of the organisation, thus closing down important dialogue about the nature of leadership. As stated by Ford et al (2008, p.80) participants, when told that they belong within a particular ‘type’, may seek to enact that type in practice, regardless of whether or not it is a true representation of self. Furthermore, as will be discussed in the next section on individualistic leadership development, Jung himself was critical of a reliance on typology tools, preferring to approach patients as equals, as unique individuals. He vigorously defended individuality and questioned any theory that sought to group people together in any form of collective, be that a social group or particular type.

Behavioural executive coaching:

Executive coaching has become a common form of development within leadership development. Behavioural psychology is the dominant logic deployed in this activity. Through interaction with a coach, competencies can be embedded into the behaviour, if not the psyche, of leadership development participants. These coaches themselves often adhere to a 'correct' framework of coaching, further perpetuating the programmatic nature of such activity.

Behavioural coaching is usually labelled as coaching for 'performance'. With its focus on the everyday performance of the executive in the workplace, this form of coaching seeks to gather information from a variety of sources in the company, including most obviously the coachee, and rectifying these issues through practice, experimentation and experience. The emphasis is thus strongly geared towards performance targets, or competencies (Jarvis et al 2006).

The most popular author on performance coaching is Whitmore (2002), who draws heavily on the available sports coaching literature to form his model. At the heart of the Whitmore approach is the GROW model, which seeks to structure coaching sessions in the direction of meeting targets, or competencies. The model offers a rigorous strategy for goal-setting and implementation planning of competencies. Acronyms, and numerous sub-acronyms, for all occasions are offered, for example, advising that goals should be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time phased (SMART) (Whitmore 2002, p.61). Emphasis is placed on viewing a particular problem 'impartially', using "descriptive rather than evaluative terminology" (Whitmore 2002, p.68) – the assumption being that coaches are disinterested scientists, rather than active participants with their own pre-held views and constructions of leadership. The idea throughout is to "see things as they really are" rather than "distorted" by one's own mental models. There is a critical contradiction at the heart of this approach – that the author seeks an ultimately unattainable 'true reality' through an assumption of impartiality.

The tone of the Whitmore coaching manual is one of common sense and logic. Yet this essentially non-theoretical philosophy rubs uncomfortably against the clear behavioural, competency-based message. At the heart of the Whitmore approach lies a major contradiction. Whilst pursuing what he believes is a flexible, client-centred approach, he is quite rigidly prescriptive in how he believes this process should be delivered. Such an approach would make it difficult for the executive whose concerns may fall in between the various mnemonics of the GROW model, who is unsure whether a goal is worthwhile or has no idea what those goals should be. It is not a model that adapts well to complexity and uncertainty. It also assumes that individuals approach issues in a linear fashion, rather than in a more opportunistic, ad hoc manner. In this sense, Whitmore's GROW model sets itself in opposition, albeit unintentionally, to the flexible and bespoke spirit which he advocates. Furthermore, his referencing of sports performance theory brings to mind Foucault's description of discipline as a physical process, as well as a psychological one, where the fabric of human tissue is territorialised for the purposes of delivering particular goals (Foucault 1997).

Discussion of the disciplinary nature of behavioural leadership development brings us to a critique of this model.

A critique of behavioural leadership development

This section will build on the work cited above, providing a further critique of behavioural forms of leadership development. It will firstly question the notion of 'rationality' within the science at the heart of such models. Secondly, it will explore in more depth notions of discipline within such methods of leadership development. Thirdly, it will explore the direct implications of viewing leadership development as a disciplinary tool in the context of specific modes of development.

A critique of 'rationality' within leadership development

At the heart of behavioural forms of leadership development is an ontological belief in positivism, which is epistemologically transferred into an emphasis on 'rationality'. In other words, if the leadership environment is capable of measurement and unitary definition, then leadership development practitioners should exercise 'rational', 'correct' actions in order to extract the potential of participants. Hence the preoccupation in this canon with accuracy and designing the most 'correct' competencies to be developed. One need not delve into the works of Foucault or his disciples in order to find fault with this view. More recently, populist management writers have started to question whether human actors operate from such a cold, rational basis. This is evidenced, for example, through the experiments of Ariely (2008), demonstrating that human actors are motivated in decision making and general behaviour more by emotions and social convention than by rationality, and in the work of Abrahamson and Freedman (2006), who assert that creative and effective leadership may have as much to do with a reasonable dose of disorder as with neat, logical plans and strategies.

The theory underlying the populist research described at the end of the previous section is well articulated by Townley (1993, 1994 and 2008), who states that a 'rational' approach to organisations and human resource management belies a socially constructed set of control mechanisms which can teach us much about the nature of the operation of power within leadership development. The consequence of such an argument, Townley believes, is a view of actors separated from social relations, from power, participating in "an abstract process", which is "engaged in by socially disembodied being[s], rationality is the property of individuals apart from, and prior to, their entry into social relations (Townley 2008, p.24). The source of this individuality is traced to classical philosophy and it becomes clear that the discourse of the 'rational' individualist leader is one embedded deep within the discourses of mainstream organisational and leadership thinking.

Related to the earlier discussion on constructionist views of leadership, Townley's work questions the basis of the 'rationality' of human resource management techniques, such as

leadership development. 'Good' leadership may be a socially constructed phenomenon, rather than an objective truth, with its techniques of development throughout the organisation operating as methods of subtle control. Leadership development, in other words, may be an attempt at imposing a particular discourse of leadership.

Through the gathering of knowledge an individual becomes more known, the object of surveillance and thus objectivised. The individual may also draw on social and cultural discourses and, in turn, objectivise others through the attribution of personal characteristics and perceived positive/destructive behaviour and so on. Power may be viewed as a fluid network, ever changing, and only ever analyzable in the place, the moment of its co-creation. Knowledge is the same as power. One does not create the other. Rather, they are the different sides of the same coin.

Here we enter the realm of Foucault's (1997) portrayal of Bentham's panopticon, where a central tower of an institution lends its permanent, yet anonymous, gaze towards inmates.

For leadership development, the parallel is clear. We find a theoretical description of the need to prescribe desirable personality traits. It is possible to recognise the definition of accepted behaviours and how these are matched to pre-defined, autonomous circumstances. This is a checklist of desirable qualities operating under the guise of objective, rational analysis. It is the strategy of placing people in boxes, of assigning psychological 'types' to actors, the act of objectification, with docility as the objective. Such an analysis could equally be applied to transformational leadership development (Bryman 1992; Conger & Kanungo 1987; House & Howell 1992), with its emphasis on interpersonal skills and the 'softer' aspects of leading. Just as Foucault (1998) theorised that public discourse on sexuality had more in common with control than liberation, it could be that development labelled superficially as more progressive in nature, could be serving the purpose of camouflaging the workings of power (Tourish and Pinnington 2002; Tourish and Tourish 2010).

Behavioural development seems to be about control. As stated by Ford et al (2008, p.79), leadership development may not be about the development of leadership at all, but more

concerned with “conformity to specific traits and competencies. Thus, the powerful voices of the organisational leaders strive to persuade the rest of the workforce to conform to organisational norms and behaviours”.

Townley’s (2008) analysis offers us the opportunity to explore potential radical alternative purposes to the existence of behavioural leadership development: its artifices of comfortable surroundings, removed from the workplace; the creation of personality ‘types’; the inter-dependency of practitioners, management gurus, a willing audience and populist accounts of heroic leadership. These discourses and many others intermingle to create and preserve an elitist view of ‘leader’ as possessing leadership, power, respect, even adoration. The parallel with Foucault’s conception of the operation of sexuality discourse in the Victorian era is clear; that such a view of leadership development may exist more to maintain an elite of leaders, rather than to develop leadership. Such a view is comforting and self-sustaining. It could be argued that this discourse of individualised leadership has spawned an industry of leadership development, whose sole purpose may be to maintain the status quo. In other words, development itself is infused with power and interests – those of the practitioners who make a living from it, the leaders whose status of privilege is enhanced through it and, even, researchers for whom it provides rich potential for study.

Development through this power-laden interpretation may be viewed, therefore, as the correcting of deviance to the dominant discourse, specifically through competencies and the deployment of specific tools and techniques, such as coaching.

Discipline deployed

Townley (1994) introduces the Foucauldian concepts of taxinomia and mathesis. Both are concerned with the ways in which individuals are classified and ordered in order to be better known, and therefore exploited, as the objects of power. Taxinomia does this through “a sequence of descriptive language”, such as the ordering of staff according to perceived professional strengths and weaknesses, whereas mathesis is the numerical

expression of taxinomia, “a quantitative taxinomia, where the relation between things is conceived of as one of order, or degree and measurement” (Townley 1994, p.30). The process is one of better knowing an individual, and through this inscription of knowing, constructing the very identity of that individual. People are herein known through the language of human resource management, assigned ‘types’, scored and placed into categories, which has the effect of making colleagues more knowable and therefore more docile and capable of control (Townley 1994, p.33).

Through taxinomia and mathesis, Townley argues, individuals can be placed within disciplinary matrices, systems of control that better enable organisations to operate ‘efficiently’. Such procedures allow for the “management at a distance” (Townley 1994, p.41) of employees. This belief in objective criteria of taxinomia and mathesis allows employers to categorise and judge employees. Townley states that practices such as performance appraisal have less to do with the genuine improvement of performance and more to do with the better knowing of individuals and the maintenance of discipline within the ranks. This would explain, Townley states, why organisations persevere with appraisal when most of the available evidence suggests it is a largely ineffective practice.

So where does this leave an analysis of leadership and leadership development? Perhaps it is the paradoxical notion of the ‘objectivity’ of the process of behavioural development, in parallel with its active construction of subjectivity, which lies at the heart of the analysis.

It is an issue highlighted by Bolden et al (2008), who state that leadership development may in fact exist for a range of reasons, only obliquely connected with the development of an individual leader. For the authors, development may have more to do with the construction of the identity of leaders and the transmission of required behaviours than the development of ‘leadership’ as a politically neutral activity:

A ‘narrative logic’ of performance management and leadership development...draws attention to the sense-making dimension of such activities...The impacts of leadership development extend far beyond the acquisition of skills and knowledge by the participant (human capital). Indeed they help build relationships and

networks (social capital) as well as signalling to participants (and conveying this to others in the organisation) that they are now part of the 'leadership cadre' and expected to assume the responsibilities and values associated with such a role (social identity). A key part of leadership development, therefore, is coming to accept one's identity as a 'leader' and developing an affiliation with other 'leaders' in the organisation (Bolden et al 2008, pp.8-9).

It is in a similar vein that management competencies can be argued to operate. As will be stated below, behavioural development may be usefully interpreted through the lens of Foucault's 'examination' and 'confession' (Townley 1994).

The examination:

Townley (1994, p.84) characterises the examination as a form of "hierarchical observation" or surveillance that enables subjects to be better known and therefore managed at a distance. Again, it enables individuals to be classed in numerical terms of "good and bad marks", a "punitive balance sheet of each individual". The danger for organisations, Townley believes, is the linear, 'logical' view of development hindering creativity and alternative means of achieving business results.

A behavioural form of transmission learning, Townley believes, leads to the 'lumping' of knowledge into carefully designed segments of teaching, which may or may not adequately reflect organisational life or the patterns of learning preferred by leaders. Such a method, Townley suggests, is reflective of the will to knowledge of the organisation rather than the will to develop the leader.

Emphasis thus far has been on methods of surveillance and control of subjects as objects. This has failed to address the specific means which may be adopted to ensure that individuals are self-policing. Foucault's concept of the 'confession' is used by Townley to illustrate this very phenomenon.

Confession:

The confessional may be seen in practices such as appraisal but also in the development of leaders. It is an attempt, Townley states, to shape the internal wishes of the subject, controlling their desires and career ambitions. Through confessing weakness the individual lays his/her soul bare and open to inscription and re-animation. Through confessing weakness, a plan may be designed to correct these failings.

The notion of leadership development serving the purpose of a 'confessional' is articulated by Fairhurst (2007). Executive coaching, Fairhurst states, could be interpreted as an attempt to transform a participant's leadership into a coaching 'Discourse', "whose 'truth' is a co-constructed product of the leader's disclosures and the coach's interpretations" (Fairhurst 2007, p.86). The vocabulary and techniques of psychology, she states, are drawn upon for empirical validation of the truth-claims of coaching. The author states that coaching may be mobilised, for example, to 'feminise' the leadership behaviour of an "alpha male", as a means of control, conforming leadership to an increasingly 'inclusive' discourse.

The confessional has a strong emotional, as well as physical aspect. Ford et al (2008, p.81) characterise leadership development as the construction of "new emotional selves". They state that a frequent result of leadership development is the encouraging of participants to be "nice" to subordinates, perpetuating "a managerial identity that is malleable and unquestioning". Such emotional constructs, they state, do not replace existing concepts of self, but, rather, stack a further layer of identity discourse on top of existing self-identities, creating an unworkable and contradictory vision of leadership.

For example, Clutterbuck and Megginson (2006), prior to the very public failure of HBOS, used the company's coaching regime as an exemplar of good practice in the field. With hindsight it is easy to view the case in a very different light. Rather than operating a form of coaching that encouraged open questioning, the methods of discipline and control as outlined above are vividly demonstrated, as descriptions of staff conditioned to sell their financial products in abundance (one of the practices which precisely caused the global

recession) are drawn in admiring terms. At no point are members of staff encouraged to question the fundamental strategy of the company.

Implications for leadership competencies

Bolden and Gosling (2006) outline a detailed and convincing critique of the use of competencies within leadership development, which could also be applied to all behavioural forms of development. They cite familiar weaknesses of the theory as “repeating refrains”. Competencies fragment the task of management rather than representing it in all its complexity, “as an integrated whole”. A generic series of solutions to leadership problems assumes a stable environment. Competencies focus on past performance and assume that these will be sufficient to tackle future challenges. Competency development targets easily identifiable solutions and “measurable behaviours” rather than searching for more “subtle qualities, interactions and situational factors”. Moreover, an emphasis on ‘objective’ measures of success “fails to capture the subjective experience of the leadership relationship.” The result of this, they state, is a “mechanistic approach to education” that fails to consider the nuanced and contextual aspects of leadership. The authors conducted a comparative analysis of competency frameworks with the reflective writings of leaders during a leadership development retreat to determine whether the behaviours extolled through competencies reflected what practicing leaders believed to be the important challenges of leadership.

They found that a “limited version of transformational leadership” was being promoted by most competency frameworks, with leadership presented as a series of “traits, qualities and behaviour possessed by the leader that encourage the participation, development and commitment of others within the organisation” (Bolden and Gosling 2006, p.155). This contrasted, state the authors, with the challenges presented by leaders in their reflective journals, which reflected a desire for “personal vision based on self belief and moral courage; the ethical and social responsibilities of leaders; the importance of self awareness and reflection; shared, emergent and situational leadership; balancing leadership dilemmas

that arise from complex and uncertain situations; the development of current and future leaders; and the impact of wider social change such as shifting ethnic identities and national allegiance.” The conclusion of the authors is that competency frameworks fail to present a “rich vocabulary” for the development and enactment of leadership.

Burgoyne (2008, p.7) describes his experience with the construction of competencies as often improvised in nature, an exercise with dubious benefits, focusing on “what won the last war”. “I have personally helped make them up on a serviette in a wine bar at the end of a corporate project taking months and spending thousands of pounds,” he states. This raises the possibility that competencies, and behavioural forms of leadership development, serve another purpose within leadership development, other than high performance or the colonising of power into the hands of a few.

So what might this purpose be? The next section suggests that one explanation for this might lie in their contribution to maintaining a ‘sacredness’ of leadership.

Sacredness and behavioural leadership development

Grint (2010) questions whether theories extolling dispersed forms of leadership are viable because they may infringe upon the ‘sacred’ nature of leadership. Agreement, no matter how subliminal, between leaders and followers, of the necessity of ‘sacredness’, could be precisely what allows organisations to function effectively on a day-to-day basis. Control and discipline may be required, to a certain degree, at least, for the functioning of leadership. Moreover, a performative aspect arises, whereby leaders as symbols are required by followers in order that they will not be required to bear the burden of responsibility for leadership themselves. The author states that a key aspect of the sanctity of leadership is the distance it creates between leaders and followers, a “setting apart – the division between the holy and the profane”. Furthermore, a degree of ‘sacrifice’ is important from followers, as this endows the purpose of following with a sacred aspect. The ‘silencing’ of discontent and criticism by leaders further adds to their construction as other-

worldly, as 'sacred'. To pursue a more dispersed form of leadership would mean the shattering of these sacred bonds – 'sacrilege' in other words. Leaders may be required as symbols of success, individually lauded as heroic in good times, but, equally, they may be required as 'scapegoats' in bad times, acting as convenient sources of blame for what might be a collective failure. Leaders, in other words, prevent the need for followers to take responsibility for organisational outcomes.

This thesis finds support in the work of Freud. According to Freud (1989a), the strength of any group can be traced to the concept of narcissism, extreme self-love, which acts as a self-preservation device within the individual. Freud states that when individuals become part of a group, they relinquish a major portion of their narcissism and instead project these feelings onto the leader. The reason our narcissism has chosen the leader as the focus of its attention, Freud states, is because we attribute to the leader a primal freedom from her or his super-ego, allowing the leader to follow her/his own sexual desires and drives as he/she pleases. This quality is idealised by the follower. The leader as object is thus established within the ego of the follower. The leader is now viewed as a figure of absolute narcissism, free to pursue desires as she or he wishes, in other words, as a 'sacred' symbol.

Cluley (2008) expands on the implications of this. He states that what binds groups, and followers, is the impossibility of gaining possession of the leader. The leader is merely a function, a construction and figurehead that glues the bonds between group members. Individual actions on the part of the leader matter less than the shared understanding between group members that none of them will ever fulfil the desire to possess the leader, to break down that sacred space which divides them. Cluley believes that highly developed organisations have, albeit subconsciously, discovered mechanisms of formalising such an understanding. Freud (1989a, pp.66-67) portrays the operation of this sanctity of leadership in the behaviour of a "troop of women and girls" in love with a piano player. Rather, he states, than "pulling out one another's hair, they act as a united group, do homage to the hero of the occasion with their common actions, and would probably be glad to have a share of his flowing locks. Originally rivals, they have succeeded in identifying themselves with one another by means of a similar love for the same object". Such behaviour, of

course, could equally be envisaged with a reversal of genders, although this was not something countenanced by Freud.

Freud did not, however, cite sexual desire as the only cause of the sanctification of leadership. He also addressed the issue of fear. As he concludes his (1989b) essay, *The ego and the id*, he hints at the fear, of followers, in the absence of a strong, sacred leader, of isolation:

...when the ego finds itself in an excessive real danger which it believes itself unable to overcome by its own strength, it is bound to draw the same conclusion. It sees itself deserted by all protecting forces and lets itself die. Here, moreover, is once again the same situation as that which underlay the first great anxiety-state of birth and the infantile anxiety of longing – the anxiety due to separation from the protecting mother. (Freud 1989b, p.61)

This argument is promoted by Fromm (1984). He argues that medieval times were characterised by a strict feudal system where everyone knew their place within the social structure. People had little opportunity of changing their allotted positions in life and yet were connected to others through virtue of their professions or positions in the class system. The Enlightenment, he argues, saw the beginning of a capitalist independence that granted greater freedom for people culturally, economically, politically and spiritually. And yet he argues that because of these freedoms, people feel a profound sense of isolation, helplessness and despair. Customers, for example, feel isolated by endless choice and impersonality of service. Employees feel a sense of detachment from their leaders, who they may only see on the television or read about in the newspaper. At the same time, trade unions have grown in scale, becoming more generalised and less personalised. People are driven to find comfort in the abandonment of their egos in the comfort of the group. People are capable of genuine freedom, but choose not to take those definite final steps because of their anxiety of being ultimately alone and exposed.

The above holds profound implications for the way in which we view leadership development. Behavioural leadership development is often criticised for an alleged

obsession with individual leaders and individuality over more collective and socially constructed interpretations of development. For example, Bolden and Gosling (2006) criticise leadership competencies for reinforcing “a focus on the individual leader while restricting consideration of leadership as a distributed relational process”. Day (2001, p.583) criticises such development for “training the individual, primarily in interpersonal, skills and attributes...[ignoring] almost 50 years of research showing leadership to be a complex interaction between the designated leader and the social and organisational environment”.

Yet it is apparent from the above that competency development is far from individualistic in nature. In fact it is quite the reverse. The lumping of individuals into ‘types’, the deployment of coaching and performance appraisal as a means of collective discipline seeks to homogenise leadership practice, to collectivise it and to stamp out individualistic freedom of expression. Alternatively, as stated by Conger and Benjamin (1999, p.59), the expectations on individuals, as expressed through leadership competencies may be so ambitious in their scale that they will be impossible to attain, thus further accentuating a super-human, god-like vision of the leader figure.

Perhaps behavioural leadership development, in perpetuating this status quo through leadership competencies, serves to reinforce the ‘sacred’ nature of leadership. It requires lower-level leaders and followers to sacrifice their individuality to the identity of the employer and the chief executive. It requires a degree of unquestioning silence on their part. Moreover, it maintains a distance between participants and their superiors because it is the strategic leaders who must determine the long-term direction of a given organisation and not lower-level leaders and followers.

And perhaps this propagation of sanctity is necessary. Followers and leaders may be unwilling to bear the burden of responsibility implied by individualism and its accompanying fear of loneliness. In other words, alternative methods of leadership development may be too difficult to implement, clashing, as they do, with the unconscious fears and desires of leadership actors.

Summary

This section started by stating that behavioural development may be connected to contingency and trait models of leadership theory, before describing its deployment in the form of leadership competencies and specific tools, such as executive coaching and psychometric profiling. It also provided a critique of these methods from a constructionist perspective, questioning the basis of 'rationality' upon which these methods are based. It specifically questioned the utility of competencies. This led to a discussion of an alternative explanation for the survival of such methods, namely, to maintain a 'sacred' order of leadership.

Nevertheless, the case made by behavioural theorists is that leadership is developed most effectively when a rigorous and value-neutral system of classification and testing is implemented. According to this school of leadership development, a 'correct' form of leadership will be appropriate according to particular environmental challenges (also capable of accurate and unitary description). The challenge within this school of leadership development is therefore twofold: first, to identify 'appropriate' leadership behaviours to be developed and, second, to communicate the 'correct' theory as clearly as possible, without interference from the outside world or the working milieu.

The key characteristics of the behavioural model can thus be captured in the following table:

Table 1: The key characteristics of the behavioural model of leadership development

School of development	Focus on...	Related leadership theory	Delivery methods	(According to the theory) success depends upon...
Behavioural	The individual	Contingency and trait theories	Psychometric profiling; behavioural coaching; classroom transmission learning	Accurate definition of leadership problems and 'appropriate' behaviours to solve these

It is now time to consider an alternative interpretation of an effective leadership development experience, also from the perspective of the individual.

b. The 'authentic' school of leadership development

As stated above, behavioural leadership development is often criticised for emphasising individual agency, rather than the influence of more structural forces. Yet this perspective would be questioned by authentic leadership development writers, who maintain that

personal development has an important role to play, albeit within the framework of a broader leadership development process.

This section will begin with the theoretical underpinnings of individualistic leadership development, drawing on the work of Carl Jung on the process of individuation. The available theory behind this belief in individualism leading to more dramatic change is discussed. It will proceed to examine how this theory of individuation has been translated into development practice through an examination of the theory of 'authentic' leadership development. It states that authentic leadership is often characterised as a 'journey', from deep, individual reflection, to the testing of 'authentic' personal vision in the leadership environment.

The section concludes by stating that an implication of this body of work is the creation of a panoply of free-thinking individuals. This amounts to individual emancipation from the norm, in contrast to the collectivising tendencies of behavioural leadership development. In this sense, authentic leadership development may be unacceptable within a leadership environment that values the sacred order of leadership.

Before this, however, the section turns to the individuation theory of Carl Jung, which underpins much of the writing on authentic leadership development.

Individuation

Opposition to collective development

The cornerstone of Jungian theory was a revulsion felt towards any form of collectivised development. This will be explored in some detail below. For now, we will explore a seeming contradiction at the heart of Jung's work. On the one hand he is to be seen as the champion of individuality. On the other, his theory of psychological types (1977) has been

adopted by behavioural writers and practitioners as a cornerstone of psychological profiling within leadership development, especially as witnessed with the MBTI tool. So how do we explain such a seemingly glaring contradiction? Perhaps this is a matter for Jung, himself, to explain. In his preface to the Argentine edition of *Psychological Types*, he states the following:

This fundamental tendency in my work has often been overlooked, and far too many readers have succumbed to the error of thinking that Chapter X (General Description of the Types) represents the essential content and purpose of the book, in the sense that it provides a system of classification and a practical guide to good judgment of human character. Indeed, even in medical circles the opinion has got about that my method of treatment consists in fitting patients into this system and giving them corresponding “advice”. This regrettable misunderstanding completely ignores the fact that this kind of classification is nothing but a childish parlour game, every bit as futile as the division of mankind into brachycephalics and dolichocephalics. My typology is far rather a critical apparatus serving to sort out and organise the welter of empirical material, but not in any sense to stick labels on people at first sight (Jung 1977, p.xiv).

Later in the book he continues:

No one, I trust, will draw the conclusion from my description of types that I believe the four or eight types here presented to be the only ones that exist. This would be a serious misconception, for I have no doubt whatever that these attitudes could also be considered and classified from other points of view (Jung 1977, pp.489-490).

What Jung expresses here is a distaste for the stereotyping of individuals. He expressly warns against the classification of participants, or in his case patients, for the purposes of providing advice and support. Indeed, if we are to trust Jung’s own word, we may regard the deployment of such tools as the MBTI as a “regrettable misunderstanding” and a “childish parlour game”. He continues to suggest that typologies may be useful later in the process of development, as a means for professionals to clarify their thinking once presented with a

multitude of information. Stevens (2001, p.100) believes that Jung's typology is "best used as one would use a compass". They were meant to open the thinking of individuals as to alternative potential directions of travel, rather than anything approaching a definitive statement of identity. Later in *Psychological Types*, Jung goes further, conceding that as all individuals are necessarily different, he has "no doubt" that other means of description would serve equally well. In other words, classification is inherently subjective. Stevens (2001, p.100) concurs with this, indicating that one of the core purposes of the typology was for practitioners to explore their own subjectivity before embarking on the provision of advice to others. Yet this does not prevent tools such as the MBTI cloaking their inherent subjectivity under a veneer of 'objective' scientific discourse, calling forth the ghost of Carl Jung to add further authority and respectability to the process.

Jung established his credo in opposition to what he viewed as "the abstract picture painted by scientific rationalism" (1998, p.82). The danger in the subjugation of the individual to the collective, according to Jung, was an abdication of individual moral responsibility (1998, pp.13-14). Jung preferred to encounter each of his patients as individuals, free of a theoretical stereotype, to approach each as unique and as intellectual equal. "Not to put too fine a point on it," Jung states, "one could say that the real picture consists of nothing but exceptions to the rule, and that, in consequence, absolute reality has predominantly the character of irregularity" (1983, p.352). The individual was to be understood as "something unique and singular which in the last analysis can be neither known nor compared with anything else".

A surrendering of individuality, Jung believed, resulted in an increasing specialisation of labour, "thoroughgoing specialists who are unusable outside their line of business". For Jung, this was a crisis of leadership.

Individualism

Individualism, in the truest sense of the word, calls to mind uniqueness. Jung set forth the theory of the shadow side of the psyche, the unconscious. He believed that each individual suppressed these “dark aspects of the personality” (Jung 1983, p.91), often for good reason. For if one were to surrender entirely to this shadow side one would be at the mercy of “uncontrolled or scarcely controlled emotions...[behaving] more or less like a primitive, who is not only the passive victim of his affects but also singularly incapable of moral judgment”. Although individuals suppress such unconscious desires, it was Jung’s belief that these aspects of the shadow personality emerge in dreams, in flashes of uncontrolled behaviour or projections. The notion of projection presents one explanation for the human tendency to construct others in villainous terms, when in reality such people may be representatives of our own dark urges (Stevens 2001, p.66). Unconscious aspects of the personality, Jung stated, would erupt in “unconscious reactions in the form of bad moods, affects, phobias, compulsive ideas, backslidings, vices etc” (1983, p.95). A gulf is thus opened between an individual’s private sphere and public face, such as that presented at work. “His [sic] ‘happiness in his work’ assumes a woeful countenance at home; his ‘spotless’ public morality looks strange indeed behind the mask – we will not mention deeds, but only fantasies, and the wives of such men would have a pretty tale to tell. As to his selfless altruism, his children have decided views about that” (Jung 1983, pp.95-96). Yet for Jung the solution was not further repression, or surrendering of the psyche to the collective. Rather, it was a process of individuation. Through individuation, an individual explores her/his own unconscious thoughts, thereby channelling what was previously repressed positively. The danger in not doing so is that concealed aspects of the unconscious might present themselves in warped, dangerous ways, even leading to mental illness later in life.

Of course such a process is difficult, even traumatic. For proof of this one need look no further than the case of Jung himself. His autobiographical work, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (Jung 1973) is a tale of a lifetime spent coming to terms with his unconscious self. His youth was spent attempting to make sense of his “No.1” and “No.2” personalities. Later in life he was preoccupied with dreams foretelling the need for him to break with his

mentor and close friend Freud. He tells of confronting his childhood memories, of a father who was dedicated to the institutions of the church yet not to spiritual faith. This implies that the process of individuation is a difficult one. The duty for practitioners in such a difficult situation was to approach each patient as an equal, as a potential source of learning. He stated that Freud's greatest accomplishment was to take neurotic patients seriously, to engage with them on their own, individual terms (Jung 1973, p.192). The duty of the practitioner was to be "familiar with the so-called 'methods'" but to also "guard against falling into any specific, routine approach. In general one must guard against theoretical assumptions. Today they may be valid, tomorrow it may be the turn of other assumptions. In my analyses they play no part" (Jung, p.153). Development rooted in individuation, therefore, consists of providing participants with a safe and supportive space within which they can explore their unconscious desires and drives, which will form the basis of a set of values, a guide for future conduct, be it leadership or followership, or somewhere in between.

The price of not doing so, Jung believed, was high. It was to surrender individuality to "mass movements" (Jung 1983, p.377), a surrendering of leadership. Later to be echoed in similar terms by Heifetz (1994) and Grint (2005a), to abdicate individual responsibility, for Jung, was to "slip with the greatest of ease down an inclined plane made up of large numbers" (Jung 1983, p.377), to live in a "kingdom of childhood...the paradise of parental care" where all responsibility for leadership and change was passed on to a higher authority, the 'State', in the case of Jung's theory. In such a state of affairs, Jung believed that "all the thinking and looking after are done from the top; to all questions there is an answer, and for all needs the necessary provision is made". "The balancing of accounts," accountability and responsibility, Jung states, "is left to a higher political or social authority, which welcomes the task, for its power is thereby increased; and the more power it has, the weaker and more helpless the individual becomes." Responsibility is central to Grint's (2005a) conception of constructive dissent amongst followers, which, at its core expresses the importance of followers articulating their individually-held views, challenging their leaders when necessary in order to produce better leadership outcomes. For Heifetz (1994), adaptive leadership requires the acceptance of responsibility of leadership from a more diverse range of actors by individuals outside of those with the formal title of 'leader'. For

Jung, this is the “balancing of accounts”, the question of whether individuals are prepared to face up to their responsibilities towards themselves and those for whom they care and love.

Jung believed that to abdicate responsibility for the “balancing of accounts” was to invite tyranny and repression, to surrender to the collective. In this way Jung blames the unwillingness of individuals to take their personal leadership development responsibilities seriously for the rise of fascism and communism within Europe. Such regimes, he states represent a warped mix of unconscious drives, projected into the outside world, unfiltered by the process of individuation. In other words, our incapability to confront and engage in a conversation with our unconscious leads to our incapacity to recognise the threat of tyrannical regimes when they arise. Perhaps this goes some way in explaining the thrall in which narcissistic leaders are often held within organisations. Resistance, Jung asserts, is possible but requires us to take our development responsibilities seriously, to become as “organised in [our] individuality as the mass itself” (Jung 1998, p.60).

Jung believed that individuation resulted in people developing a stronger sense of individual purpose, of ‘vocation’. Jung (1983) characterised vocation as the fusion of unconscious and conscious forces within the personality, the result of much personal reflection. A vocation is powerful, even dark, in its capacity to seize the personality of an individual. Jung described it in spiritual terms, “like a law of God from which there is no escape”. This sense of vocation is vividly represented as a “daemon” sitting on the shoulder of an individual “whispering to him [sic] of new and wonderful paths”. “Anyone with a vocation hears the voice of the inner man [sic]: he is called.” This, Jung believes, serves as an explanation for the phenomenon in mythology of great actors possessing private demons who provide counsel and whose “mandates [the actor] must obey”. For Jung, the possession of vocation was not the prerogative of these “great personalities” but could be realised by ordinary people. Yet danger lurked if the personality driven by the vocation was too “small” (a closed personality or an unintelligent one, presumably), as this vocation could dissolve into and merge with a destructive group norm, hence one explanation for the rise of extreme political movements.

The above discussion leads us to consider how these ideas of individuation have been developed by leadership development writers. It is with this in mind that we turn to a consideration of the authentic leadership literature.

The authentic leadership development journey

In his (2001) work, Grint asserts that in order to better conceptualise leadership, we would be well advised to broaden our notions of what it is that leadership entails – drawing on the performing arts, the imagination and martial arts. In his discussion of ‘what’ leadership means to leaders and followers alike, Grint privileges the imagination as the most compelling consideration. The trick for leaders, Grint states, is not merely to develop a utopian vision with broad appeal but to ground such a vision in reality, to convince people that it is achievable. Leaders must construct a “persuasive account of the past, present and future” (Grint 2001, p.14). Yet it is not merely the imagination of the leader that is of importance, but those of the followers, whose interpretation of the leader’s vision must be sufficiently close to that of the original intent, so as not to subvert its defining aims. This is not simply a question, therefore, of developing a meaningful personal vision, but of developing one which may withstand the rigours of external testing and likely adaptation, no matter how trivial – or significant.

The ‘why’ question of leadership is concerned with why people should be mobilised behind a particular set of discourses. Grint views the ‘why’ question of leadership through the lens of performance. Yet this is not a matter of transmission of a set of uniquely possessed views, but a matter of how a performance may be negotiated between “the script, the props, the players, the audience, the interpretations, the context, the shared cultures” (Grint 2001, p.24). This process, for Grint, is one of ongoing conversation and negotiation and leaders may be required to display significant perseverance and resilience in order to mobilise sufficient numbers of followers – not to mention the energy and skill required to hold them together – in order to lead successfully.

The basis for development within the authentic leadership development literature, as stated previously by Jung, is necessarily personal and individual. The founding task is to generate an atmosphere where deep personal learning can take place. The next phase involves the real-world testing of vision and values with colleagues, friends and family. Leadership development may begin with the personal, but authentic leadership development theory suggests that such personally held visions will soon be pushing the boundaries into more collective and contested realms of leadership development. It is the two-step process of an authentic leadership development ‘journey’ that is described below.

The notion of a journey draws its inspiration from the writings of Campbell (1993), who believed he had isolated a ‘monomyth’ within common discourse of a ‘hero’s journey’. This theory proposed that humans seem drawn to follow a particular development journey which involves a ‘departure’ (the decision to engage in deep, personal reflection), a series of trials (a testing of personal vision to external theory, essentially), the identification of supporters (sources of further reflection and challenge) and the ‘return’ (where subjects learn through the contested process of practice). For all intents and purposes, this journey can be whittled down to two stages – that of personal reflection, developing an individual vision; and collective testing of that vision, drawing on imaginative sources in order to tease out alternative ‘authentic’ visions from followers.

Personal reflection

A state of personal reflection is necessary, according to authentic leadership theory, in order to attain the state of ‘stillness’ where it will be possible to discover one’s calling. This is an unsettling process, which, Cammock (2009, p.97) states, has much in common with “existential angst”. However what sets those who successfully transform this difficult experience into a compelling personal vision apart from those who fail is the “willingness to face their fears and uncertainties, engage fully with their initial experience and use their awareness as a stepping-stone to self-responsible action”. This personal advocacy is essentially an act of courage, where “courage is not the absence of fear, but the recognition

that some things are more important than fear (Cammock 2009, p.102)". It is the courage to immerse oneself in a period of relative isolation. For Whyte (1994, p.229), this means "taking time for ourselves and allowing an easy rest into the body [granting us] permission for our deeper unconscious life to stir".

Such stillness can be achieved through outdoor wilderness experiences. Whyte (1994 and 2009) describes at length such personal development while on trekking trips in Nepal, where he tested himself against the raw elements of weather, observed local cultural practices and learnt about Buddhism. Jaworski (1998) describes how wilderness development constituted an important part of the American Leadership Foundation's initial cohort. Jaworski utilised rock climbing, outdoor exercise "of various types" and a climb of the 14,300-foot Mount Elbert, in Colorado, each as a means of encouraging deep reflection within the group. A "twenty-four-hour-solo experience" was also included, isolating participants so that they may take a step closer to their soul lives (Jaworski 1998, p.102). The solo expedition was modelled closely, Jaworski says, on Campbell's (1993) hero's journey, "an inner journey of discovery and personal renewal".

Yet such personally reflective moments are not to be misconstrued as peaceful events.

Many writers suggest a need for the presence of some form of trauma in order to shake the leader into a state of deep concentration on ultimate priorities, further echoing Jung's concept of individuation. Indeed, "grief" and coping with these feelings is at the heart of Whyte's (1994) thesis on how one is to step closer to authentic leadership. George (2003) develops this theme by suggesting that what authentic leadership development entails is an association with Bennis and Thomas' (2002) crucible experiences, the conceptualisation of a traumatic personal experience as a means of learning and shaping a system of values that will guide future leadership. Indeed, he talks of his own developmental journey in almost religious terms, saying, "had it not been for my experience in the crucible, I might never have seen the light" (George 2003, pp.34-35).

A critique of such an attribution of cause and effect is offered by Rosenzweig (2007), who is critical of academic and mainstream business literature for their explanations of success

within organisations. He states that a major fault within such literature can be explained by a 'halo effect'. Rosenzweig points out that these studies usually only deal with successful cases and tend to utilise survey-based research strategies. The outcome of this, he believes, is a phenomenon whereby responders to surveys tend to attribute an array of positive qualities to a company – such as 'great leadership', or, a 'strong culture' – because it is currently successful. The author continues by stating that such research is flawed because a company's performance is always relative to the performance of other companies and, furthermore, that success, especially within technologically-focused industries, is almost always fleeting. It may be perfectly possible, states Rosenzweig, in this case, for a company to display all manner of apparently desirable qualities and yet still fail.

Nevertheless, authentic leadership writers have expended a great deal of effort on determining the appropriate conditions for experiences similar to those offered by the 'crucible'. For Cammock (2003, p.48), such periods of reflection need not involve exotic foreign travel and may be far more practical and attainable. Such forms of 'authentic' development vary, "from straightforward periods of planning and time management through to meditating, journal keeping and walks in the park. Whatever the form, the need is to stop, slow down and find a less frenetic, more authentic and integrated way for being. Connecting, listening and reflecting together lay the foundations for 'seeing the whole'". Far from the perhaps overly ambitious wilderness experiences described by Jaworski and Whyte, "exercise, diary writing, music, reading, enjoyable hobbies, conversations, walking, meditating and being with children are all examples of reflective processes that can slow us down and help us reconnect with the deeper intuitions of the soul", states Cammock (2003).

Regardless of the specific method, the central theme of the above exploration is that, above all else, these experiences need to be personal to the leader and capable of generating a 'stillness' that will bring a participant closer to his/her authentic self (Jung's unconscious).

According to a survey of the literature, these experiences must be, i) personal and, ii) tailored to the individual. Personal so that the 'noise' of the external world is, no matter how temporarily, hushed, to generate an atmosphere conducive to deep concentration; and

individually tailored because not all means of achieving stillness will be suitable to every individual.

Yet the above process only describes half the story. It is not enough, surely, to develop a personal vision in isolation, no matter how passionately it is felt. For a vision to be enacted, it needs others to listen and to act. Although authentic leadership writers do not acknowledge it, by suggesting that personal reflection is but the first step in a journey, where vision is later tested and altered, they are tacitly acknowledging constructionist views of leadership. It is in this way that authentic leadership development may be seen as pushing at the barriers of an individual-focused model.

Collective testing

A survey of the available literature reveals that authentic leadership development writers have failed to extemporise on the second, crucial, stage of their development process. This task has been met thus far by constructionist writers seeking imaginative ways in which leaders may reflect upon their personal constructs of leadership.

Areas as diverse as the arts, sports, as well as more traditional academic theory have been drawn upon as arenas through which leadership constructs may be tested. Jackson and Parry (2009, pp.106-111), regard each of these areas as valid, so long as they assist in the task of *collective sensemaking*. Sense can be made of a leadership vision, they state, through science, yes, but also through the mediums of humour, poetry, visual arts, music, the “bodily arts”, such as dance (and, surely, sports), drama and storytelling. For Jackson and Parry (2009), the emphasis is on broadening the thinking of practitioners and academics when they relate to leadership:

We need more than just having the topic and the interest and the research heritage. We also need people who can think like an artist or like a musician or like an actor and think like a leadership scholar. For many years leadership research has been

driven by people who think like a psychologist or like a sociologist or like an economist or like a business manager. They have done great work and created great insights. But we need more. The era of the artistic and dramatic genre of leadership research is about to begin, we hope (Jackson and Parry 2009, p.108).

The arts:

In this vein, Griffey and Jackson (2010) explore how portraits commissioned of leaders act as “virtual leaders” in as much as they project a desired image of a particular form of leadership, underlining “the power of the office or institution that the leader is temporarily the nominal head of”. In the specific context of New Zealand, the authors argue that portraits of leaders draw attention to a general concern for the influence of immigration, national heritage and, importantly, a “humble and more muted form of leadership which, in contrast to the more triumphal and celebratory approaches taken from their Anglo-Saxon cousins in the United Kingdom and the United States, features the quietly heroic, verging on apologetic, leader who is fundamentally uneasy with notions of formal power and authority” (Griffey and Jackson, p.154). Paintings, as with the other artistic forms listed earlier are seen as conceptual vessels through which we try to collectively make sense of leadership and vision.

Taylor and Ladkin (2009) offer a broader perspective on how arts-based methods of leadership development may be utilised. They state that particular forms of arts-based learning will serve alternative development needs and can be adopted according to the purpose of the development programme in question. ‘Skills transfer’ involves the deployment of an aspect of the arts in order to improve specific leadership skills. An example of this may be the expert tuition of stage actors being employed to improve the creativity and effectiveness of public speaking skills. Such exercises enable participants to “feel the experience of those skills, rather than think about them”. It suggests a tangible difference between the felt experience of a development moment, as opposed to a purely theoretical understanding.

'Projective techniques' involve the utilisation of artistic techniques to allow participants to engage with "thoughts and feelings that may not be accessible through more conventional development". An example of such a method might lie in the drawing of 'rich pictures' to describe the emotions of leaders or followers about a particular current issue. The authors suggest that such an exercise might foster developmental discussion amongst colleagues as to the meaning of a particular leadership problem and, furthermore, act as an acceptable means of discussing a difficult matter, as colleagues focus their attention on the symbol of the art produced, rather than explicitly upon the personalities involved. 'Illustrations of essence' involve the deployment of the arts to demonstrate the heart of a concept through artistic expression. An example of this might be the presentation of a feature film with the expectation that participants will extract a core message of leadership from the performance. The act of 'making' is closely associated with the process of individuation, the deep personal reflection of authentic leadership, as discussed above. In other words, participants may express their unconscious thoughts and values through the construction of a piece of art, or through performance art.

Storytelling:

Authentic leadership is imbued with narrative influence. Indeed, the theoretical backbone for many, of the authentic leadership journey, is encapsulated within the 'monomyth' of the hero's journey (Campbell 1993).

So what, exactly, is a story, and why, specifically is it especially valid to the field of authentic leadership development? For Gabriel (1991a), organisational stories are artistic re-enactments of events purporting to have actually occurred, "they infuse facts with value and generate emotion". They are not purely forms of art to be enjoyed for their own sake, in isolation from the real world, but means of representing reality and meaning, for the teller and the audience. They are, Gabriel (2008) asserts, connected to experience, in our case that of personal, authentic experience, representing "poetic elaborations of narrative material, aiming to communicate facts as experience, not facts as information". Yes stories tell us much about the nature of leadership in an organisation but, Gabriel asserts, they also

fulfil a more subtle and important purpose. Stories represent the wish fulfilment of various stakeholder groups within organisations. They represent, “in deed what for the remaining workers [remains] a wish or fantasy” (Gabriel 1991b, p.861). He adds, further, that such stories earn the status of the sacred, as they represent those values that are most valued by a certain section of a workforce.

Stories, therefore, seem particularly central to authentic leadership development. They focus our attention on how a personal vision, developed in isolation, can be communicated for an audience of followers, but state that it had better find a home with the values base of these followers or face serious alteration, or even subversion. According to this interpretation, stories offer a powerful basis for the testing and discussion of a personally held, ‘authentic’ vision. They offer a means, Gabriel (1991a) states, for us to discuss issues that are normally kept off the table, for various political or emotional reasons, allowing us to personalise leadership and to escape the stultifying confines of the impersonal and formal organisation.

For Gabriel (1991b, p.871), influencing and generating debate through stories requires leaders with similar qualities to Sherlock Holmes, people who are able to use the apparently trivial as vehicles for leadership, who can mobilise “the seemingly insignificant as a clue to a deeper reality, inaccessible by other methods”. In return, the audience may be willing to drop its normal defences, to suspend disbelief. This “poetic licence” enjoyed by storytelling leaders implies that matrices of scientific judgement are not applied to stories in the same way as they are to other organisational data. Not so, states Gabriel. In actual fact, they represent a more complex contract between teller and listener, where a follower is prepared to suspend normal critical faculties to an extent, provided the narrative “makes sense (verisimilitude), yields pleasure or consolation (entertainment or catharsis), but sustains assumptions about legitimate and non legitimate forms of representation” (Gabriel 2008, p.161).

So, stories will not be accepted blindly simply because they are expressed as stories. Rather they are part of a negotiation of acceptable and non-acceptable regimes of truth within the leadership of an organisation.

This second development phase of authentic leadership is therefore characterised as a collective conversation through which meaning will be adapted and created, and leadership framed within socially acceptable and positive boundaries. Is this second, action learning-oriented phase of development, therefore, about gaining wisdom through the engagement of a multiplicity of authentic selves? Is it as much about encouraging the authentic visions of followers, as it is about negotiating the 'authentic' vision of a leader?

The answer is yes. This stage of development marks as much of a challenge to followers as it does to leaders. It means, as Whyte (1994, p.292) states, that they must "come out of hiding". It offers a profound challenge for followers themselves to 'wake up' (Whyte 1994) and take the responsibilities of Grint's (2005a) constructive dissent seriously.

Yet danger lurks for authentic leadership theories when ideology appears to take precedence over development. Described above is a theory of developing leadership, not of imposing a particular moral code. Yet some of the literature veers towards preaching a particular form of leadership – harking back to trait models of leadership, cloaked in the rhetoric of 'empowerment'. Yet empowerment may act as a mask for control. Critics of authentic, and more specifically, spiritual leadership argue that these fields are unique in that they seek to control not merely the work personas of individuals, but their entire personalities.

The dark side of authentic leadership

Dennis Tourish has been at the forefront of this critique and has levelled similar criticisms at what he views, with Naheed Tourish (2010), as spiritual leadership, and, with Pinnington (2002), transformational leadership. At the heart of this criticism is the suggestion that spiritual leadership has attempted to colonise the private spheres of individuals, not content with mere professional competence on their part. The theory may be used in order to privilege the leader as an unquestioned authority, whose leadership cannot be subjected to

scientific, rational scrutiny (because such leadership relies on an emotional bond alone) and, furthermore, that this could result in a leader's particular vision being unquestioningly accepted and programmed into the minds of those who work for him or her. Rather than generating dialogue, it is argued, these theories promote strict conformity to a vision. In this sense, the argument is that spiritually driven organisations may more resemble religious cults than businesses.

As discussed above, authentic leadership advocates that we should "challenge the notion that work should be a spirit-free zone, and assert that organisations and their leaders should facilitate more holistic personal expressions" (Tourish and Tourish 2010, p.208). This assertion is evidently supported by the above exploration of the literature. However, in summary, Tourish and Tourish continue:

- much of the inspiration behind spiritual leadership is actually performance related, with spirituality acting merely as a mask, and seeks to enforce the priorities of leaders as those of followers;
- these theories are presented without sufficient discussion of power differentials in the workplace;
- a self-proclaimed "emancipator agenda" on behalf of its advocates may simply conceal "the advancement of a more controlling and oppressive leadership agenda than is normally acknowledged or may be intended" (Tourish and Tourish 2010, p.209).

It is certainly open to question whether a passionate vision, with its subsequent overcoming of externally imposed 'trials' may act as fuel for narcissism, an absolute conviction that the leader is correct and all resistance is to be viewed as unhelpful and subversive. Furthermore, when authentic leadership becomes prescriptive, pursuing a self-defined emancipatory agenda, as if all other alternatives are to be regarded as 'inauthentic', it is clear that we may be entering dangerous waters, holding leadership and the future of our organisations at the mercy of a "divine planner" (Tourish and Tourish 2010, p.212). This may create organisations marked by 'bounded choice', where only certain behaviours and views will be permitted.

It is in this sense that a regime of authentic leadership may develop cultish characteristics. Tourish and Pinnington (2002, p.156) define cultish organisations as those which “remould individuality to conform to the codes and needs of the cult, institute taboos which preclude doubt and criticism, and generate an elitist mentality whereby members see themselves as lone evangelists struggling to bring enlightenment to the hostile forces surrounding them”. “Members,” they state, “typically display high commitment, replace their pre-existing beliefs and values with those of the group, work extremely hard, relinquish control over their time, lose confidence in their own perceptions in favour of those of the group (especially of its leaders), and experience social punishments, such as shunning by other group members, if they deviate from carefully prescribed norms” (Tourish and Pinnington 2002, p.157). We are no longer in the world, therefore, of a passionately held personal vision tested in a larger context of a multiplicity of authentic perspectives, but of unquestioning acquiescence to a divine vision. This, state Tourish and Vatcha (2005) is to enter the realms of Enron, where an organisation and its customers are subservient to the whims of a tight-knit group of narcissists.

The problem therefore seems to be a confusion of ideology with integrity of process. Surely the purpose of the process described at length above is to develop a passionate, personally held vision, and then to test it in a world of alternative viewpoints and perspectives – a multiplicity of authentic selves. Not to test and adapt is not to develop. In this sense, there does not seem to be much separating the views of Tourish and Cammock. Tourish and Pinnington (2002, p.167) make a call for power differentials to be properly recognised by authentic leadership scholars, and this seems to be an underexplored area. Moreover, they urge a return to more “democratic and stakeholder perspectives” of leadership, where “the need to cross the line frequently between leadership and followership” is recognised. Caza and Jackson (2011) construct the challenge in terms of the need to develop effective leadership authentically, rather than one of developing some form of pre-defined ‘authentic leadership’. Authentic leadership will logically vary from individual to individual – that is its foundational principle. The challenge is one of an authentic development process, not of defining a single set of traits that may be labelled ‘authentic’ post facto. This is precisely the model this section has sought to describe. It is not a model designed to promote a particular

political or spiritual agenda, rather a call for leaders, and followers, to explore their personal values and then, collectively, to test these perspectives and ideas in a spirit of mutual learning. It is in this way that authentic leadership development may be regarded as an individually emancipatory theory of leadership development.

Summary

This chapter began with an exploration of behavioural/competency models of leadership development. It offered a constructionist critique of such methods, stating that they may be more motivated by a drive for discipline and control than the development of better leadership. Nevertheless, it was stated that, according to this group of theorists, a successful leadership development experience will involve an 'accurate' measure of 'appropriate' leadership behaviours, according to an equally 'accurate' reading of the environment, and the transmission of such competencies, usually in a classroom format.

Authentic leadership development was examined as an alternative to the behavioural model. It was stated that these theorists, inspired by Jungian notions of individuation, state that a successful leadership development experience involves participants becoming more attuned to their unique unconscious lives. Such a feat, they state, will generate the identification of personal values, which may be used as a basis for future development and leadership practice.

A political dimension to personal development was introduced. It was suggested that the survival, in the literature, of competency development and the comparative rarity of Jungian-based theories of individuation may be rooted in what Grint (2010) termed the 'sacred' aspect of leadership. Namely, behavioural forms of development may serve the purpose of perpetuating the silence, sacrifice and distance of a particular kind of constructed 'command' leading. In contrast, the generation of 'authentic' leaders and followers might threaten this status quo.

It may be stated that behavioural and authentic theories of leadership development, although focusing on the individual, are quite different. Although individual in focus, behavioural leadership development encourages a collectivisation of identity and meaning, with participants encouraged to behave according to a given norm of leadership. The focus of authentic leadership development is again individual, but its operation is individualistic, encouraging difference amongst participants.

The key characteristics of the authentic school can thus be captured in the following table:

Table 2: The key characteristics of the authentic model of leadership development

School of development	Focus on...	Related leadership theory	Delivery methods	(According to the theory) success depends upon...
Authentic	The individual	Authentic leadership; Jungian individuation	Classroom exercises to encourage individualistic practice; meditation; outdoor pursuits	Participants better understanding their unconscious values

The chapter moves on to consider the second broad focus of leadership development – that of a collective view of leadership development. This following section will consider how leadership development may be related to an *engagement with theory*, rather than the *consumption* of theory.

ii. Collective views of leadership development

Introduction

This section examines an alternative perspective to the individual school of leadership development. Collective views of leadership development draw our attention away from the traits and 'appropriate' behaviours of leaders into more systemic territory. As explored earlier, these views highlight the fact that leadership might be more a process of meaning making, negotiated between actors, than the property of any single individual.

The section firstly explores the development vehicle of systems theory, the learning organisation. It states that this theory is useful in encouraging us to view leadership development as taking place within a broader organisational and social system, expanding our understanding of the actors involved in leadership development. The systems view of leadership development, however, frequently overlooks issues of power and the politics of leadership development.

ANT will be presented as a more political and realistic way of interpreting how 'relevant' leadership and leadership development theory may be determined, to a large extent, by a leader's system of operation. It also highlights the potential for leaders to influence and construct their leadership environment (Carroll and Levy 2010). In this view, the construction of an alliance, a coalition of leadership development, and, subsequently, leadership, become important tasks.

Finally, the experiential learning school will be examined. It will be stated that this school, rooted in constructionist views of leadership, holds that learning must be directly linked to the experiences of participants.

a. The 'coalition' school of leadership development

The learning organisation

Theory of the 'U'

At the heart of the learning organisation concept is a belief that leadership is generated in every part of the company and that learning may therefore arise from a number of different sources. Senge et al (2005) describe a model of learning they believe should be adopted in order to develop systems leadership. According to the authors, most people think according to their set mental models, as developed throughout their working and personal lives. They see what they are prepared to see. The theory of the 'U' states that systems learning is only possible when people manage to dispense with their learnt world views and more fully appreciate their role in the wider system, envisioned by the authors, in the broadest sense, as their place in the natural world.

The state of being at the bottom of the 'U' is described as that of "presencing" (Senge et al 2005, p.89), that is, "seeing from the deepest source and becoming a vehicle for that source". When we are in this state, the authors say, we live from our "highest future possibility that connects self and whole". Seeing from this perspective, they state, is a matter of viewing the present from the perspective of a systemic future – truly seeing the kind of leadership needed to tackle such challenging problems as climate change and understanding our role in that process. Although this could be interpreted as an individualistic process, the authors are keen to emphasise the collective nature of the learning theory, that it is one which connects individuals and organisations in shared purpose. This collectivity, they assert, will help conquer the prevailing feeling of loneliness associated with many change efforts, as visions created through the 'U' process imply a

“different stance of “co creation” between the individual or collective and the larger world” (Senge et al 2005, p. 92).

Empathy as development

Chapman (2004, p.14) suggests that the process of learning to learn as a systems thinker may be a touch more tangible and practical. He suggests undergoing, essentially, a process of experiencing an issue from another’s perspective, walking in the shoes of a colleague, and of learning to question one’s own worldview. A leader, therefore, must learn to question her or his basic assumptions:

- How would my perspective change if I regarded this organisation/agency/department as a complex adaptive system?
- What approach would I adopt if I accepted that this system cannot be controlled nor its behaviour predicted?
- What other perspectives are there on this issue and how can I understand them?
- How can I learn what is most effective here? How would I know?

What is required is for leaders to become more aware of their own position, role and influence within the system (Chapman 2004). It therefore becomes possible to map the effect of actions in one part of the system on the system as a whole. One may discover points of leverage, areas where leaders may exert the greatest influence on the whole.

In other words, leaders need to see how their position interacts with the larger system (Senge 1999, p.48). Limiting one’s horizons in leadership terms limits the capability of individuals and organisations to learn and develop. Systems theorists recognise that leadership development should be about more than sending managers to attend formal training programmes. Instead, development is concerned with how a whole organisation can learn and become a learning organisation (Senge 1999) or company (Pedler et al 1991).

The learning company is defined by Pedler et al (1991, p.1) as “an organisation that facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself”. Such a definition sounds plausible and even comforting for managers who view development as a core organisational activity. Yet how, in practice, does an organisation become a learning organisation?

Senge's 'core disciplines' of development

For Senge the journey begins with a form of deep self awareness, or personal mastery, on the part of leaders. They recognise their limited and even limiting role within the system, becoming aware of their place within the whole and how they may best influence it. This realisation demands a different form of conducting the business of work, through advocacy and playful questioning of personal perspectives and those of colleagues. It is a process of “suspending assumptions” (Senge 1999, p.244) in order to gain a more rounded view of issues prior to a decision being taken. Power, within this logic, is viewed as a possession, a negative trait that should be expunged from organisations through open and honest dialogue. The workings of power can be conquered through the development of a shared vision, trusting in some innate desire within individuals to achieve something “over and above self interest” (Senge 1999, p.274).

For Senge, responsibility and practice lie at the heart of development - themes which colour his concept of the microworld (Senge 1999, pp. 313-315). Microworlds offer a virtual reality of experimentation where actors are able to play with future possibilities and decisions in order to learn from mistakes and the dialogic process. The concept of the microworld is a curious one to be found within a systems theory tome as it seems to largely be concerned with assisting leaders in gaining some form of control of events, previously described in the literature as complex and uncontrollable. Jackson (2001, p.143) characterises the microworld as “a powerful setting within which [managers] could find a safe haven for dealing with, and regaining control of, a world that has seemingly gone out of control”. It is a “safe and sealed-off environment” that can be contrasted with the dramatic warnings

contained within Senge's work of probable global collapse due to unsustainable business practice.

In *Presence* (2005), Senge et al develop the theme of the microworld, advocating a similar concept of 'prototyping'. In essence, prototyping is a form of experimentation, where learning can be experimented with, on a smaller scale, within the workplace. This is viewed as a safe way of learning from mistakes. Prototyping could be a process of testing new ideas over time but is also applicable to us as individuals, as we experiment with new ways of seeing and being. The authors stress that this is not a one-off event that may be used to trial a specific plan, but a constant process, a new way of being, a willingness to constantly search for broader and new ways of living and learning. "In its essence, prototyping accesses and aligns the wisdom of our head, heart and hands by forcing us to act before we've figured everything out and created a plan. A tenet of prototyping is acting on a concept before that concept is complete or perfect." Such experimentation is not presented as experiential learning in the sense of learning through the enactment of leadership at work. Rather, it is presented as a classroom activity, a vehicle for participants to engage with and reflect upon leadership theory in the context of their own working lives.

The techniques suggested by Senge (1999) were preceded by a similar, more experiential and critical view of systemic development offered by Pedler et al (1991).

The learning company

Pedler et al (1991) suggest that a hallmark of a learning company must be the presence of participative policy making. In a similar vein to Senge, it is assumed that a more diverse range of voices engaged in dialogue will lead to the development of better leadership. It is the "harnessing of the dialectic" within organisations. With its emphasis on collaborative learning within the boundaries of the system, mistakes become sources of learning. Leaders will learn to become better leaders, through being offered new challenges and being given the space to fail in order to learn and develop, both individually and collectively. The main

point of contrast to Senge's learning organisation is the emphasis the authors place on the role of action learning, offering a more critical and practical means of working with established bases of power within the system (Leitch et al 1996, p.40; Pedler et al 1991, p.160). Furthermore, learning, according to the authors, should not be restricted to an internal, company activity. Instead, companies connected, for example, in a supply chain, can learn together, thus widening the system and the potential for meaningful progress. Formal management development in the learning company is not a privilege to be enjoyed by the few, elite leaders within a firm. Segregation of knowledge in a "tied cottage" (Pedler et al 1991, p. 57) form of development runs contrary to the principles of systems leadership. Rather, all members of a system may be regarded as leaders and should be exposed to the collective learning of the whole. Thus, all individuals within the system may become boundary workers, exposing themselves to outside innovation and viewing it as central to their role to share their learning with colleagues.

Having explored the theoretical underpinnings of the learning organisation and considered its application in practice, it is now time to explore the perceived shortcomings of this model.

Critique of the learning organisation

Grint (2005c, pp.132-133) establishes four criticisms of systems theory. Most pertinent to the present research, he draws attention to the failure within the theory to recognise the centrality of power within leadership. For example, Chapman (2004, p.43) states that systems thinking offers a 'natural' way of thinking about leadership and all that is required to overcome issues of petty politics in organisations is to broaden the system sufficiently so that actors are able to view the bigger picture and their role within it. Thus they will act for the good of the whole, not simply in the interests of their own section of the whole. Systems theorists generally, Grint states, take an "ahistorical view of organisations", ignoring the "imbalances of power" that may have previously existed within a system and the impact these may still exercise on the everyday behaviour of actors. More broadly, he states, the

theory assumes that people in general gravitate towards “integration and consensus” rather than disintegration and dissensus.

Perhaps this aspect of systems theory derives from its sometimes ethereal aura. Writers are concerned with developing a macro picture of how organisations and, occasionally, departments, interact, perhaps at the expense, as Chapman (2004, p.35) admits of the “rich detail” of the human interaction of leadership, or what actually makes organisations tick. Development, therefore, even if pursued collectively, may become too comfortable and detached from the everyday experiences of actors within the system. Jackson (2000, p.202), believes that the purpose of the microworld vision expounded by Senge is precisely to create a comfortable alternate reality for managers, offering an opportunity for them to transport themselves out of their immediate time and space situations to the relative comfort of a world in which problems can be properly managed and even played with alongside one’s colleagues in a safe and sealed off environment”. Indeed, Burgoyne (1999, p.43), a co-author of the Pedler et al (1991) book, recognises that the role of politics generally, and the possibility for a vision of a ‘learning’ organisation to be used as a form of control and consolidation of power has largely been overlooked.

Jackson (2001) highlights the fact that the learning organisation is not a new theory and rather one drawn from the work of Revans and Vickers, founding fathers of the intelligence unit, established in 1947. This would not be viewed by Senge as a critique, necessarily, as, according to Jackson, he is keen to view his learning organisation movement as part of a deep body of academic work heavily influenced by the quality movement, in particular. More pressing, perhaps, is the general ambiguity of the concept and lack of coherent empirical evidence for the effectiveness of this form of leadership development. As Jackson (2001) points out, most of the evidence presented is based on the authors’ own consulting experience, rather than on peer-reviewed empirical evidence.

Nevertheless, despite its flaws and almost spiritual use of language, with its emphasis on continual learning and leadership as spread throughout organisations, perhaps systems theory offers a more positive, holistic means of focusing our attention on how participants

in a process of leadership development may engage with others in the organisation and think of leadership as more of a systemic issue.

Yet this is an incomplete picture of how theory may be diffused during the leadership development process. Perhaps we would be wise to consider engagement with theory as operating within a coalition, a network of power, rather than a system. It is to this possibility that this chapter now turns.

Leadership development as a coalition of power

The learning organisation was criticised above for overlooking the role of power and history within leadership development. This section will explore more critical views of systemic development, development through a coalition of power.

A more critical view of collective development

The recognition of the co-production of meaning and the inherently political nature of leadership was recognised in print as early as the 16th century when Machiavelli recorded what others may have recognised but had failed to capture. For Machiavelli (2003) leadership was not concerned with the possession and accumulation of relevant desired characteristics. Rather, it was essentially concerned with how successful a leader was in the construction of durable coalitions to suit the demands of context. This practice has been echoed by several great political leaders. For example, a great strength of the leadership generated by Abraham Lincoln was his awareness of the limitations placed upon his personal constructs by the political network in which he operated, hence his adoption of a 'team of rivals' within his cabinet (Goodwin 2005).

The process school within leadership theory has attempted to theorise the challenge of coalition leadership. It has taken a position whereby the very notion of a 'leader' is itself a social construction (Wood 2005), dependent upon the agreement of numerous actants within a coalition. For Wood, the privileging of leaders may be unhelpful if leadership is to be developed. We would be better served by concentrating on the 'in-between' of leadership, those processes that either enable or prevent leadership from enactment in its place of operation. Leadership is "an unfolding, emergent process; a continuous coming into being" (Wood and Ladkin 2008, p.15). Leadership within process theory can thus appear from any source. Its analysis attempts to deal with 'leaderful' moments, rather than analysing leadership as the property of a single individual. Wood and Ferlie (2003) draw on the notion of rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 2008) to visualise this concept of the overlap of leadership innovation between notional 'actors'.

Ferlie et al (2005) use the principle of the rhizomatic operation of leadership to describe how innovations, within the context of the British health service, are more likely to succeed when the principles of process leadership are followed, than when unhelpful boundaries between departments, organisations and individuals are established. The construction of these blockages to change and learning are accentuated within the context of professionalisation, the authors believe, as expertise and professional pride soon become barriers to leadership in the form of protectionism and silo thinking. The ideal role of leader participants within process theory is that of nomad (Wood 2003). It is a type of leadership that eschews control and instead "spreads itself" across space, connecting seemingly disparate points.

Other theories adopting a more collective and critical view of leadership do not go this far. Rather, the focus of this section is upon how leadership development may learn from an active engagement between the practice challenges of leadership and leadership theory.

Mintzberg (2004) regards the incorporation of challenging work perspectives and peer challenge into a process of engaging with theory as essential for the operation of leadership development. This is what is referred to as a 'reflective classroom environment', where participants bring their own experiences with followers, and organisational problems, to the

classroom. Such experiences, for Mintzberg, form the backbone of a development syllabus. Through adopting such a strategy as a central part of the development process, Mintzberg believes that development may play a core role in enacting systemic change. The principle at the root of this argument is similar to that made by Burgoyne and Jackson (1997). They state that leadership development ought to be conceptualised as an 'arena'. Such an arena ought to be transparent and accessible – so that a system, or coalition, may gain the benefit of such activity. Moreover, the process will engage real practice with theory, so that power differentials are surfaced and addressed.

A more critical view of systemic leadership development will therefore not only seek to relate theory to the practice of leadership, but to consider the power at work in the creation and practice of leadership.

Purpose of this section

The purpose of this section is twofold. Firstly, it seeks to describe how the process of leadership development can be interpreted through the perspective of a coalition, a network of power, rather than a system. Secondly, it will draw a significant implication from this, namely, that as participants engage with theory during formal leadership development, such constructs will be mediated and bound by a network of leadership operating in the place of work.

The section will describe the theory of ANT as the basis for expanding our understanding of the potential of a coalition school of leadership development. Although ANT is not a theory solely concerned with leadership development, the discussion below will seek to demonstrate that it has great promise in illustrating how a participant's engagement with theory may be more complex than behavioural and systems theory suggest. Its utility, within the sphere of leadership development is in politicising our interpretation of the process.

The theory states that meaning is constructed through interplay between human and non-human actors, 'actants'. Secondly, it discusses the notion of 'translation' within networks. 'Translation' is the term adopted by actor network theorists to describe the process through which "the identity of actors, the possibility of interaction and the margins of manoeuvre are negotiated and delimited" (Callon 1986). This process describes how action within actor networks is made possible through the enrolment of allies and the negotiation of meaning. This suggests that the process of transferring theory from development to leadership involves a necessary grappling with the constitutive nature of power and the identity-construction of actants. Thirdly, it cautions against viewing such a model in mechanistic terms, accentuating the socially constructive and dynamic nature of any network rooted in subjective constructions of power objects. The implication of this is that actants will be required to exercise compromise in their personal constructions of purpose in order that the broader meaning of the network can be enacted, albeit in an altered, and ever altering, state. Finally, it concludes by stating that an implication of this need to compromise is a dispersal of responsibility in the enactment and transfer of leadership development. In other words, it demands change, and such acts are easier spoken of than delivered in practice, as the conceptualisation of the meaning of leadership development amongst the actants at play may vary significantly.

Actants: the interplay between the human and non-human

The human and non-human

At the heart of ANT is a critique of the social sciences, which its theorists believe has over emphasised the role of human agency in its analysis of humanity. It states that reality, as experienced, is more complex than that. The world in which we operate, our networks, are comprised of both human and non-human actors, 'actants'. Neither one nor the other is granted predominance by ANT writers. Latour (1988, p.1), for example, argues that the researcher misses half of the point of an observation if she or he concentrates on the

human at the expense of the non-human and likens such practice to “preparing a battle by putting at one end of the field all the paraphernalia, at the other end, all the naked men”. Latour expands on the theory set forward in Machiavelli’s *Prince*, arguing that we each operate in an environment with more unwieldy enemies than the mere human forms we readily observe. Too often we overlook technological artefacts and built constructions as politically neutral. Yet to regard physical objects as somehow ‘endowed’ with meaning by human actors would also be to miss the point. An alternative reading offered is that the human and non-human engage in a process of mutual construction, within a dynamic network, with “wires, meters, copper and filament lamps...love and fear” (Latour 1988, p.3) enjoined in a co-dependent coalition. In this the theory owes much to the work of Foucault and his belief in an active, constitutive power.

The network of ANT is alive with an ever-moving “circulation of intermediaries” (Callon 1991), which construct identity and meaning within the network. Intermediaries can be classed as texts (such as reports, books and articles), technical artefacts (technological innovations), human beings and even hard cash. Behind such intermediaries lie other actors, those able to place intermediaries “into circulation”, or, in other words, who are able to deploy others for the purpose of the construction of meaning. The relationship between intermediaries and actants determines the purpose of the networks within which they operate.

By failing to see the significance of potential allies, leaders fail to establish the most effective alliances. Latour (1988) illustrates the point with a description of the actions of an outgoing socialist administration in Paris. Convinced that the incoming conservatives would privatise the metro system, the socialists hatched an ingenious plan. Rather than waving placards or enacting legislation, the administration built a network of tunnels across the city that would be too small for the larger trains of the private companies to travel through. Of course, it is argued, the incoming administration could yet have privatised the railway system. Yet to do so would have been to unravel a coalition of politicians, trains, trade unions and concrete. The judgment made might well have been that such a battle was not worth expending the energies required to win it. As humans construct meaning for non-humans, thus non-humans can return the favour.

Reframing leadership development

This framework requires a reframing of the analysis of leadership development. The task of the researcher is no longer to observe the behaviour of humans. Instead, it is to observe the process of the construction of meaning enacted between humans and non humans. The following list provides a sample of the actants that could be regarded as relevant within an ANT-focused study of leadership development:

- *participants* – the individual leaders, whose capacity to influence the environment of leadership will vary according to the alignment and comparative strength of other ‘actants’;
- the *employing organisation*, whose history of leadership will restrict and construct the possible range of ‘acceptable’ leadership practice;
- the *geographical place* of leadership, whose physical contours and cultural history will shape the context within which leadership occurs;
- *learning peers* of participants, who will influence and co-construct meaning as the programme progresses;
- *programme organisers*, human resource professionals who will bring their preconceived ideas and constructions of participants to bear on the leadership development process, and, in turn, whose expertise will be constructed by participants and others;
- *programme facilitators*, who bring their experience and theories of leadership to bear on proceedings, whose constructions of the nature of the leadership challenge facing participants will prove influential and whose validity as ‘experts’ will stand or fall according to the constructions of participants and organisers;
- *the presenters*, academics, consultants or practitioners, whose relevance and expertise will be determined according to whether other ‘actants’ construct their offerings as valid;

- in the background, *leadership theorists*, the writers, whose ideas may or may not be accepted by participants or other ‘actants’. In this sense, it is possible to construct ‘theory’ itself as a legitimate ‘actant’;
- *partner organisations*, with whom leadership is co-created;
- *followers*, without whom there can be no ‘leadership, and no ‘leaders’;
- *the professional sector* of the leaders involved in leadership development, which will possess its own history of leadership practice and hold a series of values concerning what is deemed as valid leadership;
- *the government* of the day, whose relative emphasis on the importance of ‘leadership’ and whose definition of its meaning will have a bearing as to what is considered valid leadership;
- the *venue* within which leadership development takes place, whether it is constructed as conducive to learning and the political meaning attributed to it; and,
- the abundance or shortage of *cash* will determine whether or not formal leadership development takes place. Its relative presence will help shape perceptions of the relative importance of leadership compared to other organisational priorities.

Each of these actants will ascribe a meaning to the process of leadership development. The success or otherwise of such constructions, will depend, however, on the success or otherwise of actants in securing broad agreement within the network. A successful exercise in identity generation will result in meaning being accepted at a tacit, unconscious, taken-for-granted level. In this way, meaning becomes unquestioned, in the words of actor network theorists, “black boxed”. In a similar vein to Foucault, power is seen here as an active phenomenon. There is recognition in the theory that the various actants within a coalition may have different and often divergent reasons for remaining within it. Such meanings may not exist in harmony but their interests may be interpreted as being in some way aligned. When such a formation is in operation, the alliance is said to form a ‘black box’, an unquestioned series of interlinked meanings that combine to produce accepted knowledge. The construction of a black box is characterised as the ‘stacking’ of actants, essentially the practice of successive deployments of intermediary ‘actants’, generating layers of meaning through history that make it progressively more difficult to challenge that

meaning. Latour (1987) explores how fact is constructed within the fields of science and technology. For Latour this stacking of allies is not simply a matter of collecting more allies than your opponents. If this were the case it would be relatively easy for an opponent to pick apart the alliance, because the basis upon which one ally bases an argument is the same as that for which all the allies found their perspectives. Rather, what Latour suggests is that each ally needs to move the argument on somewhat, to develop a similar but slightly different point of view so as to make the task of unpicking a discourse that much more challenging. The process is illustrated with regard to academic papers. A scientific theory is developed by an individual and is developed through the course of several papers by other academics until the original theory, which may well have been the cause of some controversy and debate initially, has made the metamorphosis into an accepted turn of phrase, with no reference to the original author, paper or justifications required. This is accepted scientific 'knowledge'.

As Latour (1987) states, the task of unpicking the series of black boxes, stacked as they are against any willing opponent, will prove a tiring process requiring plentiful resources, patience and perseverance. In effect, the opponent is made lonely and isolated from a great swathe of accepted and 'expert' opinion.

In such a way, a leadership development participant may ascribe a certain meaning to leadership based on the negotiated, subjective construction of a leadership development alliance. Such an alliance will quickly crumble, however, if confronted with a leadership network at work which has 'stacked' a purpose of leadership that is quite different. In this way, the participant will be isolated, even regarded as deviant.

The discussion now moves on to the process of translation, whereby, in our case, leadership development participants and other actants within leadership development and leadership networks will seek to build alliances of support for a particular purpose of leadership.

The process of translation

Callon (1986) illustrates the process of translation through reference to four stages. Each will be considered in turn, within the context of a leadership development process.

At its heart, 'translation' represents the process that must be undertaken in order to build a relatively stable network of meaning. The term 'translation' suggests fluidity, a movement, as the identities of actants are constructed and reconstructed by those involved in the process, through interaction, thus determining the "freedom to manoeuvre" of actants and the purpose upon which the network is founded.

The process described by Callon seeks to explode the myth that science simply deals with the 'rational'. He paints an image not simply about the careful gathering of evidence and the testing of hypotheses, but of seduction and betrayal as actants are enrolled and withdraw from a network of meaning. Although Callon states that four stages in the process of translation are identifiable, he is at pains to emphasise that it will be inherently fluid in practice, with the various stages overlapping, as it is a process rooted in the social construction of meaning. The first of these stages is that of problematisation.

1. Problematisation, or how to become indispensable.

In this early stage the protagonist seeks to define the problem at hand. In this way other actants within the system are identified as the protagonist attempts to inscribe them with a particular identity and purpose. The aim of this is to position the protagonist actant as an "obligatory passage point" (OPP) in the network, the 'expert' through which discourse and action within the network must pass.

In the context of leadership development, perhaps participants should consider this task of problematisation more seriously. How can they construct a network that will enable them to establish themselves as an OPP for organisational change?

A leadership development programme would seem to present a favourable opportunity for participants to enact change at work. After all, the mere presence of a participant on a leadership development programme suggests the employing organisation may hold some faith in that participant. One strategy available to participants might therefore be to attempt to convince employers that new theory gathered through leadership development is merely a next 'logical' step in the aims of the organisation, thus attempting to install themselves as the OPP within the existing leadership coalition.

ANT encourages participants to exercise more imagination in their network building. The very terrain of the place of leadership can be identified as an actant in the process. Furthermore, it would seem to be in the interests of facilitators, presenters and development organisers for change to occur. The very nature of leadership development, in this sense, constructs participants as OPP. Moreover, it is in the interest of the cash actant for leadership change to be enacted through the OPP of the participant, otherwise it will be diverted for other use. It is even in the interest of the venue for the process to enact change, otherwise it will be deserted in favour of other venues or methods of development.

Alternatively, in the absence of a supportive work organisation, participants may seek to advocate for change in leadership ethos by constructing an 'underground' alliance. Such a process would involve the identification of work allies and the leverage of newly identified actors from the leadership development process (facilitators, 'experts' etc).

The identification and construction of actants brings us to the second phase of translation, that of 'interessement', which describes how the position of actants in the network is strengthened.

2. The devices of 'interessement', or how the allies are locked into place.

This phase of translation is described by Callon as a "series of trials of strength", which, he states, will determine the durability of the protagonist actor's constructions. For Callon, this

phase is determined by action, which will modify, and hopefully strengthen, the position of the network. The identity of actants and the purpose of the network will be strengthened, “locked into place”, through the actions of an entity. For Callon, the word ‘interessement’ means to be ‘interposed’, suggesting a joining of forces, a fusion of meaning between actors in a network.

But here a crucial complication is introduced. Allies will be linked, or “implicated” in the networks of others, problematised elsewhere, and hence be the subject of alternative pulls towards quite different meaning structures. The task of interessement is thus to construct barriers, to deploy intermediaries between allies and competing networks, to strengthen the tie to the protagonist construct. Strategies for doing so are “unlimited”, but “seduction” and “force” are commonly deployed.

This process has implications for how we view leadership development. Newly identified actants can be deployed as interessements to strengthen the case of participants as OPP. Facilitators, presenters and organisers do this all the time, of course, enrolling great writers, theorists, four-by-four matrices, and so on, as interessements to strengthen their standing as sources of valuable knowledge. Likewise, participants may initiate projects at work, ‘innovative’ changes whose endorsement by outside ‘expert’ actors will create a reputational safety barrier. Such interessements may appear in the form of policy reports, dissertations, or through reorganisation, as the ‘theory’ actant makes the journey from leadership development network to leadership network.

This raises an issue of how such activity may be co-ordinated, and it is this issue which is next addressed by Callon, through the enrolment stage of the translation process.

3. How to define and coordinate the roles: enrolment

The challenge here, for Callon (1986), is managing the process from a position of one of uncertainty to a more certain state of affairs, “[transforming] a question [about the direction of the newly formed network] into a series of statements which are more certain”.

Enrolment is thus the “group of multilateral negotiations, trials of strength and tricks that accompany and enable them to succeed”. In the background are the other actants, who thus far have been excluded from the process, those with competing, alternative systems of meaning, who can yet interpose their own purpose on the network as constructed – the predators.

In the case of leadership development, ‘enrolment’ draws attention to the need for political strategies of operation if theory is ever to be ‘translated’ from classroom to action. Colleagues will need to be seduced, or forced, into their roles. For example, bosses may need to be seduced and made to share the ownership of change and the same argument holds for influential members of staff further down the organisational hierarchy, and trade unions, possibly. Theorists, presenters, practitioners and facilitators will require the transactional acknowledgement of the effectiveness of their methods as a price for their participation.

This brings us to the final stage in the process of translation, that of the mobilisation of allies. The critical question in this phase, for Callon, is whether those actants enrolled are representative of the groups they claim to represent.

4. The mobilisation of allies: are the spokespeople representative?

The issue of spokespeople is one addressed in some detail by Latour (1988). The issue here is whether those representative actants identified by the protagonist are capable of delivering, of embedding the meaning structure of the network within their sub-networks. The question is, therefore, can they be relied upon? If not, then the network may be at risk of collapse. Latour insists clever leaders will find a way of entering ‘backstage’, behind the backs of meddlesome spokespeople in order to investigate the reliability of spokespeople and to quash the meaning-making activities of opposing coalitions. This is the equivalent of leaders ‘walking the floor’ and listening to staff in the hope of discovering the feelings of these actants towards any changes proposed.

In order for leadership development participants to successfully transfer 'theory' from classroom to workplace they must rely on spokespeople. The body of work represented by the presenter assumes to represent a broader body of theory and even, possibly, 'the' definitive theory in a particular area of leadership studies. Those organisational actors deemed influential in this transfer from development network to leadership network are constructed as representative of broader views or values within the milieu of leadership. Executive coaches may be viewed as representative of the validity of a theory as it undergoes transformation from a collection of spoken words and slides to action on the ground. The 'place' of leadership is assigned as a spokesperson, assumed to possess a history, a certain way of operating, learnt through time, that has influenced the formation of theory. Conversely, participants themselves are viewed by those involved in delivering the development programme to be representatives of their organisations, that through engagement with these spokespeople, change will occur in practice. The 'cash' actant is representative of a broader belief that such activity is conducive to positive learning and may continue within the network to further develop leadership change.

These networks of power can be viewed as fragile. The withdrawal of one actant can lead to a collapse in the intended purpose, as the alternative constructions of other actants are pursued. Callon characterises this as "betrayal". Other interested parties, within partnership organisations, for example, may thwart efforts at change if they regard them to be against the interests of their own leadership network. Bosses, until now supportive of leadership development, may begin to waver as change threatens their position, their 'sacred' place within an organisation.

What the above shows us is how difficult something as superficially straightforward as engaging with theory might be for participants. It may be as much a political challenge as it is an intellectual one (Morrell and Hartley 2006; Hartley and Bennington 2011). Participants must develop the ability to see and harness a disparate coalition of interests, recognising that their motives and character will be interpreted and constructed in certain ways, depending on the particular constellation of actors involved. Political leadership, as envisaged here, is fluid, deals with a broad range of actors and is focused on issues of power as a constructor of meaning (Morrell and Hartley 2006).

Additionally, the above discussion draws to mind an important difference between ANT and systems theory in exploring how participants engage with theory. It might be the case that by highlighting the role of individual actors in generating meaning around a particular theory, what we are doing is highlighting the importance of human agency within any coalition of leadership development. Individual humans may have an important role to play in making an imperfect theory work in practice. This bears close resemblance to the work of Dekker (2002 and 2006). Writing in the field of accident analysis, he states the view that it is humans fixing and working within imperfect systems who usually prevent disasters from occurring. Humans can make flawed processes work. Indeed, in his view, there may be no such thing as a perfect system. This is in contrast to the dominant view of safety systems, which regard the challenge as residing in adding safety barriers to the existing system in order to make it more fool-proof. This is often conceptualised as the 'Swiss cheese' model, developed by Reason (2000 and 2006). In this theory, holes in a layer of Swiss cheese represent potential for error. A good system will stack layers of 'cheese' (barriers preventing disaster) to make it increasingly less likely that holes will align to create an accident. Reason himself (2006) has recently refined his model, acknowledging the role of human actors in the prevention of accidents and prefers to view his model as a heuristic and communication tool for entering a discussion on system safety.

Thus far we have explored the theory of ANT, that of meaning generation through a process of negotiation between human and non-human actors, and we have explored in more depth this process of 'translation'. We will now move on to consider some of the criticisms levelled at ANT and more recent writings by scholars in this field, which suggest the theory should not seek to simplify complex organisational systems and should be more concerned with the temporary, local impact of power.

A critique of ANT: networks as fluid, temporary agreements requiring compromise

Whittle and Spicer (2008, p.612) state that ANT is guilty of "ontological realism,

epistemological positivism and political conservatism". They believe that ANT seeks to 'naturalise' actors, especially non-human actants, as if they possess "inherent properties and characteristics", rather than being fluid, negotiated entities. They argue that the very act of distinguishing between human and non-human "recreates the dualism [ANT] seeks to overcome". The authors are critical of the theory's capacity to explain acts of resistance. Moreover, they argue that ANT too often portrays actors as rationalistic self-interested creatures, much in the same way as the field of traditional economics. They are critical of an alleged privileged status assumed within ANT by the scholar, suggesting that, rather than gaining perspective from the distinctive range of subjective voices present in a network, ANT grants undue prominence to the interpretations of the academic narrator. Most tellingly, perhaps, is the critique of Whittle and Spicer (2008) of Callon's (1986) translation model discussed above. The authors state that the model implies a positivist interpretation of the environment, that there is an independently verifiable reality 'out there' capable of being captured through a reliable scientific tool.

More recently, ANT scholars have expressed a concern that their theory might itself have been translated into something other than its original purpose, that it might have been adopted in an overly technical, static manner, by scientists seeking definitive explanations for social phenomena. Law (2005) expresses the view that the very naming of Actor Network Theory and its conversion to a neat acronym, ANT, might have implied that "its centre had been fixed, pinned down, rendered definite", thus making its adoption as a "specific strategy" possible. Law believes that to do so is a 'betrayal' of the original intent of the theory, which was established as a means of observing fluid constructions of meaning that will be specific to the place of their operation, that networks are not descriptions of an inherent "order of things" but as specifically local and dynamic. ANT is concerned with the "fractional", a "line which occupies more than one dimension but less than two", states Law (2005, p.12). The inherent complexity of this view of the world should not be compromised, he states, but worked with. This is not a matter of compartmentalising definitive actants, but recognising that singular actors will represent more, or less, than themselves, depending on the perspective adopted.

Latour (2005) believes that ANT itself has been exposed to 'translation' as a result of our

changing constructions of the concept of a 'network'. Networks, he states, no longer imply the indefinite, transforming, but definitive, technologically-based information systems, where definitive 'truths' are available through a "double click" of a computer mouse. Yet ANT, he says, is concerned with contradictions. It does not seek to rectify such contradictions, but to acknowledge their presence as representative of the complexity within which practitioners, and scholars, must operate. ANT is characterised by Latour as "a method to learn from the actors without imposing on them an a priori definition of their world-building capacities" (Latour 2005, p.20). In this sense, it is linked to ethnomethodology, to be discussed in the next chapter. The task of the researcher in this context is to embrace the local, to "go about systematically recording the world-building abilities of the sites to be documented and registered...to find the procedures which render actors able to negotiate their ways through one another's world-building activity". The job of the researcher is to observe the 'circulating' of actants and forces at work in a specific place and time.

The implication of this fluid co-construction of meaning within a network of actants, suggests that a key component in the effective operation of such an alliance will be compromise. In the context of leadership development, therefore, to become overly preoccupied with delivering a particular theory in its 'pure' form, from classroom to workplace, could prove destructive. Its success will be determined by the extent to which it can survive alternative constructions within the network of leadership. Participants, by implication, must realise this, and determine to what extent they are prepared to compromise their personal visions. Likewise, the challenge for employers is one of compromise. By sending their employees to attend development programmes they are implicitly agreeing to a need for change of some sort and it is therefore to be expected that they will be required to compromise the meaning-generating network of leadership at play (Latour 1991).

In his study of a new generation of intelligent rail travel planned for Paris, *Aramis* (1996), Latour describes the torturous progress of the project over many decades, as it moved through the hands of different political regimes, between government departments, technological developments, funding agencies and scientists. Ultimately, Latour insists, the

project failed not because it was a bad idea or because the innovation was not clever enough but because it failed to compromise, to adapt in any way to changing times and priorities. It was a 'pure' but useless concept.

This draws our attention to the possibility that the purpose of leadership development will vary depending upon which aspect of the network is analysed. For example, some participants, and indeed organisations, might view leadership development programmes in terms of career progression, rather than as vehicles for pursuing an improvement in leadership practice, *per se*, although these differing motives may prove complementary in some circumstances (Parker and Carroll 2008). An organisation's chief executive may regard a leadership development programme as an OPP for senior managers, which may result in the exercise being constructed as an unhelpful, but necessary exercise in bureaucracy fulfilment. Some participants may view such programmes as a form of educational entertainment, 'edutainment', a form of peripheral learning, where presenters will be expected to stimulate the senses of participants with 'interesting' insights. Such participants thus abdicate responsibility for change.

ANT in this sense should draw our attention to the fact that for a leadership development programme to generate improved leadership a broad range of actants are required to accept a degree of shared meaning in the object of the exercise. This implies *a dispersal of responsibility* for the successful delivery of leadership development and a recognition that the very act of constructing a leadership development network will result in changes to the leadership network.

Participants are required to exercise active participation, to share experiences and to engage in experiments at work (Mintzberg 2004). Facilitators are needed to challenge participants' thinking and stretch learning as much as possible. Presenters likewise must be open to compromise and to rethinking theories presented, in the light of alternative constructions from participants. Followers must participate in the renegotiation of theory in practice, engaging in order to improve rather than destruct. Government must place a premium on the importance of the development of leadership; hence the 'cash' actant must remain faithful to the process. Importantly, organisational bosses must commit to the

inevitability of change, of new theories which will challenge the sacredness of leadership. The same argument stands for followers.

Moreover, ANT highlights the fact that although the range of leadership identities and options open to participants may be limited by the confluence of discourses in play, these leaders are well positioned to influence the meaning of leadership. They are therefore capable of exercising a choice in adopting a particular leadership identity (Carroll and Levy 2010). The emphasis on power in this section may thus be interpreted as much in a liberating, as in a restrictive manner.

In contradiction to Spicer and Whittle (2008) it is the belief of the researcher that ANT can act as a valuable, critical and nuanced theoretical lens through which to examine organisational phenomena such as leadership development. Yet the authors, as well as the ANT theorists cited above, set an important challenge to any scholar wishing to adopt an ANT perspective. Namely, actants (both human and non-human) should not be viewed as 'natural' entities with a fixed centre, but, rather, as a temporary accomplishment, whose identity will vary according to the subjective position adopted. Indeed, ANT, with its emphasis on a fluid, dynamic series of interlinking networks may be well positioned to describe this. A valid ANT analysis should pay heed to resistance. Indeed, acts of resistance ought to be at the very centre of a theory that privileges the political machinations of actants.

In turn, this implies that the subjective perspectives of actors ought to be heard, with an account of varying, often conflicting positions, provided. The voice of the academic narrator will of course be a factor within any ethnographic account, the method predominantly favoured by ANT writers. It is the task of the writer to acknowledge such subjectivity, and as far as possible to allow any study to be shaped by the subjective accounts of those involved in any network. It would surely be tempting, while conducting an ANT-inspired account, to adopt Callon's (1986) four step theory as itself an OPP for the research process. Yet this would be to ignore the above criticism of such an approach, not least the wishes of the author himself. Perhaps it would be healthier to accept the advice of Whittle and Spicer (2008), who regard the model as a useful "heuristic device", a means by which a researcher

may begin to make some form of (subjective) sense of a complex process. In this sense, the four aspects of translation may themselves be regarded as another, albeit valuable, subjective interpretation of a complex organisational process.

Summary

This section began by stating that a collective view highlights how leadership development may be the product of the efforts and meaning making activities of many people within a system. In this sense, it was suggested that leadership development involved an *engagement* with theory, rather than *consumption* of theory. Engaging with, rather than simply consuming theory, suggests a more systemic view of leadership development, with participants considering how they might leverage influence within a system. The learning organisation theory was considered as a useful means through which to begin to think about such reflections. It was criticised for overlooking the role of power and history within organisations. With this in mind, ANT was proposed as a more political means through which participants may consider the coalitions necessary to translate theory from classroom to workplace – from leadership development to leadership.

From the perspective of a collective view of leadership development, it is necessary to engage more than simply individual leader participants in the process. A systems theory view of leadership states that leadership development is effective when considered systemically, as part of an ambitious, whole-organisation strategy of continuous learning. The more political view of leadership, expressed in ANT, would view the construct necessary for the delivery of leadership as a coalition, rather than a system. According to this theory, commitment to change from a broad network of actors is necessary for a successful leadership development experience.

The key characteristics of the ‘coalition’ school can thus be captured in the following table:

Table 3: The key characteristics of the ‘coalition’ school of leadership development:

School of development	Focus on...	Related leadership theory	Delivery methods	(According to the theory) success depends upon...
Coalition	The collective	Constructionist leadership theory; Actor Network Theory; Process theory; Systems theory	Classroom-based critical reflection; work-based engagement with theory	Engaging a broader coalition of leadership development and leadership

Recap - Thus far this chapter has explored individual views of leadership development. First, it stated that, according to behavioural theorists, a successful leadership development experience requires identifying ‘correct’, ‘appropriate’ and ‘accurate’ measures of leadership behaviour that will form the basis of a series of competencies that can act as a template for development work.

Second, it stated that authentic leadership theorists regard an effective leadership development experience as that which brings participants closer to understanding their unconscious values and provides them with a means of thinking about how these values can be brought into greater alignment with the practice of leadership.

The chapter moved on to discuss collective views of leadership. It stated that the learning organisation model is a useful way of thinking about leadership as more than the property of an individual, as more of a process, shared within an organisation. Leadership development should thus be thought of more as an engagement with theory. It stated that more power-centred readings of collective leadership development state that we should think of a system of leadership development as more of a temporary, political coalition,

where meaning is negotiated and is temporary. It discussed the possibility for a more politicised view of systems leadership development – a coalition school. In this view of leadership development, an effective experience is one which engages the broader coalition of leadership, not just the individual, with theory, and, ultimately, with the practice of change.

b. The experiential learning school of leadership development

Introduction

The experiential school of leadership development offers a contrast to the other schools discussed. The challenge for this level of development is one of learning through experience, of translating reflections upon personal values and theory to the practice of leadership.

Experiential theorising is largely rooted in a constructivist view of the operation of power within development activity. Namely, it holds that, as power and meaning are constructed locally, it is only possible to develop a phenomenon such as 'leadership' within a specific context. In this sense, it is a collective theory, in that it is concerned with the meaning making activities of a group.

Constructionist writers posit experiential learning as a counterpoint to behavioural, transmission teaching, as highlighted earlier in this chapter. In this sense, they may be said to have more in common with the critical writing highlighted in the section on coalition leadership development.

Critique of 'schooling'

Stephen Fox (1997) argues that management education and management development have begun to merge as practices in recent years – but should be treated as quite separate disciplines.

He argues that a consequence of the merging of practices of development and education is that the formal, classroom, educational approach, has been adopted too frequently in development initiatives. He portrays this approach as 'schooling' and points to a number of weaknesses inherent within it when applied to a development context. 'Schooling', he states:

1. does not produce practitioners. Rather, it produces schooled adults, people who are able to talk about practice rather than belong to a community of practice;
2. effectively cuts students off from other communities of practice;
3. produces what might be called 'communities of discourse' rather than communities of practice, and necessitates the separation of abstract knowledge from knowing in practice (Fox 1997, p.30).

Fox says that such an approach produces leaders who are able to discuss the theory surrounding a particular issue but are unable to apply this knowledge to the world of work. This is what is characterised by the author as a 'transfer of learning' problem.

It is this construction of a classroom versus experiential dichotomy that pervades much of the literature on experiential learning. Emphasis on the experiential aspect of leadership development has particular saliency in light of evidence demonstrating that such 'situated' methods of development hold perhaps the most promise for the transfer of leadership development learning to the practice of leadership in action. For example, Burgoyne et al (2004, p.3) set out their finding that "leadership development that contributes most clearly to performance enhancement is that carried out in or close to companies and organisations". They continue by stating that the transfer of development into performance

becomes increasingly difficult the further away such activity is located from the source of the practice of leadership.

It is this managing of the space between an engagement with theory and the practice of leadership which is addressed by experiential learning. Namely, its purpose is to help participants and organisational actors manage the return to work.

The 'return'

While an element of separation might be necessary for the generation of individualistic reflection, even for a cool consideration and open dialogue around the political boundaries of leadership as enacted in place, this implies that at some stage the leader participant will be required to return to the milieu of leadership. The challenge of this return can be interpreted philosophically and anthropologically. It highlights the danger that participants may face ridicule or excommunication from their communities of practice if their newly gained insights do not meet with support. This is the testing of a leadership development coalition within the situated coalition of leadership.

Jones (2006) addresses the notions of 'separation' and 'return' within leadership development from an anthropological perspective. Jones' reading of formal leadership development programmes is that some of their 'value' may be hidden to organisations. This is because, he states, they often serve the purpose of 'ritual process'.

Being chosen as a participant by the sponsoring firm/organisation begins a kind of separation process, which becomes real when participants leave their firms for a week or so and relocate to an offsite programme. During a week-long programme, participants enter a stage of liminality, or a 'betwixt and between' stage, when they are no longer their former (working) selves but not yet their future (working) selves. And finally, after the programme concludes they return to work and reaggregate as (transformed) members of their organisations (Jones 2006, p.488).

Such actions of 'separation', an 'in between' and a 'return', the author continues, are especially prone to occur when cultures face times of crises. Leader representatives are sent forth to discover 'outside', 'innovative' solutions to the crisis experienced. The author concludes that such a response to a crisis is common across a range of national cultures and is not restricted to western Europe. This consideration of separation with the aim of producing innovation may place a high degree of pressure on participants to discover a definite solution to problems constructed as crises. Furthermore, this suggests that perhaps, in these situations, 'leadership' development will not be best suited to sponsoring organisations which seek something more akin to 'command' development (Grint 2005b).

Nightingale (2004) argues that such concerns have also been well documented within classical philosophy. The process of leaders separating from their locales of operation in order to seek innovative new practices was documented by the ancient Greek philosophers. The practice of 'theoria' bears close resemblance to the modern-day practice of leadership development. Within such a process, a particular leader was required to travel, to separate from the milieu of leadership, in order to witness spectacular or novel events that might provide the community of practice with valuable new learning perspectives. The aim of such a development process was practical: the improvement of the body politic and civil structures of everyday society. The process recognised the sacred aspect of leaders. As Nightingale (2004, p.44) notes, the dual meaning in ancient Greece of *theos* (god) and *thea* (sight, spectacle) signifies a form of "sacred spectating".

The very act of separation, for Nightingale, carries inherent dangers both for the community and for the leader. For the community, a fear of the "corrupting" of leadership by foreign influence, exotic and strange customs, could engender distrust and scepticism. For the individual leader, the process of *theoria* is also wrought with danger, and Nightingale remarks that the journey home, for the philosopher, is "no less important than the journey abroad". Leaders may stir feelings of political competition and jealousy amongst rivals, in addition to generating suspicion and fear of new ideals that challenge existing customs, traditions and history of the home community.

For formal leadership development to successfully navigate this 'return', it seems necessary that methods for assisting participants are explored.

Summary of the remainder of the section

This section will now discuss in more depth the various aspects of experiential learning highlighted in the literature. It will begin with an exploration of 'prototyping' theories of development. These state that leaders develop leadership through the observation of others. While this may be an accurate description of how development proceeds informally, there is a danger inherent in such practices that changes of meaning to the network of leadership may be thwarted as leaders mimic existing models of practice. This section, as a result of this, will argue that perhaps experiential learning is best viewed as a bridge, a broker, between formal development and the enactment of leadership at work. The case will be made that this aspect of development should not be underestimated by practitioners and should be regarded as a crucial aspect of the development process. This section will emphasise the role of a critical mindset in such a process and consider the implications of pursuing experiential learning critically. It will consider the methods by which such a critical treatment of a participant's 'return' to leadership may be negotiated and made sense of.

The section will end by stating that while experiential learning is valuable, when considered in isolation it may lead to an unnecessary closure to the possibilities of outside innovation, as represented by engagement with theory, and of individualistic expression.

Prototyping as development

Crucibles

Prototyping plays a significant role in the work of Bennis and Thomas (2002), as it provides a link between individual development, as experienced through significant, life-changing experience, and more dispersed organisational leadership development. In their theory of the 'crucible' of leadership development, they hold that significant personal experiences largely determine the development of individual leaders throughout their careers. For these crucibles to be of significance, as was the case with the 'departure' phase of authentic leadership, they must be "difficult events", state the authors. For these writers, 'crucibles' cannot be experienced in organised training events. Rather, they are uniquely personal events that act as a spur for leaders-in-waiting to reconsider their 'calling' to leadership. Although the authors seem to hint at the fact that 'crucible' events need to possess an aspect of the traumatic in order to be successful, they state their belief that this is of less importance than the sense individuals subsequently make of their 'crucible' experiences. This is referred to as 'adaptive capacity'. Through extracting powerful lessons from such 'crucibles', leaders learn that failures are acceptable and potentially powerful sources of information. Through virtue of having lived through these difficult crucible moments and emerged stronger and wiser, these leaders, state Bennis and Thomas, become people who seem to thrive on chaos, "not only more tolerant of ambiguity than others, they are also able to consider multiple options for a longer period. They don't rule out possibilities prematurely and so they are able to make better, more artful choices. They can tolerate the nettle of uncertainty in situations where others long for closure" (Bennis and Thomas 2002, pp.101-102).

The authors seek to describe how leaders who do not naturally undergo such experiences in life may go about staging them. The answer is twofold. Firstly, it is the role of the leader, the authors state, to create 'crucible' experiences for his/her workforce in the shape of challenging job assignments, even making meetings challenging 'crucible' experiences

(although surely these will be watered down versions of some of the traumatic ‘crucibles’ described by the authors in their book). Secondly, the authors recommend a form of modelling, whereby followers will model their behaviour according to the aspirational figure of the leader. The authors suggest that such activity could be delivered through a process of mentoring. This notion of development through example is one pursued by Gardner et al (2005) in their theory of authentic leadership development, who regard authentic leaders as those who not only follow their own deeply-held values but act as role models to those who work for them. The personal history of leaders is again regarded as important, as they must make sense of ‘crucible’ experiences in order to make sense of leadership. Again, these authors recommend a structured form of role-modelling as the most suitable form of ‘authentic’ leadership development.

Thus, “positive modelling represents a basic means whereby authentic leaders impart positive values, emotions, motives, goals and behaviours for followers to emulate” (Gardner et al 2005, p.358). This points towards an extensive body of research within the experiential school of leadership development, that of ‘prototyping’ and social learning theory.

Social learning theory

Kempster (2009) views social learning theory as a fundamentally important way in which managers learn to lead. Essentially, the theory concerns how individuals learn through the modelling of their behaviour on “significant” others, while comparing such behaviour to personal cognitive constructs and an evaluation of the environment of leadership. This is characterised as a “fundamental triadic reciprocity”. Drawing on the work of Bandura (1977, 1986 and 1997) the theory holds that individuals will determine the relative importance of tasks according to this process of modelling, of prototyping. This process of social learning, as described by Bandura (1986) consists of a prioritisation placed on what should be paid attention to in the environment, particular behaviour that is regarded as most valued. In turn this influences what is retained in the memory of developing leaders, which aids a deepening of learning. Further learning is generated through experimentation with

behaviours that subjects observe in others. Finally, developing leaders will most likely repeat behaviours where incentives exist to do so. Moreover, it is this process that determines the “self-efficacy” of developing leaders. It will influence their own view of their capability to act in certain ways in relation to particular leadership tasks. Through the process of social learning, developing leaders will search for means of shaping their self-efficacy from experiencing the task of leading, through observing others leading, listening to the advice or instructions of colleagues or outside ‘experts’ and on the ‘feeling’ of leading, i.e. whether leading results in a lowering or a boosting of confidence (Bandura 1986). Kempster (2009, p.73) states that this process, described as “vicarious learning”, observational learning, will often determine whether an individual comes to regard the task of leading as important.

Prototyping

Prototyping theory (Hogg and Terry 2000; Hogg 2001) holds that we learn appropriate behaviours within organisations by modelling ourselves against others, in conjunction with an analysis of the environment and other groups. Through such a process we develop a ‘prototype’ of the kinds of behaviour that will be regarded as acceptable and constructive within our group. This depersonalises individuals within groups as actors seek representations of embodiments of the relevant prototype – a process of “depersonalisation” (Hogg and Terry 2000, p.123). The result is conceptualised as “normative behaviour, stereotyping, ethnocentrism, positive in-group attitudes and cohesion, cooperation and altruism, emotional contagion and empathy, collective behaviour, shared norms and mutual influence”. The existence of an ‘in-group’ suggests also the presence of an ‘out-group’, constructed as the antithesis of the behaviours and principles valued. This constitutes a ‘depersonalisation’, as individuals cede their own judgment in favour of a series of group judgements.

Reference to our prototype constructions is a relatively improvised process of learning, one of continual construction of images deemed relevant, according to Hogg (2001, pp.187-188).

He states that prototypes are “often stored in memory to be ‘called forth’ by social categorisation in a particular context to guide perception, self conception and action”. Such prototypes of behaviour are “almost always” modified to suit the perceived environmental challenge. The suggestion is that these prototypes are altered to the extent that they will maximise difference between the in-group and a targeted out-group. Such categorisation will be experimented with, “tried out”, as individuals test the limits of their prototyping range.

It is in this way that we create ‘prototypes’ of an ‘ideal’ leadership within the context of a particular organisation, according to developed, comparative group norms, the authors state. We will attribute such prototypical properties to a particular individual, a ‘leader’.

Individuals who display the most prototypical characteristics, state Hogg and Terry (2000) are the individuals most likely to be attributed with leadership authority. This is dependent, they add, on the existence of a relatively stable environment. Examples of this may include a large, heavily bureaucratised organisation, such as a county council, or organisations reliant on hierarchy and rules, such as the Fire and Rescue Service or the armed services. The position of the leader is strengthened, state the authors, through the rationalisation of this process of prototyping. In other words, followers may justify their adherence to the behaviours of a leader by constructing such behaviours in charismatic, extraordinary terms. Hogg (2001), states that within highly prototypical groups, members will be especially sensitive to perceived changes in the behaviour of those attributed with leadership, thus perpetuating the cycle. Moreover, the leadership of these prototypical leaders is viewed as being strengthened by the existence, or perception of, a crisis, as followers defer to the group prototype as a means of calming anxiety (Fromm 1984). It may therefore be in the interests of leaders in highly prototypical organisations to construct leadership problems as crises (Grint 2005b and 2009).

The implications of this phenomenon for leadership development are reasonably clear and straightforward. Such behaviour may contribute to groupthink and destructive consent (Grint 2007). Learning will not be directed towards change, but towards strengthening existing norms, or *competencies*. Challenge to such norms, Hogg states, is possible, if a

leader declines in prototypicality, according to changes in how followers perceive the environment. However, in the more rigid, bureaucratic organisations mentioned above, this seems as if it might prove a slow process. One way in which this might be achieved, the author suggests, is through an alternative conception of prototype benchmarking, and one could envisage leadership development as providing the possibility of such a forum. The odds, however, of a single individual achieving such change, appear slim, as the author states that a characteristic of strongly prototypical groups is that they will attempt to cast those who behave against the prototype as 'deviant' in nature, even using such individuals as examples and 'lessons' for more effective control of other members. In sectors dominated by white, male managers (i.e. the vast majority of organisations), the process described is likely, states Hogg, to result in the exclusion of women and members of ethnic minority groups.

To offer some critical thought on the above, a contradiction in the theory can be observed, in that, on the one hand it seems to act as a critique for the typologising of leadership behaviour, by suggesting that it can lead to unimaginative and potentially destructive development. On the other hand its prescription is the adoption of subtly different or alternative prototypes – to adopt an alternative stereotype, rather than the construction of leadership development as a process of exploring unknown, complex problems. Moreover, its conceptualisation of 'power' is as something necessarily regressive that lies in the possession of individuals. Perhaps a more sophisticated reading would suggest that the theory itself is predicated upon a unique conflagration of power constructs and offers one way of describing the operation of power within leadership learning as an active, meaning shaping process.

Nevertheless, such a discussion of prototype learning is valuable for a study of leadership development, as it may go part of the way in helping us understand that participants do not enter programmes as 'blank sheets'. They do so carrying a range of preconceived notions of leadership (Ford et al 2008). Prototypical views of leadership may, to one degree or another, determine what participants view as legitimate learning. Moreover, such an understanding of prototype learning may focus our attention more pointedly at the alternative leadership networks at play within the worlds of leadership development participants. If theory

presented within leadership development programmes is viewed as contradictory to held leadership prototypes, then this may result in participants withdrawing their cooperation and participation from the leadership development network, as the transition from theory to action might be regarded as too risky. The risk of breaking prototype implies a risk to the wellbeing of participants. This is therefore an ethical as well as a performance issue. It may be in the interests of an effective leadership development process for leadership prototypes to be surfaced, reflected upon and discussed.

Experiential learning and physicality

The above discussion implies an element of physicality in leadership development, where the body of a leader is deployed and utilised for the purpose of learning. Through observing, “vicarious learning” from the physical action of leaders, participants may observe their own physical reactions to such behaviour, reflect on these and use such insights for their own future leadership practices. This is a matter addressed in more depth by Ladkin (2008 and 2010). Ladkin (2008), in her discussion of ‘beautiful leadership’, draws on Plato’s concept of ‘the beautiful’, which states that we seem particularly to react to three aspects of aesthetic leadership. Firstly, we tend to respond positively to a display of ‘mastery’, the expertise of a leader demonstrated through performance. Second, a consistency, a coherence, the author states, seems necessary, matching leadership deeds with leadership value statements. Finally, the purpose of leaders is important, with followers best responding to those leaderly acts which are focused on a goal with inherent appeal, a ‘beautiful’ goal. This introduces, the author states, a strong element of physicality to how we view authentic behaviour, as observers will rely on their ‘gut instincts’ as much as their cognitive faculties in determining their response.

Modelling within leadership development is much more than a cognitive phenomenon and has a strong physical element, one which is little recognised but that shapes how we view leadership and how leaders develop in practice. This physicality of leadership development is further expanded by the author (Ladkin 2010) when she discusses the role of ‘the flesh’.

For Ladkin, what is referred to above as 'prototyping' is not a transmission mode of development, where behaviours of Leader A are transmitted to Vessel B in a linear and unaltered fashion. Rather, it is a dynamic process where the leader, as much as the follower, may be altered and reconstructed. It is an active process with strong associations to Foucault's conception of power as constructive of identity. As followers play an important role in the constitution of this 'flesh' of leadership, Ladkin suggests that it might be sensible for leaders to consider how they might 'fatten' this bond, developing trust and inspiration to help them navigate the difficult times of leadership.

The implication of the above is that it may be wise for leadership development participants to consciously hone their prototyping skills, so as to maximise the impact of their newly formed leadership development network on that of the host leadership coalition. The danger of not recognising the power of prototyping is that participants may be overawed by the scale of effort required for change, reverting to the modelling of existing, dominant organisational behaviour.

Recap – This section has so far described how experiential learning is frequently established in opposition to a classroom form of development. The section explored the notion of learning through 'prototypes' and suggested that such constructs ought to be surfaced, confronted and discussed during formal leadership development. The remainder of this section concentrates in more detail on how writers in this area have brought a critical mindset to bear on particular methods of experiential learning.

Adopting a critical mindset: action learning, executive coaching and communities of practice

Reynolds (1998, p.184) defines the hallmark of a critical approach to leadership development as "asking questions of purpose...confronting the taken for granted, concealed interests and ideologies which inform managerial thought and action". Experiential learning, the author states, offers a particularly effective means through which such practice can be

enacted. Key to such activity is the treatment of all “observations and prescriptions as ‘interested’ rather than neutral”, as is the case with behavioural development. Crucial to the enactment of critical reflection, therefore, is the search for “meaning in professional practice by analysing events in terms of history, context and in the institutionalised relationships of class, gender, race and power”. Critical reflection seeks to explicitly surface inequalities of power at work and to ask why these may exist. In the background of such critically reflective practice lies a belief that leadership can be used for the purpose of engendering a social good and that this pursuance is justification enough for critical practice. Gray (2006 and 2007) also recognises the capacity of such practices to act as a “liberating force” (2007, p.469). The cost, as highlighted by Willmott (1997), of implementing experiential learning methods that are uncritical, as was explored during the discussion on behaviourally-focused methods of development, will be a fuelling of cynicism or guilt, an impression made that an organisation is not serious about the need for change. Tourish and Hargie (2004) point to a body of evidence to highlight the danger inherent when uncritical feedback within organisations becomes normalised. For these authors, telling the boss that he/she might be wrong is an important part of properly functioning leadership. Similarly, Grint (2005a) highlights the same issue when discussing ‘constructive dissent’, the provision of negative feedback by followers, so that leaders may learn to make better decisions.

Criticality within experiential learning seems key to a process of effective leadership development. Without such a critical focus, experiential methods of learning become forums for the ‘transmission’ of orthodox practice. Methods are simply methods and possess no inherent criticality as a rule of existence.

Action learning

Action learning may act as an antidote to the problems outlined by Reynolds and others above. Action learning requires that participants work with an actual issue from the workplace and that such problems must be sufficiently robust and complex to uncover the

workings of power within the leadership of an organisation. This means that participants should be willing to explore their own belief systems and value constructs, to deconstruct their own identities and prejudices, in essence, to bring their own subjectivities to the table, in order that the collective may better understand the complexity of the issue.

Revans (1982, pp.626-627) defines action learning as:

...a means of development, intellectual, emotional or physical, that requires its subject, through responsible involvement in some real, complex and stressful problem, to achieve intended change sufficient to improve his [sic] observable behaviour henceforth in the problem field...Action learning particularly obliges subjects to become aware of their own value systems, by demanding that the real problems tackled carry some risk of personal failure, so that the subjects can truly help each other to evaluate in what they may genuinely believe.

Action learning is thus marked by a certain antipathy towards academic theory. It highlights the importance of everyday experience, where participants learn from each others' experience, rather than from academic textbooks. The notion of the 'real' experience is central, as the group engages in critical reflection upon facets of that experience that may be taken for granted by the predominant culture of the organisation. For Revans (1998), the further management development strays from an experienced work issue, the less useful the learning. He is particularly critical, for example (1998, p.9) of the deployment of academic case studies within action learning sets, as he believes that their separation from the operating environment necessarily means that they will be of less utility in the process of learning. Such 'real' problems ought not to be confused with technical issues, however. Those seeking solutions to tame problems (Grint 2005b), Revans advises, should seek satisfaction elsewhere. The emphasis is placed, instead, on developing a capacity for inquiry. Action learning is thus characterised as a method of redefining a problem through first analysing the questions asked (Grint 2005b; Ladkin 2010; Pedler 1997).

A distrust of hierarchy pervades the work, with new ideas capable of appearing from any source. The emphasis, rather than being on the power of the individual, is focused on a

collective ability to solve problems. There is no room for “charismatic” leaders in Revans’ construction. Indeed, he positively warns against a reliance on ‘heroic’ leaders, stating that participants should not undermine their own capacity for leadership in deference to a powerfully constructed leader figure, characterised as a “had the proposal any merit the Duke of Wellington would already have thought of it” (1998, p.48) syndrome.

There is no room for narcissistic leaders in this formation. Revans states that members should be enrolled according to three criteria. Participants must: 1) know about the problem in hand; 2) care about the problem and be advocates for change; and 3) possess sufficient power to enact change (Revans 1998, pp.40-41). This is the belief that “when four or five equal colleagues are all engaged in searches of similar structure and in similar conditions, they very soon begin among themselves to release ideas, motivations and abilities that, struggling in solitude, they could not believe themselves to possess” (Revans 1982, p.644). With such individuals in place, it is their duty, states Raelin (2000, p.67) to view the world from each others’ perspectives, thus developing a capacity to “stimulate” the capacity for inquiry. Revans describes an action learning community as supportive and a safe space in which to experiment, certainly. Yet difficult issues of power are not avoided. Indeed trust, or social capital, has been recognised (e.g. Anderson 2008; Sunderland 2007) as central to the operation of effective leadership. It is this potential for the creation of social capital through action learning that interests Day (2001, p.604), who states the belief that trust is founded upon “communal relationships and free exchange of information”.

It is worth noting at this stage that Revans did not view action learning as specifically a method for uncovering issues of power at work, more as a means of colleagues developing positive, ‘generative’ dialogues, in much the same manner as described by Senge et al (2005) in an earlier section of this chapter. Raelin (2000, p.68) regards the solving of a problem within action learning as important, but of secondary consequence to learning participants may gain from experiencing and analyzing the process itself. In other words, action learning may be useful in assisting participants in learning how to learn. However, a consequence of such practices as sharing previously privileged information precisely seems to imply a resultant emphasis on power relationships. As highlighted earlier, the very act of questioning within the practice of management development suggests an opening of a

critical discourse. For Revans (1998, p.4), this was important within action learning, as the posing of “discriminating questions” was at least as important, if not more so, than more formalised training.

There is certainly a strong element of challenge within the work of Revans to confront basic beliefs and “value systems” of colleagues. As Raelin (2000, p.67) notes, for action learning to prove effective participants must “take real positions, make moral judgments and defend them under pressure”. This is a recognition that organisations should learn not simply from within themselves but should expand their boundaries to include ideas and contributions from unexpected and novel outside sources. In addition, and crucially, Revans regards leadership as existing through the operation of various “coalition[s] of power” (1982, p.433) – and states that it is the responsibility of each participant to engage in the process of critical reflection of leadership practice.

In light of the above discussion it is worth returning to the practice of executive coaching. As discussed earlier in the chapter, coaching can be called upon within the logic of behavioural leadership development as a means of transmitting competencies, for programming leaders to organisational norms. Yet, when reframed in a critical light, coaching opens new possibilities.

Executive coaching reframed

It has been noted in the development literature that executive coaching may be used as an effective forum for critical reflection (Gray 2006 and 2007). Coaching may thus act as a forum for the posing of questions in novel ways in order to increase the capacity of the participant to question organisational norms and to strategise for change. Equally, within the logic of leadership development, and leadership, networks, coaching could provide a powerful method for challenging participants to live up to their part of the development bargain, to take responsibility for leadership.

Critical reflection is at the heart of effective coaching, for Gray (2006 and 2007) and can act as a “bridge between experience and learning, involving both cognition and feelings, aiding managers in achieving emancipation from ‘perspective-limiting assumptions’” (2007, p.469). Without such critical reflection within a coaching framework, experiences can develop a negative connotation for participants, reaffirming blinkered mental models, thus restricting development. For Gray, a coachee may build support and gain authority in an organisation through recognising its inherently fractured nature and informal mechanisms of control. The informal influencing of organisational activity, for Gray, is therefore of great importance. Storytelling thus becomes a useful device for executives to seek to create meaning for followers and for themselves. Coaching can become an important forum within which to rehearse such performances.

Gray (2006) views the coach’s role in this process almost as a provocative facilitator of experience, pushing the participant to take his/her role as a driver of leadership seriously.

Throughout the process, Gray observes, coaches must be aware and reflect upon their own position and mental models, and how these will inevitably alter the dynamic of the coaching relationship.

The construction of the ‘coach’ in the above discussion is caught somewhere between provocateur, cheerleader and psychiatrist. Indeed, the similarities between psychiatry and coaching have been well documented (e.g. Spinelli 2008; Jarvis et al 2006; Peltier 2001). Perhaps one of the results of such critical reflection could be the realisation on the part of the participant that he/she is in need of some specialist counselling in order to better balance the challenges of leadership with the processing of personal trauma. Most importantly, perhaps, this conflagration of coaching identities seems most geared towards boosting the confidence of participants, of acknowledging that they possess the ability to instigate powerful change. In this sense, we have returned full circle to the ‘safe space’ of individuation.

Executive coaching can thus be constructed, with the right emphasis, as a critical method of development, a means by which participants can strategise for change and discuss

challenges inherent within the network of leadership. It need not be a tool for the transmission of existing organisational norms, but could act as a forum for questioning and reframing problems.

Perhaps one result of such an emphasis on experiential learning could be the development of a learning community of practice in the workforce, which would act as a constant cauldron of ideas and challenge. It is to this aspect of experiential learning we now turn.

Communities of practice

Building on the critically reflective perspective described above, communities of practice offer an alternative conception of the role of apprenticeship within leadership development. Communities of practice are often established by development writers in opposition to formalised ways of learning, standing as they do in stark contrast to classroom models of learning. This need not be the case, however. One of the consequences of a more open dialogue based around newly learnt leadership theory might be, for example, that the network of leadership adopts some of the characteristics of a community of practice. Moreover, it may be possible that a group of participant peers enrolled in a formal development programme could develop such practices, even extending beyond the closure of the formal offering. Such a phenomenon is precisely what is described by Iles and Preece (2006) in their research into a development programme of managers in the north east of England. Formal programmes, state the authors, have the potential to bridge the gap between abstract theory and leadership practice, with participants acting as “brokers” of information.

In making the case for their theory of situated learning Lave and Wenger (1991) dismiss the idea that meaningful learning can take place in isolation from the workplace: Abstract representations are meaningless unless they can be made specific to the situation at hand. Within communities of practice, meaning is co-produced in the act of doing (Raelin 2000, p.75). Moreover, the formation or acquisition of an abstract principle is itself recognised as

a specific event. In itself the knowing of a general, abstract, rule, in no way assures the rule will be implemented in its original or intended form. In this sense, any “power of abstraction” is situated within the lives and in the culture of the people who make it possible (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp.33-34).

The emphasis, therefore, is on participation:

For individuals it means that learning is an issue of engaging in and contributing to the practices of their communities.

For communities it means that learning is an issue of refining their practice and ensuring new generations of members (Wenger 1999, p.7).

Learning takes place through legitimate peripheral participation in the workings of a community of practice. Through such legitimate peripherality, the learner is able to learn from the social and professional conventions of the group, to observe its power dynamics at work, while being absolved of the burden of responsibility of full membership:

Peripherality provides an approximation of full participation that gives exposure to actual practice. It can be achieved in various ways, including lessened intensity, lessened risk, special assistance, lessened cost of error, close supervision, or lessened production pressures. It can involve explanations and stories but there is a big difference between a lesson that is about the practice but takes place outside of it and explanations and stories that are part of the practice and take place within it. Observation can be useful but only as a prelude to actual engagement. To open up a practice, peripheral participation must provide access to all three dimensions of practice: to mutual engagement with other members, to their actions and their negotiation of the enterprise and to the repertoire in use (Wenger 1999, p.100).

Such a process produces and works with tacit learning and this learning can be accessed by members through a process of dialogue (Raelin 2000, p.75). Members come to the realisation that effective leadership in the community can only occur through this sharing of tacit learning, which in turn contributes to the construction of participant identity. This,

states Raelin, implies a centrality of power in the process of learning. Through negotiating shared meaning, members learn about their identity as a group and as individuals. The emphasis here is once more upon power and its active nature.

“Mastery” (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.94) is “decentred” in this system, with the “master” part of a broader community of learning. It is a deprivileging of ‘teaching’ and the creation of ‘learning’. The focus moves “away from teaching and onto the intricate structuring of a community’s learning resources”. Power runs through the veins of the operation, with emphasis placed, as in Grint’s (2005a) work, as much on follower as on leader. A mutually dependent and reinforcing relationship is thus created. Conflict is expected and its sources discussed and worked through. Development is therefore a forum for exploring the workings of power which comprise an organisation’s source of leadership:

Conflicts between masters and apprentices (or, less individualistically, between generations) take place in the course of everyday participation. Shared participation is the stage on which the old and the new, the known and the unknown, the established and the hopeful, act out their differences and discover their communities, manifest their fear of one another and come to terms with their need for one another. Each threatens the fulfilment of the other’s destiny, just as it is essential to it (Lave and Wenger 1991, p.116).

For Grint and Holt (2011) these are precisely the issues that are faced by high-profile, cross-organisational-boundary, governmental initiatives such as Total Place and the Big Society in the United Kingdom. They are funded communities of practice, established around a particular problem, constructed as ‘wicked’ by those involved. Participants across organisations are given an opportunity to work through difficult issues together, to jointly reframe these problems. They are, according to the authors, learning to lead.

Yet the situated approach, in isolation, carries with it an inherent danger of groupthink, due to a defect in outside expert influence. In other words, potential sources of outside innovation seem uncertain. This is partially addressed through Wenger’s classification of the “brokering” role of “boundary workers” (1999, p. 109). Boundary workers are characterised

as important sources of external information and innovation, granted such rights by the workplace community of practice. This brokering role may offer participants within formal leadership development an opportunity to cast themselves as brokers, sources of innovative knowledge with the potential to improve leadership in practice. Certainly, if methods of critical reflection and sensemaking, such as the ones outlined above, are properly supported by the leadership development network, such an outcome seems more likely.

This optimistic note, of course, must be balanced with a more pessimistic one. Such an outcome for development participants seems likely if actants within the dominant leadership coalition in the place of work are prepared to countenance compromise in the meaning of their daily leadership in operation. Are they prepared to sully the sacredness of leadership? If not, if actants withdraw from the process, it is doomed to failure. The brokering role may quickly be reconstructed by interested others as a deviant role. Moreover, today's boundary worker and innovator could be as easily constructed as tomorrow's scapegoat.

Summary

The above discussion addressed experiential theories of leadership development. Firstly, it concentrated on prototyping as a form of development, drawing attention to the physical within this field. It moved on to discuss the 'return' implied within leadership development programmes and how experiential learning may be utilised to better manage this process. It discussed more critical aspects of experiential learning, related to a constructionist view of development – action learning, executive coaching and communities of practice. It ended by questioning the role granted to outside innovation within experiential learning, discussing whether such a weakness might result in the normalising of groupthink within the practice of leadership development.

In conclusion, experiential leadership development writers hold that an effective leadership development experience will occur if there is a direct link between the practice of

leadership and the development of leadership. This school of development holds that an effective leadership development experience will occur if participants learn through practice – i.e. experimentation, and, through continuous, active reflection on practice.

The discussion on experiential learning can now be captured in the following table:

Table 4: The key characteristics of the experiential model of leadership development

School of development	Focus on...	Related leadership theory	Delivery methods	(According to the theory) success depends upon...
Experiential	The collective	Constructionist leadership theory	Communities of practice; critically-focused coaching or mentoring; action learning	Learning based on real work problems; reflection on work problems

Recap – The above discussion has highlighted two broad foci within the leadership development literature – individual and collective.

Within the individual focus, two separate schools of leadership development were identified. Behavioural theorists hold that a successful leadership development experience requires identifying ‘correct’, ‘appropriate’ and ‘accurate’ measures of leadership behaviour that will form the basis of a series of competencies that can act as a template for development work.

Authentic leadership theorists regard an effective leadership development experience as that which brings participants closer to understanding their unconscious values and

provides them with a means of thinking about how these values can be brought into greater alignment with the practice of leadership.

Work with a collective focus on leadership development theory was discussed. This section began with a discussion of the learning organisation. It was stated that such a concept is valuable in that it draws our focus towards the possibility that leadership development is something that ought to be focused on a group of people within an organisation. A more power-centric theoretical model was explored, labelled the 'coalition' school, and ANT was adopted as a means of analysis. It was stated that according to this view of leadership development, a successful experience involves the engagement of a coalition with the leadership development process, and with a changed practice of leadership.

Finally, the experiential school of writers was explored. It was stated that this group of scholars hold that a successful leadership development experience will ensue if there is a direct relationship between learning and the practice of leadership. Specifically, the models discussed emphasised the need for participants to learn from both practical experimentation and from reflection on the practice of leadership.

The state of the literature as presented so far is incomplete, however. More recently, scholars have attempted to view leadership development far more from the perspective of a process, which may incorporate the methods advocated by some of the schools of development discussed above. Yet this focus has not been fully developed. These issues are explored below.

iii. Process views of leadership development

As stated by Day (2011), few studies exist which explore the possibility of an effective, holistic process of leadership development. Such a model would be rooted in a strong basis of research and explore the strengths of each of the models explored above. Unfortunately, the models available either overlook a major aspect of leadership development theory or

have yet to be developed beyond an initial exposition.

Lord and Hall (2005) offer a model of leadership development as a process involving an evolution from 'novice', to 'intermediate', and, finally, to 'expert' level of development. The idea is that participants graduate from one level to the next, developing an increasing focus upon organisational leadership as they gain in sophistication. Yet this model concentrates on the psychological and identity challenges facing participants, thus overlooking the host of systemic and political issues which may be encountered. It could itself be described as but one aspect of an analysis of a leadership development process.

Another of the few process-based theories of leadership development is offered by Day and Harrison (2007), in which they grapple with the challenge of articulating the elements of an effective process of leadership development. They present a heuristic for thinking about leadership development, rooted in the evolution of leadership theory, in a similar fashion to Lord and Hall (2005). The authors categorise stages of leadership development and connect the progression of leadership development to an increasing sophistication of leadership theory, again, in a similar vein to Lord and Hall (2005). They conceptualise a process of leadership development in three stages.

Basic – the link with leadership theory at the commencement of a process is made, with behavioural and trait theories of leadership seen as relevant, and the focus therefore is upon the development of individual behaviours and traits. At this stage of development, work will concentrate on the development of an individual's identity so that she/he may begin to think of her/himself as a leader. In this way, the authors suggest that the participant may begin to develop individual strategies of personal dominance and learn to lead through example.

Mid-level – during this stage the participant will become more aware of the role of followers within the practice of leadership and will thus seek to develop influencing processes, or theories, between individuals (dyadic skills). In this way, the authors state that leaders may address issues raised through dyadic leader-follower relationships, as conveyed in Leader-Member-Exchange (LMX) theory (Graen and Uhl-Bien 1995; Uhl-Bien and Maslyn 2003). A

formal development programme aimed at this level would thus incorporate individual skill training and relationship building tools. Participants in this stage of development will, according to the authors, draw on both personal and interpersonal theories of leadership.

Advanced – In this final phase, the authors state that participants will begin to view leadership as an organisational property, through which more complex issues may be tackled. Experiential learning is the favoured method of development. The authors equate this stage of development with theories of collective, or dispersed leadership (e.g. Gronn 2002). The focus, state the authors, will be upon developing a collective sense of leadership capacity, while also drawing upon the strengths offered to this process by earlier stages of more personal and interpersonal development.

This theory of a process of development is useful because it assists us in connecting leadership theory with leadership development theory. It is flawed, however in that it overlooks a large, more critically-focused, element of leadership development and leadership literature. Specifically, it overlooks the role of power, politics and the disputed construction of meaning and identity in the leadership development process. Such perspectives are readily available within the leadership literature, as illustrated briefly above. Yet the model concentrates on a largely American, psychological perspective, overlooking more power-focused, constructionist works.

The potential for a process model which draws on a range of the research conducted on leadership development, and leadership, remains strong, however.

A clumsy solution?

If leadership development is to be focused on a view of leadership as a shared process of meaning making, then any theoretical model will need to be capable of capturing such contestation and complexity.

Cultural theorists state that complex problems will require solutions drawn from a range of alternative ideological bases (Thomson 2008; Verweij 2000; Verweij et al 2006). For these writers, major social problems, such as gun crime or climate change require input from a range of actors with divergent views if they are to be solved. Likewise, leadership development could be constructed in such terms. This returns us to the arguments set forward in the body of work by ANT scholars, who maintain that the success of any network will be determined by its ability to maintain a collection of actants in tension.

The backbone of this theory has been mobilised as the basis for a tentative model of leadership development, as expressed by Grint (2007). If we are to view the environment of leadership as unstable, marked by relationships of power, the place of leadership development may be to develop wisdom, or phronesis (Grint 2007). Phronesis is “rooted in action rather than simply a reflection. It is something intimately bound up with lived experience rather than abstract reason (episteme) but is not a set of techniques to be deployed (techne) (Grint 2007, p.236).” Phronesis, for Grint, is the application of wisdom in practical, context-dependent situations. It is a recognition that “what we face is novel and thus what is important is not just regurgitating formulaic lessons of the past but reflecting on what our experience might – and might not – have to say about the present, including that the present has not been experienced in the past (Grint 2007, p.240).” Phronesis, therefore, is the interplay of acquired knowledge and context-dependent experience.

Similarly, Mills (2000) talks of a ‘sociological imagination’. This is the capacity of individuals to move from the specific context to a ‘grand’ theory. In such a way, individuals, in this case participants, will be able to make connections across elements of leadership development with the aim of enacting change in place, “the capacity to shift from one perspective to another – from the political to the psychological; from examination of a single family to comparative assessment of the national budgets of the world; from the theological school to military establishment; from considerations of an oil industry to studies of contemporary poetry. It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformations to the most intimate features of the human self – and to see the relations between the two” (Mills 2000, p.7).

A competency view of development could be compared here to Aristotle's conception of technical skill, or *Techne*, where "we try and fix the leader's lack of skill through a training course or providing counselling or a coach or whatever is the current fad or fashion, so they have a greater level of know how" (Grint 2007, p.233). To pursue a strategy of *Episteme* would be a purely academic exercise, on the other hand. "The problem is one of knowledge, or rather ignorance, and the solution is to educate followers to understand the problems of their leaders" (Grint 2007, p.235). *Phronesis* could be described as the process of making connections between more academically-focused learning and practice, recognising that each situation will appear differently, each situation unique.

Yet this work was not intended, of itself, as a detailed model of leadership development. Its potential to describe a more complete process of leadership development is therefore hindered by the lack, to date, of further evidence-based research.

To summarise, the literature review has not highlighted a process model of leadership development that can be tested in the field with integrity, a model which adequately represents the body of research on leadership development to date. Yet, as previously discussed, various schools of leadership development do offer contrasting views as to what constitutes a successful leadership development experience. These perspectives offer a solid, theoretical basis for further testing in the field.

iv. Theory to be tested

With this in mind, the following can be offered as a series of theoretical propositions capable of being tested in the field. Each represents an alternative interpretation of what constitutes a successful leadership development experience.

The behavioural leadership development school:

According to this view a successful leadership development experience will depend on an accurate reading of a scientifically knowable environment. From this perspective it will be possible to define the characteristics, the behaviours, or competencies, of 'appropriate' leadership. Any improvement in practiced leadership will depend upon the accuracy of this calculation and the clarity of its transmission to subjects.

The authentic school of leadership development:

According to this school a successful leadership development experience will be dependent upon participants developing a better understanding of their unconscious lives. This will enable them to align their deeply held, personal values with the practice of leadership. Any improvement in practiced leadership, from this perspective, depends on the creation of a learning environment that provides participants with the safety and calm to engage in such deep personal reflection.

The coalition school of leadership:

According to this school, leadership development occurs within a collective. Theory transmitted to an individual in one context cannot simply be implemented, along rational lines, in another. From this perspective, participants must engage their coalitions of leadership with leadership theory, thus enlisting them in the process and accept that meaning will be altered, to a greater or lesser extent, along the way. Any potential for an improvement in practiced leadership within this school lies in the ability of participants to involve their work teams and context in the process of theory engagement.

The experiential school of leadership development:

This school of leadership development holds that power is central to the way in which leadership is developed and practiced. It is impossible, according to this view, to develop leadership outside the specific context of power and meaning generation – i.e. at work. Any improvement in practiced leadership within this school depends upon the direct linking of experience to learning. This has been conceptualised as learning through practice and organised reflection on the practice of leadership.

A final, complete table can now be offered as a guide for the forthcoming presentation of results:

Table 5: The key characteristics of the schools of leadership development

School of development	Focus on...	Related leadership theory	Delivery methods	(According to the theory) success depends upon...
Behavioural	The individual	Contingency and trait theories	Psychometric profiling; behavioural coaching; classroom transmission learning	Accurate definition of leadership problems and 'appropriate' behaviours to solve these
Authentic	The individual	Authentic leadership; Jungian individuation	Classroom exercises to encourage individualistic reflection; meditation; outdoor pursuits	Participants better understanding their unconscious values
Coalition	The collective	Constructionist leadership theory; Actor Network Theory; process theory; systems theory	Classroom-based critical reflection; work-based engagement with theory	Engaging a broader coalition of leadership development and leadership
Experiential	The collective	Constructionist leadership theory	Communities of practice; critically-focused coaching or mentoring; action learning	Learning based on real work problems; reflection on work problems

Before the results are examined, a discussion of the research method adopted is necessary.

3. Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of a discussion on methodology, according to Bryman (2004) is to connect theory with relevant research methods for the purpose of adequately testing the theory in question. In so doing Bryman states that one should consider the epistemological and ontological positions adopted within the theory (presented in the literature review). This, he states, will dictate to a large extent the type of research strategy to be adopted – one which favours a positivist or a phenomenological interpretation. Such a discussion should adopt a practical focus, concerned with subjecting the theory to the most rigorous possible analysis that will produce data capable of contributing to our understanding of a particular field.

The discussion of relevant theory in the previous chapter informs the following discussion of the research methodology adopted by the researcher. The models presented involve four distinct perspectives, each of which regards a particular focus, setting or timeframe within leadership development as particularly relevant.

The preceding discussion on leadership development held several implications for the selection of a research strategy. First, formal leadership development programmes occur over a specified period of time, usually weeks, but their impact may not become fully apparent for months or years following the initial experience, as participants experiment with new ideas and behaviours. Second, leadership development in its broadest sense cannot be confined in cognitive terms to a series of formal sessions. It defies being neatly compartmentalised into temporal parcels, influenced as it is by a range of factors of personal and organisational influence. Participants will experience leadership development throughout their careers and view formal development in comparison to previous experience. Third, the meaning of leadership development is socially constructed both during and following formal sessions. In other words, what counts as good leadership theory for participants will depend on the outcome of a negotiation process involving the actors

described in the previous chapter. What is accepted as relevant knowledge will be socially constructed by individual participants as they consider it in relation to their own personal experiences. Such theory will be further constructed through conversations between peers. This knowledge will be further and perhaps most dramatically reconstructed as it is reified in the workplace.

These factors led the researcher to establish the elements required of a suitable methodology for an exploration of whether formal leadership development can be successful in generating better leadership within the context of the public sector organisations observed. It was determined that the research strategy adopted should:

- operate on a longitudinal basis, reflecting the long-term nature of the learning process;
- prove effective at data capture in a range of different locations, either where leadership could be developed, or where it could be practiced, or both concurrently;
- gather a range of perspectives on the development of research participants' leadership, gaining valued subjective views, listening to and valuing their 'truths' of leadership in action;
- recognise that leadership development works through a net of power relations and the method therefore would need to take account of the varying interests invested in the process by a range of stakeholders;

Yet in order to research formal leadership development programmes, the researcher must inevitably limit the scope of any project – analysing what it is possible to analyse. The challenge presented therefore was to explore a means of researching leadership development that:

- was capable of developing meaningful conclusions, based on a reasonably coherent set of data;

- acknowledged that the qualities of leadership develop over time, its effects are subjective and its operation, through networks of power, defying overly simplistic categorisations.

Such considerations suggest a research method which is flexible, draws on multiple subjective perspectives, capable of analysing nuanced exchanges and can be utilised over a long period of time without losing the focus of the research – i.e. exploring what makes formal leadership development effective, or ineffective.

This is a dilemma faced by social research in general: how to convey and capture a reality without watering down or over-simplifying its complexity or emotional intensity. This chapter will seek to expand on this dilemma.

With this in mind, this chapter will, first, explore more broadly issues relating to quantitative and positivist research, as compared to qualitative, phenomenological research. This discussion will be related specifically to leadership development. In broad terms, it will be argued that leadership development defies overly scientific rationalisation and its research and therefore demands a method that is holistic, longitudinal and qualitative in its focus.

Second, it will explore specific qualitative methodologies and their suitability to the research of leadership development.

Finally, the chapter will conclude by exploring in more depth the research method which, in the opinion of the researcher, held the most promise for the study in its totality: ethnography.

Positivist and phenomenological concerns in the research of leadership development

Bryman (2004, p.11) defines positivism as “an epistemological position that advocates the application of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond”. It is an

epistemological system, which offers the hypothesis that we live in a measurable universe where all phenomena are capable of accurate quantification. In the context of social research, notions of successful leadership development may be said to exist independently of the actors who engage in its practice. It is possible, through this logic to unproblematically describe and categorise leadership development as 'successful' and 'unsuccessful'. Bryman continues by stating that in any social research, positivism will seek to gather 'facts' in order to prove a particular hypothesis and that in order for this process to operate correctly, it must be proven that the researcher has conducted her/himself in an objective manner. Positivism does not challenge the possibility of true objectivism but rather seeks ways in which such conditions can be met. Cassell and Symon (1999, p.2) state that the concern of positivists will be to prove phenomena "systematically and statistically" through translating social action into numerical expression. Positivist researchers will thus wish to demonstrate a clear cause-effect relationship in their work, which they will seek to generalise to other spheres of interest, as broadly as is possible.

With its concern for measurement and the utilisation of numbers as an expression of social phenomena, quantitative research methods are usually adopted by researchers with a positivist outlook. Bryman (2004, p.66), in his discussion of quantitative research, states that its ability to define "fine differences" between behaviours and attitudes, "for more precise estimates of the degree of relationship between concepts", may prove advantageous. The most common form of quantitative research is the survey, be it conducted within a structured interview, online or over the telephone. Surveys attempt to make sense of the world through categorising responses and assigning them a numerical value. These quantitative, numerical expressions of reality may be described as 'indicators' and quantitative research will seek to deploy a particular indicator as proof of a cause-effect chain within a set of data. For example, one may choose to use a department's inspection rating as proof or otherwise of the effectiveness of a leadership development programme. Or, one may seek to quantify a less tangible data set, for example, by equating leadership performance to the satisfaction levels of subordinates, and translating responses into numbers for the purposes of judging the effectiveness, or otherwise, of a programme. The researcher, in making such judgements, will be concerned that his/her concept is reliable, that it is stable over time and consistent internally and between observers (Bryman 2004,

p.71). The indicator will need to be 'valid', in as much as it actually measures the concept in hand, whether it corresponds adequately to the concept being researched. This raises the question of 'inference' (Bryman 2004, p.76). The researcher will be unable to unequivocally guarantee that an indicator is capable of predicting the validity of a theory but will ultimately make a judgment based on the best available evidence and her/his own judgment. From this basis of judgment, quantitative researchers will seek to generalise their research findings through a sampling method that encompasses as broad a cross-section of the desired population as possible. However, such a strategy is not as straightforward as it seems. As Bryman (2004, p.77) states, "strictly speaking, we cannot generalise beyond the population we study, meaning, particular organisations or geographical areas." Yet generalisability is a claim frequently made by quantitative researchers. Finally, quantitative researchers are preoccupied with the test of whether their methods could be reliably replicated by other researchers. Yet occurrences of researchers utilising existing models are rare, due to the low status of such studies within the academic community and the perceived uninspiring nature of the work (Bryman 2004, p.77). Replicability, then, is a concern that largely goes untested within quantitative research.

The central problems with quantitative research within leadership development can be summarised as follows:

- it attempts to impose a short-term process on phenomena that may take months, or years, to bear fruit;
- it attempts to make tangible a phenomenon (leadership) that remains a hotly contested definitional terrain. It is likely that leadership will mean quite different things to participants, development practitioners and sponsoring organisations;
- it claims objective measurement, yet in reality operates subjectively;
- it fails to problematise the notion of 'results' within leadership. In this sense quantitative researchers seek to apportion attribution to a process that may be one of many factors underlying a particular success;
- after such weaknesses are recognised, the method may be guilty of producing relatively conservative research (Cassell and Symon 2004, p.4), "concentrating on

investigating minor variations of already established theoretical models (adding a variable here or there, trying the model out in a different context or with a different sample etc)” without contributing to “a vibrant and innovative research community”.

It is these shortcomings that phenomenological research methodologies claim to address. Unlike positivism, a phenomenological research paradigm recognises the subjectivity present within all social research. The fundamental ontological point of departure for phenomenology is that it recognises that human beings are emotionally attached to social processes in a manner that is not present within research of the natural world (Bryman 2004, p.13). The researcher, it holds, through the act of observation and participation, inevitably affects the scene under study and influences interpretation to one degree or another. The research process is one of constant reflexivity, therefore, as the researcher aims to factor such considerations into every step of the process (Cassell and Symon 2004).

Social reality, for phenomenologists, is socially constructed by participants within the setting observed. Therefore, a constructionist methodology recognises that social research may observe and surface these workings but will never claim to present a scientifically verifiable ‘truth’. ‘Reality’, or a present state of affairs, is viewed as contested and in a continual state of adaptation and change. It is the job of phenomenological research to describe this process and to take certain steps (described in more detail later) to generalise, to the degree that this will be possible, from these observations. It is with this in mind that researchers operating from within a phenomenological epistemology reject the possibility that complex social phenomena can be solely quantified numerically. This is why such scholars prefer qualitative methods of research. The goal of all qualitative research is to attempt to gain a multiplicity of subjective perspectives, to view the setting from as many vantage points as possible (Bryman 2004, p.279). Qualitative researchers are concerned with process and are interested in how a phenomenon might appear over a sustained time period, often years, and are uncomfortable with the notion that one may adequately describe complex social processes at only one point in time. It is precisely this flexibility which is valued by Klenke (2008) within qualitative studies of leadership.

While quantitative researchers share a concern with generalisability, objectivity and validity, qualitative researchers value their own measures of credibility. It is a frequent complaint of qualitative researchers that they may be judged by inappropriate, quantitative criteria, when presenting their work (Cassell and Symon 2006, p.5). “The upshot of this unbalanced view is that qualitative researchers may find themselves having to justify their research in terms of an inappropriate paradigm” (Cassell and Symon 1999, p.8). The dilemma, for Cassell and Symon, is that too rigid a protocol for qualitative research may mean precisely that it abides by quantitative standards of evaluation and may therefore prove unnecessarily conservative, but that too loose a framework may result in unfocused, and ultimately unusable, findings.

For Cassell and Symon (1999, p.6), reflection is at the heart of good qualitative research. Researchers need, the authors state, to reflect on alternative interpretations of findings and to construct an adequate refutation – or revisit the fieldwork. They ought to think carefully about how a particular research method may interact positively with the phenomenon to be studied. The reasons for various choices made during the research process should be deliberated and reflected upon later, so as to learn from mistakes and acknowledge the nature of subjective choice in the research process. They state that qualitative researchers should surface their own epistemological and ontological beliefs and acknowledge their presence in any research strategy. Finally, researchers, they say, should reflect on the impact their own disciplinary background, and the way this affects how they view the world, will have upon the research. This raises issues such as which factors may be dwelt upon and which respondents are granted credibility by the researcher. Through recognising such dangers and criticisms of qualitative research, it may be possible to limit them while recognising that from this perspective, all social research is, to one degree or another, subjective.

As previously explored, a constructionist approach to the research of leadership development would question the taken for granted assumptions that have been constructed around its practice. For example, it would question the assumption that leadership development exists in order to meet explicit business needs and whether alternative perspectives may be equally valid.

The question remains open as to which particular method should be explored further. The following section discusses various qualitative methods and their appropriateness for the research question in hand.

Specific qualitative research methods and their application for leadership development

Qualitative research interviews

The qualitative research interview is perhaps the most common and recognisable qualitative research method. This method stands in contrast to quantitative interviews in structural terms. Qualitative interviews will allow the process to be guided as much as possible by the respondent, whereas quantitative interviews will be more concerned with a prescribed structure of questioning that will be repeated for each subject; and so the goal of the qualitative research interview is to view the phenomenon under discussion from the point of view of the participant (King 2006, p.11). Such a concern remains faithful to the phenomenological belief that research respondents are to be viewed as co-constructors, genuine participants in the process.

Practical advice on the conduct of field interviews abounds in the literature, with emphasis placed on avoiding closed questions, multiple questions rolled into one and leading questions (King 2006). Such acts will either confuse or unduly influence the participant. Furthermore, King (2006, pp.18-19) provides a categorisation of 'difficult' interviewees and means by which the researcher may overcome the obstacles presented.

The benefits of qualitative interviewing for a study of leadership development are significant. Deploying the method would allow the researcher flexibility, both to experiment with and adapt modes of questioning and in covering a broad range of issues surrounding development and leadership (King 2006, p.21). Moreover, interviews may be politically

acceptable to leader participants, who will be experienced both as subjects of the method and as enactors of it. Its power as a tool of clarification and reflection, adopted within a more holistic methodology, such as ethnography, would allow for matters to be explored in more depth and for the interviewee to respond more reflectively. King (2006) states that a disadvantage of the method is that it can be time-consuming, but, with three years dedicated to a full-time research project, such concerns bear less importance. King warns about the possibility of an overload of data, but such dangers can be combated through effective thematic work and organisation. The very familiarity of the medium might in itself pose a danger to the researcher, who may believe that it is not worthy of careful thought, planning and reflection (King 1999, p.14). Another concern might be that interviews, even when conducted with a range of organisational actors, will not offer the kind of holistic perspective gained from other research methods.

Critical incident technique

Critical incident technique (CIT) is a research method closely related to qualitative interviews. It was originally developed as a positivist psychological tool by Flanagan (1954).

Yet, as Chell (2006) states, it has since been reinterpreted through a phenomenological lens, used to “identify the context of emotionally laden critical events, from which experiential learning takes place” (Chell 2006, p.45). The author tells us that in the early days of CIT, emphasis was placed on the importance of the expert external observer, who would interpret a scene through the lens of a particular set of predefined codes. A phenomenological CIT would merely seek to voice the opinions of research subjects, conveying their views as to what constitutes a valuable learning experience. The use of multi-site interviews is common within CIT, with the researcher able to make broader general conclusions as a result. Participants are asked to focus on what happened, why an incident happened and how they handled that incident.

Underpinning much of the theory in the CIT method is that of narrative within organisations. Gabriel and Griffiths (2006) and Gabriel (1991a, 1991b & 2008) have developed a research method which seeks to analyze the stories told within organisations with a view to uncovering the hidden fantasies of those who work within them. Gabriel and Griffiths state that storytellers within organisations are granted a degree of poetic licence by their audience, which is not the case with more formal modes of communication. This allows the storyteller to make serious points about perceived injustice, heroism, and so on, which would be difficult through other forums. They are “emotionally and symbolically charged narratives” (Gabriel and Griffiths 2006, p.115) that may tell researchers more about the leadership practices of an organisation than more well-worn methods of research. The focus of the researcher, say Gabriel and Griffiths, should not, however, be on the accuracy of a story. Rather, the researcher must learn to “relish the text, seeking to establish the narrative needs, and through them the psychological and organisational needs, which distortions, ambiguities and inaccuracies serve”.

The researcher’s task is to interpret stories as wish-fulfilling fantasies (Gabriel 1991a, 1991b, 2008) and to explore what the actors’ emotions may tell us about a particular organisational phenomenon, which, in our case, is the development of leadership. Gabriel and Griffiths (2006, p.123) urge against the search for mythic themes within storytelling and instead encourage researchers to regard stories at work as folklore. Myths, they say, are suggestive of the grand narrative and will leave the researcher disappointed. Regarding stories unearthed as folklore, however, will highlight their “vitality and imagination”, as the property of common people.

The authors provide a typology of stories, which they believe may be of use for researchers when mining through their data (Gabriel and Griffiths 2006, pp.119-120). Comic stories highlight perceived deserved misfortune, often at the expense of the leadership of an organisation. Epic stories are straightforward narratives that construct organisational heroes or heroines and often focus on “survival against the odds”. Tragic stories focus on perceived undeserved misfortune and are intended both to highlight injustice and to generate feelings of pity for the victim, who is taken to be symbolic for a particular section of the working community. Romantic stories “express gratitude, appreciation and love”. According to the

authors, these may be as straightforward as appreciation of a leader's behaviour or more complicated, signalling nostalgia for a previous leadership regime.

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is also concerned with the apparently mundane everyday experiences of leaders. It seeks to draw attention to important, emotionally-driven, guiding social norms and rules through the disruption of those conventions. "The aim is to bring presuppositions to consciousness and to see which, if any of them, one is compelled to accept" (Sharrock and Anderson 1986, p.7). In the spirit of phenomenology it questions the basis from which sociologists pursue their profession, drawing attention to the subjectivity it sees at the heart of much research which presents itself as objective. Its task is to make the everyday "anthropologically strange" (Garfinkel 2010, p.9). As social exchanges are governed by a series of unwritten norms, so may be the case with academic research (Sharrock and Anderson 1986). Therefore, the assumption is that science is incapable of effectively examining its own methods. Ethnomethodology differs from standard observation in that it studies not the event itself but the background assumptions that precede and follow it and how people organise themselves in conveying meaning to a researcher (Sharrock and Anderson 1986).

For the method to be effective, say its proponents, ethnomethodology must be practiced at the level of everyday, ordinary experience (Sharrock and Anderson 1986). This is because ethnomethodology sets as its aim the problematisation of everyday activity. The very conventions it seeks to enlighten take place within settings that most people would regard as mundane. With this in mind, ethnomethodology focuses on 'indexicals' within everyday talk. Indexicals can be characterised as linguistic vessels which carry unarticulated meanings, expressions "which depend for their sense upon the circumstances of their production, of who said them, when, where, in relation to what" (Sharrock and Anderson 1986, p.42). They are "expressions whose sense cannot be decided by an auditor without his necessarily knowing or assuming something about the biography and the purposes of the user of the

expression, the circumstances of the utterances, the previous course of the conversation, or the particular relationship of actual or potential interaction that exists between the expresser and the auditor” (Garfinkel 2010, p.5). For the co-participant in such talk to understand what the speaker is referring to, there must be present, ethnomethodologists argue, a shared system of understanding between listener and speaker. Ethnomethodology seeks to uncover these shared understandings and to ask what significance they may hold for the way certain social phenomena operate. In their own writing, ethnomethodologists frequently replace indexical terms with objective language in order to highlight assumptions on the part of writer and reader.

Ethnomethodology holds the potential to illuminate the values base used by leaders in their everyday practice and therefore could provide a useful method through which one could analyze the learning of leaders, and compare their espoused leadership philosophies to actual behaviour. However, the use of ethnomethodology within the current research project would surely present practical and ethical difficulties. In order to conduct effective ethnomethodological research, it is required that the researcher ‘makes trouble’, disrupts everyday processes. It is hardly likely that such conduct would be tolerated for any duration by senior public sector leaders and would likely lead to a limited set of data, demonstrating little. More importantly, case studies are built and developed based on a relationship of trust between researcher and organisation members. To disrupt a process such as leadership development, for which much financial and emotional resources are invested, would be unfair to participants and hold negative connotations for the reputation of the researcher and the institution he/she represents.

Pictorial representation

Less challenging to people’s preconceptions of what qualitative research might entail, but nevertheless an unfamiliar method to many is that of pictorial representation. This method reminds us that a preoccupation with the use of words within qualitative research may be unnecessarily restrictive. Research respondents will identify with a range of forms of

expression: some will be more naturally comfortable with words, others with numbers, music or pictures. Pictorial representation may thus prove a useful way of encouraging participants to consider issues of leadership development from an alternative perspective, unlocking hidden assumptions and unearthing surprising findings.

Ladkin and Wood (2008), asked participants to photograph moments they believed were particularly significant within their leadership environments. It was hoped that such a methodology would encourage a “richer appreciation of the role played by contextual aspects, such as history, culture or geographic situatedness” in leadership. The method, for them, matched a research need to gain a “long-range” appreciation of leadership in context, allowing discussion on the relationship between the presentation of leadership and its emergent properties in action. The authors report that the technique ‘decentred’ leadership, leading participants to observe how they, as leaders, were not necessarily at the heart of the operation of leadership in context (Ladkin and Wood 2008, p.22). It encouraged participants to consider how even inanimate objects, such as office furniture, contributed to a leadership coalition. Participants, the authors observed, acted as leadership detectives, noting novel aspects of leadership in their organisations that they had previously overlooked. Through such work, participants were able to broaden their notions of what they believed the work of a leader to be.

Griffey and Jackson (2010) state that they find it remarkable that at a time when they believe leaders are being asked to more fully utilise their senses in their everyday leadership, that the use of art in research has not become more widespread. They believe that this may change in the future as the academic community, and practitioner community, becomes more comfortable with the notion and possibilities of a socially constructed world. In their study, the authors drew on portraits of prominent New Zealand leaders. The purpose was to develop the notion of a ‘virtual leader construct’, exploring people’s conceptions of what it was to be a culturally acceptable leadership archetype. The authors believe that broadening our scope of research methods to include more arts-based approaches can tell us much not simply about leaders but about our attitudes as recipients of leadership.

An obvious drawback in the use of pictorial representation is that it is not a widely accepted and familiar method of research and therefore, perhaps, risky. This may particularly be the case with very senior leaders, who have become comfortable with a particular mode of communication. As Stiles (2006) notes, some participants refuse to engage in the drawing of pictures, either because they believe it to be frivolous or because they are not confident about their own drawing ability. Indeed, there is a danger that variations in drawing ability may well distort findings to an extent. Pictures can rarely be presented in research as self-explanatory. An extra level of interpretation must be included to allow the reader a more complete appreciation. This carries with it the danger of the researcher imposing an unreasonable interpretation on a picture. Yet it also has the potential to unlock previously hidden feelings around leadership learning. Perhaps, ultimately, however, the risk of non-participation amongst senior leaders is too great.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Wodak (2008, p.2) defines discourse analysis in the following way:

Discourse analysis provides a general framework to problem-oriented social research. It allows the integration of different dimensions of interdisciplinarity and multiple perspectives on the object investigated. Every interview, focus group debate, TV debate or visual symbol is conceived as a semiotic entity, embedded in an immediate, text-internal co-text and an intertextual and socio-political context. Analysis thus has to take into account the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships between utterances, texts, genres and discourses, as well as the extralinguistic social/sociological variables, the history and archaeology of an organisation, and institutional frames of a specific context of situation.

According to this definition, discourse analysis is a study of both broader socio-political discourses and how these discourses become embedded in talk and text. This method is not therefore merely an analysis of the immediate text of an interview, nor a broader

sociological exploration of a meta-discourse. Rather, it is a study of the interplay between grand discourse and the everyday deployment of such narratives in the workplace or other social setting.

A text is not viewed as an accidental, natural form of communication, signalling an independent, unitary reality of workplace interaction. Rather, it is viewed as a negotiated series of spoken and written conventions, developed and established over time by colleagues interacting on a daily basis. A text can be identified through a range of “grammatical rules and dependencies” (Wodak 2008, p.8) which are worked at in order to produce seeming cohesion and a series of working norms for the subjects concerned. Texts are enacted, states Wodak (2008, p.8), through a number of linguistic devices. Certain words, phrases and grammatical patterns may be produced over and over, with recurrence contributing to tacit organisational understanding. Anaphora “directs attention to what has previously been said or read”, while cataphora “points to what is to come”. Both are linguistic shorthands developed over time through the practices of work. Ellipsis concerns what is not said and has connections to an ethnomethodological approach. Understanding may be developed between individuals according to verbal or physical shortcuts.

Likewise, it may not be necessary for people to convey their meaning explicitly at all. Rather, meaning and context will be assumed by others according to a regime of social norms. Conjunctions will point to “connections between events and situations”, relatively impenetrable perhaps to those outside of the context without a broader understanding of organisational practices. Emphasis may be placed on the genre of text used at any one time.

Fairclough believes that textual analysis may provide a refreshing antidote to what he views as overly rigid social structural research, as “texts provide evidence of ongoing processes such as the redefinition of social relationships between professionals and publics, the reconstitution of social identities and forms of self, or the reconstitution of knowledge and ideology” (Fairclough 1995, p.209). Texts will thus reproduce the social world and contribute to shaping it (Fairclough 1992, p.65). The argument is that CDA may well be positioned to present the dynamic nature of social change. It is within texts, Fairclough states, that struggle, resistance and change takes place – a point illustrated earlier through Gabriel’s

analysis of storytelling as wish-fulfilling fantasy. In practical terms, CDA concerns itself with vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure, which can be conceptualised as “ascending in scale” (Fairclough 1992, p.75). As one ascends a level, one gains a more macro reading of the phenomenon at hand.

Koller (2008) draws on these principles to explore how IBM’s mission statement is received by employees of the firm and its customers. Her aim is to discover whether the discourse of ‘marketisation’ has penetrated the public sphere. In so doing she analyzes the blogs of IBM customers and employees. However, she makes the fundamental assumption at the outset of the paper that the statement in question was written by senior executives of IBM with little or no consultation of lower-level employees, which, she believes, may have caused disenfranchisement. There is no evidence presented to support this assertion. Doubts are raised immediately as to whether the author is using the research simply to make a political point, regardless of evidence. It seems that Koller has imprisoned her research within the conceptual cage of her pre-defined political views of global corporations in general. Although this may be an ‘outlier’ in the sense of its narrowness of focus and seemingly predetermined conclusions, it points to a real danger within purely textual methods. Namely, that, through restricting the analysis to a text, one may miss the broader process at work within a given social field.

Having considered a range of specific research methods, we will now progress to discussing what may be defined as broader research strategies. These may be considered as methods in their own right or as vessels for a coherent collection of methods similar to the ones discussed above.

Holistic research strategies and their application to leadership development

The pre-occupation with all of the strategies discussed below is how best to develop a research methodology that is holistic in its focus, capable of capturing the complexity and richness of leadership development. Each strategy sets as its aim the analysis of how social

structures (such as formal development programmes, specific external agencies, partner agencies) interact and how relations of power between these structures may mediate the development of leadership.

Stakeholder analysis

Burgoyne (1999) recognises that within any form of social research, 'interested parties', who help shape the reality of the action observed, are affected by it, and, as a consequence, will materially affect the course of the research project. This perspective views research actors as actively involved in the construction of research findings, as participants in the process, actively creating meaning, rather than a positivist ontology, which would view actors as passive representatives of a stable reality. The task of stakeholder analysis, states Burgoyne, is therefore to "collect data about their actions, perceptions, behaviours, experiences and thoughts in relation to the phenomenon". Stakeholder analysis is regarded by Burgoyne as a pragmatic research strategy. It shares many characteristics of phenomenological research in as much as it seeks to capture multiple subjectivities, yet it does not deny the presence of certain definable realities. It is thus a critical realist perspective. From this perspective, "it would be wrong not to count the countable. If hours of attendance, exchange of money goods and services and the like are part of the stakeholder interaction and relevant to the phenomenon under investigation, they should certainly be counted". And yet this research strategy does recognise that particular groups, or individuals, will frame issues quite differently and construct reality in often competing ways.

Burgoyne (1999) continues to demonstrate how stakeholder analysis may be used to examine the process of leadership development. Stakeholder analysis may be useful, he says, in questioning the belief surrounding most leadership development research and practice, that it should be examined as a cause-effect process of learning to action, rather than as a socially constructed process, interpreted and negotiated through relationships of power. Through a stakeholder analysis, he says, it will be possible to identify the forces at play within a development programme. For example, the deliverers of development, the

practitioners, may usefully be conceptualised as an interest group, as could participants (cliques, individuals, within the group), subordinates of the participant leader in the workplace, superiors, partner organisation peers etc. Leadership itself may thus be viewed as a co-created phenomenon between these actors and the 'success' of any development initiative will therefore always be mediated and interpreted through these channels. What is acceptable new knowledge and learning will be influenced by discourses of acceptable and 'proper' leadership in context. In this sense, stakeholder analysis provides a valuable template for considering the various interests involved in the delivery and dissemination of the learning involved in formal leadership development.

Co-research, or Mode 2 research

Co-research, or Mode 2 research, further recognises the negotiated nature of much qualitative research. Its premise is that practitioners and academics produce research as a team in the hope of gaining value from the alternative perspectives offered. Bennington and Hartley (2006) state that the academic's interest in generating generalist theory may, in a relevant setting, be complemented by the practitioner's eye for the context-specific. In their words, "practitioners may want to place more emphasis on understanding the immediate and direct consequences of actions, while academic researchers may emphasise more indirect and longer-term causal links" (Bennington and Hartley 2006, p.361). It is theorised that such a blend may generate innovation and constructive conflict, leading to a more "robust" sensemaking process. The premise behind this strategy is that since organisations are complex in nature, the academic researcher will gain much from an 'insider' insight of that complexity, assisting in the identifying and selection of participants and themes for the research.

For Bennington and Hartley (2006) the whole research process needs to be a matter of co-construction, with practitioners involved at the earliest design stage. Research may be conducted in the various home organisations of practitioner participants, which it is postulated has the possibility to generate shared best practice as well as good research. The

agenda of co-research is therefore proactive and practice-focused as well as retrospective and theory-focused. Likewise, output from the research process, state Bennington and Hartley, will necessarily be prepared with a view to satisfying both academic and practitioner communities. In reality, they state, this will require the preparation of discrete publications, each with a particular focus on their respective audiences. The process, then, demands more from the academic researcher. There is a requirement for the researcher to enact leadership research and to work well within a team environment, prepared to make compromises according to the findings and suppositions of others.

Burgoyne and James (2006) explore some of the issues raised thus far in relation to a Mode 2 research project conducted on behalf of the Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership. The aim of the project was the identification of ways in which it might be possible to improve leadership development within large corporations. The authors highlighted various tensions between the management and academic contributors that had to be managed throughout the process. These largely focused on differing perspectives as to what constituted “rigorous research”. The authors state, for example, that the practitioner participants were concerned with discovering best practice methods that could be replicated elsewhere in the sector, while the academics were more focused on problematising the concept of ‘best practice’.

A strength of this method, in relation to leadership development, is that it directly answers a need highlighted within the leadership development literature (for example, Burgoyne, Hirsh and Williams 2004) for more sharing of information between practitioners and academics. Moreover, the collaboration between two contrasting professions is sure to lead to the generation of fresh perspectives on the leadership development process. As stated in the stakeholder section of this chapter, development participants, practitioners, sponsor organisations and academics will differ in their interests as far as the development process is concerned. The sharing of these perspectives would surely make for productive research. Bennington and Hartley (2006, p.369) refer to this process as that of ‘surprise and sensemaking’, as each group learns from the others’ perspectives.

In terms of the disadvantages of such a strategy in the context of leadership development research, the selection of practitioner co-researchers seems of vital importance. The selection of a co-researcher who lacks trust in her/his organisation would result in a loss of valuable data, or in the skewing of data. Moreover, the selection of senior managers for the role might influence the nature of responses, with interviewees adapting their responses according to the seniority of the practitioners in the room. On a more practical note, perhaps the expectation that a PhD student could lead such a project as a first foray into detailed research is overoptimistic. Nevertheless, the principle of co-research, namely, that the views of participants should be valued and can guide a research process, is a valuable one.

This is the principle at the heart of ethnography, the chosen research method. The case is made below for its adoption.

Ethnography and its utility within leadership development research

In this section the case will be made for ethnography as a suitable research framework for the purposes of testing the models presented in the previous chapter.

This section will begin with an exploration of the theory of ethnography. It will consider the most pressing practical concerns related to the method and will include a specific discussion of the utility of ethnography in relation to the research of leadership development. The chapter will conclude with a description of the adopted research methodology, the cases chosen and method adopted for analysis of the data.

Ethnography as a theory

Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) contrast the ethos of ethnography with what they characterise as a positivist approach. They classify the main features of positivism as the:

1. examination of a “directly observable” phenomenon;
2. search for universal laws which may be applied to a variety of scenarios, and;
3. use of the experiment as a means of providing evidence to corroborate or disprove a theory (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996, p.4).

In contrast, they describe naturalism as the pursuance of the social world in its “natural state”. As a research method with its roots in anthropology, ethnographers seek to tread softly in order that the scene under examination remains as undisturbed as possible and the reader, finally, is able to observe it from the perspective of those under study. The challenge for the ethnographer is to preserve the environment of the observed as far as possible. As Klenke (2008, p.200) states: “Ethnographers study the meanings of behaviours, language, and interactions of members of the culture sharing group by going ‘native’ or living in a foreign locale for an extended period of time and adopting the interpretive view of the informants.” Naturalists, say Hammersley and Atkinson, reject the notion extolled by positivists that there are explanatory causal links present in everyday behaviour that may prove or disprove a given theory.

Gilbert (1993, p.157) summarises the position:

...ethnography always involves the study of behaviour in natural settings, as opposed to the experimental settings of psychology. Furthermore it is committed to the idea that an adequate knowledge of social behaviour cannot be fully grasped until the researcher has understood the symbolic world in which people live. By symbolic world we refer to the meanings people apply to their own experiences, meanings developed through patterns of behaviour which are in some way distinctive by comparison to the outside world. To get a full and adequate knowledge of these

special meanings the researcher must adopt the perspective of the members, in an effort to see things as they do.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) recognise a tension present within naturalism, however. The concept of attempting to view the world in its more “natural” state itself implies a degree of positivism, a search for a ‘true’ picture of life, an observable, unitary reality, an ‘authentic’ truth that the researcher can discover only through a metamorphosis from author to native.

More political interpretations of research would reject such a notion of naturalism on the basis that it glosses over important power relationships that ought to be surfaced for the reader to develop a better understanding of the situation. Such a reading might position the naturalist researcher as part of the problem, as perpetuating an illusory and unitarist interpretation of the world. A constructionist approach to research would stress the contested nature of the observed phenomenon, that it is to be viewed as a particular ‘regime of truth’, established as the dominant discourse of a particular alignment of voices, not as a definitive truth to be faithfully recorded by the observer. Each ‘truth’ is localised to its place of expression, negotiated, and continually renegotiated, by the actors who construct its meaning. Indeed, it is accepted by ethnographers that their very presence in a research setting, will alter the scene observed to one degree or another. The task is to minimise such contamination, for example, through subtle use of note-taking, or none at all, in the presence of research participants, and the minimisation of distracting research paraphernalia, such as technological devices, with even the type of dress worn by the researcher chosen to blend in as far as possible with the observed environment (Polsky 1971).

Cook and Crang (1995, p.7) suggest that the researcher must recognise that:

Identities are gendered, classed and coloured and therefore cannot be understood without understanding the histories and impacts of these and other categorisations...It is not enough for researchers to identify where people are (both

socially and spatially) – they must also question where they/we are coming from, going to and where on this path the research encounter has occurred.

It is with the above considerations in mind that Hammersley and Atkinson suggest a reflexive approach to ethnography that recognises the inherent partiality of any observation and that recognises that the researcher will affect and be, in turn, affected by the observed.

Cook and Crang (1995) argue that the ethnographic method is uniquely able to adequately portray such a contested reality. Unlike quantitative methods of research it does not cast itself as purely objective in output but instead seeks to present a panoply of subjectivities that combine to construct a ‘truth’ of an encounter. As Polsky (1970, p.137) states, to impose an undifferentiated research strategy onto an ethnographic study would in itself “contaminate the very thing we want to study, the reactions of people in their natural environment”.

Bearing this in mind, Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) recommend paying close attention to three variables when designing an ethnographic study.

First, they suggest observing a setting at different times. This is because, they say, temporal variations may reveal different aspects to the dynamics, characteristics and personality of a community. Second, it is important to observe a range of people describing other people. In this way it is possible to build a richer picture of the way an organisational setting works. Third, it is important, they say, to observe and speak to participants in a range of different contexts. New perspectives will offer alternative interpretations of a particular person or situation.

Having discussed the theoretical basis for pursuing an ethnographic study, we now turn to a discussion of more practical issues that arise from ethnographic fieldwork.

Fieldwork roles

The literature on ethnography is replete with discussions on the most suitable roles for a researcher to adopt in the field. Much of the literature addresses how to dress – so that one blends in with the community being studied – or the balance between recording notes and destroying the spontaneity of an unfolding and potentially valuable social episode.

Such concerns are wrapped within a consideration of the role the researcher should adopt in general, towards participants and valued gatekeepers. Such considerations establish the tone of an ethnographic project and the basis upon which relationships will be played out in the field. Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) categorise the broad tactics available to the researcher:

1. The complete participant

Such a persona may be adopted for the covert researcher or for the researcher explicit about her/his identity, yet who wishes to participate fully in the activities of an organisation. The researcher may gain a deeper understanding of particular facets of a community but the perspective of the researcher will be bound by her/his position within the group. Detailed note-taking would be difficult in such a situation and the researcher would have to rely on his/her memory more than under alternative conditions.

2. The complete observer

The complete observer ought to be able to view a much broader range of organisational activities and yet the understanding of the researcher will be bound by the fact that it is more difficult to provide context for particular events when one is not operating from within a community. Likewise, it is not possible to ask actors for clarification of their actions.

3. Participant as observer and observer as participant

The researcher ought to be able to switch between personas as the situation demands, adopting the role of participant when necessary, but also that of the more detached observer as needs must. Cook and Crang (1995, p.24) summarise the “ideal stance” as “an intelligent, sympathetic and non-judgemental listener” to all of the members of a community. As stated by Polsky (1971, p.124), a good observer-participant will be able to “look at people, listen to them, think and feel with them, talk with them rather than at them.”

One particular danger for the researcher is that of over identification with a community. This can become an issue when the ability of the researcher to portray proceedings honestly becomes difficult. This is more than simply recognition of the inevitable pollution of the data through the interaction of a researcher with the community at study. It is a form of unconscious bounded rationality where the researcher will disregard data in order to portray a community in a particularly positive light, thus losing sight of the objective of the research. It is such a danger that is described by Venkatesh (2009) in his study of the operation of life in a Chicago ‘project’ neighbourhood. The researcher relies upon the cooperation of a prominent local gang leader for access, yet being identified with this individual holds implications for the way in which he is viewed by other actors in the environment and for the nature of the data he is initially exposed to, which is filtered through his gatekeeper source.

Despite these dangers, the advantage of such an observer-participant role is that one ought to be better able to represent the contingent and complex nature of everyday realities.

Gathering and ordering material

Three major sources of data are highlighted by the literature on ethnography. The first can be characterised as data originating from unsolicited sources. Actors may express their views about other actors or their environment without any prompting from the researcher. An unsolicited account may take the form of an unconscious expression from an actor so at

ease with a researcher's presence it is almost as if they were simply thinking aloud. These are the sorts of revelations it would be difficult to capture through any other method of research. On the other hand, Hammersley and Atkinson (1996) also warn of the censorious unsolicited account, voluntarily expressed by the actor who seeks assurance that the researcher has received the 'correct' information. They suggest a healthy scepticism regarding all data received. Rather than considering whether an informant is 'telling the truth', one should "consider what the informant's statements reveal about his or her feelings and perceptions, and what inferences can be made from these about the actual environment or events he or she has experienced" (Hammersley and Atkinson 1996, p.129).

The second form of data obtainable from ethnographic research stems from field interviews. Cook and Crang (1995) recommend arranging interviews for locations of meaning to the participant so as to glean additional data from the interaction of the participant with the physical environment. The literature on interviewing abounds with normative journalistic good practice (see earlier section). The main point of contention within ethnographic interviewing surrounds the issue of whether or not to prepare a set number of questions in advance or whether to allow the interview to flow naturally – i.e. whether to adopt a structure, unstructured or semi-structured interview. In practice, such decisions will depend upon the situation. For example, Cook and Crang (1995) suggest detailed background reading, especially when interviewing busy executives, where the researcher may only have an hour or so with the principal. The ability to converse within the jargon of a particular discipline may help the interviewee feel at ease and will save time. Ultimately, in the view of this researcher, to deploy structured interviews as part of an ethnographic research strategy could compromise the coherence of the research. Rather, interviews ought to be deployed in a looser sense and as a means of clarifying understanding and deepening perspective on observed episodes.

The third method of data capture vital for the researcher is the observation of how participants respond to and interact with their physical environment. For example, a participant leader's reaction to a programme venue may elicit much about his or her attitudes towards the process of development.

All of this may leave the researcher feeling overwhelmed with detail. In terms of making sense of the material gleaned in the field, Bryman (2004) suggests adopting a model similar to grounded theory. The researcher, in the process of collecting material, notices certain themes emerging, which then determine the data he/she subsequently collects. The researcher should continue in this manner until it becomes apparent that no new theories will emerge from the data and that new information collected largely reaffirms existing categories. This is referred to as theoretical saturation. Hammersely and Atkinson (1996, p.206) construct the process as a 'funnel'. A wide frame of reference is gradually narrowed as more information is gathered and clarified according to emerging concepts generated from fieldwork. They suggest that concepts must be clarified and should be tested. A form of triangulation, whereby concepts and theories are tested with regards to similar occurrences in other literature or in different settings within the same research project, may be adopted so that the researcher better understands the issues at play.

This suggests an inductive method of theorising. Whilst the emphasis of this research project was largely deductive, it would be an over-simplification to classify it in such a definitive way. In reality, the research process was far more fluid and flexible.

Much of the data gathered will of course be specific to the setting under study. In this sense there are several challenges that are unique to the environment of each ethnographic project. Below, some of the challenges highlighted in the literature most appropriate to educational settings are described.

Ethnography and the educational setting

Gordon et al (2002) highlight a number of issues with special relevance to educational settings in a review of ethnographic literature. Whilst they acknowledge that much of the work produced has been concerned with children, there may be valuable information available that could be applied to a study of leadership development.

The issue of power in classrooms is of importance to the project in hand. Willis' (1976) ethnography examining the impact of social class on the education of children refers to a 'hidden curriculum' in the classroom, negotiated between the relationship of pupils and wider societal forces. Gordon et al (2002) believe power in the classroom to be negotiated between and through participants and teacher. The relationship between the teacher and learners in the leadership development context will tell us much about the appropriateness and relevance of the sessions, as will the particular local circumstances faced by each leader in his/her locality, as power may best be observed in operation locally, in a specific time and place.

Willis' (1976) classic study of working class school outsiders is an interesting analysis of the interplay of class on an educational setting. Some might say that it demonstrates how an educational setting may reinforce class distinctions and ensure that people remain in their pre-allotted societal positions. Hammersely and Atkinson (1996, p.111) question why Willis has allowed a handful of troublemakers to speak on behalf of the entire working class body of the school in question. They argue that by allowing himself to become overly attached to the boys, Willis accepted their position uncritically.

Gordon et al (2002) refer to the issue of gender within schooling and how past ethnographic studies have tended to find that girls are kept in their place by the curriculum, mirroring the earlier discussion on the marginalisation of women within leadership studies.

This mention of patriarchy leads us to consider a theme well trodden within the ethnographic canon, that of deviance to the norm. Hobbs (2002), in an essay largely concerning criminal deviance, nevertheless raises some interesting points applicable to leadership development. He points to Humphreys' (1975) account of 'tearoom' activities (the public procuring of sexual favours by homosexual men) as indicative of the thin layer of 'normality' applied by people in general to their surface behaviour in an attempt to cover their more complicated, 'deviant' identities.

These matters raise considerations of the powerful role of the writer within ethnography. Van Maanen (1988) states there are three predominant styles of writing available to the

ethnographer – the realist, confessional and impressionist styles. Each raises issues concerning the position of the writer in relation to the people being observed. It is unwise to accept a realist tale at face value, to assume that the ethnographer operates as an impartial being of superior knowledge. Equally, a confessional tale may centre too much on the author and detract from a better understanding of the setting. The researcher must attempt to recognise his/her own position within society and the community being studied and the implications of these factors for the work in hand. A situation where participants become the Other to the writer's authentic Self must be controlled. The researcher must not dismiss the views and words of participants but, rather, should facilitate their voices and allow the reader to observe an environment from a multiplicity of perspectives. Such is the lot of the impressionist ethnographer. Successful research according to this logic can only be achieved through a conscious attempt to view the world through the eyes of others, by adopting the positions of others and challenging one's preconceptions and taken-for-granted beliefs. The writer should be able to self reflect and communicate such issues in writing without detracting from the purpose of the work – which is to discover how leadership development initiatives could be improved.

Conclusion: a description of the research method adopted

An insightful study of leadership development ought to provide a rich picture of the process and assist the reader in becoming wiser as to the nature of how leaders learn within formal leadership development and, importantly, the range of forces at work that may attribute a host of divergent meanings to the process. Such a task cannot be accomplished through a quantitative approach. A survey would likely merely signify the views of a participant at one moment in time, and those opinions may be clouded by many hidden factors the researcher would be unable to surface.

Much better is to examine leaders at work in a variety of situations over time, interacting with peers, educationalists, followers and organisational superiors. In the case of ethnography, it is possible to collect much previously hidden data simply by virtue of 'being

there'. Unsolicited statements, the interaction of humans with themselves and non-human sources and the dynamics of group power are possible through an observer-participant role. Clearly the researcher must be sensitive to his/her role in affecting the environment under study. A consideration of the world-view, beliefs and prejudices carried around by the author is critical to any academic study. The powerful position of the writer must be recognised and, as far as possible, controlled. Self-reflection, in this sense, is the first step to broader understanding. That said, it is the view of the researcher that ethnography offers a suitable vehicle for a longitudinal and comparative study able to adequately articulate the muddled, relative and ambiguous nature of leadership education. This is the case because of its emphasis on the context of the phenomenon in hand and its ability to gain the perspectives of the several actors involved.

Requirements of the research design

At this stage it is worth reminding ourselves of the tests set for the strategy at the beginning of the chapter. It was stated that it should:

- operate on a longitudinal basis, reflecting the long-term nature of the learning process;
- prove effective at data capture in a range of different locations, either where leadership could be developed, or where it could be practiced, or both concurrently, as was often the case;
- gather a range of perspectives on the development of research participants' leadership, gaining valued subjective views, listening to and valuing participants' 'truths' of leadership in action;
- recognise that leadership development works through a net of power relations and the method therefore needed to take account of the varying interests and stakeholders invested in the process;

These requirements were informed by theory development (see previous chapter) that effective formal leadership development in the public sector might reflect one of four distinct models. The proposition made in the previous chapter was that each particular school held that leadership would improve as a result of recommended actions and models of development. The more holistic and longitudinal the model, the more capable it will be of capturing the effects of the various development methods deployed, thus supporting, or casting doubt upon the solutions offered by the schools of leadership development theory described earlier.

Research design

The research strategy was conceived as a two-stage process. Firstly, the researcher would observe the formal leadership development programmes as they unfolded. Secondly, the researcher would spend a period of time as an observer in the workplace of selected leader participants. The purpose of this was to observe a process of formal leadership development. Through observing participants within a classroom environment and, later, in their work environments, it might be possible to explore the kind of formal leadership development process that is likely to result in more effective leadership as enacted on the ground. Data would therefore emanate directly from the interactions of protagonists within both the leadership development and the leadership networks. The issue of triangulation is important here, seeking to answer questions such as: Are participants acting for the benefit of the observer? How do colleagues of the leader feel about the leadership as performed? Do these views vary at different points within an organisational hierarchy? Most important was the issue of whether the case studies adopted were broadly representative of a cohort's interaction with leadership development. Interviews would thus be conducted with other participants to explore any similarities or differences. Likewise, interviews would be conducted with organisers of leadership development programmes, who had also observed the action as it happened, to seek to learn from differences in interpretation.

Through a preoccupation with a holistic process, and the drawing of data from numerous 'interested' points of the networks at play, an analysis of the motivations for participation in a network of leadership development is possible. Who are the actants at play within this network? How do the pre-existing sensemaking constructs, the prototypes, of participants impact on the process? How do their preconceived notions of the purpose of such programmes impact on the learning process? Ultimately, is the purpose of leadership development programmes to develop leadership, or does it serve a heterogeneous range of purposes?

As stated at the beginning of this thesis, the development programmes considered were set for the researcher at the outset and the co-operation of various organisations and key personnel had been agreed, although the details of the process needed to be negotiated by the author. This offered some issues of access, namely in the work shadowing phase. This would require much trust-generating activity from the researcher, largely through informal conversations with participants and the cultivation of a range of potential cases, including planning for the event of participant withdrawal. In addition it was recognised that the researcher's contacts outside of the participant group could be leveraged in the event of fallback case studies withdrawing from the process.

A decision was taken at the outset that the researcher would as far as possible adopt a pure observational role during both phases. However, a degree of flexibility was needed during the first phase. This was purely a pragmatic choice, as in three instances the researcher was told that he could either participate in the exercise or leave the room. The decision was made to participate and record the data retrospectively – as will be noted in the next chapter. During the second stage of the research, the researcher was to resist any requests for advice on the part of participants until completion of the fieldwork.

The programmes selected for study and personal challenges

Four programmes were identified as being sufficiently different in ethos to offer a range of subjective perspectives from within the public sector. As stated previously, these were in the areas of defence, local government, the fire and rescue service and the New Zealand public service. In addition to observing all the proceedings of all four formal programmes interviews were conducted with a sample of participants some months after the completion of the programmes, to allow time for participants to experiment with new learning in their day-to-day leadership. During the formal development phase of the observation, interviews were also conducted with development practitioners, recognising their status as stakeholders within the development process.

Before each programme is described it is necessary to outline the genesis of the researcher's relationship with these development programmes. The researcher applied for a PhD studentship at Cranfield University and thus the broad terms of the research agenda were pre-defined. In addition, the academic supervisor had already developed contacts with several leadership development programmes. This enabled easier access to programmes and participants than would otherwise have been the case. The specific programmes in question were selected because they represented variety across the public sector, in terms of pedagogy and sector ethos. The Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) and armed services are uniformed public services, which have traditionally placed a high emphasis on the role of rules and hierarchy within their operations. Both have a tradition of largely behavioural leadership development, although both have attempted, more recently, to change this. The Defence Strategic Leadership Programme (DSLPL) continues to offer a strong element of behavioural development, while the FRS programme has developed more along Jungian lines of personal development, combined with an emphasis on power and experiential learning. The local government sector was chosen as it represents a more cerebral approach to leadership development, with a heavy emphasis on theory. The New Zealand programme was selected as it was thought an international comparator would help contextualise the findings and offer a valuable test of the theoretical model presented. The diversity of the

programmes reflects the diversity of the theoretical propositions made in the literature review.

The researcher, in order to gain access to the programmes, agreed to conduct consultancy work for the FRS programme, the local government programme and the New Zealand public sector programme. This presented a challenge, in research terms, as the material gathered during consultancy and research was not always complementary. For example, the practitioners involved, while interested in the more theoretical testing necessary for the completion of an academic thesis, are more interested in practical ways in which they can improve their programmes. Much data was captured on the perceived effectiveness, or otherwise, of individual presenters, for example. Whereas this information was no doubt valued by programme organisers, it held little use in terms of the thesis, which was interested in exploring the utility of formal leadership development programmes as a process of engendering change. Conversely, rich data gathered through field observation was of less immediate interest to programme organisers as it was to the researcher, whose focus was the observation of a developing leader over time. In practice the researcher was required to separate the tasks of evaluation and field research as much as possible. That said, the evaluation process was useful both as a means of trialling the research strategy in question and in the triangulating and additional testing of theoretical propositions.

In terms of implications for research findings, it is accepted within the ethnographic field, that findings are specific to the context in which the data was gathered. It is hoped that a depth of perspective, from a specific number of subjective viewpoints may be gleaned. In the case of this research, it is not possible to generalise any further than the programme cohorts selected for observation.

The programmes selected were:

The Fire and Rescue Service Executive Leadership Programme (ELP)

The programme aims to equip senior officers below the grade of chief fire officer with the necessary perspectives and skills to earn promotion to the pinnacle of the service. It is delivered in a classroom format with participants drawn from local services across England and Wales. It extends over five blocks, and its reach is therefore extensive, covering areas as diverse as personal reflection, adaptive leadership, political leadership, problem construction and experiential learning. Participants are offered personal executive coaching sessions. They are expected to take part in non facilitated action learning sets and to produce assignments. Recognised and delivered by the University of Warwick, participants gain a diploma as a result of satisfactory programme completion, which they are able to transfer towards a masters degree.

The Leeds Castle programme (LC)

This programme, run by the Leadership Centre for Local Government, is uniquely aimed jointly at the development of local authority leaders and chief executives. The programme runs over three blocks and is delivered largely in a classroom format. Systems theory looms large over the academic content, but problem construction, the politics of language and discussion of current issues facing local government also feature. The programme features a study trip abroad. Practitioner guests and guests from the worlds of academia, voluntary sector and journalism are invited to speak in an interactive format with participants. Coaching is offered by programme organisers and facilitators but its purpose is to gain feedback on the programme rather than as a forum for problem solving and construction.

The Defence Strategic Leadership Programme (DSLPL)

This programme is a one-week development initiative targeted at military personnel and Ministry of Defence civil servants at the one-star level. The content of the DSLP is eclectic, with a range of areas covered in a classroom format, from the behavioural to the constructionist, and other theories in between. The programme utilises Myers Briggs Type Indicator psychometric profiling, 360-degree feedback and involves lectures on the individual psychology of the leader, the politics of language and problem construction, dispersed leadership and decision making under stress. It features a series of 'fireside chats' with guest defence leaders. In addition, an 'encounter' day is held, where participants are encouraged to interact and discuss leadership issues with senior managers from a single guest organisation. Following completion of the formal week, a series of optional elective modules are offered, which give participants the option of pursuing elements raised in the programme, management issues or executive coaching.

The Leadership in Practice programme (LiP)

This programme is aimed at middle ranking managers (tiers two and three) across the whole of the New Zealand public service. The cohorts are comprised of civil servants in the core public service departments as well as from the more arms-length delivery agencies. The programme is targeted specifically at the individual leader and her/his personal resilience. It begins with a week-long classroom format before moving on to nine months of frequent one-to-one coaching and action learning sets. It is therefore an inversion of usual leadership development programmes, emphasising experiential learning over a classroom-based pedagogy. The formal week of classroom sessions is rooted in positive psychology theory and Jungian individuation and the focus is very much on the capacity of the individual to make a difference to leadership in the New Zealand public sector. Participants engage in informal discussions with practicing chief executives from the public sector and a senior Maori leader, who speaks to the group on historical and cultural leadership issues within the

context of present-day New Zealand governance. Presentations on change management and culture are included.

Research participant selection

Participants were selected according to a number of requirements. In the case of the local government programme, which includes chief executives and political leaders, the primary consideration was to work with both a bureaucratic and a political leader. Gender balance was an important consideration and an effort was made to secure two field cases where the principal participant was a woman – in the fire service and in the defence sector. An attempt was made to observe a woman council leader, but she lost her leadership position as a result of electoral defeat before fieldwork was to commence, which resulted in a search for an alternative solution.

The perceived 'quality' of leadership displayed by participants was not considered and such concerns were to be put aside in favour of an analysis of the process of learning. As stated above, multi-point perspectives were sought, through the medium of qualitative interviews of cross-sector peers, subordinates and superordinates of the observed participant. In the case of the New Zealand case study, a curtailed version of the above was enacted.

Observation was conducted during a formal week of development. In addition, action learning sets and coaching sessions were observed, albeit via the medium of internet video conferencing. Similar groups from other cohorts, other than the ones part of the main focus, were observed, for triangulation purposes. The researcher conducted interviews with participants at the completion of the programmes.

The generalisability of all qualitative research is a live issue. It is not suggested here that any conclusions drawn can be generalised outside of the context within which they were observed. Each programme, and each cohort within these programmes, enjoyed their own series of personal dynamics, each had its own unique meaning making structures. However, by aiming this research at the identification of patterns within a process, it is hoped that

academics and practitioners alike may use the model and questions raised to look afresh at their own encounters with leadership development. Additionally, the epistemological breadth of programmes observed provides some limited generalisability of findings, at least within the limits of the programmes observed. In this sense, the aspiration of the researcher is that this research may be considered as another valuable series of subjective contributions related to the workings of leadership development.

It is in this sense that the central issue within the research question – whether improvement in leadership occurred as a result of the programmes observed – should be judged. This is a question that can only be answered, within an ethnographic research strategy, by the participants themselves. It cannot be answered definitively through the adoption of some ‘neutral’ research. All findings are therefore bound by the subjective position of research participants.

Analysis and selection of the data

The data was gathered using shorthand, a skill developed by the researcher during his training as a journalist, and was transcribed at the conclusion of every working day, to maintain memory integrity. The adoption of Tee-Line shorthand means that the researcher is able to capture exchanges in a near verbatim fashion. Moreover, the transcription process is quicker, as the researcher is able to pre-edit ‘relevant’ material – i.e. taking notes of relevant data without the burden of spooling through hours of recorded tapes to find a particular passage. The key, of course, lies in what is to be regarded as relevant. This will be discussed below.

Data was analyzed through developing a description of the setting observed, comparing it to other environments observed during the study and reflecting on how these cultural and personality differences might impact on the researcher’s view of the development of leadership in action (Klenke 2008). Broad themes were identified and sub-themes developed, related to participant responses to the development activity and their

subsequent development in practice in the field. In this way patterns were identified and compared across development programme cohorts. This enabled a point of theoretical saturation to be reached, whereby the researcher was witnessing and hearing similar responses from participants, hence the tapering of the length of time spent with observed participants as the fieldwork progressed.

The second stage of the research was to involve a sliding scale of observation within the workplace of selected participants. It was determined that seven weeks would prove an adequate time period for observation. This would allow time for the researcher to gain confidence in the practice of the research method and for sufficient initial data to be gathered. The following case study was to last for six weeks, followed by two month-long case studies and, finally, two of two weeks' duration. This was to reflect the belief that towards the end of the process, theoretical saturation would be reached and any further time spent in the field would prove more voyeuristically enjoyable than practically useful.

An important issue within ethnography is that episodes selected for presentation are representative of a deeper trend within the data. An important consideration was to determine whether other such examples existed – either in the same context, or, even better, in a different context. This is not to fall into the trap of applying quantitative standards to a qualitative piece of research. It was not a matter of weighing particular types of episode, but of determining theoretical saturation before presenting a data point as a finding.

The strategy for data analysis followed the theoretical model of the four theoretical positions stated in the literature review, which were used as a means of selecting and interpreting the data. Each theory was used as a heuristic for identifying what was being attempted during the development programme and the measures of success for such strategies.

Particular attention was paid to whether each example of such development fulfilled its expressed purpose.

The researcher might, in reference to behavioural leadership development, identify a particular method as belonging to that school. Such a method could be observed within the context of whether it accurately represented appropriate leadership behaviour, and, later, was felt, by the participant, to have resulted in practical change.

In the case of authentic leadership development, data was analysed in terms of whether any exercises generated personal insight, allowing participants to gain a greater knowledge and comfort with their unconscious drives so that they may develop in confidence and develop a vision of leadership more attuned to their deeply held values.

The collective focus of leadership development deals more explicitly with how participants begin to engage with theory. While studying this element of leadership development, it is particularly important to differentiate between what was found to be challenging and useful by participants and what was found to be entertaining. Data had to be analysed in terms of how it stretched participants to engage with the system in which they operated. Did participants manage to connect the theory, as presented, with current leadership challenges at work? If this was the case, it was necessary to explore how they went about doing this, at an early stage, through the construction of a coalition of support. In this regard ANT was utilised as a guide to analysis. The Callon (1986) model was to be used as a heuristic but not a manual to analysis. As the author himself recognised, it is unlikely that the model would capture all of the rich detail of a coalition building process and where the four steps are in evidence, it is possible that they will occur in a messy fashion, with elements of each blended together, occurring out of sequence, and so on. ANT provided a language and a basic framework for considering the political issues at stake within a process of engaging with theory.

Data analysis within an experiential learning logic consisted of two important foci of analysis. First, where experiential learning was formalised as part of the programme, such activity was analysed in terms of its desired impact – i.e. engendering real change at work through practical experimentation. Secondly, where no significant experiential learning was provided as part of the formal programme, was it possible to glean how participants learnt informally on the job? Moreover, where no formal experiential learning was provided as

part of the programme, how did this impact on the capacity of participants to implement and reflect upon leadership vision and theory?

Ethical considerations

Implied within a study based on the observation of human interaction is a need for a high regard to a robust ethical framework. The need for a robust ethical framework is surely heightened within an ethnographic research strategy, where the researcher is invited in to the private world of participants, where he/she may witness uncomfortable and embarrassing, as well as impressive and laudable behaviour. The Economic and Social Research Council (2010) has produced detailed guidelines for what it considers to be ethical research. The following points are considered to constitute the heart of such guidance:

1. Research should be designed, reviewed and undertaken to ensure integrity, quality and transparency.
2. Research staff and participants must normally be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved.
3. The confidentiality of information supplied by research participants and the anonymity of respondents must be respected.
4. Research participants must take part voluntarily, free from any coercion.
5. Harm to research participants must be avoided in all instances.
6. The independence of research must be clear, and any conflicts of interest or partiality must be explicit (ESRC 2010, p.3)

In relation to the first of these points, the research design was reviewed frequently with the researcher's supervisor. In addition, numerous triangulation interviews and sensemaking conversations with participants were included, ensuring more integrity and transparency. Participants were aware of the nature of the research and full briefings provided not simply for the protagonists but those they worked with. Confidentiality was respected within the

model, with reasonable steps taken to ensure this, for example, by generalising a person's position to the greatest extent possible without losing the core power of the contextual inference. This research project was the first of its kind conducted by the researcher, who came into contact with the actors involved for the first time during the research process.

The thesis will now proceed, in the following chapter, with a presentation of the findings.

4. Results

This chapter follows the logic of the theoretical frameworks established in the literature review. It begins by examining cases of individual-focused leadership. It continues into more collective realms by presenting results on how participants engaged with theory during the programmes observed, interpreting the data through an ANT lens. Finally, it examines how participants related to experiential learning aspects of their programmes.

The data in the first section, as was stated in the previous chapter, was analysed against the findings of the literature review. The data was analysed according to whether it was observed that participants gained any personal insight of significance, which they were able to apply to their leadership practice.

i. Individual leadership development

Introduction

There are two main findings in this section, in relation to the theoretical model set out earlier. First, that behavioural forms of development failed to generate personal insight amongst participants and, indeed, produced a degree of rebellion, as participants rejected the tenet of such techniques. Second, strong evidence was found that a more individualistic method of development, centred on Jungian individuation (Jung 1973, 1983 and 1998) and authentic leadership (Cammock 2003 and 2009) both generated significant personal insight and acted as a spur for more advanced development.

An absence of such individuated forms of development resulted in participants experiencing the remainder of the programme through the filter of earlier career 'crucibles', which, in development terms, were often unacknowledged.

This section begins by exploring behavioural leadership development practice. It continues by discussing those instances of successful personal development, where Jungian notions of individuation were brought to bear. Later, it will address instances where personalised leadership development was overlooked by programme organisers.

a. Behavioural leadership development

Set in the confines of a former stately home, now owned by the Ministry of Defence, the DSLP is designed to relax participants and to engender a constructive learning atmosphere. During the early stages of this ‘smorgasbord’, week-long programme, participants engage with ‘micro’, psychology-inspired leadership concepts, moving on to consider more macro, social explanations later. As stated earlier, the programme was initially conceptualised as a means of encouraging newly promoted senior military and civilian leaders within defence to consider leadership as a more complex, socially constructed phenomenon that required a more thoughtful approach than the familiar ‘command’ (Grint 2005b and 2009) methods employed in the earlier stages of military careers.

With this in mind, programme organisers employ the MBTI profiling tool as a means of generating learning. The main lesson participants are urged to draw from the results of the psychometric profiling is that people possess different attitudes to leadership and that none of these are necessarily ‘correct’. It is a straightforward lesson to draw, yet also a contradictory one, which, in attempting to draw attention to difference, places subjects within pre-prescribed psychological boxes. This perhaps explains why the exercise was viewed as of marginal utility by participants on the cohort observed by the researcher.

Restricted personal development – “in a line please”

A world-renowned expert on MBTI profiling from a leading university was employed to disseminate the results of participants' profiles and to explain and contextualise the results. This section will describe what occurred in this session. On a point of researcher reflection, this exercise occurred early in the study, at a point where the researcher had yet to form definite views about what constituted an effective leadership development intervention. At the time the researcher noticed the ambivalence of participants to the exercise but only later did he link this to an epistemological position and question why it might constitute a contradiction to principles of individualism.

Many of the participants had experienced the MBTI earlier in their careers and were familiar with the concepts. They began to engage critically with the exercise, with one participant questioning whether they might have completed their surveys on the basis of an aspirational self-image rather than the reality of how they lead. This generated a broader debate. One of the participants showed signs of rebellion, questioning whether it was helpful to categorise individuals as 'types' and whether there was a danger that it would encourage leaders to lead according to academically endorsed "stereotypes".

The facilitator reacted defensively to this suggestion and rather than address the issue directly, referred to his 20 years of experience in the field, stating that the MBTI was the best profiling method he knew of. He therefore avoided the deeper issue of whether profiling methods per se are useful in the development of leadership. The proximity of the exercise to behavioural and situational schools of leadership were further enhanced with an exercise in which participants were asked to make a brief speech in which they would attempt to appeal to each broad 'type' as identified by the tool. It therefore suggested that there was a particular 'correct' way in which the participants could approach a definable 'type' of person in any given situation, or put another way, that leaders could adopt a particular, set 'persona' according to pre-defined and stable leadership environments. This ontological position was critiqued in the literature review as failing to consider that

leadership environments and the subjects who occupy these spaces may be socially constructed entities, whose identities will vary depending on whose opinion one seeks.

One of the participants, 'B', a US Marine colonel, who the researcher would later shadow at work, asked whether it was more important that they developed more self awareness or whether they appeared self aware to others. He said that there was a danger that they would appear to be trying too hard, to appear 'inauthentic'. A brief discussion followed but the issue was not addressed by the facilitator.

The participants were asked to "line up" according to where they fitted in the range of types as set out by the profiling tool. There was much joking amongst participants at this stage, with the 'creatives' and 'introverts' teasing those with a more 'practical' and "extroverted" profile, and vice versa. Participants were asked to quickly brainstorm particular leadership problems within their 'type' groups. An army colonel made several eccentric, ultra-creative suggestions and explained to his peers that he would not normally behave like this at work but that he was trying to help the facilitator make his point about psychological types. Members of the opposite group 'type' made a similar point, that they would not behave like this at work and were trying to help the facilitator illustrate his thesis. This pointed at a danger in the 'typing' of individuals, that a result of such activity might be a loss of credibility at work. It was a contrived method that placed greater value on a synthetic exercise than on deep reflection based on actual experiences and held leadership philosophies. This 'assisting' of the facilitator was explained to him by a participant at the conclusion of the exercise. He stated that he did not understand and it was explained to him again. This time he expressed surprise that such a phenomenon occurred.

The MBTI process was not mentioned proactively by participants in follow-up interviews and when it was, it was regarded as marginal in its effectiveness. During the process it became apparent that participants were familiar with the profiling tool, that they were aware of the lessons resulting from a variety of leadership 'styles'. Moreover, they questioned its applicability in a high-level leadership programme and some expressed the view that they were more complex, uniquely individual entities than suggested by the tool. One participant even initiated a discussion about possible negative consequences of the tool, that it could

produce results counter to its purpose, the generation of 'inauthentic', 'stereotyped' behaviour. Ultimately, the MBTI and similar profiling tools can be viewed as establishing a block to fiercely individualistic reflection. Rather than regarding the journey of personal development as uniquely individual, as rooted in personal freedoms, perhaps in reality they contribute more to a collective demeaning of personal meaning, thus hindering later development.

Further evidence of the perceived irrelevance of behavioural leadership development was found in the New Zealand case study.

Behavioural leadership development as an ice-breaker

The LiP group observed was presented with results from a Firo-B psychometric exercise. This happened on the first day of their formal development. As with the DSLP, participants were not simply given the results and asked to reflect upon them. Instead, an exercise was manufactured to draw attention to certain findings.

A psychometric profiling expert was hired to speak to the group about the results. As stated previously, participants were told that the exercise was about discovering more about their personalities. Furthermore, it was stated that the exercise was meant to generate the learning point that difference at work was to be welcomed and made for more effective teams. In order to reach these conclusions, participants were introduced to an intricate scoring mechanism for each personality attribute they were tested against. Participants were asked to stand in a line according to their scores, a visual continuum representing difference within the group. This generated significant laughter, self-deprecating comments and bonding amongst the group.

If one were to make a judgment on development effectiveness purely based on observation at the time, the session described above would have ranked extremely highly. Participants teased each other, made jokes throughout. Yet, when participants were interviewed about

the programme nine months later, responses were quite different. No participant mentioned the psychometric profiling aspect of development unprompted. When questioned about the profiling, participants largely regarded it as a group bonding exercise, rather than a particularly insightful development experience. Some participants drew attention to the limitations of these exercises, as they perceived them. For example, one could vary the results according to frame of mind and which 'persona' (work, home, leisure etc) one adopted for the exercise. A gap existed, therefore, between the levels of enjoyment at the time and the effectiveness of the exercise when viewed contextually some months later.

Rather than view psychometric profiling as a form of discipline, this group interpreted the exercise more along the lines of Ford et al's (2008) horoscopes, referred to in the literature review. Whereas Ford et al (2008) state that such an intuitive appeal can contribute to the creep of control, the evidence from this group was that they interpreted the session as an amusing yet largely irrelevant way to become more familiar with one another. Indeed, when the researcher later questioned programme facilitators about the exercise, they stated that, while they believed in the potential of profiling to generate insight, this particular exercise served the purpose of an ice-breaker and that they had yet to find a better way for participants to get to know each other at the beginning of the programme.

Summary:

The above findings drew upon data from a common form of behavioural development, namely, psychometric profiling. The data demonstrated that participants did not view such development as helping them develop a better sense of themselves. Nor did they report any improvement in leadership practice. Neither were the exercises regarded as particularly controlling, as was suggested by constructionist writers. In the first example drawn upon, the exercise was regarded as flawed by participants, who sought to assist the presenter in making his point. In the second example, the session was regarded as a harmless ice-breaking exercise, unrelated to the development of leadership.

These findings can be summarised in the table below:

Table 6: Summary of behavioural leadership development results

Delivery method observed	School of leadership development	(According to the theory) success depends upon...	Programmes where methods observed	Improvement in leadership, from the perspective of the participants?
Psychometric testing	Behavioural	Accurate definition of leadership problems and 'appropriate' behaviours to solve these	DSLIP and LiP	No

This section now moves on to discuss instances of authentic leadership development in practice.

b. Authentic leadership development

Having explored examples of behavioural leadership development, we now consider the other school of leadership development within the individual focus, namely, authentic leadership development.

Jungian individuation and authentic leadership methods of development were observed on two of the programmes, the ELP and LiP. The section below demonstrates how the process of individuation was successfully implemented in the case of LiP, before the discussion moves on to consider the case of the ELP.

Lawn games

Both facilitators of the LiP programme were passionate advocates of positive and authentic leadership. One of them, Peter Cammock, is an academic and author based at Canterbury University and has published two books in this area. His enthusiasm for authentic leadership and the personal wellbeing of participants is apparent in his presentational style, which is earnest and passionate, peppered with extracts from poems to illustrate an 'ideal' leadership development journey. His session on 'positive leadership' began in the classroom, as Dr Cammock set out his views on the purpose of leadership. The presenter advocated a form of leadership that focused on the strengths of subordinates. Rather than framing the idea of positive leadership in merely performance enhancing terms, the presenter emphasised what he viewed as a humanitarian responsibility of leaders to care for and develop those in their charge. He invited participants to try to reframe tasks and work so as to foster more happiness within the organisation. The emphasis on the role of happiness in boosting performance was linked to personal leadership by the presenter.

Dr Cammock proceeded to address the notion of vocation, of a 'calling' to leadership. The presenter set forth the view that effective leaders lead best when they are passionate about their work, when they have found their 'calling'. He likened leaders conversing with their inner calling as getting to know their own 'souls'. In his view leaders should seek 'alignment' between a passionately held vision, a personal values system, and the work they perform daily. To illustrate the point he drew on stories gathered in his field research of people who changed the course of their careers in order to successfully pursue business, community or public service leadership roles. He said it was to do with "inspirational individualistic change, about people who find their purpose in life". As with the authentic leadership literature, Dr Cammock framed the notion of 'calling' as becoming increasingly lost within our materialistic, impersonal and confusing world. The presenter stated his belief that in order for participants to find their 'calling', or 'passion', they would need to experience 'stillness', which was characterised as a state of calm that would enable deep personal reflection.

Participants were asked to join the presenter on a lawn below our classroom for an exercise. The researcher noted that the setting contributed to a feeling of serenity and relaxation. The sound of crickets hummed in the background, dragonflies skipped over the grass, seemingly to the rhythm of the presenter's voice. Participants were asked to close their eyes and visualise the space which they inhabited on the day of their birth. They were invited to picture a line along the lawn, representing their life path and to choose a spot further along that would represent where they were in the present. They were asked to walk along that line, pausing at particular points to take notes, on paper, of "times of absolute peak experience, great moments of [their] lives". The tone of voice of Dr Cammock was measured and relaxed and, as an observer, the researcher noted his own feeling of relaxation, realising that the participants would be able to take as long as they needed to complete the task. Some of the participants sat down at their 'peak experience moments', others stood. It was conducted in absolute silence, with only the sound of surrounding nature as an accompaniment. As participants reached their present-moment 'spaces', some had progressed far down their 'lines', others significantly less, demonstrating their belief that most of their peak experiences were yet to occur. Participants were asked to reflect on what their experiences meant and about what was important to them in their working and personal lives. Dr Cammock asked, "If I was to bring my life and my work into greater alignment with me, what changes would I make?"

Participants were asked to walk further along their 'lines' to a moment in which they would visualise the day of their retirement. They were asked to remain at that spot and look back down their 'lines', over their careers and lives. They were asked if they had "lived the values that are important to [them], contributed to the community and felt absolute satisfaction that [they] had lived [their] lives with integrity". Then they were asked a series of questions aimed at bringing them closer to their unconscious drives:

What kind of work were you doing? What's happening for you now, in your own lives that might give you that sense of satisfaction? It could be the people around you, the skills you have used, the sense that you have done something that you are uniquely able to do. As you are standing in that space, look back at today's marker again. What are some of the things you have had to do to get to that point of satisfaction?

What are the things you will have to do between now and then to really have this fulfilling experience? What initiatives are there in the present to invite you to this future state?

Participants were invited to think of their development in the context of their families and loved ones:

Think about yourself as a young person, the parents, grandparents and all the effort and resources that have been invested in you to bring you to where you are today. Look back through time. What hopes did they have for you in what you might achieve in the world? How much alignment is there between your own values, hopes and others' hopes and where you currently are? If that older, wiser you walked up to you now, what advice would they now give you about the way you live? What does any of this say about where you would like to be in your life and work in three to five years from now? Think about where you might like to be in three to five years. What are the pivotal goals you might set for yourself now?

After the completion of the exercise, participants filed back into the classroom in silence. Many appeared to be shaken.

After some further remarks by the presenter, participants split up into pairs and spent an hour walking the grounds of the compound, making sense of their reflections and, in some cases, comforting and reassuring one another.

The process had a resonance with Bennis and Thomas' (2002) work on the 'crucible', described in the literature review. To recap, the authors state that personal experiences, usually traumatic in nature, can act as a catalyst for personal development if constructive lessons are drawn from them. The process described above, however, seemed to have more in common with Jungian psychoanalysis and authentic leadership theories, a more assisted and managed process that is subsequently made sense of in the outside world.

Jung viewed this process, referred to in the literature review, as a conversation with the subconscious and believed that people could not live truly satisfactory lives unless they facilitated an honest dialogue between their conscious and unconscious states. Yet he warned that to do so is an unsettling, even traumatic experience. This proved to be the case with several of the LiP participants. In a conversation with one participant, “R”, told the researcher that she had felt unsettled by the exercise, that she was sure she had not found her ‘calling’ but that she was balancing financial imperatives with her need for intellectual stimulation. She said that she needed to be unsettled at this stage of her career in order to build for her and her family’s future.

It was apparent that the experience had shaken the participants, but whether this would be sufficient to generate deep personal insight and a spur for more organisation-focused development was yet to be seen.

Upset and tears

At the end of the week, participants were required to present their thoughts on the programme and to set out goals for themselves over the coming nine months. Participant ‘R’ cried and had to collect her thoughts several times before continuing. Another participant, during his final presentation, described how he wanted to leave the public sector and follow his dream of opening a bistro. Two other participants told their peers about how they needed to spend more time with their families. Another participant described how he had still been thinking about work while driving to the programme, placing calls on his mobile phone to provide direction and schedule appointments. He was shocked by the personal nature of the exercise and subsequent discussions. He described “standing there on the lawn, with my arms crossed, thinking, I’m not having any of this”, but that he made a decision to “go with it, to invest in it and give it a chance”. He also fought back the tears during his presentation, telling the researcher afterwards, “I never, ever cry, let alone in public, so anything that got me to that point must have been powerful”.

This feeling of being shocked into reflection was echoed by another participant, 'L'. The researcher's first social contact with 'L' came during her first coaching session with Dr Cammock. The researcher had several subsequent conversations with her during the rest of the formal week of the programme, observed her final presentation to the group at the end of the nine months and finally conducted an interview with her. She later summarised her feelings at the time of the initial coaching session as "bloody Pete!" She said that she had not expected to be asked to consider the history of her upbringing and family and that she had experienced a "strange history with my family and death in my family". She said: "I thought he had no right to assume every family has that kind of set of values. It was a big struggle to refocus myself and to take that family stuff away. It had an effect on me for quite some time." She told the researcher that she had expected her coaching session to focus purely on work issues, but that instead "all this other stuff came out". The coach asked 'L' how she was and she proceeded to describe how her child was ill, her work was "slipping" and that she was struggling to come to terms with the death of her brother. She said that she felt "sad" about the state of her organisation but that she did not have the energy to commit fully to turning the situation around. She described an interest in pursuing a career in social services but that she felt this might be a diversion from her need to rebalance her present situation.

Further evidence was gathered, through interaction and observation with participants that this strategy of personalising an individual element of leadership development, along the lines of Jungian individuation, was effective at leading participants into a state of deep, personal reflection. Moreover, in some cases this had caused some significant upset, deemed necessary by Jung (1973) in order to generate deeper change. Whether such an exercise would lead to more sophisticated leadership development was yet to be seen.

The study now turns to similar experiences, in a different context, that of senior UK fire officers. As will be demonstrated by the data, while the feelings of trauma were not as powerfully felt, authentic leadership development tactics were equally as effective in generating deep personal reflection amongst the participants. The following data, although it could be presented in more detail, is set out here as supporting material for the points already made: that personalised individuation as development acted as an effective vehicle

for the creation of deep, personal reflection. Unlike the LiP participants, however, FRS participants were anxious about the very concept of reflection. The Jungian exercise detailed below, and the sharing of reflective practice, seemed to overcome these feelings.

Anxiety in the ranks

For participants in the FRS Executive Leadership Programme (ELP), the experience of trauma as part of the individuation process was again present as a starting point for more structural development. These participants were unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the concept of reflection, equating it with inactivity. The first block of the programme was dedicated to personal reflection and wider reflection on the meaning of leadership. Although conducted within a classroom environment, participants were frequently encouraged to think critically about their own practices. The facilitators faced a challenge in readying their participants to the practice of personal reflection. This degree of challenge was witnessed, for example, in the reluctance in the first sessions for participants to ask any questions of presenters. During a plenary discussion, this reluctance began to be overcome, as the main facilitator of the ELP told a powerful story that seemed to hold resonance for participants. He said:

On a previous cohort we had a very thoughtful participant, who got a lot from this programme. He analysed his own leadership and realised that he did not spend enough, actually any time at work reflecting about his own practices and the leadership challenges he was facing. So he decided that for half an hour every day, he would place his feet on the windowsill and just think about what his challenges were and do some reflection. So he blocked off the time in his diary and started to do it. He noticed some initial results and got into the habit. Then one day, not long after he started this his chief came into his office unannounced. He was given a bollocking for “not doing anything”. So how, in this environment, do you make the time and space for reflection?

This anecdote resonates with what Gabriel (1991a, 1991b, 2008) refers to as a victim story, where organisational heroes are cruelly put down by superiors for attempting to generate change. Its tragic overtones are meant to create feelings of sympathy and perhaps anger. As proof of the power of this story, it was repeated, with slight variations, by numerous participants, both in plenary and in informal discussions, for the remainder of the week, becoming symbolic of the leadership challenge the participants felt awaited them in the workplace. Fears of not appearing 'productive' at work unless they were engaged in a visible activity permeated discussions. Before this story was told it appeared that participants were reluctant to engage fully with the programme syllabus, perhaps for fear of facing similar reprimands upon return to work. It would later become apparent that several of the participants felt anxious because they had witnessed little in the way of change from colleagues who had been through previous cohorts of the programme and linked this to a belief that they were there to "tick a box", fulfil an organisational obligation and then put the learning to one side and carry on with their leadership as usual. There will be more on this in the next two sections of the chapter. For now, it is worth noting that the anecdote seemed to unlock a desire amongst participants to share their frustrations at not being able to reflect at work and generated a degree of trust that they were in the same position and could work together in order to produce some solutions to overcome this.

Tough guys in tents

In a similar way to the lifeline exercise in New Zealand, participants were asked to make sense of their own biographies so that they could better align their leadership with their deepest personal values. This was delivered through a 'tents' exercise. Invented by Steve Kempster (2008), the activity involves participants dividing into pairs and sitting in their own tent for as long as necessary, where they interview each other about significant childhood and formative experiences that might have informed their leadership. They discuss the salience of these experiences for the way they currently practice leadership. In the words of one of the facilitators, this experience can prove to be "revelatory" and "shocking" because

many of the participants have never taken the time to explore their own psyches in such depth. It is not possible to claim that the experience was revelatory for all participants.

Some found it uncomfortable: “you know two blokes on their own talking about the past and feelings”. Others listened far more than talked and did not feel they had fully exploited the opportunity to explore their own values base. Yet, almost all participants felt they had initiated a process of reflection that had opened them to the possibility of learning and wider organisational reflection. One participant told the researcher that it had been “a cocoon, a space to think, which you normally don’t get”, another that it was “refreshing, no mobile phone, just a real discussion”.

This session generated a more open dialogue within the group. Participants proceeded to strategise together on how they could generate space to reflect and “get away with it” in the context of a sector which did not value such practice.

Recap - To summarise, participants gained significant value from individual-focused leadership development exercises derived from the authentic leadership school. It was the very individuality of these exercises, designed uniquely around each participant, which seemed most effective. The sessions, as observed, generated significant reflection from participants, who were able to construct personal visions and values to inform their leadership practice. These experiences were often accompanied by a degree of shock, or even trauma, much as was predicted by Bennis and Thomas (2002) and by Jung (1973).

Below are some examples of how the ‘shock’ experience described resulted in a greater ‘alignment’ (Cammock 2003 and 2009) of leadership with personal values amongst ELP and LiP participants. These are offered as further empirical support for the findings above. Furthermore, they meet the second of the two criteria identified earlier as necessary for this element of leadership development – that of acting as a spur for more sophisticated development experiences.

Vocation-building shock

Individuation often generated a stronger sense of vocation (Jung 1983), as participants confirmed that they were correct in their choices and made them even more determined to succeed in their line of work. For example, a police divisional commander told the researcher during an informal conversation that he had become more convinced than ever after the lawn exercise that he was on the right track and described the experience as “refreshing”. Widely praised by the wider group as a potential future head of the national police force, this participant exuded confidence. The officer stated in another casual conversation, in energetic terms, he was more certain than ever that he would seek promotion to district commander level as soon as possible. The ‘soulful’ feel of the individuation process had struck a chord with the police officer, a practicing Christian, who had found resonance with the concept of a ‘calling’.

Christian faith and policing:

In his final presentation to the group, after nine months of coaching and action learning, the police officer stated that he had changed his view on what was important in his career. He said that during these months of development, his Christian faith had proven a valuable resource when exploring his personal values. As a result of this spiritual conversation he had undertaken with himself, he had come to the conclusion that there were more important matters for him to consider than his ambitions to lead. He had come to the view, he said, that he had to serve a larger purpose, a ‘calling’, and that he was scanning the leadership environment and engaging in frequent reflection so as to allow that ‘calling’ to approach him. He said that he needed to understand his “purpose” better, rather than trying to dictate a specific career path. The officer said that this process had been difficult, because of the scale of the commitment and the disruption deep reflection can have on the psyche. His early insights had allowed him to begin to reflect on high-level strategic issues within the police force.

'Authentic' leaders:

As with the New Zealand group, the sense that the initial 'shock' of deep personal reflection reaffirmed a sense of passionate vocation was echoed with the FRS participants. One participant told the researcher in an interview three months after the completion of the programme that the tents exercise had focused him on how he had, even in his childhood, possessed a passion for leading. He recounted how he had joined a model engineering club as a teenager and soon took charge of his branch, and soon after that the whole club. Whenever he had been on a committee he had always yearned to chair it, and usually gained that position. "I need to change things," he said, "it's in my nature."

A similar sense of driving vocation was witnessed with one of the FRS leaders shadowed at work. There was an intangible feeling with 'H', which the researcher struggled to quantify, that he seemed at home at work. He seemed comfortable in his leather work chair, had an almost ever-present smile of satisfaction on his face and spoke about the organisation, colleagues, policy initiatives and organisational policies with enthusiasm and reverence. He believed that a life of public service ran through his blood, as his father was a retired police officer. During our time together he would frequently refer to the notion of 'fair play'. 'Chwarae teg' as it is known in Wales is an accepted concept which means not only offering someone a fair chance but also a belief that a form of natural justice and leniency should be at the heart of how we act in our public and private lives. Moreover, 'chwarae teg' denotes a desire to display a positive outlook on life, despite the misfortunes thrown our way. If someone is seen to be violating this code publicly, they can expect some form of public retribution.

'H' peppered his speech with the phrase "fair play" and rarely a contribution to a meeting would pass without him uttering it. This denoted a general positivity to his leadership, which he believed has been further strengthened by reflecting on his leadership motivations. The researcher did not witness him criticise a colleague or another organisation throughout the two weeks in his company.

The fire officer had originally applied to the fire service and been told he would have to wait because his local service was over capacity. He therefore pursued work in business, becoming a senior manager within a medium-sized local firm within two years. But one day he was walking through the streets of his home town when he noticed a fire engine flashing past with the sirens sounding and he remembered thinking, "I wonder..." He inquired whether there was free capacity in the service, was told there was and joined up, taking a large pay cut to do so. The first week on the ELP had encouraged such reflective thoughts. During this time, he had become even more quietly certain of his purpose in life, to serve in the FRS. His physical presence, quiet firmness of speech, all reflected this certainty.

Recap - The experiences of the leaders above offer further evidence that a period of deep, personal reflection, along the lines described by authentic leadership writers, such as Cammock (2003 and 2009) and Whyte (1994) can generate significant personal insight (vision), closely aligned with a participant's unconscious values.

These insights were preceded by moments of 'shock', or crucibles (Bennis and Thomas 2002), which were sometimes experienced as traumatic. Participants were able to draw lessons from these feelings in the context of their leadership practice.

These findings can be summarised in the table below:

Table 7: Summary of authentic leadership development results

Delivery method observed	School of leadership development	(According to the theory) success depends upon...	Programmes where methods observed	Improved leadership, from the perspective of the participants?
Classroom-based, structured, deep, personal reflection	Authentic	Participants better understanding their unconscious values	LiP and ELP	Yes, in the vast majority of cases

A further interesting theme can be noted from this section. Namely, this form of leadership development seemed to spark an interest amongst participants in further development. It acted as a spur for participants to think about the possible impact of their personal leadership upon real organisational issues, suggesting that participants, at least, did not regard individual-focused leadership development as the only valuable model of leadership development available to them.

Related to this, discussion will now continue according to the theoretical models offered earlier. It will consider the effect on participants when personalised development was largely overlooked. The main finding here is that when personal values were not surfaced and explored, participants tended to view the development experience from the perspective of previously constructed leadership prototypes. Hence, separating development experiences according to 'school' and 'focus' was less straightforward than the theoretical models explored earlier would suggest. One element, or its absence, was seen to impact upon other elements of leadership development.

Overlooking individual-focused leadership development

In the case of the Leeds Castle (LC) programme, deep personal reflection was hinted at by the syllabus but ultimately left to the participants to embark on such a journey.

The 'Harvard' of leadership development programmes

The LC programme for leaders and chief executives prides itself on being the 'Harvard' of public sector leadership programmes. Rooted in systems theory, it deals with sophisticated leadership ideas and draws on some of the most sought-after speakers in this area and other, more critical streams of leadership thought. These presentations are interspersed with some collective sensemaking in the form of smaller group discussions, a foreign study trip and limited, supportive executive coaching. In the vast majority of cases the participants in this programme have reached the pinnacle of their careers, either leading the political or bureaucratic aspects of their organisations. It is perhaps understandable, as a consequence, that more emphasis is placed on sophisticated, broader, often sector-wide leadership. This was apparent on the first day of the programme when participants were exposed to a range of sector experts and urged to question them on the 'big' questions facing local government in years to come, followed by a workshop activity where participants were urged to discuss the likely impact of these 'big' issues and to identify some 'wicked' problems of their own. Heavily linked to the work of Grint (2005b), the hope was that the forthcoming sessions would develop some form of collective, cross-organisational understanding of leadership issues.

It was still the case that leaders in this programme referred to personal visions, generated earlier in their careers through similar 'crucible' moments. These were visible during the researcher's field observations, in the workplace and the classroom. Yet by not surfacing these feelings during the formal programme, such powerful leadership 'prototypes' were placed in the background, their influence and impact not reflected upon. The lack of

reflection on personal values had two effects. The first was that participants interpreted programme material through the lens of their established leadership prototypes, using such models as an editing tool for relevance. The second effect was that they drew on their leadership prototypes as a means of determining an 'appropriate' leadership response at work.

Crucible moments echoing in the present - the chief executive seeking justice

The researcher shadowed a council chief executive participant of the LC programme at work for six weeks. In an interview with the researcher, he described a particular, traumatic experience he had suffered at the beginning of his career, which he proudly proclaimed as "starting as a file clerk, ending as a chief executive". The participant, 'DC', is dyslexic, and struggled early in his career to accept the "memo-based, ass covering culture" he experienced in local government. He recalled being told by a manager that he would not amount to much professionally and that he had better not waste his time by reading in his lunch hour. He said that moment led him to reflect that he:

...had to strip the bullshit out of organisations. Ass covering, memos, emails, inter-department warfare, one-up-manship, macho behaviour, they have no place in our organisation. I promised myself back then that if I ever became a chief executive I would cut all of that out because if you can convert all that energy into cohesion and collaboration, what a difference it makes. None of our time is wasted with back covering. I was quite good at the game myself but I hated doing it. There had to be enough people out there who felt the same as I did and this is how I would build my organisation if I ever got to the top. I reflected on how it had made me feel when that manager had told my 18-year-old self not to read in this spare time and vowed never to make anyone working for me feel dehumanised.

'DC' was frustrated with what he saw as a dominant 'mechanical' view of organisations and believed the key to effective leadership was providing a strong values-centred example from the top and understanding the emotions of his staff.

The family-centred approach to leadership at the council was manifested in a 'One Team' philosophy, where portfolio holders were encouraged to "get into each others' business"; territorialism was disapproved of, and, according to 'DC', "good ideas count regardless of their source". In interviews with his subordinates, this was welcomed, variously described as "exhilarating", "unique", "sometimes claustrophobic" and "refreshing". DC acknowledged that he could lose his temper with staff, self-penned as his "red mist moments". Several subordinates described their various strategies for avoiding these and of how they felt when they were at the receiving end. They recounted subsequent night-time personal phone calls where DC had explained his feelings and apologised for any wrong-doing. The researcher was also the recipient of one of these phone calls, after DC had attended a closed meeting with councillors and wanted to share his feelings with someone on how it had gone.

The family values of the chief executive were witnessed on a daily basis. His office was a revolving door of visitors, reporting to him in person, or coming in for casual conversations. He did not have a computer in his office and did not accept e-mails from staff. On the few occasions when he dealt with misfortunes that had befallen members of staff he behaved much as a caring father would during a family crisis. One of his deputy chief executives, for example, was undergoing chemotherapy and was still coming into the office occasionally to catch up on work and joining in conversations over the phone. On each occasion she would receive a deep embrace from DC, followed by a fatherly row for not resting, and was sent home with strict instructions to relax.

In short, the philosophy, initially developed as a result of a 'shock' experience early in his career, had shaped everything he did in leadership terms within his organisation. Interestingly, it also dominated the lens through which he viewed the formal development process of LC. Each of his contributions, on a range of different subjects, was framed in emotional terms. For example, during a session on systems thinking he stated that he had first learned of the impact the recession through casual conversations with fleet and

reception staff. His fleet staff had stated that there were more cars parked outside houses during the day, making it difficult for their trucks to pass, because people were at home, out of work, and his receptionists had stated that they were receiving more calls about access to benefits.

He believed most management theories overlooked the “human element” and that leaders needed to learn that their viewpoints may not be the most appropriate in tackling a problem. He framed a session during LC on the social construction of problems as being about control and how people within organisations found it difficult to “let go” of an issue and share it with colleagues. He had tried to employ more ‘authentic’ communication strategies with his staff, he said. For example, he had told them that he did not yet understand the full impact of the recession on the organisation but that they could be sure they would work together as a family in order to get through it. It is difficult to predict how the formal programme would have felt to ‘DC’ had he shared his early personal leadership shock with the group and engaged in further reflection on the present state of leadership in his organisation. However, the truth of the programme for the participant, as expressed by him, was that learning had been “affirmative”, confirming his existing thoughts about appropriate leadership. In other words, he had viewed the programme through the lens of his previous crucible experience. DC felt that the programme had been “useful”, that he had gained some new “tools” to use at work but that it had not altered his view of leadership. He regarded the programme as “marginal” in its effects. As a result, it is unlikely that any development intervention not involving a deep and perhaps shock-inducing moment could have had anything other than a relatively minor impact on his leadership development.

Summary

This section built on the earlier finding on the power of individuation and authentic leadership development to engender powerful personal leadership visions and, furthermore, to spark an interest in further development activity. It was found that when such methods are missing, participants observed drew upon existing leadership prototypes

(Hogg 2000; Hogg and Terry 2001), interpreting the development programme through this lens. This suggests that the separation of theories of leadership development into competing explanations of effectiveness may be unwise, as it is shown that one element of leadership development may have a significant impact on the remainder of the process.

Recap –So far we have explored evidence supporting the value of authentic leadership development and individuation in generating deep personal insights and showed how such insights pushed at the boundaries of individual-focused leadership development, acting as a spur for participants to explore leadership in more depth. The section moved on to consider a lack of emphasis on personal leadership development. Later workplace shadowing revealed that participants, in the absence of a formalised framework, generated their own personal visions, based on their own ‘crucible’ experiences, which later acted as powerful prototype images when these leaders reflected upon their leadership values.

The data thus offered support, in the context of the groups observed in this study, for authentic leadership and individuation as a valuable source of individual-focused leadership development. Moreover, it was stated that, within the contexts observed, behavioural leadership development methods were not valued by participants.

The data showed that it may be unwise for us to view individual-focused methods of leadership development in isolation. It was shown, within the research context, that in cases where personal leadership development was executed successfully, it acted as a spur for more organisation-focused development. Where personal leadership development was missing, it narrowed the focus of the remainder of the programme, thus limiting learning potential.

The next section will consider the two schools within the collective focus of leadership development.

ii. Collectively focused leadership development

a. Coalition leadership development

Introduction

This section of the results shows that, for the participants observed, leadership development was about more than an intense individual focus. A collective view of the politics of a coalition of development was also crucial.

This aspect of leadership development, where participants engage with leadership theory and its implications, was observed as highly political, with issues of power as important as technical issues around the suitability of a theory. Furthermore, an ANT-focused analysis of the data revealed that in order for participants to successfully negotiate this element of development, a wider coalition of leadership development was necessary. This implies a need for a dispersal of responsibility for the delivery of leadership change within organisations, a challenge which should not be underestimated by employers, organisers, followers or participants. Because of the centrality of power in this element of leadership development, those theories which explicitly addressed power – and complexity – seemed to be most relevant to participants.

Finally, it was apparent, in the context of the research, that a coalition model of leadership development should not be viewed in isolation. Such a view of leadership development focused participants upon the challenges of implementation. It is also shown that this form of leadership development is enriched by earlier structured personal reflection, which enabled participants to inject an element of purpose into their theoretical engagement.

This section begins with a presentation of results demonstrating participants' positive engagement with theory. It will conclude with an exploration of negative experiences of

theoretical engagement, also relating these as coalition concerns. The chapter concludes with an exploration of experiential learning.

As stated previously, Callon's (1986) model for the analysis of the construction of alliances will be used here as a heuristic, rather than as a strict guide.

Engaging with the coalition of leadership development: complexity and power at work

In the literature review we explored how an ANT focus would characterise leadership development as a meeting of various human and non-human 'actants' in a process of meaning-making. It suggested that such a meeting of forces was fluid, ever capable of change, as the circumstances of 'actants' and their 'spokespeople' changed. The model suggested a need for each actor to consider the importance of compromise, of 'clumsy solutions' (Grint 2005b and 2009; Thomson 2008; Verweij 2000; Verweij et al 2006) in leadership development. In turn, this implies a significant degree of responsibility for each 'actant' within the coalition of leadership development, as without the participation of each, the process would fail.

This section will deal with successful instances of coalition leadership development – where meaning was successfully created. The meaning created through this coalition was usually related to theory which helped participants deal with uncertainty, complexity and the constitutive nature of power. Firstly, this was regarded as salutary and worthy of the attention of 'actants' and, secondly, was 'verified' through initial engagement with the coalition of leadership.

As stated earlier, the LC programme set great importance on the value of systems theory. During the programme observed, two of its main speakers were from the systems school. In addition to the keynote systems speakers, participants were exposed to social constructionist theories of leadership, specifically that of problem construction (Grint 2005b and 2009). Through engaging with these theory actants, participants constructed a meaning

of leadership as something that involved enacting change in a complex environment, within which they could be influential constructors of meaning, but whose effectiveness in so doing would be bound, in turn, by the complexity of the system.

Complex systems in local government

The power to inspire change caused when a 'theory' agrees common purpose with others within the leadership development coalition can be illustrated through the case of 'CD', the local government leader shadowed by the researcher. When interviewed during the LC programme, the leader had described a problem he was experiencing with the scrutiny process in his council. Previous leaders of his council, in general, had preferred 'command' and 'management' forms of operation. In terms of scrutiny, this had resulted in members of the council fearful of acting without the direction of their political leader. The participant leader had attempted to change this, viewing scrutiny as a valuable alternative source of leadership and perspective to the dominant leadership network. Thus he sought to widen the coalition of leadership within the council through the attempted enrolment of backbench councillors. He had sought, following engagement with the theoretical content of the programme, to reconstruct the 'tame' or 'crisis' problem of scrutiny, as a 'wicked' one, whereby a broader range of actors would accept the responsibility of leadership.

Accordingly, he could be seen as allowing his followers to feel more of the heat of leadership (Heifetz 1994; Heifetz and Linsky 2001). The difficulties faced by the leader were witnessed firsthand during a meeting with influential committee chairs, who would be responsible for implementing these changes. 'CD' explained to them that responsibility for the strategic direction of scrutiny was now theirs and that too much involvement from him was "unhealthy". "The agenda is your agenda," he said, "and, the reports are yours as well. If you want detail, go for it, if you want top line strategy, fine." A typical response came from one committee chair, formerly the leader of a district council, who said that through controlling the scrutiny process he had "eliminated socialism" in his area. Another chair added that he was frustrated by the local newspaper and was uncertain whether it would

respond in a mature fashion to the new strategy. A disagreement proceeded to break out concerning the responsibility for adult care services. Throughout, 'CD' remained relatively silent, explaining to the researcher afterwards that he viewed this as a necessary stage his committee chairs had to pass through in order to properly engage with the issue. In other words, he was "cooking the problem" (Heifetz and Linsky 2001). Although 'CD's followers seemed unwilling to accept much of the responsibility of leadership, the leader was determined to allow the issue to run its course, attempting to allow the coalition of leadership within the local authority to redefine and reconstruct itself, thus creating a new meaning and purpose.

'Wicked problems' and 'clumsy solutions' in the US Marine Corps

Similarly, the marine colonel observed as part of the researcher's fieldwork was engaged in a project to explore the reasons behind a rising suicide rate amongst members of his organisation. Rather than cite technical 'tame' reasons for the problem, 'B' had come to the conclusion that the problem was a 'wicked', leadership one. In a conversation with the researcher he stated that he believed the problem was related to an interplay of factors, notably an increasing predisposition of young marines to risky behaviours, such as riding motorcycles quickly, and an absence of "leadership" from officers, namely, an increasing reluctance of commanding officers to be seen as interfering in the personal lives of subordinates. This situation was further compounded by the fact that commanders of troops at home experienced comparatively little investment, while resources tended to be more plentiful for those engaged in the theatre of battle.

As 'B' viewed the issue as a 'wicked' one, he tailored his response accordingly, engaging both junior officers and senior officers in a debate around the issue. Firstly, the colonel was observed conducting a lecture on his findings to a group of junior officers. He placed the burden of responsibility on their shoulders, telling them that this was less about a bureaucratic exercise to prove, on paper, that they had exercised pastoral care for their subordinates, and more to do with engendering a discipline of spending time face-to-face

with their troops, learning about their personal lives. He continued by stating that it was a precondition of being a marine to possess a level of aggression, which is why, in his view, marines tended to engage in high-octane, high-risk social activities. It was the duty of junior officers to find a constructive outlet for aggression and competitiveness within their units. Emphasis was also placed on the importance of the sergeant actor as an intelligence gatherer of potentially troubling behaviour.

Later in the week, 'B' led a discussion on the issue with a group of senior managers, including a more senior, general officer. In this meeting he concentrated more on social trends, such as the preponderance of electronic communication at the expense of face-to-face communication. He addressed the increasing unease felt by senior marines to instil "a bit of the old Full Metal Jacket" culture within the corps, meaning a regime of tough discipline where marines were disciplined to believe that taking one's own life was contrary to their values. The general officer chuckled at this, stating, "yeah, the shrinks told us we couldn't do that kind of thing anymore." They proceeded to discuss ways in which, from a senior officer's position, they could "drill cultural discipline" without infringing the human rights of subordinates. This led to a broader discussion on recruitment strategy, with the general officer despairing that "surely at some point these guys must have realised the marine corps is a tough, conformist organisation". He followed this with a recognition that they should pay heed to the relevance of command orders, making them relevant to the wellbeing of troops, rather than concerned with fulfilling bureaucratic obligations. He cited unhappiness with recent motorcycle safety clothing regulations as an example of a command disconnected from the overall aim of reducing marine casualties.

For such stories of change to have been possible there was a requirement for a range of actants to take their leadership responsibilities seriously, as with the case of marine suicides above, where accountability was constructed as a matter involving numerous hierarchical actors, wider social factors and non-human actors. It required the temporary stabilisation of meaning amongst a collection of leadership development actants. It needed the credibility of the 'theory' actant to be accepted by the 'participant' actant. Moreover, it required the commitment of programme organisers and facilitators to the construction of leadership as complex and socially constructed. The cash actant was required in order to attract the best

possible 'presenter' actant to lead discussion around the theory. Finally, the coalition needed the enrolment of 'follower' actants amongst partner organisations, politicians, officers, members of the local community and the physical 'place' of leadership. The burden required for successfully constructing meaning, and change from leadership development can thus be characterised as complex and laden with relationships of power, as the various actants involved negotiate the interests served by leadership and its very identity.

Confronting power issues in the FRS

As stated in the previous section, the fire officer participants entered the ELP with feelings approaching guilt at the time and resources being spent on their development. 'Just sitting around' for several days was viewed as an illicit activity for participants who preferred action, to respond practically in the face of some form of crisis. Many of the participants prided themselves on possessing 'logic' and accordingly basing their leadership decisions on this system (Townley 2008). The idea that leadership and identity at work may be constituted by power relationships was novel to them. This was noted in the first block, where participants started substituting the word 'complexity' for any situation that reflected a power dynamic at work. The participants were confronted directly with theories of the operation of power, firstly, in the first block, when they were exposed to theories of problem construction (Grint 2005b and 2009), and, secondly, in the second block, when they were asked to engage in theories of adaptive leadership (Heifetz 1994; Heifetz and Linsky 2001). At the time of the session on the social construction of problems, participants sat through the presentation in near silence. The presenter, when asking for questions intermittently, allowed the silence to hang in the air, adding to the feeling of discomfort. The group would later become more adept at challenging presenters and asking questions, but at this stage they were still developing their confidence. As stated later by participants, an unease was felt that they would appear "foolish" in front of peers, and, worse, that suggestions of subversive statements would be passed back to their chief officers.

By the second block, however, the group had relaxed significantly. It is at this stage that a presenter came to speak to the group on the issue of adaptive leadership. It took the form of a case study, centred on the speaker's experience leading a high-profile police operation. The presenter was confrontational from the outset, attempting to encourage heated debate amongst participants, asking towards the beginning of his initial presentation, "Who hates me already?" He pitched the task of a leader as making a 'step-up' from specialist managerial issues to the political, complex matters of leadership and challenged them not to think like they "used to do three or four pay grades lower".

During initial discussions, he challenged one participant on his use of the word 'they' when apportioning blame during a discussion. The presenter asked the participant to clarify this remark and asked what he intended to do about the matter. So the tone, to summarise, was confrontational. Yet the presenter found it difficult to generate interactivity from the group. He remarked, "This is a bit one way isn't it? Don't you want this to be interactive?" The presenter stated that one interpretation of this behaviour could be that participants were not engaged with the material. At this point, the behaviour of the group seemed to alter. One participant responded that the presenter needed to understand that until this point in their careers "the utmost clarity" had been demanded of them on a "daily basis". The researcher noted at the time that the presenter seemed to be constantly attempting to shock the participants.

Participants engaged in an exercise associated with a policing case experienced some years previously by the presenter. They were split into three groups, with the first adopting the role of the police, the second a group of protestors and the third a 'balcony' (Heifetz and Linsky 2001) group, whose role it was to observe the processes of negotiation taking place. The police and protest groups began to discuss the problem and to negotiate. The third group seemed confused about its task. Side discussions between members of the third group began to dominate until, by the end of the task, the group was engaged in a discussion about how they would approach the issue, rather than noting the process of negotiation between the other two groups as observed. The lunch break arrived and the 'balcony' group was the first to leave the room, "not quickly enough", as noted by the presenter, while the other two groups remained in the room discussing the issues. During

the later report-back the observation group presented a discussion about the public order issue at the heart of the exercise. They were challenged by the presenter, who stated that they had been “on the dance floor” rather than on the “balcony” observing the process of leadership (Heifetz and Linsky 2001). This was received as a revelatory piece of information for the larger group, which began to state that it understood the value of the exercise for the first time. There then followed a detailed discussion about how the group could operate as a learning community and how members could learn from their feelings when challenged by the presenter.

The confrontations with theory outlined above were later related back to the researcher in interviews, as participants discussed how they had approached leadership challenges differently as a result of this engagement. One participant described the issue of closing a fire station as a “no brainer” adaptive leadership problem. He said that his service was currently consulting the public about a particular closure and was facing strong opposition. He said:

You should read some of the emails. We are being told that people will die in their beds as a result of this. Another person wanted my personal telephone number so she could call us when members of her family died in a fire. But of course the point here is that we don't start the fires in the first place. We will provide all the advice, the smoke alarms, everything necessary to ensure that these fires do not happen. It is about getting away from the blame culture in leadership, pushing more of the responsibility for these issues to those people who can make a difference, which, in this case is those members of the public who may start fires. We have a big meeting about this soon and I will present the data demonstrating that actually the closure will make no difference to response times but I will also show them categorically that the best way of ensuring the safety of their families is by taking more responsibility for preventing fires.

The officer continued to say that he did not “do command” any more. He maintained a leadership role, even at operational incidents, where he would seek solutions from

operational experts, rather than providing them with explicit solutions. He claimed his role was to be a facilitator of dialogue.

These cases required a reassessment of the leadership coalition on the part of participants. Such a change was preceded, however, by a reappraisal of the leadership development coalition. In each case, a renegotiating of the position of key actants, or the enrolment of a fresh actant was witnessed. It was with some resistance that the spokesperson representing the theory actant was admitted to the development network, specifically because participants found it difficult to grapple with issues of power and identity at the heart of their organisations. It was a process of seduction conducted over several months. Participants began to reconstruct the problem of leadership from one of ineffective transmission, a management issue, to one of grappling with the construction of identity and purpose, a leadership issue. Moreover, new actants were recruited to the development network, namely followers, either in the shape of members of the communities served, or of members of staff in the employing organisation. Both were called upon to participate in the leadership development of the participant actant. In the cases above, both gave their consent, albeit after periods of varying degrees of resistance.

One could further make the case of non-human objects being enrolled or expelled from the network of leadership development. The process of closing fire stations was important to participants, as they grappled with the nature of this non-human actant and who was to be regarded as its spokesperson. Preventative home safety equipment was enrolled, its reliability as a representative of community leadership presented as key within the coalition of leadership development. Quietly, in these cases, in the background, were the chief fire officer and employing organisation actants, either explicitly supporting such efforts or passively assenting to change.

Recap – This section has explored successful instances of participants engaging with theory, as part of a ‘coalition’ theory of leadership development. It stated that this element was far more political than has been addressed thus far in the literature on leadership development. It highlighted that those theories that helped participants address issues of

power and complexity were the ones most valued. Successful engagement with theory involved the successful construction of a coalition of leadership, with participants gaining support at work for the reframing of problems, helped along by the enrolment of non-human actors, such as ‘cash’, or the lack of it.

In terms of the models offered in the literature review, this element of leadership development was shown to be complemented, in the instance of the FRS, by an earlier period of personal reflection, with participants able to add some meaning to their theoretical reflections. In all successful cases, engagement with theory explicitly generated a thirst for experimentation and implementation, pushing at the boundaries of classroom learning. It may be unwise, therefore, based on these results, to think of coalition leadership development as an isolated theory. It might be more fruitful to think of it in terms related to other models of leadership development.

The findings on ‘coalition’ leadership development are summarised in the table below:

Table 8: Summary of ‘coalition’ leadership development results:

Delivery method observed	School of leadership development	(According to the theory) success depends upon...	Programmes where methods observed	Improved leadership, from the perspective of the participants?
Critically-focused theory engagement	Coalition	Engaging a broader coalition of leadership development and leadership	ELP and LC	Yes, in the vast majority of cases

Before we move on to discuss experiential forms of leadership development, this chapter will also consider unsuccessful instances of coalition development. In so doing it will again adopt an ANT method of analysis, attempting to isolate points in the leadership development coalition where failure occurred. The conclusion, again, is that responsibility for the success of leadership development is dispersed amongst a range of actors, who all need to accept this liability and commit to the process if it is to succeed.

The disintegration of development networks

This section will firstly explore instances of 'betrayal' on the part of the participant actant. It will continue with a presentation of results demonstrating the withdrawal of employer actors from the leadership development coalition. It concludes with a consideration of instances where the very 'theory' actants of the programmes observed were seen to fail.

The betrayal of participant actants

On the ELP and other programmes, 'participant' actants were observed withdrawing from the leadership development coalition. This was explained by participants in terms of a failure within the network. In all cases, the withdrawals affected the capacity of the network, in some way, to engage with the theory, the purpose, of the programme.

Non-human actors enrolled:

The 'cash' actor, the expense of the programmes, was raised as a reason for lack of engagement with their theory. One participant told the researcher that for the cost of the programme he could have enrolled in an MBA at a highly-rated university, rather than gain a

diploma through the ELP. This particular participant had been forced to attend the programme by his chief officer, as it was compulsory for all officers at his level to attend. This was the case, likewise, with a participant who thought his participation was unnecessary, as he would be retiring within two years and was therefore “too long in the tooth” to change his leadership. Another participant, frequently, when he disagreed with an aspect of a presentation, would cite the cost of the programme. Several participants, after completion of the programme, complained about the selection process. Each had been interviewed by programme organisers and facilitators and, as was referenced by participants, none were rejected. Participants who engaged with the process were frustrated to discover that many of their peers regarded attendance as a chore, a bureaucratic necessity to maintain positive relations with their chief fire officers back at work.

There were also complaints about one of the ELP venues, the Fire Service College. Participants were familiar with long stretches at the college. They associated it with memories of ‘command’ courses, poor food and facilities, when compared with the other venue utilised during the programme. There was a history and a life invoked within the actant of the college venue. Such concerns did not just affect the leadership development coalition of the ELP.

Gobbledegook!:

One participant of the LC programme had enrolled largely due to pressure from his chief executive. He had become frustrated even at the design day stage. He could frequently be heard referring to content as “gobbledegook” and was highly critical of the academic nature of the programme. The participant dropped out after the first block of activity. An interview with this participant lasted a mere five minutes as he answered every question with the phrase, “It was just gobbledegook!” After LiP, two participants admitted to the researcher that they had attended the programme, not of their own initiative but because their bosses had asked them to. As it happens, both had engaged with the content and felt they had

improved as leaders, as was the case with two of the cynical ELP participants, who felt they had “changed at the margins”.

Yet such instances of participant withdrawal from the coalition of leadership development were relatively rare. More common was a withdrawal from the network of an actant in the leadership milieu of participants. Such instances called into question the motivation of employing organisations for enrolling their staff. Others highlighted a shortcoming in theory, which failed to surface a more complex, power-oriented leadership environment experienced by participants at work.

Betrayal of the employer

The following cases highlight the importance of the ‘place’ and ‘employing organisation’ actants in the coalition of leadership development. Without the enrolment and collaboration of these actants, the leadership development network constructed by participants failed to translate into a leadership network at work.

The chief:

In the case of the ELP, a problem was observed with the chief fire officer actant, the ‘chief’. To understand this actant it is necessary to understand the history of the old fire brigade command course, previously a necessary step towards becoming a chief fire officer. During participation in this programme, participants would enjoy a sustained period out of the workplace, travel extensively and be awarded a masters degree upon completion. The course was based along competency lines (Adair 2005 and 2006). Critics of the course, participants on the ELP, viewed it as a bureaucratic exercise, a ‘box ticking’ necessity, which was used for the purposes of networking as much as learning, cultivating an “old boys’ club” of friends versed in the ways of command management. It is no surprise, given the history of the course, that some chiefs regarded the ELP with suspicion, aiming, as it did, to better

equip leaders to handle perceived complexity, encouraging questioning of the environment, of leadership, rather than an adherence to command. Other chiefs were ignorant of the ethos of the programme, viewing it in the same light as the old brigade command course, and therefore expected their staff to return to work unaltered by the experience. Others, according to participants, sent 'deviant' members of staff along to participate, in order to "get [them] out of the way".

One particular chief was described by a participant as a "blocker" of change in the organisation. The participant stated that "his lack of understanding of the concepts we have picked up during the programme is damaging". The participant felt that there was little point in initiating change at work as to do so would prove career hindering. The individual concerned had developed a passion for strength-based, positive psychology inspired theory as a result of the programme, and had a plan for implementing a wide-ranging strategy to remodel the leadership of the organisation along these lines. Yet the participant felt that this would be impossible for as long as the present head of the organisation remained in post. The problem, here, of course is that the 'chief' actant did not regard himself as part of the leadership development network. Development for such actors, the researcher was told, is something that occurs at a safe distance away from the workplace, is probably skills based and aimed at the acquisition of universally applicable command tools. For other participants, the story was quite different. For example, one participant was successfully implementing a strengths-based philosophy within his organisation and was planning on applying for a forthcoming vacancy as chief officer in his organisation in order to take the project further. Yet for others, the network was more difficult to manage.

A gang of insurgents:

To remain with the fire service for now, the experiences of participant 'A' are worth recounting. In her case, she resisted attempts to block the translation of theory through the creation of a group she styled as her "insurgents". 'A' had reflected on her passion for nurturing talent within her organisation and began to implement a more organic leadership network that drew on wide-ranging expertise. This was a result of her construction of major

issues facing the sector, specifically the need for radically more ambitious cross sector partnership working, as 'wicked' ones. As touched upon in the previous section, 'A' had gathered around her a team of staff who had been enrolled to her leadership coalition, which was largely comprised of individuals she felt possessed great potential but, without her assistance, would stand little chance of progressing within the organisation, or, for that matter, another force. 'A' was an expert at discovering under-utilised talent within the organisation and nurturing this latent potential. One such case, for example, was a recovered alcoholic uniformed officer, who had won rapid promotions and acted as a boundary worker within 'A's' community of practice (Wenger 1999). The officer who identified the potential of this boundary worker was, in turn, another of 'A's' protégés.

This group of activists was constructed by 'A' in the strongest possible terms, conveying what she viewed as their subversive purpose. They were her "band of insurgents", her "terrorists". The ELP had provided 'A', she said, with the confidence in her mission to develop her "insurgents" and to promote reform within her service and the sector more widely. She repeated often to the researcher the message from a slide displayed by an academic during the ELP, demonstrating how a number of separate 'cultures' could co-exist in an organisation at any one time. She grasped this as a powerful lesson in how she might influence her organisation through tactics akin to those outlined by ANT writers. Yet, ultimately, one of the main realisations 'A' grappled with after completion of the ELP was her powerlessness to affect wide-ranging change in her service. She was able to influence individual issues, and enact significant influence within her group of "terrorists", but was unable to alter the purpose of the organisation's leadership network.

'A's' chief had noted publicly that he no longer saw the value in sending participants through the ELP. 'A' suspected she had been sent to remove her from the organisation for a period. The service was traditional in its approach. When the researcher, for example, parked in the car park on his first day of shadowing he was addressed by a member of staff as "squire". The chief saw little of 'A', who reported instead through his deputy. Other members of the organisation remembered instances where they had presented papers to the senior management committee on matters of policy and received only feedback on spelling from the chief. During the researcher's time in the organisation the chief had

authored a report stating that the service would not consider partnership working with neighbouring services. The meaning embedded and developed over time by the leadership network of the organisation, in other words, was too strong for 'A''s leadership development coalition to break. Viewed slightly differently, the 'chief' actant, through his withdrawal from 'A''s leadership development network, had further protected the status quo, the purpose of the organisation's leadership coalition. The situation was summarised neatly by 'A''s mentor:

She has changed what she can touch but of course it has set up huge tensions for her. The more she discovers about her ability the more confidence she gains and the more sharply the reality of where she is comes into focus. She is suffering from cognitive dissonance. So how does she carve out in this organisation the leadership space she needs? I have huge admiration and respect for her. She is innovative and experimental but her management team is very interested in matters of extreme detail and loves to hold on to things that they feel comfortable with. The result is that the organisation does not like change. They deal with things they like to deal with and ignore every other problem as if it does not exist. ['A'] has been trying hard to broaden the pallet they use and rather than worrying about tiny details has been thinking about how the service, for example, engages with vulnerable people, which is normal fire service stuff. If she was not asking these questions and dealing with the auditors it would be a really poorly rated service. But this is not recognised and her influence is limited. What she brings is not seen as valuable in her hierarchy. She is working on ways to work around them but there is a limit to that kind of work and she knows this.

The leadership development coalition of 'A' was concerned with constructing the demands of leadership in one particular way, and the chief's network of leadership was concerned with constructing a quite different purpose. Thus this was a power struggle between two sets of networks, both attempting to construct leadership in the organisation in their own image (Foucault 1998). It draws stark attention to a key finding of this research, which is without the enrolment and proper consideration of the home environment (the leadership coalition of the participant actant) then the leadership development coalition is likely to fail.

The above cases illustrate a withdrawal of the 'employer' actant from the leadership development coalition, drawing attention to the importance of the role of history and tradition as represented by the actants of 'place' and 'sector'.

The following cases follow stories of 'theory' withdrawal from the network of leadership development. In other words, they represent instances where the theory of leadership presented on the programmes in question, was insufficient to explain the workings of the leadership coalition within the milieu of leadership.

Theory betrayal

A smorgasbord of theory:

The DSLP is a programme which offers several relatively brief presentations from guest speakers over the course of a week, within the environment of a classroom. The week begins with an emphasis on behavioural and trait-based theories. For example, as stated in the previous section, a session is held on psychometric testing. Other speakers in this earlier part of the week address leadership from an individual-focused, psychological perspective. Later in the week a speaker addressed the group on 'collaborative leadership'. This was followed with two sessions on socially constructed views of leadership, on problem formulation and the role of language. At the end of the week, participants engage in an experiential exercise, to be described in more detail in the next section. To summarise a wide range of theories are covered but little emphasis is placed on any one of these often contradictory theories.

This approach can be characterised as a 'smorgasbord' of theory. The very surroundings, the 'venue' actant within the DSLP leadership development coalition, emitted a feeling of comfort, taking place as it did within the confines of a former stately home, now in the ownership of the Ministry of Defence. The 'facilitator' actant was regularly heard

emphasising the “complexity” of leadership, not in the sense of a need on the part of participants to grapple with a systems thinking perspective on the world, but in as much as he regarded leadership as expressed through the jumble of theories presented. Time and again facilitators told participants that they did not see it as their job to endorse a particular theory of leadership and that the desired result was that participants would work it out for themselves based on the range of material presented.

A result of this ‘smorgasbord’, a lack of depth of theoretical explanation, is that participants felt the programme to have had marginal, if marginally positive, constructive and “interesting” impact on their leadership. They had been given a range of concepts and “tools” with which to privately reconsider their leadership. They could pick and choose which to experiment with. A civil servant shadowed in the workplace after completion of the programme regretted the lack of a coherent theoretical narrative during the formal programme, which would have helped her, she said, reflect on what she viewed as the systemic nature of her leadership challenge. The task of this civil servant, in her view, was to build a coalition of leadership in her sphere of operation in order to develop effective resilience strategies within government. She regarded her job as enacting change through others and acknowledged that she possessed little in the way of power. She relied on others’ constructions of leadership in order to gain results.

The leadership development coalition that shaped the purpose of LiP differed to a yet greater extent to the other programmes observed, with a marked and prominent withdrawal of the ‘theory’ actant. It is perhaps more challenging to present data demonstrating a lack of the felt impact of a particular actor. However, at the outset of the researcher’s engagement with this programme, it was actively described by one of the facilitators as a ‘smorgasbord’ of theory. It differed from the DSLP, however, in its tendency to avoid particular theories of leadership, with a few exceptions, for example, touching on positive leadership theory. This was a programme more concerned, as stated in the previous section, with personal reflection and, later, with developing the personal resilience of individual leaders. This was supported through the programme of coaching and action learning to be discussed in detail in the next section.

The result of this prioritisation was observed in the relatively theory-free way in which participants contextualised their learning. Participants generally referred to specific instances of change, which they attributed to engagement with the programme, but did so outside any particular theoretical construct. Such changes, therefore, were situation specific and the question remains, and exists outside the bounds of this research, as to whether the absence of 'Grand Theory' (Mills 2000) will limit future general leadership change, as opposed to the more specific leader-centred change (Day 2001). For example, one participant, in an interview subsequent to the programme, described how she had managed a difficult situation at work concerning the balancing of the needs of two sections of staff. Her department had suffered from several staff absences due to health and personal problems. The participant was concerned that others in the department, who rarely missed work, would begin to develop a sense of resentment. The participant developed a specific strategy for dealing with this situation with her LiP coach, whereby she gathered her ever-present staff together, personally thanked them for their work and told them it had been noticed and appreciated within the organisation. This had resulted, she believed, in a more resilient and engaged operation for a difficult working period which followed. Such learning had not been generalised, however, as it was not rooted in any particular theory. Moreover, several of the participants reported changing their personal lifestyles as a result of the programme. Again, the development of healthier and happier participants is surely a phenomenon to be welcomed and a worthy use of development resources. However, it is not rooted, nor is it intended to be, in any generalisable theory of leadership. It is a question for future research to determine, whether over the longer term, the withdrawal of a 'theory' actant from the leadership development coalition observed resulted in a less durable leadership coalition over time.

Systems theory and development:

The LC programme prided itself on its academic assuredness and credibility, referenced by a prominent political supporter as the "Harvard of leadership development programmes". Indeed, all leaders, with the exception of one, interviewed by the researcher across four cohorts of the programme, could offer tangible stories of how they had made specific use of

the general, grand theory presented and discussed. The ethos of the programme was explained to the researcher by an organiser as “using systems thinking as a means of addressing the wicked problems of leadership in local government”. Rooted as it was in systems theory, emphasis was placed on viewing the wider sphere of the operation of leadership, of the need to engage, of ‘disturbing’ that system if lasting change was to be achieved. Emphasis was also placed on the social construction of problems within leadership, although this was allowed less prominence than systems theory during the cohort observed by the researcher. As stated in the literature review, a weakness of systems theory is its lack of consideration of the role of power within the sphere of leadership. This lack of emphasis on the political operation of leadership was echoed in the experiences of leaders in the field following completion of the programme, as they grappled with applying theory to their specific situations, translating the coalition of leadership development into a coalition of leadership.

Political suicide:

Time in the field with the council chief executive mentioned in the previous section, ‘DC’, was dominated by a dramatic issue that was related to a system of leadership, certainly, but which was also fundamentally political. Throughout our period together it became apparent that the council leader had not been included, or at least did not feel included, in big strategic leadership decisions facing the council. This was rooted in ambitious plans to broaden the public offer of the council. The chief executive, throughout his period in charge of the council, had held ambitions to deliver joint services with a range of external partners, including the police, fire service, ambulance service, customs, benefits agency and job centre. This had begun to come to fruition at the site of the existing council building, in the centre of a town, where some of these agencies provided a call-in advice centre for the public. The chief executive, however, envisaged, creating a new headquarters, on the edge of town, incorporating the main office functions of all the agencies listed above. Services would be truly integrated, involving major financial savings and a simpler, more ‘joined-up’ service for the public. Politically, the councillors had agreed to a town centre strategy, which involved the redevelopment of the market, the building of a restaurant ‘quarter’ and the

resisting of individual applications for retail developments on the outskirts of town. The chief executive had viewed this political sign-off as permission for him to begin tentative negotiations and manoeuvrings to secure a suitable site for this new umbrella collection of public services, which he conducted, as observed, with some relish.

In the mean time, however, two political issues surfaced, both overlooked by the chief executive. Until that point he worked along a systems logic, of what was best for the area, enrolling a range of actor allies across the public services, reconceptualising and broadening the 'system' of public service delivery, with personal charm and emotion used as the glue to bind it all together. In this sense the leadership development coalition of the chief executive had merged with the leadership network of the place of operation. Something was missing, however, namely, an underestimation of the political actant and the 'theory' actant. In other words, a recognition that systems are socially constructed phenomena and therefore determined through the operation of power, as a range of actors compete to construct the meaning and purpose of leadership.

The local football club was experiencing financial difficulties. The matter was made worse by the fact that the lease on its current ground was drawing to a close and it was facing the possibility of being without a permanent home. The issue had drawn significant local media coverage. The local MP, a member of the same party as the ruling council group, who possessed a small majority, had become nervous, and was applying pressure on councillors to find a solution to the problem. In addition, the owners of the football club were frustrated with what they viewed as the unhelpful stance of the council. In other words, they wanted the council to invest significant funds in the club and were angered when this did not appear to be forthcoming.

The football club accused the council of overlooking its needs in order to build itself a new headquarters. This took place amidst the backdrop of political scandal in Westminster and the rhetoric of the club was soaked with insinuations about dishonest and self-serving behaviour within the public sector. Furthermore, representatives of the club had attacked the motives of the council leader. It is within this context that the chief executive met his leader and deputy leader to discuss the issue. Prior to the meeting the leader had made it

clear that he wanted a factual press release, countering the allegations made by the club. There was much heat surrounding the issue. 'DC' was angry that the football club had assumed it was the duty of a public sector body to offer financial assistance to a private sector enterprise.

The meeting began in a friendly manner, with a range of local issues discussed. The discussion moved on to the matter of the football club and the leader told the managers present that he wanted a factual press release to counter some of the allegations made by the club. Rather than respond to the request, 'DC' and one of his deputy chief executives responded defensively and stated that they believed they had operated within the bounds of their authority in their discussions with the management of a large supermarket chain (with plans for an out-of-town development), drawing the conversation into a different area of significance. The chief executive followed this by stating that he would apologise if he had misinterpreted the policy of the council. At the time the researcher noted that this felt like an unnecessary bait. The leader, rather than ignore the remark, said, "No, no" in flustered terms. But the result of the managers leading the discussion on to their conduct was that a detailed conversation ensued about their conduct and the merits, or otherwise, of the football club's plans. 'DC' began to adopt a passionate tone of voice, and when interrupted on one occasion by his leader, countered with the phrase, "let me finish, sir".

At this point the leader countered with, "All I'm saying is let's put this in a press release. Sometimes you think I am arguing against you, which I am not. I'm full-square with you on this, don't worry. I just want to correct the inaccuracies." This offered the chief executive an opportunity to withdraw from what was becoming a row. But the chief executive's response was to ask the leader that if he had misinterpreted the political policy of the council and thus behaved improperly, the leader should tell him so. The leader became frustrated and angry at this point and accused the chief executive of returning to the issue of his own integrity, which, in the view of the leader, was not in question. The leader stated that he felt the reputation of the council was becoming "besmirched" and that it was their duty to publicly correct these allegations. At this point, the chief executive pulled a press release from a folder. The leader read it, saying, in an exasperated tone, "but why didn't you give me this right at the beginning? I know you'll never convince some people but most are

reasonably minded, so this is all I wanted today.” The chief executive responded by making a speech about the council not being responsible for the plight of the football club, which was drawn to a close by the leader countering that he understood that they agreed on this issue and considered the matter closed.

What was observed throughout this episode was a withdrawal of the systems-grounded ‘theory’ actant of the leadership development coalition. What had previously been constructed as a managerialist, ‘logical’ (Townley 2008) actant, was being recast in more political terms. In other words, there was more at play than what, on paper, seemed like the most effective outcome for local public services. The leadership development network was being confronted by an alternative meaning making system, a leadership coalition, with an alternative interpretation. The conception of leadership development, and leadership, was therefore being constructed through the operation of power.

At the core of this struggle was a proposed merger between the observed council (OC) and a neighbouring council (NC). At the beginning of the researcher’s period in the field with the chief executive, a meeting had taken place between the two ruling political groups of OC and NC. This was later described by a council officer of OC as a “political love-in”. The chief executive, until this point, had been sceptical of the chances of success of this merger, largely because he thought it was unlikely to receive political support from the respective groups of councillors. This was rooted in a belief that the instinct of the councillors for self-preservation, combined with a commitment to pursue his partnership proposal, the ‘scope’ strategy, would persevere. This theory began to unravel, however.

New actants had been invited in to the leadership network of OC by the leader, namely the leader and chief executive of NC. The leader of NC was a passionate advocate for the merger and the morning following the initial meeting had drafted a press release announcing merger plans. He viewed it as the role of ‘DC’ to approve the press release, which would be released to the media later that day. This came as a shock to ‘DC’, who began to characterise the issue as “dangerous”. During a meeting ‘DC’ held with his deputies, he received a phone call from the chief executive of NC, asking for a response to the press release. ‘DC’ had not looked at the statement, as he had been busy discussing a

high-profile proposed housing and community development with his officers. The chief executive told 'DC' that he and his leader had already circulated the statement to the ruling political group and planned on sending it to all members of staff later that day. In contrast, 'DC' had only spoken of the meeting with his deputies and the researcher.

'DC' told the other chief executive that he would not be "pushed into" a statement. His council and NC were "different" places and he was worried about the reactions of staff and the public if they issued a public statement at this early stage before conducting any form of research and detailed discussion about how the merger might work in practice. The response from the other chief executive was that 'DC' should look at the press release, make changes and offer his approval. 'DC' became agitated, his voice rose in pitch. He walked to his meeting table to look at the press release, dropping the phone handset, allowing it to crash forcefully against the wall. After only a few seconds of viewing the statement, he rose from his chair, stating aloud, "No, no, I'm not having this. I'm not going to be pushed into this." He picked up the phone and told the other chief executive that he would not agree to anything verbally over the phone and wanted time to look over the release and consider it "properly".

There then followed a debate rooted in the allegory of climbing Everest. 'DC' said that this process was akin to a mountaineering expedition in its complexity. The other chief executive countered by stating that they had already reached "base camp" together. 'DC' disagreed, stating that they had "sat in the pub, had a few pints, got excited and agreed it would be a good idea to climb Everest". He followed this by stating that he believed there to be significant obstacles to the merger in the shape of staff concerns and legal impediments. 'DC' ended the conversation by emphasising the closeness of relationship between his leader and he, and asked the other chief executive to give them ("us"), more space to properly consider the matter, drawing his leader into his conception of the leadership alliance of OC. As would later emerge, this was a misreading of the nature of the leadership coalition being constructed.

Throughout the course of the following weeks, it emerged that the leader of OC had held, or was planning to hold, meetings with the leader, and the chief executive of NC, often without

the knowledge of 'DC'. This worried 'DC' as he believed a merger could endanger his 'scope' strategy, of simplifying and broadening local public services. Yet, he maintained a belief that his leader was committed to this strategy above all else, as he thought they both believed it offered the most 'logical', 'effective' means of gaining financial savings and implementing a 'radical' vision of public service delivery.

The extent of the redrawing and renegotiation of actants within the leadership coalition of the local area became apparent to the chief executive during a heated meeting between senior councillors and senior officers of OC. Prior to the meeting 'DC' had overseen a report from officers detailing what they viewed as the significant obstacles to delivering the merger plan. The leader, on the other hand, was expecting a report detailing how such a merger could be made to work. At the outset of the meeting, a political discussion took place between the leader and a cabinet colleague. 'DC' rolled his hand across his face and sighed, expressing his boredom.

The paper prepared on the merger was presented by the chief executive, who emphasised the alternative potential of his 'scope' strategy in delivering deep savings. The report was challenged by the council leader, who stated that his group had come to a decision and expected officer actions to reflect this. 'DC''s body language became defensive and he leant back in his seat, rubbing his head. The leader believed they could overcome doubts about the merger amongst stakeholders in the same manner as they overcame doubts about the potential of existing agreements. The response of the chief executive was to sigh and say, "so what do you want from me?" 'DC' tried to make eye contact with the leader, but the leader kept his head bowed and shuffled his papers. The leader believed the merger would make them "bullet proof" against future attempts from the county council to earn the status of a unitary authority.

Throughout the discussion the deputy chief executives present remained silent. The chief executive further emphasised the danger in the leader's strategy in alienating existing partners, which could seek agreements with other authorities. The leader's response was to state that he would look "foolish" if they failed to progress the merger proposal. The chief executive set an ultimatum for the leader: did he want a "few integrated services or a new

public service delivery model”? The leader stated that he did want a “new model” but that he was “unconvinced” this would be delivered through the chief executive’s ‘scope’ strategy. This was the proverbial bombshell for the chief executive, who now realised the extent of the challenge to his leadership, and leadership development, coalition. A smirk crossed the face of the chief executive, which the researcher interpreted as one of suspected betrayal, as the council leader appeared to be dismantling the leadership strategy of the council in a matter of minutes.

The chief executive again sighed deeply, turning to his officers, exclaiming, “Colleagues, help me out here.” The leader again looked down at the table, avoiding eye contact with everyone else in the room. The leader challenged the chief executive about the “business case” of his scope strategy. ‘DC’ began to respond in an emotional tone of voice but covered his own mouth with his hand, cutting himself off in mid sentence. Upon restarting his speech, the chief executive began his remarks dramatically, stating in a theatrical tone of voice, “and I say to you sir”. The leader said that he needed to leave the meeting and calm down. The chief executive agreed, rolling his eyes. The leader ended his involvement by summarising what he would say in a meeting with NC’s chief executive and leader the following day. This is the first ‘DC’ learnt of the meeting, which he was not invited to. At this point, another senior council officer spoke, stating that his colleagues were not attempting to block the merger, but to be realistic about the obstacles they would have to overcome together in order to make it work. The meeting disbanded.

To summarise, *‘DC’ underestimated the operation of power, of politics, in his network of leadership, mimicking the criticisms levelled at the body of systems theory work.* The ‘theory’ actant of his leadership development network was challenged. An alternative leadership coalition formed, enrolling the bricks and mortar of supermarkets and stadiums, the physical contours of a neighbouring authority. The ‘cash’ actant of ‘DC’'s coalition was questioned by the leader, its status undermined. A new ‘theory’ actant was at play, one which recognised the importance of a ‘system’ in delivering change within the sector, but which operated according to social constructions of meaning, where political legacy was as important as a perceived ‘common sense’, ‘logical’ view of a unified public service systems model.

In summary, it is hoped that the above cases demonstrate that even when participants fail to adopt a coalition view to an engagement with theory, ANT is a useful means through which we may interpret failures in the process. Most importantly, it re-emphasises the importance within leadership development of regarding the process as more than the domain of individual leaders learning in isolated classrooms. It is a process that requires the commitment of a broader coalition of interested parties.

Recap – This section began by stating the conditions for a successful coalition leadership development experience. It stated that theories with most resonance and value for participants appeared to be ones which addressed issues of power and complexity. It stated that a successful engagement with theory required the enrolment of a coalition of support for change at work – with a transition made from leadership development to leadership coalition. Support across the alliance was necessary for a successful experience. It was stated that when participants adopted such a focus of theory engagement, they were spurred on to consider the practicalities of leadership change and how they may learn from practice. This reflection upon the coalition of leadership was further informed, and observed as more successful, when participants were able to bring their own values to bear on the process, as highlighted in the previous section. This suggested that perhaps coalition leadership development is not an element of leadership development that should be analysed in isolation but may be more appropriately viewed as itself part of an alliance, a process of leadership development.

These findings were further strengthened through an ANT analysis of failures in this element of the process. All failures could be attributed to ‘betrayals’ within the coalition of leadership development and were capable of being identified. Usually these had nothing to do with the technical strength of a theory, per se, nor the intellectual capacity of a participant, but with power, history and political support.

The chapter concludes with a consideration of experiential leadership development.

b. Experiential leadership development

Introduction

This section finds strong support, from the perspective of participants, for the effectiveness of experiential learning. Effective experiential learning was found to offer a supportive environment for participants, but was balanced with a strong element of criticality. It was the case that experiential learning was especially valuable for women participants.

Experiential learning was the most overlooked of each of the four theories examined, yet, from the perspective of participants, the most effective. Perhaps this suggests that programmes exist, as was hinted at in the previous section on ANT, for reasons other than the development of leadership. Moreover, ANT was again found to be a useful lens through which to analyse this element of leadership development, demonstrating that when experiential learning is not supported by the wider range of actors within a coalition of development, failure can be expected.

As was the case with the previous theories of leadership development tested, experiential learning seemed to overlap into other areas. In establishing a forum for reflecting upon practice and implementation, experiential learning, where evidenced, was enriched by the theoretical and personal inputs of authentic and coalition forms of development. In turn, the experiential element of development was seen to enrich and contextualise authentic and coalition learning.

A picture thus begins to develop: although three of the theoretical models tested appear, from the perspective of participants, to result in more effective leadership practice, the more of these successful approaches that are included in a process of leadership development, the more effective the process. Indeed, these methods seem to influence and complement each other.

This section firstly explores successful instances of experiential leadership development, before moving on to discuss instances of failure within this school.

The spirit of leadership

Peter Cammock's *The Spirit of Leadership* (2009) is a collection of tales from the field detailing the inspirational journeys of leaders who have found greater alignment with their personal value systems. For Cammock, following this 'calling' represents the 'spirit' of leadership. The argument places individual purpose at the heart of the endeavour of leadership, a refreshing antidote to the glut of textbooks overly concerned with and one-best-ways of leading, seemingly at the expense of a consideration of the purpose of leadership in the first place. In this section, however, the researcher attempts to take the term 'spirit' a step further, suggesting that in the cases observed, such an enactment of the 'spirit' of leadership requires a connection and overlap to be discovered between the personal insights of leaders with a collective will to leadership. This connection was often made through participation in experiential learning.

The 'spirit' of leadership was largely found within the New Zealand cohort of participants, with some exceptions elsewhere, notably within the FRS, and in one particular element of LC. The following sections deal with aspects of experiential leadership development which contributed most to a successful outcome. These are: the generation of a safe 'space'; support and exposure generating an increase in confidence; critical challenge, and; learning through, as well as from, others. These aspects are addressed in turn.

Trust and the safe 'space'

This section addresses ways in which such safe 'space' for participants was generated.

Generative dialogue:

This phenomenon was largely witnessed within the final block of the ELP. In the previous section we drew on observations from this block to demonstrate what happens when the broader network of leadership is not properly acknowledged and addressed within development. Yet two of the three groups did prove successful. As stated in the previous section, the instructions given to the groups were to discuss and report back on their thoughts about the nature of leadership after participating in the programme. They rotated members of the group to act as 'balcony workers' (Heifetz and Linsky 2001) and to report back their findings to the group at frequent intervals. By doing so the group was able to reflect on the process of their collective sensemaking and to guard against 'command', prescriptive behaviour. For example, early in the session, one 'balcony worker' noted how a member of the group had attempted to assign blame during a discussion. Another pointed to the constructive use of humour being used to defuse tension.

What was interesting to observe in this group was how 'A', the participant the researcher shadowed in the workplace, emerged as a leader, moderating between participants and encouraging an ethos of generative dialogue (Jaworski 1998; Senge et al 2005) when it appeared that the group was becoming too task focused.

'A's leadership was particularly witnessed during a crisis in the group. The participants had drawn up a series of principles, which they based on learning gained during the programme and from academic reading they had been set prior to the final block. An idea was put forward in the group that they should split into two smaller groups and work with lists in order to draw up some conclusions to present to the larger group at the end of the programme. Before this happened they discussed the need for a "vision" to frame their discussions. They decided that their "vision" of leadership would be based around being "kind, listening to others, engaging in dialogue, being smart, caring and agile". The smaller groups had bundled their 'principles' into broader 'themes'. The observer noted that the process was beginning to become a bureaucratic exercise rather than a dialogue about leadership. Matters degenerated further. The group reassembled and a view was put

forward that they should all vote on their favourite principles to include under each theme – because they would only allow three principles per theme. The process had become a cataloguing exercise.

‘A’ expressed her dissatisfaction with this system, stating that it would sideline minority views and that the purpose of this exercise was to engage in a dialogue and present a nuanced view of leadership. Another participant confronted her on this and said the cataloguing process had helped them prioritise. ‘A’ did not think this process was about prioritisation but about accepting uncertainty and becoming comfortable with the notion that leadership cannot be neatly catalogued. She continued by referencing a lecture from the previous day, which had conveyed the view that each organisation contained a number of different ‘cultures’ and therefore various forms of leadership would always be present. In the meantime another participant returned from a toilet break – he had missed this debate – and said, “Right then, shall we get on with the voting?” The others began to gather their voting papers. But ‘A’ did not give up. She again raised the importance of allowing a minority position to be heard. Another participant told her that her perspective was “very HR”. ‘A’ responded to this with humour, stating, “Well, it’s very unlike me, I know, but this course has obviously had an effect.” This seemed to spark the interest of another participant, who started thinking aloud about the wisdom of beginning the process with a ‘vision’ at all and that perhaps vision materialised as a result of dialogue, or at least could be radically altered through dialogue.

When the researcher returned to the group in the morning, they were still grappling with a perceived need for a definite outcome. One participant said, “Part of me still wants to present three definite outcomes but I am asking myself all the time why I want that.” Another participant acknowledged that he was continually fighting against the urge to “revert to type”. Proceedings had moved away from a cataloguing and voting exercise to a dialogue about how they might have been restricting their dialogue by only using words to describe their view of leadership, that leadership might also be about physicality and imagery. Gone now were the confrontational comments of the previous evening. Instead, supportive statements were dropped in at the end of each participant’s remarks – for example, “yeah, that’s quality that is”, or a supportive joke employed to ‘normalise’ an

eccentric suggestion. The group had also started to finish each others' sentences, as if some members at least were thinking the same thoughts.

Support and exposure in experiential learning = confidence + results

As the results below show, the creation of a safe 'space' within the collective reflection aspect of development seemed, to a degree, to result in and to rely on the sharing of emotions, of exposure. Participants needed the safe 'space' in order to feel secure in expressing their innermost feelings. And yet the act of bearing emotion, the vulnerability created by this very physical and visceral 'exposure' in turn made the 'space' safer for participants. This aspect of experiential learning seemed to particularly benefit women participants, who gained significantly in confidence as a result of their participation. This relates to the literature discussed earlier, which stated that women frequently suffer from a lack of confidence in the workplace, which in large degree can be attributed to 'male' constructions of leadership and a resulting 'double bind' for women leaders, who find themselves caught between demands to be viewed as both 'tough' and 'nurturing' (Carli and Eagly 1991; Bryans and Mavin 2003; Bligh and Kohles 2008).

Exposure:

One LiP participant spoke in her final presentation to the group of her experience in "stepping off the edge of a cliff". She was referring to recently applying for a more senior leadership role, despite not being confident of success, thanks to the support she had received from peers and her coach. The researcher asked her about this use of language in an interview. The participant, a woman, admitted that she had suffered from a lack of confidence throughout her career, described in terms of the 'impostor' syndrome, whereby an individual, usually a woman, feels she is undeserving of her position and that one day she will be 'discovered' and shamed by her peers. This of course had no basis in fact, as the

researcher found her to be one of the most intelligent, cultured, interesting and friendly participants he had encountered on any programme.

She described how sharing her feelings with participants during action learning sessions and in informal discussions had boosted her confidence because she realised that her feelings were shared by others, even the seemingly outwardly confident. Her confidence was further bolstered during her coaching sessions, where the coach had helped her become more assertive with peers and colleagues. She admitted that in the past she had a “problem with confrontation” but she had started to change and was becoming more confident in her own abilities and views at work. When she was asked about her cliff metaphor, she provided a touching background story. In 2006 she had applied for a general manager role in her old organisation and had failed. As a result she had left the organisation and joined another government ministry. During the programme the same job again became vacant. She dismissed the possibility of applying but was haunted by a nagging doubt, a feeling that she would regret it if she did not apply. She described it as her “perfect job”, an opportunity to take charge of a policy leadership role, her preferred field, in an organisation she knew and a subject area she was passionate about. She had received significant support from her peers on the programme and her coach during the application process and made it through to the final three. But she was ultimately rejected for the job. Soon afterwards she was told that her existing job was being scrapped due to cutbacks in the New Zealand public service. Soon after the Christmas break she was informed that she would be made redundant. To return to the question, the participant provided this background and then broke down in tears. Despite the poignancy of this story’s outcome (although at the time of writing the participant’s career was far from over), it remains the case that through the collective sharing of emotion, specifically fear, the participant was able to collect herself from a previous disappointment, regroup and face those fears.

This notion of ‘exposure’ resonates with Ladkin’s (2010) conceptualisation of the ‘flesh’ of leadership; that leadership is about more than the internal thoughts of individuals but about the space between them and the physicality of leadership.

Support and confidence:

Participant 'R', who had earlier broken down in tears during her final presentation cited the action learning and coaching elements as beneficial in helping her develop confidence. Prior to the programme, she was uncomfortable with the label 'leader' because she did not view herself in that light. She did not even, she stated, see herself as a 'manager'. This was linked to a lack of confidence in her own authority. The result of sharing experiences with her coach and the action learning set was that she was now "far more comfortable in [her] skin". Another woman participant described her coaching experience as "excellent because it built my confidence". She described changes she knew needed to be made in her department prior to the programme but admitted she had avoided the issue at the time. She described how her coach had helped her construct a solution, concentrating positively on her strengths in the process.

One of the programme organisers described to the researcher her first encounter with the programme. Her story illustrated an example of a group of women who developed confidence during the programme and created an alliance in the workplace to instigate change and embed more of a learning culture in their organisation. The above suggests that the process of collective reflection had a special importance for women participants. Perhaps this should be a point of reflection for male programme organisers when considering the importance of investing in such structured collective sensemaking.

"I don't think anyone listens to her":

To further reinforce the point, it is worth noting that participant 'A' from the FRS programme is a woman and more than any other aspect of the programme, had responded to the experiential elements. For example, she had developed a strong bond with her mentor, a chief fire officer from a different service. In an interview the chief told the researcher that he had a particular interest in assisting the careers of under-represented groups within the sector. He said:

I didn't know her very well before she asked me to be her mentor. She got someone to ask me which was an interesting starting point and that tells you something about her confidence. It is like getting your best friend to ask a girl out for you in the playground. I believe in promoting leadership amongst under-represented groups in the FRS. My initial reaction was that she had fine instincts but was someone who was slightly lost in her own organisation and was uncertain whether her ideas held any relevance to the organisation where she worked because managerially it is in the stone age. Her preferred way of operating is not well supported at the top. It is very valuable to her and the people around her...I have watched her grow and grow in confidence and she has engaged through the ELP and it has given her a much stronger sense of what she is good at and she has been able to get feedback loops going for herself. She went through a dark time in receiving her 360 and she focused on the negatives rather than looking at the positives. I told her to look at balance. It is quite an emotional experience for her. She realised it was a lot more positive than first impressions and increased her confidence in the end. What she has gained is a huge amount of confidence and has had her instinctive beliefs about how to lead people and organisations confirmed because she has been with other people and thinkers who have confirmed her beliefs. I have tried hard to listen. I don't think anyone listens to her.

This is perhaps the most profound of stories of the research process and one told in incisive terms by a leader well respected in the sector. It is tinged with poignancy. The researcher could retell other stories about this case but doing so would be unethical as they might reveal the identity of the participant. More will be said on this at the end of the thesis, when some of the methodological implications of the research are considered. For now, the focus will be placed on the story recounted above.

The fact that 'A', someone who seemed outwardly confident, holding down a senior management post, felt the need to ask an intermediary to approach the chief for help is telling of a lack of confidence, created through a series of negative experiences at work, where her views and indeed she as a leader, had been sidelined. She had "fine instincts" but these were becoming lost as she sank deeper into disillusionment with her working

situation. This manifested itself when she received her 360 degree appraisal. Her first response was to concentrate on the 'negative' aspects, that she was "tough", bordering on the "brutal" on occasions. Later, as she went over the report with her mentor, she analyzed her "brutal" behaviour and questioned whether it was so unusual within her macho male working environment. Nevertheless, when she discussed the matter in more depth with her mentor, she realised she had become upset because she had read a portrait of a character that was not representative of her personality. This was caused, she realised, by a lack of confidence to build a learning environment within her department and to break away from "playing the male game" in her leadership. The mentor had helped her conclude that to get ahead she need not act at work and could seek senior employment in another organisation where her leadership, her "instinctive beliefs in how to lead people" would be valued. Just the act of someone listening to her, her mentor said, had resulted in a significant growth in her confidence.

The process of collective reflection did not merely have a positive effect on helping women make sense of their emotions, it should be noted. Male participants also benefited significantly, albeit the results were less dramatic.

Although experienced as "safe", coaching, mentoring and action learning sessions were not soft experiences. Far from it, they served to encourage participants when it was felt they were on the right track and to challenge their thinking when they began to derail. In this sense, experiential learning was seen as having strong links to the 'arena thesis' as set out by Burgoyne and Jackson (1997), where leadership development is characterised as a 'space' within which emotion, power differentials and identity issues are surfaced, challenged and resolved.

Challenge

Criticality:

As reflected in the literature review, an important element of the notion of 'challenge' within experiential learning was that of a critical focus brought to bear by participants and programme facilitators.

An early example of this element of challenge was offered by observing the aftermath of a coaching session in New Zealand. Participant 'AA', who had avoided confronting many issues with humour throughout the programme, emerged from his first session. He looked pale and shaken. The rest of the participants were sat down for dinner. He scanned the table and realised only two spaces remained. One was in a cluster of two seats next to his coach and the other was at the other end of the table next to the other coach. He explained in an embarrassed tone of voice that he would like to do "some male bonding" with the other coach. His coach said she understood and he walked to the other end of the table. By the time he reached his place, the other coach had risen from his seat and walked towards the other empty space. His coach signalled to him that he could join them at their end of the table. He stated that he was ok where he was and sat down with a sheepish expression on his face. The researcher asked the coach about the session and she stated that they had "addressed a few things, but it will be ok".

Similar tough experiences were reported by the remaining LiP participants, although such challenge was less common on the other programmes observed. One LiP participant described how his action learning set had brought him "back to focus" when he was pondering where to go next with his career. Another participant stated she had recognised a need to restructure her department prior to the programme, specifically to deal with a member of staff she felt was not fulfilling her obligations. Her coach had confronted her about this and had helped her develop the "bottle" to confront it. "If I had not gone on LiP I might still be pedalling," she said. In this sense, the feeling of unease felt by the participant had become related to a wider organisational issue, which required a restructuring of her

department to enable managers to become “more efficient”, to concentrate on leading rather than getting too involved in technical detail. She said this emphasis on appointing senior managers based on their strategic abilities rather than technical skills had begun to impact on the thinking of her chief executive, who had recently made two appointments based on this changed criteria.

Action learning as a reflection of real working tensions:

Another important sub-element of the theme of challenge was that effective action learning tackled real, live work issues and tensions (as required by Revans 1982 and 1998).

To return to the action learning element of the FRS, ‘A’ stated that she thought the group had learned much in her session about how learning is restricted in the workplace and that the session had led to her making a connection between her felt unhappiness at work and the wider need for a greater ethos of learning in her service. She said the group had reflected “the kind of range of characters and views you get at work”. She recalled the voting episode and said it reflected an instinct developed by fire officers to immediately start taking action when a command is given. But she added that the group had reflected on their behaviour and had learnt from it, and therefore it had been a valuable developmental experience. Another participant showed the presentation to his chief, who had “not got it at all”, but this had opened up a discussion between them about the ethos of the session and the contextuality of leadership.

Recap – This section on positive engagement with experiential learning has thus far addressed the potential of experiential learning to generate a safe environment. This was created through engagement in generative dialogue, support of peers and facilitators and the exposure of the fears of participants. These elements were seen to be particularly valuable for women participants.

Learning from and through others

'Learning from others' and 'learning through others' can be characterised as two distinctive modes of learning, both connected to a collective means of making sense of leadership learning. 'Learning from others' is the act of receiving direct advice or of copying the behaviour of others. 'Learning through others' can be described as learning through participation. In other words, the act of learning through indirect action, of seeing a situation through the eyes of others so that one's own leadership problems may be viewed in a different light. This has much in common with Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger's (1999) concept of the community of practice, whereby a learner is able to engage with a group involved in specific tasks without the burden of full responsibility of that group, referred to as 'legitimate peripheral participation'. In this sense the power dynamics of the group, specific and rooted to place as they are, become apparent, and the peripheral participator is able to experience an alternative view to seemingly familiar problems. It also holds resonance with Grint's (2007) description of phronesis as a mode of development, as the participant is able to connect theoretical perspectives gained during formal development with the practice of leadership.

Learning from others:

A surprising trend emerged from the fieldwork, which was that participants shared considerably more experiences of 'learning through others' than they did of 'learning from others'. This is curious because of the nature of the distinction between the two concepts, that 'learning from others' involves a simpler, more technical process, whereas 'learning through others' requires an additional leap of abstraction, connecting an unfamiliar situation to a familiar one. Some evidence of learning from others was observed, however.

Participant 'L', from LiP, recalled a particularly useful case of learning from others. 'L' described a difficulty she had with a regional office, which was due to be closed due to central government cutbacks. Her organisation had provided extensive skills training and advice to staff to help them find other jobs and had given them generous notice of the

decision. But she was frustrated because members of staff in the office were causing problems and the organisation was suffering as a result. During a conversation with her coach she had confessed that she was merely “riding it out”, waiting for the problem to pass. Her coach challenged her as to what she would have done in the past to resolve the issue. He suggested that she visit the office and talk to the staff in fairly harsh terms. She said: “It was tough on them because losing your job is unpleasant. But as an organisation we had done everything we could to help them. It got to a point where I went there and gave them a talk about their responsibilities to the organisation and to the public who relied on us. I told them exactly what I expected of them in those final few months.” The result of the ‘talk’ (lecture) had been significantly less trouble over the following weeks and months. She said her coach had been “quite prescriptive” but she was at a stage in her life where she needed reminding of how she should respond in situations where others were taking advantage of her fragility. In turn, the incident had given her more confidence that she could cope with the demands of leadership in the organisation.

We now move on to a presentation on how participants learnt through the acts of others.

Learning through others:

By learning through others, participants were able to gaze into the workings of alternative communities of practice and thus shine an alternative perspective on their own predicament. For example, a participant, ‘AA’ from LiP described how he had listened to the experiences of his peers with some horror. He had come to the public service from a strong private sector background and was unfamiliar with the centrality of office politics he now viewed within his new situation. He said it had “hit home to me”, that his action learning peers, despite holding fairly senior management positions were“still doffing their caps to their chief executives and line managers. They had come through the hierarchical system of their organisation and were still doing this. I realised how lucky I was in many ways.”

Viewing the predicament of others had made him reconsider his own position within his organisation. He had a reputation, amongst fellow directors of being overly confrontational,

which he viewed as “just holding them to account”. He believed it was a duty of staff at his level to provide robust challenge to the thinking of peers. But he had realised that his colleagues were not ready for such an approach. ‘AA’ did not like this but now operated more within the political system of his workplace, finding more comfortable arenas for these challenges, such as one-to-one conversations in the offices of his peers. He admitted to not liking it, because he felt it was a more “dishonest, manipulative” way of working, but conceded that his working relationships had improved as a result.

Recap – So far this section has discussed how positive experiential learning is generated when a safe space is created through the support of peers, facilitators and employing organisations and that this space is further strengthened when participants are challenged and expose their fears. It was found that such experiential learning was especially useful for women participants. The section explored in more detail the educational process experienced by participants – namely that they learned from and through others.

Through experiential learning, participants, in the context of the New Zealand cohort, stretched their understanding of the capacity of their personal vision, as initially developed in the authentic element of leadership development. In the context of the ELP, participants enriched their understanding of both personal and broader organisation leadership through experiential dialogue. In this sense, an overlap of theories, with each seen as leading to and strengthening the other, seems to exist. The more of the ‘successful’ theoretical models present, the more effective the programme, from the perspective of participants.

As touched on above, some, although significantly less, experiential learning took place outside LiP and the ELP. The next section draws on additional data to strengthen the case that experiential learning may enrich other elements of the process, namely engagement with theory and personal development. Only one case is offered, as a particularly powerful example, although others could have been included. The case is drawn from a participant of the DSLP, who, despite limited exposure to experiential learning on the programme, was able to contextualise his theoretical learning through a particularly salient learning experience at work.

Constructive dissent

A US Marine Corps Colonel, who participated in the DSLP, 'B', was versed in the culture of his organisation, which promoted vigorous feedback from lower ranks. Senior officers, he explained, were expected to 'serve' their charges and to engender a culture of constructive dissent (Grint 2005).

Dramatic evidence of the power of followership as a means of generating collective reflection in action was witnessed at the end of the researcher's time with the participant. The case involved a seemingly mundane matter that evolved into a more profound leadership issue. Early on in the episode, the colonel made a statement which reflected a personally held principle of leadership and noted his intention to act upon it. His followers were unhappy with this and proceeded, over the course of several hours, to gradually provide him with more information, so as to make further sense of the issue. The episode concerned a prank played by a group of students on a fellow captain at the school. Unknown perpetrators had sent a forged email to all students from the captain's account stating that she had copies of exam papers available and would gladly share information to help her peers pass. Notes from the episode are reproduced below and subsequent reflections have been added in brackets, denoting the relevant points at which a leadership intervention (and followership) intervention was made.

A female student, it appears, has had her email account hacked into and an email sent around to all students offering them help to cheat on the year's syllabus. The colonel tells his team he thinks this is a practical joke gone wrong. He says almost immediately that he wants an ultimatum set that if someone confesses by noon there will be no disciplinary action taken (statement of leadership intent). Two subordinates state that, at the beginning of the year his deputy addressed the students and told them of the importance of technological security. Another officer had just addressed the students and read the riot act. They both suggest, indirectly, that this might be enough. The deputy asks what would happen if no one came

forward (constructive dissent intervention, early testing of the colonel's leadership theory).

The colonel states that he appreciates the officer might have had the desired effect in his address to students but feels there is a leadership lesson present in the incident for the students (statement of leadership philosophy) and asks his subordinates for suggestions (testing his leadership position). The next speaker begins to consider an appropriate forum for such an ultimatum. This seems to galvanise the colonel, who now assumes he is receiving consent for his original view (destructive consent).

Later, the deputy stops his boss outside the lecture theatre and speaks to him in hushed tones. He tells him he feels the point on the email has already been made and fears the consequences for poisoning the atmosphere in the school for the year if no one confesses (constructive dissent intervention).

The colonel is firm, says he thinks it is a leadership lesson for the year about moral courage, which will provide something for them to talk about further down the line – to reflect on (statement of leadership philosophy and intent). The deputy says, “Ok sir” and that is that (destructive consent).

Later still, we are sitting in the lecture theatre when another subordinate and his unit heads pull the colonel out to have a private conversation. They are not giving up on this. We stand outside the fire escape on the steps. The subordinate tells the colonel he needs more information. Some of the faculty advisers have already spoken to their groups and told them the victim of the prank deserves an apology. An officer, in his speech to the class, also emphasised that she deserved an apology (constructive dissent intervention). The colonel says he wants to refine his decision in light of receiving new information. He wants some of the faculty advisers to tell the students that they are expected to either offer the girl an apology or to confess to the faculty adviser. He says the identity of the perpetrator does not even have to be revealed to him – rather, it is the act of moral courage which is important (alteration of leadership intent).

He says there is a lesson here for a leadership discussion later in the year, when he can either:

- a. applaud someone for learning from a mistake and displaying moral courage;
or
- b. adopt a critical stance on moral cowardice (further refinement of leadership intent)

The problem present here was originally constructed by the colonel as one of an immediate 'crisis'. He was concerned about potentially significant repercussions of trust for the remainder of the academic year and felt he needed to take a strong, "moral" command action to resolve this. His subordinates initially attempted to disagree, seeking to frame this as a more complicated problem but failed to do so as the colonel abided by his original decision. Later, it was revealed the subordinates had failed to share information with each other and realised that they would fail, in that case, to alter the view of the colonel. They thus regrouped, shared information and approached the colonel again, through the medium of the deputy. Again this failed, as the deputy apparently did not pass on all of the information in his possession. The subordinates of the deputy, in turn, held him to account and together they all approached the colonel directly, engaging him in the conversation on the steps. At this point the colonel himself started to construct the issue as a 'wicked' one and began to experiment with a clumsy solution in the presence of his subordinates. The situation was later resolved as planned.

This is a textbook example of collective reflection in action, as the passionately held personal leadership philosophy of a senior officer, rooted in a belief in moral courage, is used as a starting point for in-action-reflection. A 'clumsy' solution (Grint 2005b and 2009) was reached whereby the colonel's 'moral' point was still made, but within a less confrontational framework that would result in less damaging repercussions for the students as the academic year progressed. The final point to make about this episode of leadership is that it occurred within the framework of the strong history of the marine corps of constructive dissent and powerful exercise of followership. Clearly not all organisations exercise this level of sophistication in their leadership systems. This points to a weakness in organisations relying on purely experiential, ad hoc learning, as referred to in the literature review, namely the absence of innovative perspectives from outside a community of

practice. This also points to a powerful role for organised, formal development, in sharing the practical utility of such moments.

Although this participant had not engaged in experiential learning as part of his formal development programme, he regularly engaged in such practices at work, due to his belief in the power of learning from colleagues and the values of his organisation, which emphasised a culture of constructive dissent. This case serves as a representative example of a minority of instances where such practices were observed or recalled, despite a lack of engagement, in a formal way, with experiential learning during the formal programme. It illustrates the potential of experiential leadership development to contextualise and enrich the process as a whole.

Recap – this section has explored successful instances of experiential leadership development. Specifically, it has cited the causes for success, as observed in the context of the research settings. These were the generation of a safe ‘space’; support and exposure generating an increase in confidence; critical challenge, and; learning through, as well as from, others. It was found that experiential learning was especially valuable in boosting the confidence of women participants.

In general it was found that experiential learning could be viewed alongside, as complementary to, other models of leadership development explored and seemed especially useful as it enriched other elements of a development process. This suggests that the models offered in the literature may be best viewed as more than the sum of their parts. It suggests the possibility of a more holistic model of leadership development.

The findings on experiential leadership development can be captured in the following table:

Table 9: Summary of experiential leadership development results

Delivery method observed	School of leadership development	(According to the theory) success depends upon...	Programmes where methods observed	Improved leadership, from the perspective of the participants?
Executive coaching; mentoring; action learning	Experiential	Learning based on real work problems; reflection on work problems	LiP and ELP	Yes, in the vast majority of cases

This section now turns to consider how we can learn from instances of failure within experiential learning.

The loneliness of leaders

This section will explore instances of failure within experiential learning. These failures will be attributed to a ‘curse’ of abstracted discussion and the impact of the ‘outside’ leadership coalition on the work of the leadership development alliance. The section concludes by stating that in the absence of formalised experiential leadership development, it was observed that participants defaulted to forums in which they felt comfortable, i.e. their previously constructed leadership ‘prototypes’.

The curse of abstraction

At the heart of the discussion in the literature review on non-classroom, experiential learning (Grint 2007; Revans 1998; Raelin 2000) is a rather simple principle. That for experiential learning to be effective it must be connected to lived experience. This plain assertion seems obvious. After all, without action, leadership is merely an abstract concept. It would be foolish to assert that participants within programmes which provided limited forums for making sense of learning did not engage in leadership. However, what can be shown below is the limited learning apparent when leadership development fails to engage in the detail of leadership as experienced by participants. An example is provided below.

Encounters:

The DSLP includes an interesting activity in its week-long programme. A selection of managers from an outside organisation is invited into the training centre for something called an 'encounter' day. The hope is that participants will gain fresh perspective on their own leadership issues through sharing insights with leaders from quite different organisations and disciplinary backgrounds. Through such a process, leaders may experience what it is like to consider a problem from an alternative stance, using 'fresh eyes', thus potentially reshaping the meaning of the issue. When the DSLP started its life, participants were invited to present real-life problems they were facing at work and this would act as the basis for discussions. However, the emphasis has since changed.

A speaker from each organisation addresses a plenary, describing how a particular major issue of leadership was addressed. Participants form into smaller syndicate groups. They are given pre-prepared, abstract, academically-focused questions on leadership to discuss. They are not required to select a question from the list but always did in the presence of the researcher. Furthermore, the effect of supplying these questions seemed to be to

encourage participants into an emphasis on abstract, academic concerns, rather than on lived experience.

Following this, they present findings to the larger plenary group. Participants are free to set these questions aside and focus on a lived leadership issue, but, as witnessed, this did not occur. The researcher witnessed two such 'encounters', one of which was with a group from a major oil company.

Before a representative of the oil company spoke, the session began with a presentation from a senior army general on an operation in Afghanistan. It was delivered to a script and accompanying electronic slide format. As an observer the researcher found himself becoming absorbed in the content. The military participants also seemed outwardly engaged, asking questions and appearing alert. After the event, however, in aside conversations with the researcher, they expressed disappointment at the 'shallowness' of the presentation, that it had been 'traditional' and 'typical army', lacking in any depth of discussion. They were frustrated with the linear nature of the communication. Some noted embarrassment, for example, when, during the presentation, the mobile phone of one of the guest organisation's managers started to ring and the manager concerned received a row from the presenter. This, participants said, demonstrated that the presenter expected participants to listen in silence, rather than contribute to and co-construct the session. The participants did not feel able to express these feelings openly in plenary and reserved their expression for private, confidential conversations after the event.

The presenter from the oil company set out the leadership 'values' of his company before presenting a case study of a serious environmental incident at one of the company's refineries. It was described as an "industrial accident of seismic proportions". He explored ways in which the ethos of leadership in the company had not extended to the minutiae of day-to-day safety management, citing the history of the firm under a previous chief executive and describing changes in the prioritisation of safety since the event. Again, there was little discussion, with some short remarks made from the audience on promotion systems and public relations. At this stage, participants had received two briefings. One of

them related to a scenario none of them had been directly involved in. The other was not discussed in any depth at the time.

Following the presentations, the group divided into smaller syndicate groups for more detailed discussion. Rather than concentrate on 'real' work issues, the first group observed discussed "the importance of charisma" to leadership. The discussion continued in a general fashion, with guest participants describing their "rigorous", technically-focused performance system and defence participants describing different leadership "styles" required for theatre and non-operational situations.

The other groups reported similar experiences. When they reported back to plenary, they stated, for example, that they had discussed 'the leadership role in driving technological change' and whether 'mission command [was] more rhetoric than reality in the battle and business spaces'. No 'live', 'specific' experiential situation was explored in any depth. This violates the golden rule of action learning (Revans 1998 and 1982) and other theories of experiential learning, that learning will be absent in the absence of experience. This was confirmed in discussions and interviews with participants after the session. Some months later, for example, one described it as "interesting" but could not specify any definite learning. This was representative of the feelings of other participants.

It is now time to turn our attention to consider the impact of the 'outside' leadership coalition on the experiential learning activities of participants.

Paying heed to the network within experiential learning

During the process of leadership development observed by the researcher, the coalition required for its delivery was ever present. If not explicitly stated, it constantly played in the background, both as a metaphorical soundtrack to the process and as an active shaper of the experiences of participants.

The spectre of 'command' within FRS experiential learning:

Many FRS participants feared that colleagues at the office would behave cynically towards changes in leadership following the programme. Participants were concerned that their superordinates regarded the programme as a "box ticking exercise", a formality to be completed in order that officers could be considered for future promotion. In this sense, they frequently compared the programme to the old brigade command course, which was structured around theories of behavioural leadership (Adair 2005 and 2006) which participants felt added little value to their organisations. They feared they would be expected to 'box-off' their experiences on the programme and to continue as normal. Of course this was not always the case and many participants, as stated in the previous section, experienced significant work transformations as a result of the programme. Yet this fear of ridicule had a debilitating effect on the operation of experiential aspects of the programme. This was witnessed in participant behaviours during action learning exercises and the formal mentoring aspects of the ELP. ELP participants found the 'return' to working life particularly harsh, due largely to deep uncertainty as to whether ideas developed on the programme would be accepted. The point will be illustrated with some more detailed cases below.

Failure in facilitated action learning:

As stated in the first section of this chapter, the final block of the ELP was dedicated to less structured action learning. Participants were split into three smaller groups, provided with academic articles on leadership and asked to reflect on their learning throughout the programme. They were expected to present their findings to a plenary session at the end of the week. One group found this challenging. The researcher observed the sessions and a description of what occurred will now be presented.

From the outset the group was split between participants who wanted to share workplace experiences of leadership dilemmas, people who wanted to engage constructively with the ethos of the sessions and others who responded cynically to the material and refused to offer lived experiences. The former participants experienced a constant struggle to move

the sessions from the often banal abstract to the particular, while the latter group experienced a constant struggle to maintain any form of commitment to the programme as a whole. Indeed, several of the latter participants were heard remarking on their desire to leave and poor weather over previous days was cited as a reason for this. Participants later admitted in interviews with the researcher that at this stage of the programme they had “had enough” and wanted to go home.

The action learning set began with the following statement from one of the cynics: “Does someone want to explain this post-structuralist feminist bollocks?” The tone had been set. Another participant explained the material in terms of behavioural theories of leadership and the need to display ‘hard’ male skills and ‘soft’ female skills at ‘appropriate’ times. The discussion moved on without any reference to lived experience. During the next discussion on ‘mindful leadership’, essentially reflection in action, a cynic remarked that he would “fall asleep” if asked to “meditate for 20 minutes”. Another participant asked whether the FRS was ready for such practices. This was not addressed by colleagues and the conversation moved on. Two of the participants stated that they had shared all their learning from the programme with colleagues. The others dismissed this as a “regional thing” and said that they had all felt the need to “keep it to ourselves” for fear of damaging their careers. Later, when the programme facilitator entered the discussion, a participant remarked that he was “too old in the tooth” to fundamentally change his leadership at this stage in his career (two years away from retirement). He continued to say that he viewed the programme as a means of “tinkering around the edges”. Another participant challenged this statement and asked if he was serious. He retorted that he was and that is what it meant to develop self awareness. At this stage another participant entered the conversation and told the group it was too comfortable and should explore real, lived leadership experiences. This was countered by another ‘cynic’ who stated that there was no point because if he took any learning gleaned from the programme back to his organisation, his colleagues would not know what he was talking about. Later in the discussions, one of the ‘cynics’ started to use his mobile phone and withdrew from participation. Other member of the group noticed and attempted to intervene:

Participant 1 (P1): What's going on? You were full of it earlier.

Participant 2 (P2): Yeah mate, what's happening?

'Cynic' (C): No, I'm ok, just some work stuff going on (he looks down at his mobile phone, avoiding eye contact)

P2: Would it help if you shared it?

C: No it's ok.

P2: We might be able to help out, you know.

C: (in a firmer tone of voice): No, it's ok, it'll be fine.

P2: Ok mate, just asking.

[silence for a few seconds]

Participant 3 (P3): Ok, well that's it then I suppose...[further silence for a few seconds]...Shall we watch the rest of the DVD?

P1: May as well.

P3: Ok then, roll VT.

They sit there in silence watching the DVD for 20 minutes as 'C' continues to draft an email on his mobile phone. After 20 minutes one participant wanders out of the room and does not return for 15 minutes. One participant constantly rummages in her bag. 'C' watches the film but then starts to use his mobile phone again. Another participant walks out of the room. Two are left watching the film.

When the researcher returned to the group the following day, they had moved on to drafting their final presentation. This proved another area for disagreement. The group had placed one of the 'cynics' in charge of delivering the presentation. This was later explained as a strategy to try to engage this individual in the process. He presented his plan to the group, a technical series of lists, entirely abstract and unrelated to any discussion of experience. "Bosh, there you go," he said, definitively. Silence followed for several seconds. The most experienced fire officer in the room, one of the engaged participants, asked another engaged member of the group how she felt about it. She said that she thought they

should describe the process they had been through in reaching these conclusions, their learning journey, to present a reflection on their experiences.

The cynic in charge of drafting the presentation suggested dedicating a “couple of minutes” to the “journey” and appointed the engaged participant as their “leader” who would do this, abdicating any involvement in this task. This was rejected by the engaged participant, who continued by stating that she would help the presenter practice if he felt nervous about it. He replied that it would not be necessary. There then followed silence. Another participant asked how the engaged participant felt about this outcome. She replied that she was “fine”. He disagreed, stating that she was upset. “You’re not fine, look, your hands are clenched, you’re tense.” More silence followed and the group moved on to discuss technical details of the presentation. As the time came to present these ‘findings’ the speaker stated, “we have five minutes to make a presentation, so I will take five minutes only” and proceeded to state that the group had found it difficult to engage with the process at the outset but that they had done so eventually and had gained significant learning.

In later interviews with participants, one of the ‘cynics’ told the researcher that he had been a reluctant participant in the programme, that he had attended because it was a requirement in his service for people at his rank. He was close to retirement, had gleaned some learning from the programme but felt it was futile on his part to expend significant energy on transforming his leadership so close to retirement. Another participant expressed disillusionment with his chief fire officer and said that he would be unable to enact these processes of collective reflection at work and therefore found the exercise meaningless. Yet another participant thought it was “inappropriate” to discuss “sensitive” work matters in such forums, that he felt able to do so with colleagues and therefore such an exercise within a formal leadership development programme was unnecessary. He interpreted engagement with the exercise as a breach of the trust of his colleagues at work. This statement betrayed a fragile sense of trust felt by some participants with the programme as a whole.

Failure in non facilitated action learning groups:

As further proof of the felt effect of the leadership network within the ELP, participants also expressed disappointment that the non facilitated action learning groups, which were supposed to meet between blocks, had not functioned properly. Again, significant responsibility for this was placed at the feet of the employing organisation actor. Many participants complained they were not given the time to attend the sessions, that they were expected to pay for the expenses themselves and in reality the sessions became study exercises where participants would assist each other in the completion of programme assignments. When they did occur, therefore, they were task-focused and avoided experiential dialogue.

Equally, one could state that responsibility for failure rests with the employing organisations, which were reluctant to allow their employees the space and time to fully commit to the programme. Finally, one could allocate responsibility to the non-human 'cash actor', since its absence damaged the effective working of the action learning process. The 'reality' of the situation is that the non-working of the action learning process within the ELP was due to a lack of shared meaning amongst actors, one which ultimately did not regard shared, experiential learning as important. Whilst some participants regarded it as important, others regarded the process as a "box ticking exercise" or a means of making their assignments easier. The facilitators regarded the sessions as important but cited lack of financial resources and lack of leadership from participants as reasons for failure. Many employing organisations clearly did not view the programme as a valuable means of developing leadership and interpreted it through the lens of the old brigade command course, which valued transmission and behavioural competency learning. The cash, metaphorically, simply bemoaned its lack of clout and shrugged its shoulders.

Recap - Thus far in this section, we have explored the blight of the 'curse of abstraction' on experiential learning efforts and considered the impact of a lack of support and trust within a broader leadership network on efforts to learn experientially.

It was also the case, in the programmes observed, that a lack of experiential learning within the formal development process, was substituted by leaders in the form of ad hoc sensemaking with colleagues at work. In these cases, leaders were observed reverting to their leadership 'prototypes'. This offers further support for experiential methods of leadership development to be offered as part of a process, strengthening and assisting with the challenges of implementing theory and personal vision, coming to terms with the compromise and power games inherent within this process.

The absence of experiential learning

Absence of organised, structured personal and collective reflection through formal development meant that participants tested their own leadership visions and the broader leadership of their organisations through pre-existing, individually crafted 'prototypes'. Although several other examples could have been offered, below, the case of 'DC' is described, demonstrating how his experiential sensemaking involved falling back on a previously constructed 'prototypical' (Hogg 2001; Hogg and Terry 2000) view of leadership.

Learning from emotions:

Earlier, a story from 'DC', about how he had been told early in his career not to worry about stretching himself intellectually, was recounted. It was stated that he had, since that time, become frustrated with what he viewed as impersonal pettiness within his sector. As a result of this experience he had constructed a form of leadership based around the analysis and sharing of emotions. He practiced collective reflection in the same manner.

To illustrate the point we will examine a session during LC facilitated by a systems theorist who irritated participants with his thoughts on Jungian projection. During his session, the presenter asked participants to draw a series of pictures, representing their view of leadership in their home organisations and of their feelings about their home and work

lives. The chief executives enthusiastically participated. The political leaders, however, literally, crossed their arms and protested. One stated that if he brought such a technique of reflection to his cabinet or group he would be “laughed at” and that it would undermine his position. Another leader stated that he did not see how this was applicable to political leadership. ‘DC’, however, was an enthusiast, elaborating in some detail through his drawing on how he does not differentiate between his family and working lives, embracing the same philosophy of shared, emotion-driven leadership in both spheres.

During the period of observation, he gathered his management team in a nearby conference centre for a collective sensemaking exercise. ‘DC’ came to the event in baggy jeans and a sweatshirt and the rest of the staff were also informally dressed. To further add to the informal atmosphere of the event, they sat in a horseshoe pattern of tables, with a whiteboard situated in the gap. He asked the staff to draw a picture expressing how they felt about their place in the organisation. One manager stated that they had spoken before the event and decided they would draw a collective picture, rather than individual ones. They all felt “the same” and wanted to convey this to ‘DC’. ‘DC’ initially protested, citing a danger of “groupthink” hindering the process, but relented after the other managers agreed. When the group dispersed to begin their drawings, ‘DC’ engaged in a heated conversation with his leader on the phone. He began to draw a picture, depicting a man being pulled in four different directions (meant to be him) and another man in the background with a part of his anatomy on fire. “Hey, how do I draw a man with his arse on fire?” asked ‘DC’. The man in question was meant to represent the leader of the neighbouring council, who the chief executive felt had become over-excited with the possibility of merger. “Someone put ecstasy in his sandwiches. I’ve never seen a love-in like this in my 30 years in local government,” he said. When the pictures were presented to the larger group, ‘DC’ spoke first, stating he was being pulled into a discussion on the merger issue which was distracting him from his other ‘directions’, caring for his staff and other policy issues. This came as a shock to the managers because until this time they had only heard rumours about the merger proposals. Later, the researcher asked ‘DC’ if he had intended to casually introduce such a profound issue. He said he had. He then produced another picture, which was penned in the style of a faint outline, depicting ‘DC’ with his family. This represented, he said, his feeling that he was losing touch with what was

important to him because of the merger issue. Later, 'DC' told the researcher that he wanted his management team to better understand his emotional state of mind so that they could work together from a basis of renewed respect.

The heads of service presented their drawing next. It featured a selection of people aboard a fairground ride, engaged in laughter. They felt they were aboard a rollercoaster, with more 'downs' than 'ups'. They still laughed together but they felt it was "hysterical laughter", that the "good times" were receding and they feared "dark times" ahead. They described a felt distance between them and the senior management team, a distance they remarked they had not felt in the past. They wanted to be a part of the strategic direction of the council. A series of similar analogies were drawn, each conveying a sense of frustration with their working lives. 'DC' asked them to draw out some common themes. These were presented as "uncertainty", "lack of control", "lack of support" and a "retreating into silos, which is the antithesis of this organisation". 'DC's response was to draw some collective lessons from this. He stated they were all under pressure and asked them to empathise with the position of the leader, who he believed was under pressure from the right wing within his group.

One of his deputy chief executives said that they were spending too much time "worrying" about meta issues and not enough time on maintenance of relationships and the process of leadership. 'DC' agreed and this received further supportive comments from the managers. "So there is an issue here about cutting each other some slack," said 'DC'. A manager followed this by stating that they felt irritated by not being told about the potential merger issues earlier. 'DC' admitted he had got it wrong and said he wanted to talk about it openly for the remainder of the session. They did so, largely listening to 'DC's account of the situation. This developed into a broader dialogue about how they were perceived as professionals by local politicians. One said they were seen as "shovel leaners", as "waste" to be disposed of. This introduced a dialogue about how they could protect the professional services of the council, through forthcoming appointments and demonstrating that they were serious about achieving more efficiency in their operations. Through opening proceedings with a collective sharing of emotion, which manifested as constructive dissent

(Grint 2005) therefore, a broader discussion was opened, addressing the adaptive challenges of managers within the council (Heifetz 1994).

'DC''s preoccupation with the emotional aspect of leadership, learned through personal traumatic experiences, informed the way in which he approached personal reflection, leadership theory and collective reflection. This was seen to have positive consequences, enabling constructive dissent and the sharing of emotions as a means of generating more adaptive leadership. It also had a flip-side, namely, that 'DC' in his reflections with others, was quick to assume an emotional basis for leadership problems and was reluctant to adopt alternative lenses of interpretation, which was compounded by his senior management team, who had also become socialised in 'DC''s philosophy of leadership.

It is valid to question whether a formalised aspect of experiential leadership development would have helped 'DC', and others, contextualise their personal values and experiences of engaging with theory. Indeed, we may learn much from the failure in experiential learning experienced by some participants. A successful experiential focus might have helped 'DC' recognise a political element, and the power at play, within his organisation, and the need for him to reflect on his chosen frame of reference, his leadership 'prototype'. Such a finding is backed by experiences of other participants on LC and other programmes, whose reflections on theory and personal values were not sufficiently stretched through a robust emphasis on experiential learning. Failures in the area of experiential learning were due to either an absence of this form of development, or, a failure in other areas of the process. This offers further support, in the context of this research, for the value of exploring further the role of experiential learning within a more holistic model, where different schools of leadership development may complement each other and add value to the strengths of each.

Recap – This section began by considering successful examples of experiential leadership development. It stated that such successes were caused through the generation of trust and a safe 'space' for dialogue; addressing real work problems; support and critical challenge for participants, from peers and programme organisers; a willingness on the part of participants

to 'expose' their fears and weaknesses, and; a premium placed on learning through, as well as from, others. Women were found to gain particular value from experiential learning, as it seemed to address issues of confidence and the 'double bind' experienced by women leaders at work.

Experiential learning was seen to fail when it avoided the discussion of real work issues; when actors within the leadership coalition of participants failed to engage in the process of experiential leadership development.

Overall, it was stated that it is perhaps unwise to view experiential learning in isolation, as other aspects of leadership development impact and build upon its success. In particular, experiential forms of leadership development helped participants contextualise personal and theoretical insights gained during authentic and coalition elements. In turn, these elements enriched the experiential learning of participants, by offering a source of inspiration and ideas.

Chapter summary

This chapter has offered support for three of the four models of leadership development set out in the literature review.

This can now be presented in a more complete table:

Table 10: Summary of results

Delivery method observed	School of leadership development	(According to the theory) success depends upon...	Programmes where methods observed	Improvement in leadership, from the perspective of the participants?
Psychometric testing	Behavioural	Accurate definition of leadership problems and 'appropriate' behaviours to solve these	DSLIP and LiP	No
Classroom-based, structured, deep, personal reflection	Authentic	Participants better understanding their unconscious values	LiP and ELP	Yes, in the vast majority of cases
Critically-focused theory engagement	Coalition	Engaging a broader coalition of leadership development and leadership	ELP and LC	Yes, in the vast majority of cases
Executive coaching; mentoring; action learning	Experiential	Learning based on real work problems; reflection on work problems	LiP and ELP	Yes, in the vast majority of cases

Behavioural leadership development, in the context of this study, was found to be ineffective from the perspective of participants. Unlike the criticisms levelled at the school from the literature, however, this did not seem to be because participants felt this form of leadership development was intrusive, or controlling. Rather, it was regarded as somewhat irrelevant to the process of developing leadership.

The authentic leadership development model enjoyed considerable support within the context of the data, with participants feeling that such activity led to an improvement in their leadership practice. This was witnessed with participants stating that they could bring more of their unique personalities and values to bear on their everyday leadership activities.

The coalition model of leadership development found support in the data. Participants stated that they gained from engaging with theories which highlighted the complexities and power involved with leadership, pointing at several solid examples of where such theories had helped them approach leadership problems in a different way. In all of these cases, the individuals concerned had paid heed to a broader coalition of leadership and had been able to conduct the work of influencing the meaning making processes of this network. In this sense, leadership development was found to be highly political. Failures within this school could be attributed to a betrayal somewhere in the leadership development coalition – an unwillingness to adapt to a change in the predominant construction of leadership in practice.

The experiential learning model was also supported by the data. Experiential learning was found to be particularly successful when: trust and a safe 'space' for dialogue was generated; real work problems were addressed; a combination of support and critical challenge was provided by participants, peers and programme organisers; participants were prepared to 'expose' their fears and weaknesses, and; participants practiced the art of learning through others, as well as from others. Failures within experiential leadership development could be attributed to failure within other elements of the process of leadership development.

Finally, it was stated that although it was possible to test each of these theories in relative isolation, it was clear that, from the perspective of participants, they regarded successful encounters with leadership development as interdependent. Authentic leadership development was felt to influence an engagement with theory, and both influenced how participants learnt through the experience of leading. In turn, experience influenced how participants engaged with theory and how they conceptualised their personal values.

It was not possible to test each of the four models of leadership development within each of the programme settings. However, it was observed that the more 'successful' modes of leadership development present in one programme, the more successful the process was regarded by participants. This finding opens the possibility of further research into a more holistic theory of a process of leadership development, and suggests that leadership development may be more about plotting a sensemaking process of development than about individual, isolated encounters with a particular school.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter will:

- explore the methodological implications of the study, offering a perspective on the strengths of the research strategy adopted, as well as its shortcomings in practice;
- reflect on the ethical challenges presented by the research;
- explore the results in terms of the research question set out in the introduction and the theoretical models described in the literature review;
- suggest possibilities for further research as a result of the study.

Research design and methodological reflections

This section revisits the methodological discussion of the third chapter in light of the experiences of the researcher in the field. It will firstly discuss how engagement with participants caused the researcher to reflect on his theoretical framework and ultimately change it, thus adopting a more inductive research strategy. Secondly, it will address some of the 'hygiene' factors of ethnography and how these can impact upon effective data gathering. Thirdly, it addresses some dangers encountered when adopting a predominantly observational research role – specifically those of distraction, inclusion, sabotage and non-eventful activity. Fourth, it will discuss the danger of respondent bias in light of a research strategy that privileges the voices of participants. Fifth, it discusses the strategy of triangulation employed. Finally, it addresses some of the perceived shortcomings of the model employed. Specifically, it will address issues of contextuality and longevity of research.

Reflective practice

The importance of reflective practice in the research process was brought home powerfully during the fieldwork and literature review stages. At the commencement of the research, the researcher had no particular fixed epistemological or ontological views on the operation of leadership or leadership development. They were phenomena that fascinated, largely due to an engagement with them as a practitioner in the spheres of journalism and politics. The literature review was conducted in this spirit, with equal weight given in the early stages to research in the more individualistic and socially constructed fields of leadership theory. Indeed, the researcher had a felt sense that there was much in the concept of individual charisma that could explain why people followed certain individuals and was interested in how this might translate into the sphere of development. As the literature review progressed, however, and as the researcher began to engage with practicing leaders in the field, a different picture emerged. It was one rooted in the operation of power in the lives of leaders. They were also grappling with complex systems on a daily basis and seemed to yearn for means to better conceptualise their actions in this context. Whilst the researcher maintained a belief that there was an in-betweenness, a 'flesh' (Ladkin 2010) to leadership development that resulted in a sometimes extraordinary phenomenon of 'leadership', the researcher came to view this phenomenon as existing within a socially constructed sphere, where issues of power dominated and restricted leadership development, especially as it sought to translate itself from formal programmes to practice. This was an issue of constant reflection.

The LiP programme in New Zealand was observed relatively late in the research process, with a week spent investigating its genesis, speaking to the 'backstage' actors, the facilitators and organisers, academics and past participants, all of whom held views about its history and, a second week observing a particular cohort as it engaged in a formal week of development, referred to in some depth in earlier chapters. This programme was quite unlike the others observed. It unapologetically placed individualism at its heart. The theory was that at a middle stage of their careers, these leaders valued the opportunity to 'indulge' in personal meaning-making activity and to develop a strategy for becoming more resilient

in their day jobs. As with the rest of the fieldwork activity, the researcher played close attention to his own reactions as he observed these sessions unfold. His initial reaction was a feeling of rebellious scepticism. "Haven't they read Foucault?" the researcher thought. This feeling was kept under control and instead proceedings were noted non-judgmentally (possessing advanced shorthand skills was undoubtedly a blessing within an ethnographic framework), and sensemaking and academically-oriented conversations engaged in with the academic mentioned in the results section.

As the week progressed and the researcher spoke to more participants, it became apparent that this pedagogical and theoretical strategy was producing results and responses from participants more dramatic than witnessed elsewhere. This engagement with a new theoretical perspective necessitated a return to the literature review and therefore a more inductive strategy. As the researcher engaged in research in the fields of Jungian theory and authentic leadership, it became apparent that such perspectives were not particularly contradictory to the more socially-constructed and experiential views on leadership development. It was felt that leadership development may offer an emancipatory alternative to behavioural leadership development practices. Through reflecting on this issue the researcher realised that his own perspective on any theory involving individualism had been influenced by a growing awareness of the ineffectiveness of behavioural methods in developing leadership. It was a powerful lesson in the need for ethnographers to keep an open mind and recognise their own subjective biases.

Yet such considerations were tempered by more straightforward ones. It is these 'hygiene' factors which are addressed next.

Hygiene factors in the research process

Some issues might seem rather flippant for what is intended as a serious investigation into the operation of leadership development. Yet it is notable that relatively small factors in the field can have disproportionately large consequences in the quality of the data gathered.

Ethnography is a research method that requires long periods spent away from home and the office. It can be a lonely and tiring pursuit, and indeed ought to be if it is to be effective. Early in the research process the researcher learnt the importance of a good night's sleep to the collection of reliable data. The period of observation with the council chief executive described earlier, necessitated a long car journey from home to the office – of several hours. In the first week of shadowing, a meeting was called for 8am on Monday morning. The researcher left his house before 5am to make it on time. When he arrived, after little sleep the previous night, the meeting had started some minutes early and he was ushered to a comfortable leather chair in the corner, next to a hot radiator.

From then on he adapted to the patterns of those he observed, staying in the location of the observation the previous night to ensure a fresh mind in the morning. Other survival strategies were adopted, such as the practice of a balanced diet while away from home for extended periods of time, learning how to take exercise in unfamiliar areas and the practice of catching trains where possible to allow for extra work and reflection time. Such concerns may seem relatively trivial. Yet it is worth noting that if the researcher is not in the correct frame of mind, is not entirely 'present' during leadership interactions, and is unable to note action as faithfully and in as detailed a manner as possible, then the final work produced will suffer.

While feeling tired during a leadership encounter could be regarded as distracting from the goal of observing leadership development, more explicit operations of distraction techniques on the part of those observed were witnessed and noted as valuable learning opportunities.

Distraction techniques

As part of the process of considering an appropriate research method, the researcher engaged in some pilot testing of observation research. The opportunity presented itself in

the form of some evaluation work for the Leadership Centre for Local Government, which also wanted to experiment with new ways of gleaning information from past participants, as it had previously employed a simple questionnaire format, with some follow-up interviews conducted. In the researcher's evaluation work with two previous cohorts he arranged to shadow a selection of leaders in the workplace. This provided powerful insights into the challenges of ethnography and the discipline required when engaging in research observation over months, rather than days.

These observations took place over a single, and occasionally, two, days. The first phenomenon to note is that such a period was clearly insufficient to gain any depth of perspective on the leadership activities of participants. A degree of socialisation is required, for an ethnographer to blend in with the environment, so as to minimise the impact he/she will have on the events observed. The second and more powerful insight was to note discomfort on the part of leaders and to observe techniques of distraction employed to divert the attention of the researcher. The researcher reflected that this is a natural reaction on the part of intelligent people to the sudden emergence of a near stranger to the private sanctum of their work spaces, where this stranger is privy to information and conversations other staff, even senior managers, will not be able to access.

One telling example of this arose when a particular chief executive, on hearing of the researcher's past in a senior communications position within the political sector, asked him to proof read and make alterations to a policy document she was working on and, in addition, to help her construct a speech. This was immediately recognised as a distraction technique and the inappropriateness of engaging in such activity during the fieldwork proper was noted. Such an engagement early in the process could set a dangerous precedent for the remainder of the observation. Yet as this was a pilot study the researcher determined to agree to the conditions of the chief executive as a point of learning. The participant visibly relaxed for the remainder of the day. Yet the relationship had changed, as, no doubt, was the intention, from one of 'observer' and 'observed' to a 'casual advisor' and 'chief executive' relationship.

Another example worth noting held an equally powerful lesson for an ethnographer learning his trade. The episode involved the interaction between the researcher and a particular academic presenter. As the presenter began his session, he urged the researcher to take part in the exercises which comprised the majority of the time. The invitation was framed in caring terms, suggesting that the researcher would gain more from the experience by playing an active role. The researcher explained that as he was not a participant, his participation would be futile and counterproductive. The framing of the invitation subsequently evolved into an appeal for the researcher not to be a poor sport. Later, over lunch the academic engaged him in a conversation about the research. It soon changed from a dialogue about leadership development into a questioning of the researcher's ethicality and what felt (from a subjective, emotional perspective) as an interrogation about bureaucratic responsibilities. It was explained that this process was non-evaluative and concerned the learning processes of participants over time, not the particular skills of presenters. The researcher reflected that such a reaction might have concealed a deeper felt performance anxiety on the part of the academic (an unfounded one). The researcher learnt, as a consequence of this encounter, to be more alert to such signals from presenters and to proactively explain the research methodology as a means of defusing any tension. In such a way he hoped to minimise his effect on the environment observed.

As the fieldwork progressed, the researcher was thankful for such early experiences as they allowed him to practice explanations that would avoid such situations from becoming embedded. Another variation on the same theme was a tendency amongst most of the observed participants to explain the detail of their work to the researcher. Such activity can be viewed as a positive aspect of ordinary human behaviour, overcoming a feeling of guilt that someone present in the room may feel excluded, confused or exasperated by a stream of acronyms or other technical language. The strategy adopted therefore was to state at the beginning of a period of observation that it was the duty of a researcher to ask for technical explanations but that this researcher would postpone such questions for a time when there was a 'lull' in activity. If this phenomenon emerged despite this, then the strategy was to repeat the policy. On each occasion this was effective. Another strategy employed, when participants asked for advice, was to state that the researcher would be happy to provide

feedback to help improve their leadership but that this would be best provided after completion of fieldwork. This hints at an ethical dimension to the research and it is this issue that the discussion now addresses.

Ethical questions

Although the guidelines as stated by the ESRC, and referred to in the methodology chapter, were adhered to, it was the researcher's experience that the majority of ethical dilemmas faced during the research were dealt with using a form of reflection in practice not unlike the process described by Grint (2007) and Ladkin(2010).

Of all aspects of the research process, it is the ethical questions that caused the researcher the most anxiety. The position of the ethnographer is a privileged one, as she/he gains access and bears witness to events and emotions unseen even by relatively senior colleagues of participants. The relationship between observer and observed is necessarily one, therefore, which is premised on trust.

In the case of the participants observed, the fieldwork frequently took unexpected turns and it is undoubtedly the case that the leaders who participated in this study would not have chosen in advance for some of these incidents to have been observed by a third party, let alone written about in depth. Yet it is to their credit that they chose to view such experiences as learning opportunities. Some of these 'uncomfortable' situations did, however, cause careful reflection on whether to include them in the final draft, and, in addition, to what extent the masking of the identity of these leaders would offer them sufficient protection from vicarious readers, while maintaining sufficient contextual power. Hence, the acronyms adopted for each participant hold no further significance other than personal codes adopted by the researcher. The dilemma of inclusion was particularly stark in the case of one participant, who was involved in a serious industrial dispute with his/her employer at the time of the observation. This manifested to such an extent that a senior colleague of this leader actively ignored the researcher throughout his time in the

organisation. It was uncomfortable but the data produced was valuable. The decision was made, however, despite being privy to such conversations, not to reproduce discussions or incidents directly relating to the industrial dispute. These were of a largely personal nature and their inclusion risked causing undue distress to the participant and, anyway, in the view of the researcher, added little to the value of a study of leadership development.

Ethical concerns were particularly pronounced when dealing with the LiP participants. Personal exposure and revelation was designed into the programme and it would have been difficult and detrimental to the research not to explore personal issues with participants. On three occasions during subsequent interviews, however, such questioning resulted in participants crying during their conversations with the researcher. On one occasion, related to the dashed (temporarily in the view of the researcher, permanently in the view of the participant) career aspirations of a participant, the emotional disturbance was significant. The researcher suspended the interview for several minutes. It was apparent that it would be unethical to continue the interview under such circumstances, as it undoubtedly would have caused further distress. Yet the researcher was conscious that the participant should not feel embarrassed by his/her feelings. The researcher therefore asked a relatively technical question relating to one of the sessions, the answer to which would bear no significance to the research, and engaged in a non-research oriented conversation with the participant, before terminating the interview. The researcher was conscious that it was important for the ethicality of the research that the interview ended with the participant in a positive frame of mind. In the other two incidents referred to, participants quickly re-adjusted themselves and the interview was able to proceed as normal.

It remains now to discuss shortcomings in the research process as enacted.

Shortcomings in the method as adopted

In the view of the researcher a period of observation with participants prior to their induction into formal leadership development would have proven beneficial. Such an

exercise would have provided an important insight into the everyday practices of these leaders before a formal intervention and could have acted as a comparator to subsequent observations. Three practical considerations emerged, however, that would have made such a strategy difficult to pursue in practice. The first of these was the timeframe involved. While generous, the researcher was conscious of the need to spend a considerable amount of time with participants in order to generate richer, more valuable descriptions of events as observed. Such a period of prior observation would have nibbled away at this post-programme time. In addition, an issue of trust existed, whereby the formal development programme allowed the researcher the time to establish a relationship of trust with participants, largely based on social, informal talk. Finally, participants dropping out of programmes due to urgent demands on their time was uncommon, but did occur. To have 'gambled' on the continued participation of a participant prior to the commencement of formal development might have proven a risky strategy given the necessarily finite resources available for the project.

Instead, the researcher employed a method of triangulating interviews with peers, subordinates and superordinates of participant leaders. Such a process was effective in corroborating the self-reported views of the leaders observed. In the case of the New Zealand study, it was not possible to follow the participants in the workplace. The sole method of post-programme data gathering was thus conducted through interview, which did place a restriction on the depth of possible data gathering.

The main restriction placed on ethnographic research is determined by its inherent participant focus and subjectivity. The 'success' of a given leadership development method was judged, not by any benign research tool, but by the views of the participants themselves. What was important was not some 'neutral' measurement of leadership change, but whether participants, and those they worked with, felt that leadership development had improved leadership in practice. In this sense, one could never answer definitively the research question, only offer the subjective positions of those observed. Yet the researcher would argue that such a 'restriction' is common to most social research, but remains unacknowledged. Perhaps in explicitly lending weight to the subjectivity of participants, we acknowledge that all social research is inherently subjective. The challenge,

rather than attempting the construction of some 'neutral' measurement tool, becomes one of presenting subjective perspectives with integrity.

Ethnography and other qualitative research methods are often criticised from the perspective of quantitative epistemologies and positivist ontologies. It is not the intent of an ethnographer to produce widely generalisable findings, however. This study is limited to the public sector and to the realities experienced by specific participants. It is the story of participants engaging in leadership development, from their perspective. It values subjectivity. It is the view of the researcher that much quantitative, 'objective' research is also largely subjective in nature. In contrast, it was the hope of the researcher that the subjective perspectives of participants may teach us something of the operation of leadership development over time, rather than produce a snapshot restricted by the questions posed by the researcher.

It is perhaps indicative of the socialising operation of the positivist ontological perspective that the researcher felt a degree of guilt in writing the results section of this thesis, holding a fear that the data presented was too subjective in nature. However, as stated, such subjectivity is embedded within the very method of ethnography. It was the duty of the researcher, therefore, to recognise the impact of his subjectivity on the observation process. For example, it is natural that the researcher felt closer to some participants than to others, and, conversely, some participants would have liked the researcher, on a personal level, and others less so. It was the duty of the researcher to reflect on the impact of such relationships and to maintain a professional focus.

A participant focus, however, provides some practical challenges. This was particularly the case with the defence cohort. Throughout the formal week of activity, participants were keen to contribute to the research, the most enthusiastic of all groups observed. Some weeks and months after completion of the programme, it became difficult, however, to earn the agreement of any of the participants to a period of work shadowing. This can partly be attributed to the compartmentalised behaviour of defence professionals, who are re-assigned every two years, and, as they move from theatre to home-based management, must learn to live in the moment enthusiastically.

The problem for a researcher is that the subject's focus of attention moves relatively quickly, at least from the perspective of an academic's view of time. Another reason for the slipperiness of participants might lie in the periphality of the programme, as discussed earlier, in the context of a career in defence that is marked by continual engagement with development activity. In other words, participants found the programme interesting, but not fundamentally life altering, and thus half promises made during the formal week were soon forgotten as participants moved on to the next challenge. This was particularly marked within the context of the DSLP as these were leaders who, largely, had been newly promoted to the level of general officer and were therefore preoccupied with this 'step up' in responsibility. There is a danger inherent in the study of leadership development programmes where participants with the most profound learning experiences will be the least accessible. This tendency was partly overcome by the practice of ethnography itself, premised on an initial observation of the formal development in action, and the reactions of participants to it, and in the enrolment of, in this case, colleagues working in defence, who assisted the researcher in securing access to the workplaces of participants.

The issue of access points to another shortcoming of the method adopted. In the case of this research project much of the negotiation concerning access to programmes had been conducted prior to the involvement of the researcher, due to relationships already established by the research supervisor. In other cases, however, it is easy to foresee challenges presented when attempting to negotiate entry into what is a private and often sensitive world of leadership development programmes.

Having discussed the methodological issues raised by the research, it is now the task of this chapter to explore the theoretical implications of the events observed.

Results contextualised

This section will firstly revisit the research question in light of the theory, results and methodological discussion presented earlier. It continues with more detailed reflection on the research strategy employed. It concludes with some suggestions for future research, given the findings of the thesis.

Revisiting the research question

To recap, the research question, as stated in the introduction, was:

- *To what extent can we explain whether leadership development programmes improve practiced leadership in the context of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, UK local government, the UK defence sector and New Zealand public sector?*

As stated above, the question could never be answered definitively. The challenge was to present, in degrees, the subjectively held views of programme participants and their colleagues. What mattered, therefore, was not a 'neutral' verdict on leadership development programmes, but a qualitative assessment of the impact of the programmes from the point of view of those who experienced their effects. Did these leadership development programmes, from the perspective of participants and colleagues, improve leadership in practice?

To this end, the available literature was studied, with a theoretical model of a successful leadership development experience sought. The chapter concluded by stating that no single model of sufficient robustness could be found. Rather, four models, offering distinctive positions, were offered.

Two broad foci were identified in the literature – studies adopting an individual focus and those offering a collective focus. Two particular schools were highlighted within each focus, each offering a particular theoretical model.

Individual focus:

Behavioural leadership development - according to this view, a successful leadership development experience will depend on an accurate reading of a scientifically knowable environment. From this perspective it will be possible to define the characteristics, the behaviours, or competencies, of 'appropriate' leadership. Any improvement in practiced leadership will depend upon the accuracy of this calculation and the clarity of its transmission to subjects.

Authentic leadership development - according to this school, a successful leadership development experience will be dependent upon participants developing a better understanding of their unconscious lives. This will enable them to better align their deeply held, personal values with the practice of leadership. Any improvement in practiced leadership, from this perspective, depends on the creation of a learning environment that provides participants with the safety and calm to engage in such deep personal reflection.

Collective focus:

Coalition leadership development – according to this school, leadership development occurs within a collective. Theory transmitted to an individual in one context cannot simply be implemented, along rational lines, in another. From this perspective, participants must engage their coalitions of leadership with leadership theory, thus enlisting them in the process and accept that meaning will be altered, to a greater or lesser extent, along the way. Any potential for an improvement in practiced leadership within this school lies in the ability of participants to involve their work teams and context in the process of theory engagement.

Experiential leadership development – this school of leadership development holds that power is central to the way in which leadership is developed and practiced. It is impossible, according to this view, to develop leadership outside of the specific context of power and meaning generation – i.e. at work. Any improvement in practiced leadership within this school depends upon the direct linking of experience to learning. This has been conceptualised as learning through practice and organised reflection on the practice of leadership.

Each of these models articulated a competing answer as to where we might concentrate our attention in order to determine where we might concentrate our focus in order to determine whether or not leadership development programmes have impacted upon the practice of leadership.

According to these models, each stated that leadership development could make a difference to leadership in practice – as long as the theoretical model offered was implemented. It was the job of the fieldwork to test these models, to determine whether they offered an explanation for successful leadership development, within the context of the programmes observed.

The results show that, from the perspective of participants, the leadership development programmes observed generated improvements, at least in part. Tangible change was witnessed in terms of participants becoming personally more aligned with their base of values, more open to learning and more confident as leaders. Furthermore, many participants, in engaging with new theory, were able to reframe pressing leadership issues at work, bringing a new perspective to previously intractable problems. Finally, some of the leaders observed were able to concentrate on specific issues and draw on support from peers and facilitators to engender change in their organisations.

Below, the main results are summarised and contextualised.

i. Individual-focused leadership development

a. Behavioural leadership development

Participants on the programmes observed were all intelligent people interested in the step-up challenge of leadership development. When they were presented with behavioural forms of leadership development, they responded either with suspicion and hostility or through laissez faire indifference.

This is unsurprising and the finding has substantial support in the literature (Townley 1993, 1994 and 2008; Foucault 1997 and 1998). The task for development practitioners, after all, is not to profile and categorise, but to develop a complex and socially constructed phenomenon, that of leadership. Through stripping away the individuality of participants, the exercises seemed to chip away at the creativity of otherwise positively received programmes.

A more critical view of behavioural methods leads us to consider whether these profiling tools serve another purpose, other than the development of leadership. Profiling is a lucrative industry and there is a shared sense of interest in the perpetuation of what is an 'easy' session for all concerned: those presenters who specialise in profiling know the script by heart and both facilitators and participants are allowed some time to rest their minds, before being challenged again by theories of leadership. Competency-based development also serves the purpose of perpetuating a status quo, a sacred aspect, of leadership as it is practiced. Everyone must know their roles and fit neatly into boxes. Know thy place is the subliminal message. The operation of leadership development, for participants, was a far more complex process than is suggested by behavioural theories of leadership development.

b. Authentic leadership development and individuation

The power of individuation

The main finding in this area was that an 'authentic' method of leadership development, Jungian individuation, generated a quality period of personal reflection amongst participants. They were able to reflect upon their personal values and how these were expressed within their leadership practices.

Often, a form of 'shock' was necessary in order for such a period to take place (Jung 1973 and 1983). This notion received significant support in the literature. Cammock (2003) and Whyte (1994) both liken this process to one of being lost in a 'dark wood'. Furthermore, Bennis and Thomas (2002) suggest that for such 'crucible' moments to be effective, a degree of trauma seems necessary. Many participants underwent such periods of personal reflection without experiencing trauma, although for others, experiences could certainly be described in traumatic terms. These experiences needed to be powerful *enough*, then, to 'shock' participants into a period of personal reflection.

As was stated by Jung (1983), these personally reflective experiences resulted in participants strengthening a sense of vocation, a commitment to leadership. They reaffirmed, or established for the first time, an inner belief in their ability to lead. This was witnessed in terms of a reaffirmation of the place of participants within a particular sector, or in coming to terms with the responsibilities and identity of 'leadership' (Lord and Hall 2005).

Participant experiences with individuation, while useful in and of themselves, were especially salient within a more holistic context of a process of leadership development. Where personal, 'basic' leadership was emphasised, participants were spurred on to more sophisticated elements within the model. They were able to frame leadership theory in the context of their own values (in the case of the ELP) and their leadership practice in the context of their values (in the case of LiP and the ELP). Furthermore, where programmes did

not pay regard to individuation, it was noticeable that participants did not operate from a value-neutral basis. Rather, they drew on existing views of leadership (Ford et al 2008) and prototypical views of leadership developed earlier in their careers (Hogg 2000; Hogg and Terry 2001). These leadership prototypes acted as a relevance filter, narrowing the scope of participants, affecting what they viewed as relevant or irrelevant.

ii. Collectively-focused leadership development

a. 'Coalition' leadership development

Step-up leadership theory

Participants related to a more political and collectively-focused reading of leadership theory as it seemed to match 'step-up' challenges they faced in leadership positions. Work, for them, was no longer a matter of technical excellence, but one of finding ways to live with and thrive in a complex and power-dominated environment. In this sense participants exhibited a growing awareness of the power associated with leadership and the political challenge inherent in developing a coalition of leadership. It was stated that this might be especially salient when participants engaged with theory during leadership development, thereby suggesting a period of organisational change.

It was the case that theories which dealt with the complexity and power of leadership resulted in more change than other theory. In many cases, especially where participants engaged in another element of leadership development, engagement with such theory led to tangible change in leadership as practiced by the employing organisation. This conclusion does not suggest any 'ideal' form of syllabus but it does suggest the proposition that participants characterised leadership as largely a task of facilitating a response to 'wicked problems' (Grint 2005b and 2009). In this sense, they regarded leadership as a 'step up' and

were searching for theories that could help them make sense of the often confusing and contradictory environment within which they operated.

ANT as a mode of analysis

ANT was found to be an effective means to analyse participant engagement with theory.

As discussed earlier, systems theory seemed a useful, yet ultimately unsatisfactory means of interpreting the sensemaking process of leadership development. In contrast, ANT emphasises identity and meaning as constructed phenomena and offers non-human actants equal weight to human actants. Such a logic forces the researcher to redefine the 'problem' of leadership development as something fluid, dynamic and active. It focuses our attention, and that of the participants, on the political challenge of maintaining support across a range of interested, or disinterested, human, and non human, actors (Morrell and Hartley 2006; Hartley and Bennington 2011).

It adds a steely edge of political manoeuvring to the interpretation, suggesting that translating leadership development into a process of leadership requires more than 'rational' tools (Townley 2008). Techniques of seduction and force will be required in order for a particular constructed meaning of leadership development to succeed. Those participants who were observed to emerge through an 'effective' process were those who were able to hold a coalition of competing and often contradictory actants in tension, to convince these actants of the veracity of their leadership claims. This phenomenon found support in the literature on accident prevention (Dekker 2002 and 2006) explored earlier, which states that imperfect systems are usually made to work through the actions of the people within them. In other words, an imperfect system, including an imperfect leadership theory, can be successfully enacted as long as the people within the network are prepared to work hard to paper over the faults in the system. In those experiences of failure highlighted, the result was attributable to the 'betrayal' of a single or more actants within either the network of leadership development or of leadership. In observing such

movement, Callon's (1986) study of the process of translation was particularly useful in framing an understanding of the challenges of maintaining a coalition of development and leadership.

The utility of the translation framework

The process of translation offered a powerful means by which the complexity and constructed workings of the journey of leadership development to leadership could be interpreted.

To recap, Callon (1986), characterised 'translation' as a process of the construction of meaning, negotiated between a series of 'actants'. This process involved four steps, which, the author emphasised, were complementary and could overlap or occur in any particular order. These were:

- a. problematisation – this is the procedure whereby a particular actant attempts to construct her/himself as an obligatory point of passage (OPP) through which all discourse must flow in order for a particular meaning construct to succeed;
- b. interessement - the process of an actant placing an intermediary between itself and other actants as a means of strengthening the desired meaning of a coalition;
- c. enrolment – this is the stage whereby the position of actants is solidified in a network through strategies of 'seduction', 'aggression' or 'transaction';
- d. the mobilisation of spokespeople – in this stage it is assumed that the few representatives constructed as speaking for a larger mass are truly capable of delivering such mass support, or at least of silencing mass dissent. If they fulfil this criterion then they can be deployed as powerful allies, as they will be viewed as representative of a much larger group of interests.

Failures in this process were observed as:

- betrayals of the theory actant within the leadership development network: as when theories were viewed as irreconcilable with the predominant history and culture as embodied by the meaning of the leadership network in the workplace;
- betrayals by participant actants within the leadership development network: where participants, for one reason or another, were reluctant participants in the leadership development networks;
- betrayals by presenters and organisers within the leadership development network: as when presenters failed to 'seduce' participants with the veracity of their theories, or when organisers failed to consider a particular element of leadership development;
- betrayals of the 'venue' actant within the leadership development network;
- betrayals of the 'cash' actant within the leadership network: where participants were hindered in their development through financial pressures caused by the recession; and,
- betrayals on the part of the employing organisation actant within the leadership, predominantly, but also the leadership development network: where the leaders of leaders, or their staff, or their peers, refused to accept that they had any responsibilities within the leadership development network. As with the first betrayal, such acts often constituted a divergent meaning of the purpose of leadership development programmes.

To summarise, the clear finding here is that a wide dispersal of commitment is required in order to build a leadership development coalition, and, an even broader and deeper commitment from actors is required if an agreement around leadership development is to be translated into leadership practice.

We now move on to a contextualised summary of the findings on experiential learning.

b. Experiential leadership development

In practice, this was a model of leadership development too often sidelined by the programmes observed, relegated to an optional extra, a dessert to the main course of classroom learning. Yet the results demonstrate that where the experiential learning area of leadership development is offered equal billing to other elements it can become a powerful force in the management of translating learning from the boundaries of the classroom to the living laboratory of the workplace.

The main findings from the results are discussed below.

The curse of abstraction

Abstracted learning was found to be a blight on the experiential learning process.

A key tenet of all experiential learning theories is that they place a premium on development through action, through experience. Two of the four programmes observed paid little attention to this. In so doing they followed the norms of 'transmission' learning, whereby it is assumed that learning can be equated to a linear process of despatch from one source to another. This is strange as both the DSLP and LC place a premium on what they view as a 'complex' leadership environment. This view of complexity, however, was not translated into a support package of situated, experiential learning, contravening a golden rule of Revans (1982 and 1998): namely, that the further away experiential learning takes place from the heart of the action, the less effective it will be.

Safe 'space'

The creation of a safe 'space' for experiential learning was crucial to its success. This involved support from peers and facilitators, as well as a commitment to 'exposure' on the part of participants.

The 'return' (Jones 2006; Nightingale 2004) to work is threatening enough for participants, the role of a manager stressful and demanding enough, without this situation being perpetuated through further intimidation in the experiential learning stage of leadership development. For participants, the ability to be able to engage in generative dialogue concerning real leadership issues, necessitated a 'safe' environment, a forum removed from work in which they could reveal their thoughts without fear of ridicule. In this sense, such a forum closely resembled that envisaged by systems-authentic theory crossover writers (e.g. Senge 1999; Senge et al 2005; Jaworski 1998). In an ideal world, it would be possible for participants to have such conversations within the workplace. But it is easy for a researcher to state such a thing. It is another to experience the vulnerability of lived leadership. Where observed, a safe space, created between participants and facilitators, resulted in mutual support, as participants felt able to share their emotions regarding the practice of leadership. Participants were able to confront and expose their anxieties as they sought to implement new leadership strategies. This was observed to be particularly helpful to women participants, both in New Zealand and on the ELP.

The benefit for women participants

Supportive experiential learning was disproportionately beneficial to women participants.

Although a significant body of work exists addressing the role of women in leadership, as stated in the earlier literature review, research into how women, specifically, negotiate formal leadership development is not as forthcoming. What is true of the experiences of

women in the leadership development programmes observed is that they were often burdened by a chronic lack of confidence, which hindered their career progression or, felt 'fractured' in their identities, as 'imposters' in the leadership role.

Traditional forms of transmission leadership development can be viewed, from a feminist perspective, as an agent of patriarchy communicating the dominant 'male' discourse of how leadership should operate to participants. Development may be making the situation worse for women by perpetuating the agentic nature of modern businesses and public services. An approach that emphasises competency acquisition in a formal, classroom environment, may well favour men more than women. The very composition of leadership development programmes may perpetuate the problem of patriarchy.

A critical focus

Questioning criticality is essential to the effective working of experiential learning.

An extensive body of literature lies behind this finding (for example Reynolds 1998; Willmott 1997; Gray 2006 and 2007). Without a core element of criticality, as stated in the literature review, experiential learning can soon descend either into meaningless abstraction or competency-driven behaviouralism. This echoes the work on organisational communication, which demonstrates that performance suffers if critical upward feedback is withheld from leaders (Tourish and Hargie 2004).

Such challenging criticality was observed mostly on the LiP programme, as coaches urged participants to question their assumptions and those of their employing organisations. Thus the images of a shaken 'AA' after being reminded of his responsibilities and the confrontational approach of participant 'L', whose fragile state was being taken advantage of by a group of workers, present powerful images of critical challenge. An element of criticality formed a key component in the practice of 'learning through others' in addition, as participants attempted to 'borrow a fresh pair of eyes', an alternative worldview so that

they could observe their own leadership practices differently. Yet it is worth noting that the majority of these critically-focused experiences came within the forum of coaching, rather than action learning.

The power of coaching

Coaching was valued more by participants than action learning.

Action learning is enjoying something of a renaissance, with high-profile, mainstream US writers regarding it as a potential solution to the 'problem' of leadership development (for example, Conger and Benjamin 1999, p.211, who regard it as "the new paradigm of leadership development).

Yet the participants observed responded more positively to one-to-one coaching than they did to action learning. They characterised coaching in terms of its flexibility to meet the particular demands of leadership, situated as it is in its place of operation. Moreover, participants, while valuing the action learning process, struggled with it, especially when sessions were not facilitated.

Perhaps this reflects the inherently more slippery nature of action learning. Coaching, on the other hand, is more easily conceptualised: two people in a room, or over a phone, challenging each other's thinking in order to generate some concrete, experiential learning. This finding suggests that while action learning, especially when it is facilitated, can provide an effective forum for challenge, learning and support, its impact is uneven. Coaching, on the other hand, seemed to provide the kind of tailored support participants required as they attempted to translate their leadership development networks into their networks of leadership. Programme organisers ought to treat action learning with the same degree of criticality as they would other forms of development and it should not be offered a free pass due to its rich history and current popularity in the mainstream business literature.

The network of leadership and experiential learning

The network of leadership casts a powerful shadow over formalised experiential learning.

As was witnessed with the ELP, corrosive aspects of the leadership network, as described in the previous section, continued to poison these later, experiential learning moments. One particular action learning set, as observed by the researcher, brought the scale of the challenge for facilitators and organisers into clear focus. As described in the previous chapter, participants in the ELP's 'troubled' action learning set reverted to the classic FRS leader prototype towards the conclusion of the programme. It was as if any pretence of participation was lifted as the hours until the close of the programme drew near. It became apparent that two participants in particular had attended the programme because they were told to do so by their chiefs. Other participants first fought a battle of seduction in an attempt to enrol these reluctant participants into a process of action learning, urging them to draw on their lived experiences to enrich the discussion. When this failed they broke another rule of action learning, as established by Revans, that of peer challenge.

It was the intention of Revans, as stated in the previous chapter, that action learning would operate as a method of forcing participants to face up to the limitations of their perspectives. Yet this appeared too uncomfortable a task for many participants and for other actors within their coalition of leadership. Most participants were willing actors in this process, as were their leadership coalitions at work. Yet it was observed that the disruptive behaviour of a few damaged the process for the many. Politics may therefore be construed as both constructive and destructive within the context of experiential learning in particular, and leadership development in general.

This finding further highlights the importance of a political focus when considering leadership development.

Prototyping and experiential learning

Prototyping can both assist and derail experiential learning, especially when formal programmes overlook experiential methods of development.

Where experiential learning was lacking from formal leadership development, leaders were witnessed substituting these structured experiences with sensemaking at work, which was closely modelled on their earlier construction of leadership prototypes (Hogg and Terry 2000; Hogg 2001). In the case of 'DC' he drew on arts-based projective learning techniques (Taylor and Ladkin 2009) in an attempt to glean the emotions of his staff, and with some effect. Yet later on, his emotional leadership prototype was challenged, and he was almost derailed when confronted with an alternative, highly political construction of leadership.

This final finding further highlighted the importance of an experiential emphasis within leadership development. Were participants, like 'DC', exposed to collective, reflective exercises centred on real work experience, it is possible that they would have been more adept at spotting potential leadership pitfalls and in navigating the political perils of translating a leadership development alliance into a leadership coalition.

Support was found, in the research context, for the potential of leadership development to affect change in leadership practice, in relation to any of the three explanations of effective leadership development above. But this does not adequately represent the process of engendering change. In practice, leadership development programmes did not restrict themselves to one model of leadership development. Moreover, when a fusion of elements was evidenced, a greater improvement, from the perspective of participants, was evidenced.

Such a finding opens the possibility for further research to develop a more holistic process model, synthesising elements of leadership development experienced as especially useful. The section below explores what the findings may offer to this work.

A synthesis model of leadership development

A stark finding from the research was that it proved difficult to come to a conclusion about each theoretical model in isolation. The literature on leadership development tends to address one particular model. Yet in practice it was observed that programmes adopted more than one of the models presented. Furthermore, each model was observed to inform and influence the operation of other models. The general effect of this interaction was positive.

When more than one model was utilised, this resulted in a more marked change in practice. For example, when participants in LiP connected with the process of individuation, this clarified their base of deeply held values, which in turn opened them to new ideas and helped create a bond in the group – between peers and facilitators – which enabled an openness and challenge to emerge within experiential learning, which resulted in impressive, tangible change. Yet this was not a theoretical programme and it therefore remains to be seen in practice whether participants will be able to generalise their learning or whether it will be relatively confined to individual instances. In the case of the FRS programme, participants responded well to the individual reflection and theory. This enabled them to grapple with complex issues at work, yet this was done in a relatively private way, and the absence of support and challenge through a platform of effective experiential learning further heightened the unease felt by these participants.

When fewer than two models appeared in the programmes observed, as was the case with the DSLP and LC, tangible change was less obvious.

The above discussion highlights a gap in the literature, which tends to concentrate on one aspect of leadership development or another. As was shown in the literature review, when a whole process has been examined, efforts have tended to be narrow in focus. In the case of Lord and Hall (2005) and Day and Harrison (2007), the studies adopted an overwhelming focus on psychology-inspired leadership theory and overlooked a body of literature, in both

leadership and leadership development studies, which draws attention to the role of power and social construction.

A synthesis model: three elements, one process

Day and Harrison (2007) make a valuable contribution in urging us to consider an effective development experience in terms of a process, rather than an isolated element. Yet their model fails to draw from the strengths of a range of the latest thinking within leadership studies, concentrating as it does on largely psychology-focused theory. Perhaps, in considering the possibility of a synthesis model of leadership development, we would do well to follow the call of Grint and Jackson (2010) for a socially constructive form of social constructionism, one which is capable of drawing from the strengths of a range of perspectives within the field of leadership, as well as leadership development studies. It is hoped, in this spirit, that this model may benefit both practitioners and leadership development scholars, in both clarifying theory on, and improving the practice of, leadership development. It follows the call, referred to earlier, by Tourish and Barge (2010) for constructionist scholars to offer alternative solutions, rather than simply highlight flaws and problems with current theory.

Behavioural leadership development is ontologically positivist, with its belief in measurable, quantifiable leadership performance, its practical emphasis on 'transmission' classroom learning and programmatic experiential learning closely linked to trait and contingency views of leadership. This method of development was extensively criticised for its assumption that a leadership environment will be stable and predictable over time. It was also stated that while the school actively overlooks any possibility of power existing as a constructor of knowledge, identity and meaning, a strong case can be made that its deployment is more often than not used precisely to discipline participants according to a dominant discourse of leadership. In this sense it can be questioned whether it is concerned with leadership development at all, and, rather, is more interested in managing according to

pre-defined, known standards (Grint 2005b and 2009), or, in other words, management development.

In terms of a process model of leadership development, therefore, it is difficult to see where competency and behavioural forms of development fit in. Such methods seemed to slow down progression through a process, rather than push at the boundaries of personal development, as participants either rebelled against them or later dismissed them as irrelevant.

The other models of leadership development explored were seen to hold promise but also weakness in terms of their capacity to explain a complete process of development. Each described a particular aspect, or moment of development, rather than a process.

The potential of a synthesis model lies in its capacity to generate a greater collective strength than can be offered by the sum total of the parts explored above. It is more than a collection of three separate models; it is a consideration of how authentic leadership development, critical engagement with theory and experiential learning can strengthen each other, act in conversation with one another to produce a more complete process of development. Such a process would enable participants to learn from comparison and from revisiting each aspect of development.

Perhaps we should consider how this might appear in more tangible form.

In terms of authentic leadership, while it is plausible, and indeed psychiatrists for decades have made their livings from this supposition, that a more balanced psyche will lead to the development of more fulfilled individuals, and even better individual performance, the link to better organisational performance is more uncertain. The link between individual and organisation is one recognised by authentic leadership writers, who suggest that an 'authentic' journey is one which will necessitate the recruitment of others in order for a personal vision to be enacted in practice. In turn, this suggests a degree of compromise and negotiation. Yet the theory is sparse on how this might occur in practice. Hence, authentic leadership theories of development tell us much about how an individual may commence a

meaningful development experience, through exploring his/her deeply held values, but far less on how this individual may fare in an organisational context.

This is precisely the issue confronted by experiential learning, which takes as its *raison d'être* the negotiation of development within a work context. While authentic leadership development remains largely aloof from the practice context, experiential learning methods seek to unravel and confront issues of power and privilege at work and to explore how our taken for granted assumptions on how we work may prevent leadership change. Yet experiential learning writers underplay the importance of participants gaining access to outside innovation as a means of generating change and a more complete and effective leadership development process. It assumes that most of the answers to leadership problems will be generated from within a community of practice. It also largely overlooks the capacity of an individual to inspire and generate a spur for change. Unless one adopts the position that only collective, experiential work, or, only purely individual reflection, may generate the effective development of leadership, it becomes apparent that a synthesis of the strengths of the two models might be a sensible solution.

Experiential learning may add a much needed element of criticality to authentic leadership, a questioning in situ of individually held vision, thus steering clear of the danger that leadership development may become more a celebration of a cult of an individual leader. Through processes such as action learning and coaching, a leader's concept of leadership and the purpose of leadership may be explored, questioned and reformed. Moreover, experiential learning, without a basis in values seems to be a form of development lacking purpose. Authentic leadership may thus be said to strengthen the impact of experiential learning by injecting some 'soul' into the process of development. Moreover, through synthesising experiential and authentic leadership development, one sees that authentic leadership development need not be the preserve of a single individual at the pinnacle of an organisation. In contrast, authentic leadership development may be more about developing a multiplicity of authentic selves within an organisation. This opens the possibility of a messy form of development, with individuals developing in different directions. Yet these are issues which may be dealt with through experiential learning, development within an open

arena (Burgoyne and Jackson 1997), where power differentials are negotiated and dealt with.

Viewing the role of theory within leadership development as a linear process of transmission does not sit well with the evidence in the spheres of leadership development and leadership that such phenomena are contested, open to interpretation and capable of being viewed differently, depending on where one sits within a network. An ANT interpretation of the acquisition of leadership theory shows us that this may be a process of coalition building. This theory gains in power through a synthesis with authentic leadership and experiential learning. Outside perspectives, in the shape of new theory, are essential if a community of practice is to progress and develop a competitive edge. Moreover, an 'authentic' self is of little use without a range of theories through which it may express itself. Furthermore, through exposure to new theories of leadership, participants may engage in a process of self questioning, further enhancing the iterative aspect of the synthesis model of leadership development. Experiential learning, when viewed alongside an ANT interpretation of theory engagement, offers a practical series of methods through which the formation of leadership coalitions may be pursued. The adoption of an action learning set may, for example, help to solidify an emergent leadership coalition, the genesis of which may be the result of deep personal reflection and engagement with new theory within a formal leadership development programme.

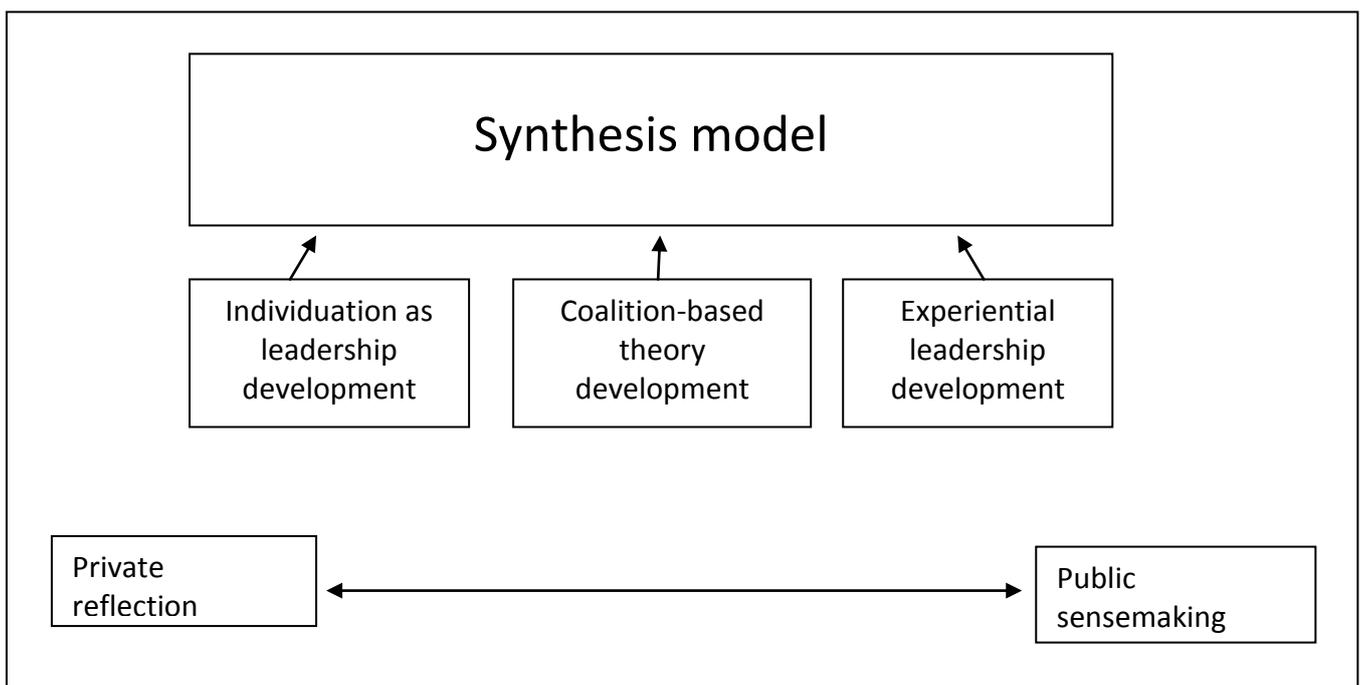
In summary, individuation as development may act as an initial spur to development, through encouraging dramatic individual change through deep, personal reflection.

Adopting an ANT lens, viewing development as a coalition effort, helps us to focus on the inherently negotiated, the constructed nature of what may or may not be regarded as valid theory within a larger system than we would previously have considered. Experiential learning tells us much about the need for any development effort to continue long after any formal conclusion of classroom activity and that there will be a crucial role for supported, situated development, as participants attempt to translate development into leadership. The strength of each aspect of the model, it is suggested, compensates for the weakness of each aspect.

Thus, the distinct models of leadership development addressed, in a synthesis model, at least within the context of this study, appear to be bonded together, to inform each other, with participants utilising insights gained in one area, in another.

The diagram below seeks to plot this. Namely, a development process of individuation values highly private reflection, centred on the individual. At the other end of the spectrum, experiential sensemaking favours public development, where meaning is negotiated through working practice. In between, a coalition-based view largely explores how a semi-public, semi-private engagement with theory is interpreted and acted upon by participants and others. The synthesis model, on the other hand, seeks to gain from the advantages of all three elements, spanning private reflection, public sensemaking and the negotiation of meaning in between. More than this, through a bonding of elements, the collective whole of the synthesis model, as stated above, becomes stronger than the sum of the individual elements of the model. This is because each element of the model may be seen as conversing with, adding value to other elements, strengthening each in turn and the process of development as a whole.

Figure 1: The synthesis model of leadership development



The researcher does not wish this tentative model to be viewed as a technical or a static model. It is perfectly feasible to picture a successful development experience that may begin in one of these phases and end in another. For example, engagement with leadership theory might instigate a process of collective testing in the workplace which, in turn, will cause an individual leader to engage in deep, personal reflection regarding his/her personal values. Likewise, it may be possible that experimentation at work will lead to a process of personal reflection in an attempt to reconcile such practice to personal belief, which in turn will necessitate an engagement with extant theory. Or two or more processes might, in fact, most likely will, proceed in unison. The socially constructed and locally specific aspect of this model, furthermore, demands such fluidity and it is hoped, as was the case with ANT, that it does not become bogged down in a debate over agency/structure. This is a sensemaking process, which is both individual and collective, and neither of these things. It is a model whereby each element is required for an effective process to take place, albeit that the elements need not follow in any particular order, and where the strength of the whole is stronger than the sum of the individual parts.

The result of this process is a bonding of elements, a fusing of strengths. Participants, moving freely between personal insight, academic knowledge and experiential experimentation, may be said to approach the development of what Grint (2007) referred to as *phronesis*.

Finally, this model raises a serious question as to the motivation for establishing leadership development programmes in the first place. The very nature of leadership and its development implies a changing of the present situation. The behavioural model tested in the data was shown to produce little in the way of change in leadership practice. Yet behavioural forms of leadership development continue to flourish as a staple element of leadership development programmes. Meaningful change, on the other hand, would seem to require the engagement of a range of actants within the network of leadership, as well as leadership development. A result of this may well be a dismantling of the 'sacred' nature of leadership, as envisaged by leaders and followers. It implies that a range of actors will have to take their responsibilities seriously. The challenge of leadership development is an adaptive challenge, when constructed in this way (Grint 2005; Heifetz 1994; Heifetz and

Linsky 2001).

Leadership development and the 'sacred'

'Development' in the most fundamental sense of the word connotes 'change' – a development from one state of affairs to a different state of affairs. In turn, this implies a disruption to a status quo of leadership. Participation in a programme which seeks to develop leadership means that a participant actor will be exposed to discourses of change. Within an environment that values the 'sacred' in leadership, this may not be welcomed, as it will involve a reconstruction of the dominant discourse of leadership in play.

To recap, Grint's (2010) characterisation of the 'sacred' states that organisations will enact the following meta behaviours:

- distance will be maintained between leaders and followers;
- sacrifice will be accepted on the part of followers to the ideal of leadership as expressed by a figurehead leader, sacrifices which will often be disproportionate to their pecuniary rewards; and
- the act of silencing will be accepted, which allows the deified figure of the leader the freedom to enact his/her will.

The effect of these phenomena is that leaders continue to enjoy a privileged position within organisations. Moreover, followers are able to abdicate responsibility for leadership, blaming, and even sacrificing the Other of the leader when results falter. Such a confluence of tacit understandings, Grint argues, act as a powerful barrier to change. 'Sacred' leadership may also, he states, serve a practical purpose: that followers must accept, and do accept, that they must be subjected to at least a degree of control in order for an organisation to function. More than this, if followers begin to challenge this model, then this means that in return they will have to shoulder more of the burden of leadership,

withdrawing their privilege for 'scapegoating' leaders during difficult times. In other words, a strong coalition of interests acts as a barrier to change.

Individualistic learning implies a freedom of individuality and offers the possibility of free thinking and self determination. Is it any wonder that such ideas could be viewed as threatening to a leadership status quo? This is precisely the root cause of the anxiety of FRS participants, schooled in the 'prototype' of command. The learnt role for many of these individuals was not to think for themselves, but to think as a prototypical collective. They were afraid of the consequences at work of individual reflection. This is Fromm's (1984) fear of freedom in action – a backing away from true individuality just as that possibility seems capable of enactment.

In terms of experiential learning, it is a method that especially benefits women participants. It is a method that has the potential to exert relatively immediate and specific change in the workplace. In so doing it is perhaps more of a direct threat to the 'sacred' nature of leadership. Experiential learning threatens the distance of leadership by bringing colleagues closer together and inviting them to share their conceptions of power in an organisation. In this sense it requires an element of sacrifice and of silence from leaders, who must temporarily hush their busy voices and pay heed to the potentially challenging views of those below them in the hierarchy. Perhaps experiential learning is therefore the victim of a hostile leadership network whose construction of leadership as a 'sacred' and largely 'male' duty is contradicted by this model.

In terms of engaging with theory, if leadership development offers a programme geared around a competency model, a deficit basis for training, rather than a programme for change, such a design would likely perpetuate a power status quo. Perhaps this goes a long way to explaining the survival of behavioural methods of leadership development. Not only do they act to maintain a particular practice of leadership, but they also maintain an academic discourse which values a positivist view of leadership as a phenomenon that can be independently defined, verified and classified. Theories related to power and complexity – as well as those dealing with dispersed leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership – challenge a hierarchical 'sacred' model of leadership. This was a state of affairs

confronted by participants in the programmes observed as they attempted to translate a theory of leadership development into a practice of leadership. As was stated, these attempts were frequently thwarted by their organisational networks, and, in some cases, by the participants themselves.

It is clear in some of the cases observed that the leadership network in which participants operated was not interested in the development of leadership. It did not see that it had a role to play in the process. In other cases, where the leadership coalition in play in the workplace of participants was committed to a reconstruction of the meaning of leadership, tangible leadership development was observed.

The lingering question left in one's mind, therefore, is: 'Are we ready for leadership development?'

The main finding of this thesis is that, although distinct models of leadership development, delivered through leadership development programmes, appear to result, from the perspective of those involved, in improved practiced leadership, we may gain better results through exploring a more holistic alternative. Through exploring a socially constructive (Grint and Jackson 2010) constructionist-oriented model of leadership development we may harness the strengths of seemingly contradictory theories of leadership development. In this way, we may gain more from the collective strength and conversation between the elements than from the mere sum of their parts. This finding calls to mind the possibility of viewing development, and the synthesis model, through the metaphor of a lifecycle. It is with this metaphor that the analysis element of the thesis draws to a conclusion.

The Three Fates of leadership development

Greek myth presents us with the Three Fates as goddesses, each the guardians of distinct, yet complementary, elements of the process of life.

Clotho is the spinner of the thread of life, the goddess who provides the basis for which one will pursue life's challenges. In terms of leadership development, such a role is adopted by individuation, that aspect of the process which provides deep personal context to leadership learning and practice – the value and purpose of leadership.

Lachesis is the allotter of life, the goddess who determines the role of humans in practice. Within the context of leadership development, this role can be seen as that of theory. It is through the construction and negotiation of theory – interspersed with practice – that leaders are able to create more collectively held meaning, to link personally held values with broader social concerns.

Atropos is the cutter of the thread of life, the goddess who determines when a human's time on earth is at an end. This role can be said to be occupied by experiential learning within the context of leadership development. It is this element which manages the death of formal development, yet enacts the beginning of the life of leadership practice. In this sense, experiential learning can be conceptualised within a more spiritual interpretation of the beginning of a more profound, meaningful life, after the death of formal leadership development.

This metaphor draws our attention to the fact that each element of the synthesis model is important in and of itself. Individualistic learning generates purpose and helps leaders better align their leadership to their values. Engagement with theory, as opposed to transmission learning, focuses on both the importance of expert outside views, but also upon the notion that knowledge is a negotiated construct. Experiential learning highlights the importance of localised power within leadership development and of the importance of practice and confidence in leadership. As a lifecycle would be incomplete without birth, life or death, so the process of leadership development is lacking if one of the three elements highlighted above is absent.

Having summarised the findings of the thesis, it now remains to discuss the potential for future research.

Potential for future research

This work has sought to determine to what extent leadership development programmes appear to positively affect leadership practice. In doing so it highlighted four models of leadership development as a means of describing effective leadership development theoretically. The thesis ended with the presentation of a model of leadership development, a synthesis model.

The synthesis model presented could be the subject of future research. For this to occur, it would be preferable to conduct in-depth research on a programme, or more than one programme, which adopted a structure similar to the one presented in the synthesis model. Alternatively, one could engage in an exercise of testing the findings in the results section of this thesis, exploring elements of leadership development as they appear in a specified number of different programmes.

It is a necessary characteristic of ethnographic research that it explores the depth of a phenomenon within certain contexts. It would be beneficial to explore the validity of this model within different contexts, such as different public sector agencies, or within the private sector.

Eastern, African and South American cultures will conceptualise leadership in a different way and so may regard such a model as superfluous. It has been pointed out to the researcher that this model is necessarily culturally bound within a western, largely western European frame. It has been noted, for example, that within countries that experience embedded corruption on a daily basis, engaging with one's unconscious or encouraging work-based learning activity would be counterproductive, even highly dangerous to one's long-term career aspirations.

This research was reasonably macro in its focus. That is the nature of research which seeks to observe a process, from beginning to end. A wide range of literature was therefore

examined, resulting in a study of breadth and some depth. Nevertheless, there is the potential for further work to examine some of the particular issues raised.

For example, the potential of arts-based methods for developing leadership is clear and it would be valuable to discover how Taylor and Ladkin's (2009) typology would play out within the synthesis model. This research was limited in this sense by a rarity of such methods utilised on the ground. It would be fascinating to chart the operation of the various levels of arts-based development as described by the authors within the context of a synthesis model of leadership development.

The realm of executive coaching remains an under theorised area, especially from within a critical framework. Work by Peltier (2001) on the relationship between psychology and coaching raises some interesting questions as to where psychotherapy ends and coaching begins. Yet the field would benefit from some more critical, longitudinal study of the operation of both behavioural and more critically-focused coaching endeavours over time. For too long the field has been dominated by debates of best practice within a competency logic. Likewise, leadership development from the perspective of women has been largely overlooked. This research demonstrates the possibility that some forms of development, particularly experiential learning, may be especially beneficial for women participants. This merits further exploration.

The concept of an 'authentic' leadership needs to be problematised to a greater extent. Ladkin's work (2008 and 2010) draws our attention to a physical and aesthetic aspect of leadership development. However, the proximity of such work to Jung's notion of individuation, conversations with the unconscious and particularly the potential human cost of this have been under examined.

Most important, perhaps, is the issue of why participants enrol on a leadership development programme in the first place. A more explicit, critical study of the heterogeneity of motives, and the human fallout of this, would be valuable. Specifically, it would be fascinating and valuable to explore the role of prototypes (Hogg and Terry 2000; Hogg 2001), and how these colour participant attitudes to formal leadership development.

For example, more research could be conducted on the relationship between the genesis of the programmes observed and their relative success, or failure. Many public sector leadership development programmes are established as the result of a political directive rather than on a human resource-informed, professional basis. In this sense, it could be the case that such programmes are not properly integrated into the overall development strategies of organisations but are present to fulfil a political directive. In addition, it was undoubtedly the case that many participants attended the programmes observed because they were required to do so by their organisations and, in all likelihood, would not have chosen to enrol otherwise. This could be described as a 'push' system. Further research into the impact of this on the wider success of programmes could prove valuable.

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