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Leadership: the complexities and state of the field

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Purpose:

The purpose of this literature review is to advance contemporary cognisance of the leadership field and its current state, through the synthesis and development of earlier contributions. A taxonomy of evolutionary eras is tendered, from which future research opportunities can be extrapolated.

Design/methodology/approach:

This paper conducts a narrative literature review of significant leadership literature. There is a focus on prominent contributions which are considered to have been highly influential within the field, whilst acknowledging other notable influences.

Findings:

Leadership is found to be a multifaceted and evolving field, which continues to produce further research fields. This dynamism hinders the progression of leadership to achieve integration. Eleven interrelated eras of leadership, which hold varying research value, were found. Whilst some eras superficially appear to be discredited, there is arguably scope for these to be developed in contemporary context. Currently the leadership approaches which are replete with research opportunities include servant leadership, a skills approach, and entrepreneurial leadership.

Research limitations/implications:

Leadership is a vast research area with numerous contributions to its body of work, therefore, this review has focused on prominent contributions, and has not attempted to include all available literature. The dissemination of leadership literature has allowed for research gaps to emerge, and future research recommendations to be drawn.

Originality/value:

Whilst there is an extensive body of leadership literature, there are few reviews of the literature. A comprehensive contemporary review facilitates an examination of the current complexities and state of the leadership field.

Introduction

As a modern field of study leadership has a relatively long and meandering history. It is the most prominent organisational science research field, which has become increasingly multifaceted and interdisciplinary as it has evolved (Perruci and McManus, 2013; Yammarino, 2013). Yet, contrary to the expectation that profuse scholarly exploration leads to greater and more nuanced understandings, mastery of the leadership field has remained elusive. This could be attributed to many factors which have culminated to hinder assimilation: the abundance of theory which both enriches and dissociates the field (Meuser *et al.*, 2016); its unsystematic development (Hoffman *et al.*, 2010); the rate of management research production (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009); and the increasingly divergent approaches to its exploration (Meuser *et al.*, 2016). However, these perceived complications are arguably to the strength of leadership through distinction and longevity as a research field, which remains thriving (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; Perruci and McManus, 2013). There is an extensive body of leadership literature, which requires evaluation and categorisation to develop coherence. This task has been attempted by both King (1990), in his contribution of leadership eras, and by Alimo-Metcalfe's (2013) stages of leadership development, which is less extensive. However, the field has extended beyond these contributions, as leadership research is continually produced; which thus invalidates King's (1990) suggestion of an integrative era of leadership.

For an established field of study leadership has few comprehensive literature reviews. Those which have been identified are conceivably insufficient, as the field has advanced beyond their coverage (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; King, 1990). This paper aims to address this literature gap whilst ascertaining:

- R1. What does existing literature currently contribute to an understanding of the development of the leadership field?
- R2. To what extent has the field of leadership advanced beyond existing categorisations of its literature?
- R3. What future research opportunities can be extrapolated from the continuous development of the established field of leadership.

The contributions of Alimo-Metcalfe (2013) and King (1990) can be considered significant given their depth and wide scope respectively. Independently they provide partial coverage

of existing leadership literature, with their synthesis providing a framework which facilitates the assessment of current literature. However, the stages of progression proffered by each require development which can be achieved through the inclusion of further literature. This assertion is particularly true of Alimo-Metcalfe’s (2013) post-heroic era, which omits significant leadership approaches such as implicit leadership theories. The framework created by the synthesis of these literature reviews can be extended to further develop Alimo-Metcalfe’s (2013) post-heroic era and include further eras – the skills era and the entrepreneurial era (Figure 1). This allows for the exploration of further leadership developments beyond the scope of those existing contributions. From this comprehensive exploration, gaps in literature and further empirical research opportunities will be extrapolated.

Figure 1: The Leadership Eras

Adapted from Alimo-Metcalfe (2013) and King (1990)

Personality Era

The personality era marks the beginning of modern western empirical leadership studies. This era is dominated by Great Man theory and the trait approach, which have inextricable links in their proposition of inherent traits determining leadership ability (Hoffman *et al.*, 2010; King, 1990). In 1840 Carlyle developed Great Man theory through a study of prominent historical leaders, which he presented in a series of lectures and the publication of *Our Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic History* (Perruci and McManus, 2013; Spector, 2016). Leaders were proposed to be individuals sent by God with a divine right to superiority, thus, endorsing the subordination of followers who uphold the leadership position through hero-worship (Perruci and McManus, 2013; Spector, 2016). Great Man theory commanded scholarly attention into the 20th century through the exploration of leadership personality (King, 1990; Ronald, 2014) and follower’s psychological dependency (Spector, 2016) suggesting the emulation of great leaders could potentially create effective leadership, although to limited effect (Ronald, 2014; Yammarino, 2013). There are challenges to the scholarly rigour of Great Man theory, including the exclusion of context and limited practical application led to the approach being discredited (King, 1990; Spector,

2016). Yet, Spector (2016) intimates a contemporary relevance of Great Man theory in the exploration of highly remunerated CEOs who are revered for their transformational abilities, irrespective of past business transgressions.

The trait approach emerged as an incremental advancement from Great Man theory, where the focus shifted from known prominent leaders to the possession of leadership traits (King, 1990; Yukl, 2013). There is a continuity in theoretical perspective as the underlying assumption of leaders being born with a natural predisposition to lead remains (Hoffman *et al.*, 2010; King, 1990), with the proposition that traits are simply the “outward manifestation of being born to lead” (Halliman, 2014 p.38). Furthermore, the intention of trait theory is the early identification of leadership attributes to ensure elevation of the natural leader, instead of imitation (Halliman, 2014). Empirical studies have sought to develop personality profiles to achieve leadership identification; however, these have yielded discord in findings which attracted criticism (Antonakis, 2011; Bass, 1990). Nevertheless, Stogdill produced two notable contributions (Bass, 1990). In 1948 Stogdill suggested that leaders and followers could be differentiated by eight traits however in 1974 Stogdill produced a revised list of ten attributes which also considered situation (Bass, 1990; Northouse, 2016). These findings had a dual effect on the trait approach: it simultaneously added and advanced empirical literature, whilst challenging the assumption of inherent leadership by acknowledging context. Through the recognition of context, leadership was progressed from a unidimensional conceptualisation, to one with greater potential variables (Halliman, 2014; King, 1990), yet, the trait approach has proven to be enduring and influential on subsequent eras arguably because its simplicity is appealing although potentially contributory to its demise (Derue *et al.*, 2011; Yukl, 2013). This unidimensional approach of trait theory limits its application and practical relevance (Germain, 2012; King, 1990). Whilst it is an approach that may facilitate the early identification of leaders (Halliman, 2014), it is restricted in its ability to predict or enhance leadership (Germain, 2012; King, 1990). Perhaps most pertinently this singular approach does not consider the influence of context on a leader’s personality (Germain, 2012), where traits may either be suppressed or exaggerated (Halliman, 2014). This conceivably creates a cyclical limitation where trait theories cannot predict leadership whilst excluding context, and context influences the expression of leadership traits which do not necessarily fit existing leadership trait profiles.

Influence Era

The influence era emerged from the personality era by exploring the relational nature of leadership and power dynamics, whilst being comparable in its singularity and focus on the lone leadership figure (King, 1990; Yukl, 2013). French and Raven’s (1959) taxonomy of power examines sources of social power and the ability of the influencing agent to change the beliefs, attitudes or behaviours of the target through their actions (Raven, 2008). Six types of power are identified which allow the agent to influence the target: legitimate power – derived from position and formal authority; expert power – derived from personal knowledge; referent power – derived from the positive feelings of the followers; reward power – the exchange of effort for reward; coercive power – the threat of retribution from non-conformity; and informational power – derived from the control of information (Raven, 2008; Yukl, 2013).

The inclusion of coercive power has led to controversy for legitimising this potentially dysfunctional power (Northouse, 2016; Yukl, 2013). This ethical consideration can also be extended to informational power, as disinformation can be used to covertly extend the influence of leadership (Tourish, 2011). Yet, informational power is conceivably not a preserve of leadership, and can therefore hinder their ability to influence followers (Yukl, 2013). The influence era is arguably limited in its contribution to the leadership field, however it should be recognised for its ability to create debate as to the legitimacy of negative leadership. Furthermore, it created an acknowledgement of leadership choice in the application of power, which is comparable to the behaviour era where the focus is on the actions of leaders.

Behaviour Era

Through a focus on the actions of leaders, the behaviour era challenges the premise that leaders have an inherent predisposition to lead (King, 1990), however, persevering characteristics of the earlier trait era are apparent within this advancement. This era produced leadership behaviour profiles, and arguably progressed the proposition of imitability which is achievable when it is not concentrated on inherent characteristics. The

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3 advancement proffered by the behaviour era can be contested, given the perpetuation of
4 the unidimensional leadership (Derue *et al.*, 2011). Irrespective of the scale of advancement
5 or the continuation of perceived conceptual limitations, the behaviour era offers empirical
6 studies which investigate leadership from the perspective of action.
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11 Notable contributions to the behaviour era include Lewin *et al.* (1939) three leadership
12 styles; Bowers and Seashore's Four Factor Theory (1966); McGregor's (1960) Theory X and
13 Theory Y. Debatably the most prominent studies are the Ohio State studies, and the
14 University of Michigan studies (Kest, 2006). These individual studies both identify a
15 relationship between the behavioural variables of task and people inclination, whilst
16 distinctly differing on the nature of this relationship (Kest, 2006). These behavioural models
17 are considered to have been influential on the development of later models, including
18 Bowers and Seashore's (1966) four factor model and in underpinning the leadership styles
19 approach (Halliman, 2014).
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28 The leadership styles approach is typified by the Managerial Grid (Blake and Mouton, 1964).
29 Whilst this model facilitates practical application, it is arguably disadvantaged by its
30 discourse, potentially yielding skewed results where management is inferred instead of
31 leadership (Halliman, 2014; Northouse, 2016). The later rebranding of the model to the
32 Leadership Grid was conceivably a response to this concern (Halliman, 2014); however, its
33 prolific use prior to this may prevent a material change in discourse.
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40 41 **Situational and Contingency Era**

42 Situational and contingency eras are differentiated by King (1990), which is arguably
43 arbitrary given their conceptual proximity. Both approaches can be considered an
44 advancement from the behaviour era, which demonstrated some awareness of followers in
45 the leadership phenomena, although to a limited extent. However, the situational and
46 contingency era can be suggested to advance the field through a wider awareness of further
47 influential factors, and a shift away from the "unidimensional forms" of leadership
48 postulated by earlier eras (King, 1990 p.47).
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Contributions to the situation and contingency era identified many potential variables including Trist and Bamforth's (1951) socio-technical systems, Katz and Kahn's (1978) organisational structures, Vroom and Yetton's (1973) Normative Decision Model, Stogdill's (1959) Role Attainment Theory and Homans' (1950) Leader Role Theory and Path-Goal theory (House, 1971). However, this era is dominated by Fiedler's (1964) Contingency Theory, and Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) Situational Leadership Theory. Akin to earlier theorisations, Fiedler's Contingency Theory and Hersey and Blanchard's (1977) Situational Leadership are similar in their focus, context, yet fundamentally different in perspective and approach. They are comparable on their mutual acceptance of a relationship between leadership task and relationship motivation however, differ on how effective leadership emerges from this relationship (Jago, 1982; McClesky, 2014).

Parallels of these models continue in the facilitation of leadership style measurement and their limitations (Jago, 1982; Kest, 2006). The value of Situational Leadership is arguably in its ability to facilitate measurement, and therefore may be more accurately considered a model as there is a perceived lack of theoretical rationale for leadership actions due to ambiguities and conceptual contradictions (Kest, 2006; McClesky, 2014). Furthermore, the ability of Situational Leadership to persuasively evaluate the multifaceted maturity construct is questioned which arguably challenges the veracity of the theory (Norris and Vecchio, 1992; Vecchio *et al.*, 2006). Fiedler's (1964) Contingency Theory proffered the Least Preferred Co-worker questionnaire (LPC) as a framework for measuring leadership style. However, the veracity of this framework can also be contested given its focus on the leadership position to the exclusion of followers, and its reliance on the subjective perceptions of individuals (Jago, 1982). There are also methodological criticisms of LPC which challenge its validity and reliability (Jago, 1982) which could be addressed by further empirical longitudinal studies. Bass (1990 p.496), debates the stability of the LPC over "extended intervals of time" and cites a number of significant studies Rice (1978), Prothero and Fiedler (1974), and Bons (1974). Yet, these studies can all be considered cross-sectional as they are measured in months and thus raise challenges to the assertion of 'extended intervals'. Furthermore, the LPC is limited in its ability to demonstrate a relationship with leadership behaviour which emerges from the motivational inclination (Neider and Schriesheim, 2002).

Transactional Era

The transactional era is debatably an advancement of the influence era, with a perpetuating focus on social interactions and role differentiation, yet this development includes an acknowledgement of reciprocity in the leader-follower relationship (King, 1990). Within this era, leader-follower relationships are considered a dyadic exchange between these two actors (Northouse, 2016). This era is typified by three prominent approaches: the Vertical Dyad Linkage, Leader-Member Exchange, and Transactional Leadership.

Vertical Dyad Linkage proposes individual leader-follower relationships, or vertical dyads (Dansereau *et al.* 1995). Followers are categorised according to the strength and formality of the relationship with the leader as either in-groups or out-groups (Schedlitzki and Edwards, 2014). The contribution of Dansereau *et al.* (1995) conceivably provided the foundation on which Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) was developed, and consequently furthered this perspective (Northouse, 2016). LMX advanced the field through its exploration of the quality of the unique and individual leader-member relationships, which rejected the proposition of adapting leadership style, and evaluated the impact of these relationship on organisational performance (Anand *et al.*, 2011; Ronald, 2014). There are both prescriptive and descriptive advantages to this research stream. The reciprocity of the relationship is explicative of the leadership position maintained through follower perception, whilst providing a rationale for follower behaviour (De Souza and Klein, 1995; Ronald, 2014). However, this focus on the quality of dyadic leader-member relationship is arguably to the exclusion of context; thus, potentially losing the nuance which contributes to the formation of this relationship (Anand *et al.*, 2011).

Transactional Leadership is an alternative perspective which suggests the reciprocal leader-member relationship is based on a series of mutually beneficial exchanges (Den Hartog *et al.*, 1997). Each actor is thought to undertake a cost-benefit analysis; where the leader seeks desirable follower behaviour, and followers receive an expected return (Den Hartog *et al.*, 1997; Sarros and Santora, 2001). Whilst followers can draw satisfaction from this anticipated agreement, there is limited scope for leaders to redress follower dissatisfaction as the relationship is based on a series of transactions rather than a unitary continuous

affiliation (Den Hartog *et al*, 1997). Whilst it could be proposed that a new transaction could remedy dissatisfaction, the relationship is still essentially instrumental and therefore potentially limited in scope (Conger, 2011).

Transformational Era

Burns (1978) Transformational Leadership approach dominates the transformational era, positing leadership as a proactive process of influence and change. Leadership motivation is suggested to facilitate individuals transcending their current state to achieve organisational goals (Kest, 2006; Ronald, 2014). Transformational leadership was proposed to facilitate “morally uplifting” engagement of followers, thus allowing them to surpass the accepted norm to achieve goals (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011 p. 300). Burns’ (1978) conceptualisation of Transformational Leadership was presented as a juxtaposition of Transactional Leadership, which gave the term prominence, however, it should be recognised that the term was originally coined by Downtown in 1973 (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011).

This antithetical conceptualisation of Burns (1978) was furthered by Bass (1995) through the development of the Full Range Leadership model and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The wealth of empirical evidence produced from the use of the MLQ arguably explicates the persevering popularity of Transformational Leadership (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011; McClesky, 2014). Nevertheless, it is not without limitations, particularly the narrow behaviours it includes, and the exclusion of perceived negative leadership traits (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011; Yukl, 1999). Transformational Leadership can be criticised as regressing the evolution of the leadership field, as it reverts to a leader-centric approach, which is focused on the dyadic leader-follower relationship to the exclusion of the acknowledgement of group influence (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011; Yukl, 1999, 2011).

Whilst, Transformational Leadership arguably dominates this era, there are further approaches. The Pygmalion Effect is limited by lack of empirical evidence and criticism for its laboratory development (Eden, 2008). Charismatic Leadership, developed by House in 1977 and based on the work of Weber, is also limited by a lack of empirical evidence (Conger, 2011; King, 1990). There are two theorisations of Charismatic Leadership which arguably contribute to the limited persuasiveness of the approach: attribution theory of charisma

and self-concept of charisma (Yukl, 1999; 2013). However, from a conceptual perspective it should be commended for its recognition of follower perception and the rationale for being led (Conger, 2011).

Culture Era

The cultural era widened the scope of the leadership field, as the iterative relationship of leadership and organisational culture was considered (Gordon, 2011). Organisational culture is an expansive research field, which conceivably parallels the leadership field: multiple research streams and working definitions, emergent and enacted phenomena, and resultant social processes (Alvesson, 2011; Yukl, 2013). Culture can be considered to be a historical evolution, with the point of inception being the founder's vision; thus inferring an iterative relationship between leadership and culture, as it evolves with organisational progression (Alvesson, 2011; Schein, 2010). As with all eras there were many notable contributions to the culture era including Manz and Sims' (1987) study of self-managed teams, and Theory Z as a development from McGregors' (1960) Theory X and Theory Y (Sullivan, 1983).

Peters and Waterman developed a practical framework in their 1982 publication *In Search of Excellence* (Alvesson, 2011; Kaplan, 2005). The McKinsey 7-S framework identifies seven interrelated criteria which addresses culture and leadership through the criteria of shared values (Dahlgard-Park and Dahlgard, 2007; Kaplan, 2005). However, this framework is challenged by the subjective perceptions of leaders and is incapable of effectively evaluating the extent of follower internalisation of culture (Alvesson, 2011). Furthermore, *In Search of Excellence* cited organisational examples which went on to fail, thus contesting the anecdotal veracity of the framework (Dahlgard-Park and Dahlgard, 2007).

Anti-Leadership Era

The field of leadership is subject to criticism resulting from the lack of definitional consensus, inconclusive empirical findings, and the perceived ineffectiveness of the paradigm (King, 1990). Pfeffer (1977) extended the issue of consensus, asserting that disparity was not confined to definitional debates, but was also apparent regarding the basic elements of leadership. The "underlying form or essence" of leadership is thought to have been overlooked in favour of delineating particular aspects such as traits or context

(Fairhurst, 2011 p. 498). This delineation of leadership attributes debatably contributes to the limited symbolic leadership position (Pfeffer, 1977). This maintained leadership position is posited as a result of followers' needs to develop a sense of control, and thus attribute causality to the socially constructed leadership figure; which potentially challenges the validity of existing empirical studies (Antonakis, 2011; Pfeffer, 1977).

Leadership Substitution Theory, posed by Kerr and Jermier in 1978, contested leadership as the primary organisational variable, and instead proposes that leadership behaviour is constrained by neutralising factors (Yukl, 2011; 2013). However, considering the potentially iterative nature of the relationship of leadership and organisation, posed in the cultural era, arguably early leadership influenced the formation of neutralising organisational variables, which thus infers salient leadership influence (King, 1990).

Post-Heroic Era

The post-heroic era of leadership emerged as a reaction to the events which challenged the “heroic” leadership figure (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013 p.25), and instigated a demand for more ethical and transparent leadership practices following high-profile ethical scandals (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; Perruci and McManus, 2013). Whilst ethical leadership is a prominent approach within this era, the post-heroic era has evolved to also include leadership approaches including authentic leadership and distributive leadership (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; Schyns and Schilling, 2011). Alimo-Metcalfe’s (2013) stages of leadership development categorises implicit leadership theories within the trait stage, however its inclusion in post-heroic is considered more accurate along with the inclusion of servant leadership. This advancement of the field demonstrates a broader awareness of the external environment and contemporary challenges. Leadership as a social process with a focus on values and culture has emerged as a response to globalisation and a dissatisfaction of earlier conceptualisation, where there is a greater awareness of the potentially divergent values of leaders and followers (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2014; Perruci and McManus, 2013).

Whilst ethical leadership is replete with a range of definitions it can broadly be considered as a moral form of leadership informed by personal ethics, altruistic intention and a concern for societal good and approval (Ciulla, 2005; Kangungo and Mendonca, 1998). Comparisons

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3 have been drawn between the ethical era and the trait and behaviour eras due to profiling
4 activity (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; Perruci and McManus, 2013). The subjectivity of ethics and
5 perceptions of leaders' challenges this approach; particularly in the evaluation of historical
6 leaders who can be judged on the outcomes of their actions, rather than the means to
7 achieve them (Ciulla, 2005). Furthermore, the influence of power in the leadership position
8 potentially renders ethical leadership inherently unstable, and therefore arguably
9 unsustainable (Ciulla and Forsyth, 2011).
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16 Authentic leadership is also concerned with the greater societal good whilst being
17 challenged by definitional discord and complexity in discourse (Caza and Jackson, 2011).
18 Followers are a significant consideration as the leadership position is maintained by the
19 follower's perception of leadership authenticity, which is achieved through the enactment
20 of appropriate leadership behaviours imitable by followers (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Shamir and
21 Eilam, 2005). This arguably creates a precarious leadership strategy as it is contingent on
22 unceasing positive follower perception; which may be unsustainable (Caza and Jackson,
23 2011; Shamir and Eilam, 2005).
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32 Follower perceptions are further explored through implicit leadership theories, which are
33 concerned with their perceptual process and attributions (Schyns and Schilling, 2011).
34 Leadership stereotypes created and attributed by followers renders the continuance of the
35 leadership position contingent upon followers' positive perceptions (Schyns and Schilling,
36 2011; Shondrick *et al.*, 2010). However, implicit leadership theory assumes a stable
37 environment and does not address the possibility of mistaken attribution, where the
38 characteristics of past leaders are projected onto current leaders (Schyns and Schilling,
39 2011; Shondrick *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, Schyns and Schilling (2011) suggest that the
40 potency of negative leadership perceptions is potentially instrumental in realising self-
41 fulfilling prophecies, as leadership support diminishes as does follower efforts.
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51 The emergence of the knowledge economy stimulated another paradigm shift which further
52 focused on the follower, as conventional leadership theories struggled to contend with the
53 evolving influence of social capital derived from knowledge assets and collaboration of
54 organisational success (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2007). Distributive leadership
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emerged as a social leadership process of shared power amongst a competent set of followers who demonstrated leadership abilities (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2013; Uhl-Bien *et al.*, 2007). This is conceivably merely a structural arrangement of transformational leadership (Díaz-Sáenz, 2011). Yet, as power and leadership are delineated within distributive leadership the delegation of task may not be a consequence of the leader’s discretion, and thus not a result of a transformational leadership agenda (Bolden, 2011).

The proposition of leadership facilitating the performance of followers is advanced by servant leadership, where leadership is an ethically based vocation with the motivation of service (Parris and Peachey, 2013; Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002). Servant leadership has been suggested to have links to Great Man theory when its central tenets are applied to notable historical leaders such as Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa (Parris and Peachey, 2013; Sendjaya and Sarros, 2002). There is arguably limited convincing empirical support for servant leadership given the sources of the most cited contributions. Parris and Peachey (2013) found Greenleaf, who devised the theory, and Spears, the former CEO of the Greenleaf Centre to be two of the most commonly cited sources. This infers a potential for bias and partisanship within these prominent works.

Further Leadership Eras

Skills Era

The skills era conceivably advanced from the post-heroic era, given authentic leadership’s proposition that leaders have development potential (Gardner *et al.*, 2005; Shamir and Eilam *et al.*, 2005). There is a continued recognition of the influence of leaders within this era with a further focus on the capabilities and skills which determine the application of leadership influence (Mumford *et al.*, 2000a). Skills have indirectly been intimated within previous eras, yet not considered as a distinctive leadership approach, however, given the accumulation of behaviours and the increased prolificacy of the importance of relationships and followers, it is considered that skills should be explored to determine its veracity as an era in itself.

In 1955 Katz published *Skills of an Effective Administrator*, which included a three-skills model of leadership (Katz, 2009). This was chronologically contemporaneous to the

development of prominent trait approaches, yet aimed to address the limitations of trait theories by proposing that leadership should be evaluated on what they do rather than who they are (Katz, 2009; Northouse, 2016). Whilst this can be considered a reasonable proposition, the three-skills approach was hindered by the discourse it engaged, with administrator inferring a management focus (Katz, 2009). Yukl (2013) potentially addressed this limitation by developing the imitative three-factor taxonomy of leadership skills, however, this model is considered limited in its predictive abilities (Mumford *et al.*, 2007).

Mumford and colleagues (2000a; 2000b; 2000c) have been instrumental in the empirical study of leadership skills. Mumford *et al.* (2000a) proposed a skills-based model of leadership which identifies the skills requirement for organisational problem solving and solution construction as creative problem-solving skills, social judgement skills, and social skills which are suggested to be facilitated by knowledge. The inference is that leadership is a learned capability, which fundamentally contests the 'Great Man' theory of leadership, and those approaches which consider leadership as inherent (Mumford *et al.*, 2000a). Empirical research supported this skills-based model (Mumford *et al.*, 2000b; 2000c; 2007), however it is potentially limited in transferability and generalisability given the narrow and unique context of the US army in which it was conducted.

Entrepreneurial Era

A further absence from both King (1990) and Alimo-Metcalfe (2013) is the entrepreneurial era. This emergent paradigm shares the limitations of the wider leadership field, particularly regarding definitional discord and a broad range of perspectives to its exploration. Entrepreneurial leadership, which characterises the entrepreneurial era, was investigated by Harrison *et al.* (2016a) through a systematic literature review of 82 papers, where 56 were empirical studies. Furthermore, a narrative literature review found entrepreneurial leadership to have five approaches (Roomi and Harrison, 2011) thus, illuminating the disparity across the approach. Arguably, the entrepreneurial leadership paradigm has evolved beyond the five approaches identified by Roomi and Harrison (2011), which would require further exploration to identify its nuances.

Whilst all of the approaches identified by Roomi and Harrison (2011) can be considered veracious, arguably the most significant research stream emerges from the intersection of leadership and entrepreneurship. Contributions from this perspective propose entrepreneurial leadership to emerge where commonalities between entrepreneurship and leadership converge (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Roomi and Harrison, 2011). There is a debate as to the points of intersection and perhaps ironically the perspective which postulates entrepreneurial leadership's existence cannot agree on a definition (Carland and Carland, 2012; Cogliser and Brigham, 2004). Nevertheless, examining these proposed intersections is thought to yield insights into the development of the paradigm (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Roomi and Harrison, 2011). An irony of this approach which explores the emergence of entrepreneurial leadership is the inability to proffer a definition (Cogliser and Brigham, 2004; Roomi and Harrison, 2011); which arguably is restricted in its development due to this situation. Furthermore, Vecchio (2003) posits that entrepreneurship is a derivative of leadership, rather than a distinct field. Whilst this may complicate the conceptualisation of entrepreneurial leadership, it furthers the assertion of an entrepreneurial era within the field of leadership.

Advancing the Field

The synthesis of Alimo-Metcalfe's (2013) and King's (1990) categorisations of leadership depicts a fair historical representation of the field. Prominent approaches and developments which incited paradigmatic shifts in the field are acknowledged thus, facilitating an adequate, but incomplete understanding of the field, however, leadership has developed beyond these contributions. These developments are not limited to the emergence of new eras, but have also occurred within eras identified within earlier literature reviews. The post-heroic era was found to be deficient in its omission of implicit leadership theories and servant leadership. Furthermore, neither contribution recognised the significance of a skills era nor the emergence of an entrepreneurial era. Those leadership approaches which were not included in the earlier literature reviews arguably yield the greatest future research potential. Conjecture as to their absence potentially indicates their initial exclusion was due to their relative emergence. Nevertheless, this allows for further expansion of the field through empirical research.

Further empirical research could advance servant leadership as an approach. Currently empirical evidence of servant leadership is potentially limited due to its source. The most cited servant leadership scholars are Greenleaf, Spears, and Laub (Parris and Peachey, 2013). As earlier recognised the relationship of two of these scholars to an institution potentially allows for bias, thus, further empirical research free from partisanship could both further develop and validate this leadership approach. Distributive leadership may also provide future research streams as context has not been fully explored as a pertinent variable (Bolden, 2011).

Arguably the greatest research opportunities arise from the skills and entrepreneurial eras of leadership. Whilst there is existing notable empirical evidence within the skills era, it is potentially limited by its narrow context (Mumford *et al.*, 2000a; 2000b; 2000c; 2007). For generalisability and transferability to be created, these contributions require evaluation within a range of contexts. As empirical research is conducted within different environments greater insights may be facilitated. Longitudinal studies of the skills approach could also identify relationships between leadership skills and the life cycle of organisations. The entrepreneurial era is also replete with research opportunities, which can develop its veracity as a leadership era. The scope to achieve this is provided by the nascent entrepreneurial leadership paradigm. There are some notable empirical contributions (Gupta *et al.*, 2004; Renko *et al.*, 2015), however the fragmentation of the paradigm creates the requirement for further empirical study in many of the resultant research streams (Roomi & Harrison, 2011). A skills approach to entrepreneurial leadership is a particularly prominent research opportunity, given its recognition by Lippitt (1987) at the paradigm's inception and empirical study being limited to the contribution of Harrison *et al.* (2016b). Furthermore, there is a potentially iterative benefit to the exploration of skills within the entrepreneurial leadership paradigm and the skills approach to leadership.

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