

# Developing a new Perspective on Leadership Theory: From a Tree of Knowledge to a Rhizome of Contingencies

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**Abstract:** Does the discursive formation of leadership theory hinder the development and practise of alternative leadership styles in the UK? This research question is in response to the issues summarised in the PriceWaterhouseCooper's 2008 report on *Key Trends in Human Capital*. Eight years into the new millennium, leadership is still at the top of the human capital agenda. Although companies invest considerable amounts of money in leadership development, the report suggests that there is limited evidence of leadership programmes delivering value for money, and that three in every ten leaders in the UK do not demonstrate essential leadership qualities. This indicates issues with the practical application of leadership research. The common denominator of all leadership research and application is the leadership theories. The theories are an easily comprehensible, continuous series of events that lead into the present of leadership, supporting all leadership research. Unquestioned assumptions support the theory framework, becoming commonly accepted truths. These suppositions include; the grounding of theory and research in reality; leadership is a fundamental component of the human condition; that social and economic progress has only been possible due to leadership, together with the unquestioned dismissal of alternative voices. Finally there is a notion that leadership theory evolves, drawing on a Darwinian event of natural selection, by evoking biological empirical science to explain a discursive structure. The research and the subject of this paper is to challenge the assumptions and framework of leadership theory through the creation of a research strategy based on Foucault's methods, creating a rhizome of contingencies rather than a progressive tree of knowledge. The paper will address definitions of the archive, archaeology and genealogy, as contextualised within the research.

**Keywords:** leadership theory, Foucault, methodology, philosophy, research strategies

## 1. Introduction

It is an unquestioned belief that the development of the right kind of leadership is fundamental not only to the survival, but to the sustainability of businesses and organisations in the United Kingdom, thus maintaining leadership as one of the most researched phenomena within social science (Thorpe, Lawler & Gold, 2007; Grint, 2008). However, PricewaterhouseCooper (2008) in their report on human resource trends comment that in spite of the emphasis on leadership development, United Kingdom leaders are outperformed by their contemporaries in both Europe and America. The metric employed to evaluate the performance is based on quantifying the impact rather than characteristics of effective leadership. The metric includes value and wealth creation, the retention and productivity of followers, the levels of internal promotion and development of followers and corporate social responsibility initiatives including diversity. The PricewaterhouseCooper report confirms the statistics identified in 2006 by Proudfoot Consulting who identified a 30 per cent productivity gap between the United Kingdom and the United States equivalent to 85 lost working days per United Kingdom worker (Mannion, 2009). Although there may be a lack of agreement regarding the conclusion that United Kingdom business leaders are somehow lacking, the opinion has been stated universally and therefore needs further investigation. This paper is an introduction to the research strategy which initially explores the assumptions that underpin leadership research. The objective is to describe the research methods utilised to gather together the statements that form our current understanding of leadership and to interrogate those statements to explain why they have developed.

This research is proposing that an explanation for the perceived gap between the performance of United Kingdom leaders and their European and United States colleagues is created by two compounding issues. The first is a series of assumptions that have become unquestioned truths currently providing a foundation to leadership research. The second is a bifurcation between the development of United Kingdom business leadership practice and the social, cultural and economic needs of the United Kingdom to which it should be a response. This analysis is born out by the Globe research project conducted over ten years in 61 countries and discussed in Culture and Leadership Across the World (Chokar, Broadbeck & House, 2007). The global enterprise has begun the work of quantifying the relationship between culture, organisation and leadership. Within the report there is an interesting divergence between the media analysis of business leadership and that of middle managers. The media show British business leaders as fitting a liberal culture, where there is no

discussion of high power distance or hierarchies, but of action and energy that motivates and empowers others. However, middle managers themselves discuss a culture that is 'stratified, individualistic, masculine' (343), where there is a large difference in power and little humanity, sharing or kindness.

Alban-Metcalfe & Alimo-Metcalfe (2007) suggests that the United Kingdom leadership models are heavily influenced by developments in America, whereas Styhre (2005) believes European leadership models, due primarily to language issues, have not been influenced to the same degree. Taking the perspective that leadership literature, which is the product of research into leadership development and practice, is constructed to answer precise social needs at defined historical moments, the research is exploring why statements regarding leadership are made at all, what purpose they accomplish (Alvesson, 2002), and finally what social and economic need are the statements responding to.

In order to explore this proposition further a methodology has been developed based on the methods created by French philosopher and historian, Foucault. Foucault is most famous for his investigations into current understandings of madness which he suggested were not based on scientific knowledge as commonly assumed, but has been constructed to address specific social and economic needs at particular historic moments (Foucault, 1998, 2005, 2007). Whether one agrees with Foucault's understanding of madness is of secondary importance to the fact that he has developed an alternative way to understand the construction of the term madness by incorporating social, cultural and economic need at specific historical moments (Foucault, 1998). This creates a discursive formation where the present understanding of madness as a psychological and physiological condition discovered through advances in science is only one of a number of possible understandings. The alternative understanding put forward by Foucault is that madness is a constructed response to social, economic and cultural need at particular historical moments, with science retrospectively providing the evidence. This research is creating a similar discursive formation centered on the term leadership, specifically business leadership.

## **2. Philosophical considerations**

The research process which is qualitative, based on the interpretation of texts both academic and popular, and can be described as the process of finding the 'bits and pieces that have to be in place to allow something else to be possible' (Kendal & Wickham, 2003:25). Not unlike a patchwork quilter, drawing on fragments of materials from a variety of sources to create something new but formed through the recycling of what already exists. Hollinshead (2004) suggests that in qualitative research there is little emphasis on the decisions made by researchers at the foundational level. Most attention is on methods, focusing on the 'technical accuracy or instrumental procedure' (Hollinshead 2004, 83). The debate indicates that a well-developed research strategy requires sensitivity to philosophical changes in the perception of leadership, due to post-modern considerations of what it is to be human, and the perception of reality (Tosh 2002; Ford, Harding & Learmouth 2008; Klenke 2008).

This research strategy is characterised by four fundamental principles, developed in answer to criticism that much qualitative research work becomes descriptive rather than being rigorous in analysis and coherently explicit in application (Hammersley, 1992: 28):

- Grounding this study is a philosophical awareness of the debates that characterise thinking in qualitative research and the established objective and positive approaches inherent in leadership research.
- It is largely interpretative in that it seeks to understand the cultural power/knowledge matrix informing the interaction between individuals and society, in the application of meaning to the term 'leader'. It will not therefore be generalisable, as understood within traditional leadership research.
- The findings will be three-dimensional in terms of geographical and temporal locations so that understanding of present day interaction with the term leader develops and emerges from the researcher's interaction with historical leadership theory and the data found outside the developed archive of knowledge. The findings will therefore be transient and evolving.
- The research requires a multi-faceted strategy that is more than the use of multiple methods. The methodology needs to accommodate theories and ideas from history, psychology and aspects of

post colonial, post feminist and post structural theories. The term patchwork quilt describes both the content and the process of data collection..

Ontology represents the ideas that inform beliefs concerning the 'being' of human, and the nature of engagement with reality. Within leadership theory, this is an important consideration as leadership concerns the understanding of what it is to be an individual, a subject and an object of knowledge (Ford, Harding and Learmouth 2008). Epistemology is the philosophical foundation for deciding what knowledge is possible and if that knowledge is adequate and legitimate (Guba and Lincoln 2005). Methodology is the theory that encompasses the methods used. Each methodology has its own ontological and epistemological understanding. In order to contextualise these areas, it is necessary to provide some general definitions in which to contextualise the philosophical position of this study.

## **2.1 The essence of humanity and the understanding of reality**

Objectivism is an ontology where meaningful reality exists outside the human consciousness. An object carries a meaning, understandings and values waiting for discovery. Bryman (2008) suggests that foundation of traditional leadership research is within this ontology. The structure of the research centres on an identified problem. The product is a rational explanation together with recommendations which are in-line with the current organisational structure and management.

The second is that of subjectivism, where the meaning is imposed on the object by the subject. The object contributes in no way to the formation of its meaning. Meaning, constructed through language derives from imported ideas from other areas of consciousness, such as dreams, aspects of planets and religious beliefs. Meaning derives from 'anything but an interaction between the subject and the object to which it is ascribed' (Crotty 2007 9). Crotty suggests that structuralism and post-structuralism is within this epistemology.

The third is that of constructionism. Meaning comes into existence through our engagement with the world. Constructionism actually has two branches of thought attached to it. One is constructionism, based on collective generation and transmission of meaning and the other is constructivism, which is a focus on the individual's meaning-making activity (Crotty 2007). Ontology seems relatively straightforward; however, post-modernism, has in recent years, disturbed the rational and logical definitions of ontology.

## **2.2 Post-modernism and the lack of human essence**

Over the past twenty years, the development of a theoretical post-modern stance has shown that an objective ontology is impossible to achieve within research as the researcher unconsciously brings beliefs, values and attitudes to the interpretative element of research (Tosh 2002; Hollinshead 2004; Denzin & Lincoln 2005; Crotty 2007; Bryman 2008). The hallmark of post-modernism is the prioritization of language over experiences resulting in a sceptic response to the human capacity to observe and interpret the external world, particularly the human world (Tosh 2002). From this perspective, there is an implication that leadership is not objectively real, or related to human experience and meaning. It is a creation of discourse (Alvesson 2002; Ford, Harding & Learmouth 2008).

Alvesson (2002) suggests that language is external and real, it precedes any experience because experience has to mediate through it. Within post-modernism there are three main aspects concerning language; the first is that the individual reconciles experience through language. The experience is categorised, then typified and finally rests within everyday familiarity (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Secondly, discourse structures an individual's subjectivity providing its social identity. The discourse precedes the individual and provides a series of, 'images, folk tales, beliefs, values and attitudes' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005 485), which are applied to the new event, rendering it understandable, explainable and familiar. The third point is that in everyday life we think that there is a one-to-one relationship between the word, the object it refers to and the image then created.

This is a position developed by Saussure (1974), who developed the notion of the signifier and signified as a chain, developing the term structuralism. Post-modernists and post-structuralists including Derrida believe that language is value-laden and that linguistic and non-linguistic practises interrelate. The creation of meaning is from a vast store of images that have developed through the individual's lifetime. Language is not therefore a neutral reflection of reality. Language provides a

structure determining our perception of the world (Tosh 2002), undermining the belief of a human essence that is discoverable. Recent research into leadership utilises deconstructional notions particularly that of Ford, Harding and Learmouth (2008), where there is a view that the subject, the leader, through an interaction with the object, leadership, creates leadership, which language mediates, drawing upon stored images of leadership to create a known entity, that of a leader.

Alvesson (2002) suggests that post-modernism assumes no core or essence to human nature. If a person is 'thrown' into a new discourse, the subject will respond to the changes and will be re-created. If there is an essence, it is the exposure and adaptation to the potential of discourse. This flexibility, although appearing to be liberating also creates insecurities. Individuals develop deliberate normalizing strategies where they voluntarily cling to identities primarily offered, in modern society, by corporate cultures and an ideological understanding of professional standards, and how those standards of behaviour are applied (Alvesson 2002, Ford, Learmouth and Hardy 2008). Wilson Harris, a Euro-Caribbean writer and theorist, expresses an anxiety over the nature of choices available in the context of cultural, social and political forces. He suggests that humans have a tendency to, 'extrapolate assumptions of character from a dominant model, to assume that a people or an individual ought to conform to particular models whether imposed or wished for' (Harris 1981 43). The effect of post-modernism on the philosophical foundations of research is one of undermining the distinctions between the various ontological positions as language appears to mediate between the human and the world within and through the three main perspectives. It is the post-modern perspective of subjectivity and the constructed meaning of reality that provides the ontological grounding for this research.

### **2.3 What is acceptable knowledge?**

Epistemology concerns the question of what is acceptable knowledge within a discipline. The central issue is whether the social world reflects the natural world. The term positivism affirms the need to regard the social world as operating in the same way as the natural world. The second term is that of realism, which suggests that there is a reality existing externally and separately from our perception of reality. It is within these two stances that traditionally leadership research is conducted (Bryman 2008, Crotty 2002). Interpretativism is a polemical position to positivism and from a post-modern position offers an alternative to realism (Bryman 2008).

### **2.4 Possibility? - as accepted knowledge**

Within this research an intermediate epistemological position is suggested, where the question of what is acceptable knowledge represents a point of departure which seeks to understand the 'conditions of possibility' (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine 2008, 91). This view enables a challenge to the authority of one cultural way of seeing, for example, the authority of business and academic conceptions of a leader, whilst un-concealing the significance of alternative cultural ways of perceiving leadership through the discourses of those voices historically dismissed (Parker 2002, 10). This stance provides the epistemological foundations on which to suggest that Foucaultian methods create a methodology. Methodology refers to the research strategy used to investigate the reality identified through the researcher's assumptions based on ontological and epistemological considerations. Methodologies include grounded theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnography and historiography; Foucault's methods provide a methodology, emphasizing discovery, description and meaning, and a way around 'society- individual dualism' (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008:93).

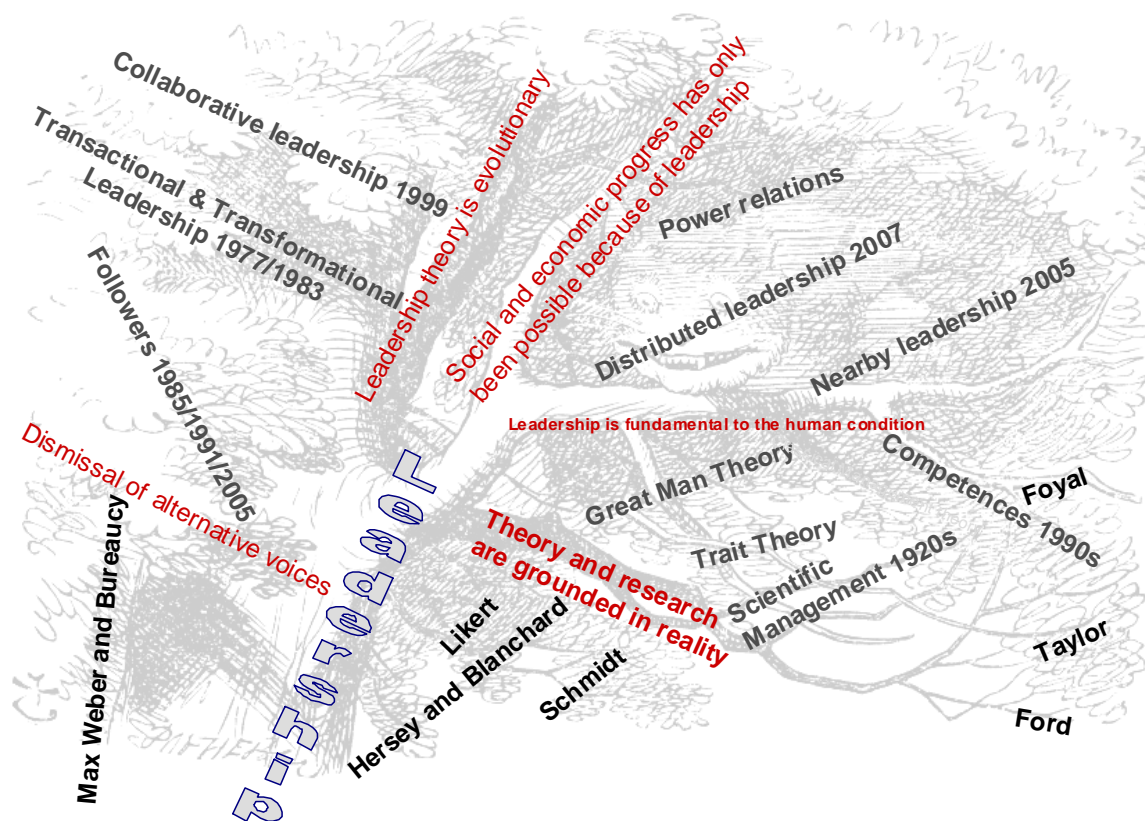
## **3. Research strategy and the quilt-maker**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) articulate a cogent argument that describes the qualitative researcher as a bricoleur or quilt maker, concentrating on the very creative aspects of developing the methodological elements of a research paradigm. Creativity seems to offer a key concept in developing a methodological research strategy into the fragmented area of leadership research, for which there is no encompassing definition (Bass 1990, Thorpe, Lawler & Gold 2007, Ford, Learmouth & Hardy 2008). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) express the need for creativity in the role of a qualitative researcher through the use the terms bricoleur and quilt maker. The term bricoleur is defined by Levi-Strauss(1966) as being a 'Jack of all trades, a kind of professional do-it-yourself' (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 4), producing a 'pieced together set of representations that is fitted to the specifics of a complex situation' (2005, 4). Many researchers have used this term to describe the act of qualitative research (2005, 4). For this study, the term quilt-maker (hooks 1992) describes this particular multi-faceted research strategy more successfully.

To explore the link between methodological development and the quilt-maker, the film *How to Make an American Quilt* (1995) will facilitate the contextualisation. A quilt-making group using the theme 'Where Love Resides' create a quilt. Each member of the group uses scraps of material from clothing that has personal meaning to them creating a patch for the quilt that expresses their own perception of where love resides. Each patch created represents in an abstract format personal recollections and perceptions, which inform the theme. Using connecting fabric that takes into account colour, shading and perspective of the individual patches a harmonious whole is created. In terms of the study, the quilt maker and the quilt pictorially represents the many grounding theories of leadership, linked together in a matrix connected by cultural, social, economic and legal understandings, both present and historical, carefully chosen to create a harmonious whole.

The quilt, with its roots in Afro-American history (hooks 1992) also represents aspects of alternative theory not usually brought into account within leadership research, fiction writing, post-colonial theory, post feminist theory, history, post modernism and psychology. These perspectives incorporated within this methodology will illustrate that leadership theory is the subject of sharp ideological differences and is not value free and objective. The methodology will investigate why one leadership theory enters the 'archive' of acceptable knowledge at the expense of alternatives (Tosh 2002). These varied theoretical perspectives add a much-needed depth to the study of leadership and a rich interpretation of how and why we have reached this point at this time.

#### 4. Common denominators, unquestioned assumptions and principles



**Figure 1:** The leadership theory tree of knowledge and the assumptions that provide the foundation

The common denominator of leadership research, whether explicit or implicit, is the leadership theories. The theories are an easily comprehensible, continuous series of events, a tree of knowledge, leading into the present, underpinning all research, model development and application. Through the literature review, five assumptions supporting the framework of leadership theory were identified and have become commonly accepted, unquestioned truths (Thorpe, Lawler & Gold, 2007; Price and Hicks, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Parker, 2004; Midley, 2004) rooted in the philosophical underpinning of research strategies, but not articulated. These assumptions include:

- The belief that social progress, economic growth and organized society have only been possible because of leadership providing a foundation for Fordism, Taylorism and Scientific management.

- Leadership is a natural part of being human and it is impossible to imagine what we might do without it, underpinning investigations into leadership traits and competencies.
- That the rigorous methods used in researching leadership guarantee that the research reflects the reality as it is seen, supporting work completed by the Hawthorne Studies influencing the development of research into leader behaviour and its impact on motivation and improved performance (Mullins, 2007: 53)
- That research contains views from all the voices available, not just a chosen few which is implicit in work on transformational, charismatic and visionary leadership, with only the voices of leaders present.

Although researchers (Price & Hicks; Parker, 2006:2; Thorpe et al, 2007; Klenke, 2008) have identified these assumptions, this research suggests that there is a need to understand why and how these assumptions became implicit within leadership theory in order to understand the influence on present day understandings of leadership. To find the answer, it is necessary to develop a research philosophy and strategy that focuses on the “why” and “how” of leadership rather than the “what”.

## **5. Developing the research methodology**

Sara Mills (2003) suggests that using the methods of Foucault is difficult to achieve in practise. It is easy to utilise his themes, repeating his ideas rather than making use of them. Foucault's concern is to question the way we think and to explore areas in terms of problems rather than subjects. In order to do this he develops particular methodological positions, the elements of which can be utilised in developing a methodology that will question the way we consider and research leadership.

Foucault related discourse to diverse social groups, linking them to specific practises in which they were located. This work continued in the nineteen-seventies, and identified heterogeneous links between institutional practices and the construction of subjectivity (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine 2008). Deleuze (1977), through his understanding of Foucault suggests that the application of theory to practice is no longer a tenable position; it is an interactive and open-ended process. This aspect will extend the work recently completed by Ford, Harding and Learmouth (2008), and their assertion that leadership is a performance that intertwines within the discursive practises of the current times. This creates a position of leadership that engages with the psychology of an individual where, ‘it penetrates the psyche and allows for the construction of identity or a self’ (21).

The term discourse, since the nineteen-seventies, refers to the large field of research that comes under the banner of qualitative and is concerned with the analysis of language and text. Foucaultian discursive formations are distinguishable from other versions of discourse analysis (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine 2008). The problem with using Foucault as a methodology is that the techniques were developed to eschew all formalisation (Smart 1992). However, following the lead taken by Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008) it is possible to discuss Foucault within a three-dimensional model in which to analyse discursive formations rather than discourse. Firstly, there is an ‘historical enquiry’ (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2008:91). This includes the development of an archive, and the archaeological and genealogical inquiry. The second dimension explores the mechanisms of power (91), trying to uncover the functioning of that power. Thirdly, an analysis of the material and signifying practises in which individual subjects are involved resulting in the subjectification of the individual (91).

## **6. Creating the archive**

The research will initially use two very different methodologies to develop and make visible the corpus of knowledge that refers to leadership. The first will use Foucault's notions of the archive and the statements that form the archive. The aim of the research is to understand the discursive structure that has formed around the term ‘leader’ within a business context. The initial step is to construct the archive of leadership literature composed of the current understanding of leadership discourse and research as it applies in the United Kingdom.

This activity reveals the statements (Foucault, 2005) identifying leadership as understood today. It also brings together the texts that contain those statements regarding leadership that are currently in use. What is interesting is that at present the archive for today is drawing on texts written by authors such as Machiavelli (1464), Sun Tzu (6<sup>th</sup> century BC), Likert (1932), Maslow (1943), Collins (2001), and Huczynski (2006). Foucault suggests that the range of texts come together because they contain



beings about an effect, much like a sentence which is an objective description of what is happening is a unit of discourse (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

In order to recognise statements of leadership within the archive Said's seminal work *Orientalism* (1978) will be used as a template. Said (1978) created a new dynamic within post-colonial theory, moving away from a Marxist interpretation of domination and repression to a Foucaultian view of discursive formations. Said suggests that the Orient is not a creation of nature, it is constructed by 'generations of intellectuals, artists, commentators, writers, politicians and more importantly through the naturalising of a wide range of Orientalist assumptions and stereotypes' (Said, 1978 in Ashcroft & Ahluwalia 2001:168). Terms such as exotic, mysterious and a land of opportunities and adventures are constructions of the Orient that we still hold today and often seen in travel brochures. Viewed as a discursive formation, *Orientalism* illustrates how the power to construct knowledge enables the retention of authority and control. Power in Foucaultian terms is creative, affecting the ability to construct and therefore claim knowledge, which in turn fixes and names identities (Foucault, 1998). Post-colonialism links Alvesson's (2002) thoughts on why leadership statements are made and what they are accomplishing with Foucault's notions on the historical conditions and social needs enabling the production of leadership statements.

In this particular research, an investigation of management and leadership theories and the accompanying research and academic critique will identify the statements that have contributed to the discursive formation of leadership. The archive develops by examining the 'sets of rules which at a given period and for a given society define...the limits and forms of the sayable' (Foucault, cited in Mills 2003, 64). Many of these rules are unquestionably accepted, and only those statements, which fit the rules, become part of the circulating discourse. This stage of the research represents a search for the statements into a discourse that privileges certain ideas and dismisses others developing a corpus of knowledge concerning a specific object, in this case the leader.

Foucault's methods avoid giving primacy to the ideas of the individual, preferring to view the human subject as being subjected to, 'particular, historically located, disciplinary processes and concepts which enable us to consider ourselves as individual subjects and which constrain us from thinking otherwise' (McHoul & Grace 1993:3). According to the Foucaultian view, these processes enable the subject to state, 'what we are' (McHoul & Grace 1993:3) and need establishing in order to develop the current literature, research and theory into a visible archive of leadership knowledge. Achievement of this objective will create the first step in the research process, making visible the current structure of leadership literature. Once completed, the second stage of the research will use archaeology within the newly created archive.

## **7. The archaeological dig**

The leadership archive consisting of a homogeneous network of relations and causality provides coherence to leadership theory and literature. This consistency creates a logical 'total history' (Kendall & Wickham 2003, 24), which can be divided into definite cohesive periods and stages. The second stage of the research will be to analyse the actual statements within the archive and to make visible the rules regulating the development of statements, and interrogate how institutions provide the limits within which discursive objects may act. Foucault describes archaeology as aiding the exploration of the networks of what is said and what can be seen, in a set of social arrangements (Kendall & Wickham 2003, 25). Archaeology links to Foucault's conception of discourse as a practical representation of language. He suggests that past discourse is not a theme commented on, but is a monument described. In archaeology, it is the condition under which discourse exists and its laws of construction, that are important and not the subject who articulates the thought (Foucault, cited in McHoul & Grace 1993, 49). This section will also explore in greater depth Foucault's notions of discourse, its application to the corpus of leadership theory, research and critiques, providing a foundation on which to base an alternative perspective on the development of leadership literature. The use of archaeology is very much a historical exploration of the laws and conditions under which the leadership statements are created. In order to look at the present, as a 'history of the present' (Mills 2003, Kendall and Wickham 2003) Foucault's method of genealogy is utilised.

It would appear that as assumptions implicit within leadership literature are being revealed, that the archive of leadership literature has passed through the final threshold, that of Formalization. This is where assumptions become legitimate starting points for knowledge development through research.



The assumption that leadership is necessary and can be objectively measured forms the starting point of all leadership research.

The preceding threshold concerns the development of acceptable paradigms in which knowledge can be acquired. In leadership research until recently, research was only accepted if it was conducted in a positive, objective, quantitative paradigm, and this is still the case for certain 4\* journals.

The threshold that was of most interest to Foucault was that of epistemology. This is the stage where attempts are made to establish the body of knowledge as a coherent, valid and unified body of knowledge. It is at this stage that research is most influenced by cultural and social factors.

The first threshold is that of positivity. This is the point where the term 'leader' is first mentioned, where the body of knowledge starts to be recognised as a separate discourse.

This stage of the research is concerned with discovery. The aim is to discover the connecting themes and statements of the literature now and to back trace them until there is a change in those statements. This change represents a threshold within the archive, and is associated with a change in the economic, political and social agenda of that time. This process continues until all the thresholds have been identified. Completion of this task will result in the formation of an archive of leadership knowledge encapsulated into the statements made about leadership. The third stage is to understand what social need these statements are responding to, and therefore what the statements in our present threshold are actually a response to. This is accomplished by utilizing Foucault's method of genealogy.

## **8. Genealogical tracing**

Archaeology and genealogy are regarded as being complimentary by Foucault (Kendall & Wickham 2003, 31), and he describes genealogy as the tactics for using the results of archaeology (Foucault 1980, 85). Archaeology explores the use of discourse in its historical milieu, and genealogy starts to integrate Foucault's notion of power and knowledge. Genealogy will also explore the leadership archive from the perspective of a 'history of the present' with an emphasis on power. Archaeology provides a snapshot of the web of discourse in its historical context, whereas genealogy describes statements as ongoing processes, and concentrates on a strategic use of archaeology to answer problems about the present. Power, as discussed by Kendall and Wickham (2003), is neither possessive nor repressive in Foucaultian methodology it is practised, and it is from this perspective that the research will engage with the archive. It will provide another perspective on leadership literature, concentrating on the issues of power and knowledge within the historical formation of leadership knowledge and the privileging of certain statements. It is within the genealogical phase that the notion of quilt-maker is developed. In order to explore statements as ongoing process it is necessary to consider them in terms of post-feminist, post-colonial, psychological and modern philosophical themes and methods. It is here that the connecting stories surrounding the individual 'patches' of theory are re-interrogated and re-formed, and how it effects the role of the human subject in the creation of archives and discourses.

Rabinow (1984) suggest that, 'our culture attempts to normalize individuals through increasingly rationalised means by turning them into meaningful subjects and docile objects (xxiii). The suggestion is that the individual is a stable entity with an essence open to examination and conditioning (Kendall & Wickham 2003:53). This leaves the individual in a position of oppression allowing power to become a force that is possessed and owned. Foucault however sees the individual as an effect of power and it is the discursive processes that constitute the individual (Mills 2008, 83). Genealogical tracing explores the archive through the effect that the power and knowledge of leadership theory has on the bodies that are its target.

## **9. Conclusion**

Leadership theory over the past eighty years has undergone a 'reduction of changes and differences by invoking explanations employing models of creation, consciousness, and evolution (Smart 1992). This has developed a smooth unifying history of leadership theory with appropriate causalities in place. In order to overcome this problem and create a site for the development and acceptance of alternative leadership models the research strategy based on the conditions of possibility creates a problem based research question.

Through the initial literature review into business leadership, it is apparent that one of the many issues available for exploration is, "Why are United Kingdom leaders being outperformed by those in Europe and America?" The answer will add knowledge to the debate concerning the production of a leadership model that will aid United Kingdom business not only to survive but to develop during these difficult times.

The proposition states that the reason could be that leadership in the United Kingdom, due to influences from America has not developed in order to respond to cultural and social needs in the United Kingdom, creating a rupture between the practice of leadership and what is required. The suggestion is that the discursive formation of leadership literature and the assumptions it implicitly contains inhibits the ability to create alternative leadership models more appropriate to the United Kingdom in the twenty first century.

The research is therefore attempting to discover the historical conditions that enabled the discourse of leadership to exist rather than attempting to discover what leadership is. By questioning underlying assumptions, investigating cultural and social needs to which leadership is responding Foucault's historical conditions of possibility are revealed. It is a process of finding the 'bits and pieces that have to be in place to allow something else to be possible' (Kendal & Wickham, 2003:25), not unlike a patchwork quilter, drawing on fragments of materials from a variety of sources to create something new but recycled from what already exists.

The aim of the research is to contribute to the understanding of leadership within the United Kingdom. The research is developed in the belief that there is a need to align the social, economic and cultural need of the United Kingdom to leadership development and to achieve that task, it is necessary to discover "why leadership", the conditions that enable it to exist and what the fundamental purpose is.

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