Review

Qualitative research on leadership:
A critical but appreciative review

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Abstract

This article reviews a large number of articles that derive from qualitative research on leadership that were published prior to 2004 in peer-reviewed journals. The article then goes on to examine critically but appreciatively the ways in which qualitative research on leadership is and is not distinctive. This review shows that while qualitative research has made some important contributions to certain areas of leadership, such as the role of leaders in the change process, it is sometimes not as distinctive, when compared to quantitative research, as might be supposed. The piece also examines studies that combine quantitative with qualitative research. The different ways in which the two approaches are combined is a particular emphasis in this examination. In addition, the article explores the issue of whether the corpus of research that has been accumulated by qualitative researchers can be combined with that of quantitative researchers. A central ingredient of the discussion of qualitative research is the tendency for many researchers not to build sufficiently on the studies of leadership conducted by others. It is argued that giving greater attention to this issue will allow the contributions of qualitative research on leadership to become clearer.
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1. Introduction

The field of leadership research has changed markedly from the one to which many of the contributors to and readers of this journal will have encountered in the 1970s and 1980s. Two features stand out when the current situation is compared to that of today. These two features are the greater optimism about the field and its greater methodological diversity. These characteristics will be briefly outlined. First, many leading figures seemed to be queuing up to condemn the field for the vast amount of money and effort spent and expended on understanding leadership with so little payoff. One highly respected contributor to organizational psychology pronounced:

> *As we all know*, the study, and more particularly, the results produced by the study, of leadership, has been a major disappointment for many of us working within organizational behavior. (Cummings, 1981, p. 366, emphasis added)

"As we all know" has been emphasized in this quotation because it implies that such a view of leadership research was largely unremarkable (and therefore unlikely to be disputed) and could be made in spite of the fact that it was simultaneously sweeping and damning. Nor was such a view uncommon, as the "as we all know" remark implies. Many contributors to the field were keen to proffer remarks of the "never has so much research been done for so little return" kind. Miner (1975) even suggested abandoning the concept of leadership, at least temporarily, because of its limited utility in helping us to understand organizational behavior.

Today, the picture seems very different, as Avolio, Sosik, Jung, and Berson (2003, p. 277) have noted. Leadership research comes across as a more confident, self-assured and fertile field than in the days when writers like Cummings and Miner made their pronouncements. Several factors have contributed to this improved state of affairs, including: improved measurement and analytic techniques; greater use of meta-analysis so that more systematic reviews of evidence could be compiled; the huge surge of interest in transformational leadership and charismatic leadership which provided a fulcrum for the field; more and better cross-cultural studies; and greater diversity in the types of leadership and organizational context that became the focus of attention.

One further factor that may have contributed to the perception that leadership research is no longer a field in crisis is additionally the second way in which the field differs from the 1970s and 1980s. Leadership research nowadays exhibits far greater methodological diversity today than in even the relatively recent past. There are a number of different aspects to the greater methodological diversity in the field but the one that will be the focus of this article is the greater incursion of qualitative research. At the time that Cummings (1981) and Miner (1975) gave their verdicts, qualitative research was virtually unknown in leadership research. Indeed, the first article that appears in the table of journal articles below (see Table 1) was not published until 1979 (Pettigrew, 1979). The earliest article that appears if one conducts a search in the ISI Web of Science using "leadership" and "qualitative" as key words was published in 1988 (Bryman, Bresnen, Beardsworth, & Keil, 1988). It is the significance of the incursion of qualitative research into leadership research that is the focus of this review.

As Table 1 below suggests, although there are some earlier examples of qualitative research on leadership, it is not until the late 1980s that the approach began to gain a foothold. In this regard, leadership research was probably somewhat behind other social scientific fields, an issue that will receive further attention below. One possible component of the explanation for this somewhat later incursion of qualitative research into leadership may be that, whereas many sociologists and organization theorists readily embraced the approach, social psychologists, who have been prominent contributors to leadership research, have been more resistant (Fine & Elsbach, 2000). Psychology generally is a field that tends to produce a very small number of articles based on qualitative research (Munley et al., 2002). This resistance is probably connected with the tendency for psychological research to be wedded to experimental designs, a style of research that does not connect well to qualitative research. Nonexperimental research tends to be undertaken when an experimental design is not feasible.

A significant catalyst for qualitative research on leadership may have been the growing interest in the second half of the 1980s onwards in leadership in relation to organizational symbolism and sensemaking, which are issues to which an interpretive strategy are particularly well suited. Moore and Beck's (1984) research on metaphorical imagery among bank managers is an early example of such an emphasis. Moreover, the arrival of *The Leadership Quarterly* in 1990 and the creation within it of a Qualitative Methods section that could provide a forum for discussion of and articles employing qualitative research has also played a part.

Leadership research has been and almost certainly still is a field that is dominated by a single kind of data gathering instrument—the self-administered questionnaire. The field is replete with countless studies that employ questionnaires within the context of experimental, cross-sectional, and longitudinal designs. Indeed, some of the best-known contributions to the field are more or less defined by the questionnaires that lay at their heart. The Ohio State LBDQ scales, Fiedler's LPC scale, and more recently the MLQ, which exemplify respectively the style, contingency and new leadership phases of the

Table 1
Studies of leadership based on qualitative research

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Pettigrew (1979)	Private British public school	Case study	Qualitative interviewing, documents and other archival material	Impact of leadership succession on the course of the school's history.	Leader as a manager of meaning who infuses the organization with purpose and commitment. Use of values, beliefs, language and rituals in the process of infusion. Significance of the leader's vision.
Smircich (1983), Smircich and Morgan (1982)	Insurance company in USA	Case study	Participant observation; qualitative interviews; documents	Course of events surrounding company president's attempt to solve some organizational problems by inaugurating a company-wide initiative to address it.	The leader is a manager of meaning who moulds organizational culture.
Roberts (1985), Roberts and Bradley (1988)	School district superintendent/ school commissioner in US	Case study	Archives; participant observation; interviews	Impact of leader on others and in terms of driving the organization forward.	Charismatic leadership. At district level, leader viewed as visionary, enthusiastic, creator of mutual trust. At state level, seen as innovative but no longer as charismatic. Importance of context (lack of crisis, pressures on leader's time).
Statham (1987)	Female and male managers in financial firm, manufacturing firm, and technical institute in US	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Gender differences in management styles, as viewed by managers and their secretaries.	Female managers more people oriented than men but just as task oriented. Men and women equally prepared to delegate but women more likely to want to be involved in what others are doing.
Tierney (1987)	Leader of a liberal arts college in US	Case study	Ethnography, including participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and documents	How the President dealt with a series of crises with which the college was faced.	President's use of symbols to convey her leadership style. Lack of understanding about the intended meaning of symbols among staff.
Bryman et al. (1988)	Construction projects in the UK	Multiple case study (3)	Qualitative interviews	Leaders need continually to adjust their styles of leadership to suit different people and	Whether leader is directive or participative in dealings with subordinates is contingent on the nature of the situation with which he

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Bryman et al. (1988)				circumstances (e.g. whether dealing with subcontractors and different stages in the project cycle).	or she is faced.
Vanderslice (1988)	US worker-owned restaurant	Case study	Qualitative interviews, conversations, observation	Leadership in a formally leaderless organization.	Leadership occurs throughout the organization and not in terms of hierarchical position.
Bensimon (1989)	Higher education institutions in US	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Perceptions of good leadership among higher education presidents.	Presidents were more likely to conceive of good leadership within one of four frames (mainly bureaucratic or collegial) or within a pair of frames (mainly collegial/symbolic or collegial/political). The bureaucratic frame largely dominates the perceptions of presidents by others.
Birnbaum (1990)	Same as Bensimon (1989)			Implicit leadership theories among higher education presidents.	Majority conceptualized leadership in terms of use of power/influence over others or of behavior, such as motivating others.
Tierney (1989)	Same as Bensimon (1989)			Perceptions of good leadership among higher education presidents and how they themselves enact their leadership roles.	Presidents as symbolic actors. Emphasizes their use of: metaphors, physical symbols, distinctive modes of communication, structural symbols, people as symbols, and symbols to represent their institutions.
Graham (1991)	Servant–leaders in USA	Multiple case study (3)	Not entirely clear (observation, documents)	The nature and significance of servant leadership.	Important for leaders not just to be visionaries but also to enable others to become competent agents in their own right. Servant leaders have a moral capacity, which enhances followers' agency and recognizes their needs.
Alvesson (1992)	Computer consultancy company in Sweden	Case study	Qualitative interviews, some participant observation,	Leadership is an expression of organizational culture and therefore	Importance for the company of leaders being expressions of the culture and of promoting the

Table 1 (continued)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Alvesson (1992)			documents	constrained by it. Shows how leadership changed over the years.	company's integration in the face of fissiparous tendencies.
Knights and Willmott (1992)	UK life assurance firm	Case study but article based largely on a single transcript of data	Qualitative interviews and other research methods but transcript derives from a recorded conversation.	Leadership is viewed as something that is accomplished discursively in the process of interaction.	No specific leadership styles or forms of behavior emphasized.
Neumann (1992)	University presidents in USA	Multiple case study (2 out of 8)	Qualitative interviewing	Presidents' leader behavior in good times and bad times.	Leaders use budgets both as ways of conveying information and as symbols. The 'story' is crucial to how budgets are received by staff.
Dana and Pitts (1993)	Elementary school principal in US	Case study	Qualitative interviews, participant observation and autoethnography (second author is the principal)	Role of metaphors in helping the principal to make sense of his roles and changes he intended to achieve his vision of change.	Shift from metaphor of principal as loner to principal as team player, from principal as the school to principal as facilitator of the school, from running faculty meetings to facilitating them.
Gaines (1993)	Leader of a UK retail chain	Case study	Qualitative interviewing; documents	Anita Roddick as a charismatic leader.	Significance of charismatic leader in the founding of Body Shop International, along with the negative impact of charismatic leadership, including problems of routinizing it.
Weed (1993)	Leader of a US reform movement/ pressure group	Case study	Qualitative interviewing, participant observation, documents	The process through which Candy Lightner formed MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)	Significance of founder's charismatic leadership in the formation of the movement and the subsequent problems of routinizing her charisma along with problems arising from her power, insensitivity to and inconsistency in dealing with others, and an excessive focus upon her.
Dyck (1994)	Leader of a Canadian farming reform	Case study	Participant observation, biographical	Nature of the leadership of the leader of Shared	Significance of: having a strong sense of mission; empowering others;

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Dyck (1994)	movement		interview, survey	Farming with respect to leadership for environmental change.	listening to others for shaping ideas; being able to articulate a philosophy; and having integrity.
Feyerherm (1994)	Agencies charged with responsibility for environmental protection in USA	Multiple case study (2)	Observation of meetings; qualitative interviews; documents	Impact of different leadership behaviors on shared frameworks for creating regulatory frameworks.	Emphasis on informal leaders. Many forms of leader behavior identified but grouped into: surfacing own or others' thoughts and assumptions; creating new ideas; and initiating collective action. Leaders manage meaning.
Flannery and May (1994)	An organization in the waste management industry in USA	Case study	Qualitative interviewing with top and middle managers and documents	Extension of an emerging model of factors leading to environmental leadership.	Significance in the fostering of environmental leadership of, such factors as: environmental protection values and attitudes towards the environment among top executives; pressure from stakeholder groups; and overcoming impediments to environmental behavior.
Selsky and Smith (1994)	Action research projects in USA	Multiple case study (2)	Critical incident analysis; participant observation	How community entrepreneurs can make an impact as leaders of small organizations.	Importance of forging strategic alliances.
Shamir et al. (1994)	A political speech by a US presidential candidate	Case study	Thematic content analysis of a speech	The process whereby the motivational effects of Jesse Jackson's charismatic leadership are triggered through rhetorical prowess. 'Effects' based on a prior theory of motivational effects of charisma.	Salience of several flourishes for engendering motivational effect, such as: references to history and tradition; an emphasis on collective identity; identification with followers; and references to values, hope and followers' self-efficacy.
Bogotch et al. (1995)	High level administrators in urban school district's central office in USA	Case study	Qualitative interviews	Relationship between central office work and school administration and significance of leadership in that relationship.	Lack of leadership led to lack of direction. As a result, it led to proliferation of new programs that were inconsistent with district policy and mission.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Bresnen (1995)	Same as Bryman et al. (1988)			Managers' individualistic implicit theories of leadership.	Leadership is socially constructed through leaders' and others' cognitions and actions.
Hunt and Ropo (1995)	A CEO's tenure at a US car manufacturer	Case study	Public domain documents and interviews relating to Roger Smith's tenure as CEO at General Motors	The relative strengths and significance of grounded theory and mainstream approaches in accounting for Smith's and GM's failure to reorganize and perform well.	Importance of taking a processual perspective that recognizes, e.g. the significance of past success for current leader behavior and past strategy and vision for current strategy and vision.
Neumann (1995)	College in USA	Case study	Qualitative interviews	Impact of a new leader on a college's culture and direction. Importance of how others respond to leaders and what they do.	Instilling a vision; being open and consultative; responding to others' points of view
Brooks (1996)	An NHS Trust hospital in the UK	Case study	Qualitative interviews	Role and nature of leadership in relation to cultural change process.	Need for CEO and his team to gain acceptance of changes. Adopted a consensual, non-coercive approach, creating a sense of urgency. Used his own language and actions as symbols to convey the kind of direction he wanted to take.
Bryman, Stephens & A Campo (1996)	Police officers in UK	Multiple case study (2) and cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Perceptions of what constitutes effective and poor leadership.	Significance of instrumental leader behavior relative to all other forms of leadership style. Also important were: creating trust; empowering others; good communication; leading by example; and consideration.
Bryman, Gillingwater, & McGuinness (1996)	Community transport organizations in UK	Multiple case study (3)	Qualitative interviews; documents.	Role of leaders in organizational transformation and significance of contextual factors in facilitating or impeding leaders' actions.	Transactional and transformational leadership in relation to organizational transformation. Context can result in 'frustrated' transformational leadership.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Coleman (1996)	Schools in UK	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Styles and forms of behavior of head teachers.	Importance of integrity, honesty, being participative, vision, and spending a lot of time in school.
Romano (1996)	Female leaders of student campus organizations in USA	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Approaches to leadership with specific reference to gender issues.	Tendency to emphasize relationships with others, to be accessible, less hierarchical, and to stress the team. Need for female leaders to be aware of implications of their gender for others.
Rusaw (1996)	Churches in US	Multiple case study (3 congregations and their pastors)	Qualitative interviews; documents	Pastors as informal leaders and their leadership approaches in connection with diversity issues.	Importance of leaders integrating flocks' symbols and beliefs into worship services and sharing service goals with local nonreligious organizations. Importance of celebrating accomplishments and integrating congregations' themes with theological interpretations. Importance of vision but one rooted in scripture.
Card (1997)	Newly appointed state agency directors in Ohio	Multiple case study (3)	Qualitative interviews; documents	The process of 'taking charge' among public managers.	Through symbolic leadership, satisfying different stakeholders' expectations after appointment. Importance of, for example: developing an understanding of the organization's needs and its staff; demonstrating competence; and forming a consensus about what needs to be done.
Den Hartog and Verburg (1997)	Speeches by 3 business leaders (UK, Holland and Canada)	Multiple case study (3)	Discourse analysis of documents	The rhetoric of charismatic CEOs' speeches particularly in connection with the international dimensions of their businesses.	The role of rhetorical displays in getting a message across. The contrasting positions between the leaders with regard to the internationalisation of their businesses.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Gabriel (1997)	British organizations	Multiple case study (3)	Narrative analysis of written accounts of followers' meetings with top leaders.	The experiences of followers when they encounter a supreme leader and how these relate to their fantasies about the leaders concerned.	The degree to which the contact is enchanting or disenchanting. Importance in accounts of how far leader is someone who: cares for followers; is accessible; is omniscient and omnipotent; and has a legitimate claim to lead. Whether these were confirmed or disconfirmed led to feelings of enchantment or otherwise.
Spaulding (1997)	School principals in USA	Cross-sectional design	Answers to open questions in questionnaires and qualitative interviewing	Teachers' views on ineffective leadership behavior among principals.	Detrimental effects on teachers' morale and motivation of: a non-participative, directive approach; lack of support from the principal; showing favoritism; lack of confidence in teachers; poor communication; and several other styles of leadership.
Välikangas and Okumura (1997)	A US and a Japanese company	Multiple case study (2)	Qualitative interviews; documents	CEOs' approaches to leadership and their motivational appeal as seen through the lens of two change programs.	Cross-cultural differences between the CEOs: US CEO's leadership evaluated in terms of its consequences for the firm; in Japan, the issue is one of behavior in terms of what is expected of a CEO.
Renshon (1998)	A candidate for the US presidency	Case study	Documents	How a political candidate (Bob Dole) gets across (in this case) his credibility as a candidate and the role of leadership within that process.	Importance of: being ambitious; having integrity; and being able to articulate convictions. Lack of self-promotion may have restricted his success.
Waldman et al. (1998)	Manufacturing plant, hospital and police force in Canada	Multiple case study (3)	Qualitative interviews; documents	The links between leadership and TQM programs.	Clear vision and commitment of top managers to TQM are crucial to its success. Important that commitment is seen as unwavering and planned. Importance of leaders changing culture to support TQM.

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Beyer and Browning (1999)	A consortium in the US semiconductor industry	Case study	Ethnography; qualitative interviewing; documents	Extent to which the leader of the organization can be viewed as a charismatic leader.	Significance of a sense of crisis in providing the foundations for the emergence of charismatic leadership. The degree to which it was possible to routinize charismatic leadership.
Gronn (1999)	Australian school	Case study	Documents	The leadership of the founder of the school and its first head.	The two leaders formed a 'leadership couple' which acted as a substitute for leadership.
Kekäle (1999)	University departments in Finnish universities	Multiple case study (8)	Qualitative interviews	Different academic discipline cultures' contrasting beliefs about how leaders should behave and what constrains them.	Importance of being supportive and democratic.
Mouly and Sankaran (1999)	An Indian R&D organization	Case study	Observation, qualitative interviewing, documents	The leadership style of the leader of a dying organization.	Need to distinguish between temporary/interim leaders and those who are more or less permanently acting leaders.
Parry (1999)	Australian local government organizations	Multiple case study (3)	Qualitative interviewing	Leadership in relation to organizations undergoing turbulent change.	Emphasis on leadership as a social influence process that entails enhancing adaptability in the face of uncertainty and the specific strategies employed by leaders to reduce follower uncertainty. Also emphasizes importance of leaders having a clear role.
Scribner et al. (1999)	Schools in USA	Multiple case study (3)	Observation; qualitative interviews	Principals' leadership styles crucial to professional development	Importance of building trust; limits of laissez-faire.
Starck, Warner, & Kotarba (1999)	Deans of graduate schools of nursing in USA	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Approaches to managing change; communication issues; future leadership skills needed.	Importance of empowering faculty; need to instill a vision; build culture of trust; build consensus.
Greene et al. (2000)	Union leaders in relation to British metal	Multiple case study (2 companies)	Qualitative interviewing and diaries kept	Influence on union leaders' leadership styles on commitment	Importance of union leaders adopting a participative style of leadership,

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Greene et al. (2000)	manufacturing organizations			and participation of rank-and-file union members.	ensuring good communication and being trusted for members' levels of commitment and participation.
Jones (2000)	A British worker cooperative	Case study	Qualitative interviews; nonparticipant observation; questionnaires (findings not reported)	How to lead in an organization committed to democracy and worker participation and with a perceived problem of 'free riders'.	Leadership has shifted from an exclusive emphasis on participative and supportive leadership to a visionary approach emphasizing importance of shared values.
Alexander, Comfort, Weiner, & Bogue (2001)	Collaborative community health partnerships in US	Multiple case study	Qualitative interviews	Differences between leadership in partnerships and in traditional organizations.	Leadership in partnerships is distinctive in the emphasis on: systems thinking (e.g. importance of appreciation of communities' organizational systems); vision-based leadership; collateral leadership (leadership not concentrated); power-sharing; and process-based leadership (importance of interpersonal and communication skills).
Buttner (2001)	Female business entrepreneurs in USA	Cross-sectional design	Focus groups	Leadership styles and forms of leader behavior of entrepreneurs especially as they relate to employees and clients.	Variety of factors relating to leadership: making sure tasks and the running of the business run smoothly; importance of empowering others; developing a climate for good teamwork; significance of vision (not a major theme).
Datnow and Castellano (2001)	Schools in USA	Multiple case study (6)	Qualitative interviews and focus groups	Principals' leadership styles in promoting a program of school reform.	Emphasis on instrumental forms of leader behavior and some attention to vision.
Denis et al. (2001); also Denis, Langley, & Cazale (1996), Denis, Langley, & Pineault (2000)	Hospitals in Canada	Multiple case study (5 'change situations')	Documents, qualitative interviews, and observation of meetings	How leaders can collectively achieve strategic change in pluralistic organizations in which objectives are conflicting and power	Collective leadership needs to involve distinct roles whose incumbents work harmoniously but this is a fragile process. Collective leaders must be perceived as legitimate, which

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Denis et al. (2001); also Denis, Langley, & Cazale (1996), Denis, Langley, & Pineault (2000)				is dispersed.	depends on their credibility. Extreme pluralism makes collective leadership vulnerable.
Dillon (2001)	An occupational therapy educator at a US college	Case study	Qualitative interviews	The leader behavior of the head of an occupational therapy program.	The leader was a servant leader, rather than a charismatic leader. She enabled others to become competent therapists and leaders in their own right, focused upon the greater good, and building a con-sensus around an imaginative vision. In addition, she treated others in a respectful and caring way.
Mumford and Van Doorn (2001)	Critical incidents in Benjamin Franklin's political life	Multiple case study (10)	Documents	The relative significance of different approaches to leadership to notable leadership acts.	Franklin's performance as a pragmatic leader was more significant than being a transactional, transformational, or charismatic leader.
Rantz (2002)	Presidents of public higher education institutions in US	Multiple case study (5)	Qualitative interviews	Presidents' perceptions of issues facing their organizations and their approaches to dealing with them.	Crucial for leaders to be good communicators who are seen as having integrity, which is earned through ethically sound leadership.
Brown and Gioia (2002)	Internet unit of a large US firm	Case study	Qualitative interviews	The nature of leadership in fast-changing, ambiguous and complex contexts and in which issues of organizational identity were unresolved.	E-leadership is defined by the unique context of internet firms and is dispersed throughout the top management team rather than being concentrated in just one or two individuals.
Pescosolido (2002)	Semiprofessional jazz groups and collegiate rowing crews in US	Multiple case study (20)	Observation; group interview in connection with critical incident	The role of informal leaders in the management of group emotion.	Leaders are more likely to emerge to manage group emotion when: situations are ambiguous; appropriate group norms have developed; and when they exhibit charisma and

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Pescosolido (2002)					empathy. NB Small amount of quantitative research in this study.
Upenieks (2002)	Nurse leaders in USA	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Nature of successful leadership in health care.	Being a female leader seen as advantageous. Importance of ensuring nurses have tools to do their jobs and being passionate about nursing. Need for good business acumen.
Weinberg and McDermott (2002)	Sports and business organizations in USA	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Styles and leader characteristics viewed as contributing to organizational success.	Traits, including having interpersonal skills, e.g. empathy, trust in others' abilities; democracy vs. autocracy; importance of shared vision for group cohesion; developing climate conducive to sharing opinions; communication.
Youngs and King (2002)	Schools in USA	Multiple case study (9)	Observation; qualitative interviews	Leadership styles and behavior that contribute to organizational effectiveness.	Importance of establishing trust and creating structures.
Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003a)	Leadership in international biotech company	Case study	Discourse analysis of qualitative interview transcripts; some observation	Managers' views on the nature of leadership and of good and bad leadership.	Views about what leadership is and should be are deeply contradictory. Leaders feel under pressure to exhibit widely criticised forms of leadership (e.g. micromanagement), at the same time as extolled ones (e.g. vision and strategy). Leaders are caught between contradictory leadership discourses.
Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003b)	Minicases of leadership in international biotech company	Case study/ Multiple case study (6)	Discourse analysis of qualitative interview transcripts	The managers' accounts of the nature of their leadership.	Great variety in what leaders mean by leadership. Leaders are often confused and contradictory about what they mean by it and about what they do as leaders. Is leadership important and does it exist?

Table 1 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized
Galanes (2003)	Leaders in several sectors in USA	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	What interviewees do as leaders and what effective leaders generally do.	Effective leaders emphasize the goal, provide a collaborative climate; build team members' confidence, are technically proficient, set appropriate priorities for group, manage group's performance; importance of communication. NB wide range of forms of behavior emphasized and grouped into five categories.
Rigano and Ritchie (2003)	A science educator who became head of department in an Australian school	Case study	Qualitative interviews	How the individual led changes to science teaching.	Main elements of his implementation of change: challenging teachers' complacency; challenging the school culture; and encouraging students to have a voice in their education.
Treviño et al. (2003)	Ethics compliance officers and CEOs in US	Cross-sectional design	Qualitative interviews	Variety of forms taken by ethical leadership.	Concern about people; role modeling; having integrity; create and institutionalize values; use of rewards and punishments.
Vangen and Huxham (2003)	Leadership of partnerships in UK public sector organizations	Multiple case study (13)	Mainly naturally occurring data deriving from authors' roles as facilitators	How leadership is done among managers involved in partnerships.	The process of leading partnerships poses dilemmas that force leaders to straddle ideological commitment and pragmatism. Importance of trust and giving members sense of ownership.

field's development, are emblematic of this feature (Bryman, 1996). While structured observation is not uncommon, especially in laboratory experiments, and content analysis has become an increasingly familiar technique (an issue that will be returned to below), the questionnaire has become the instrument of choice for researchers working in a variety of different theoretical traditions and within different research designs.

However, as in most other fields, it would be premature (as well as totally inaccurate) to write the obituary of quantitative research with respect to leadership. Reviewing 10 years of publications in The Leadership Quarterly, Lowe and Gardner (2000) found that 64% of studies employed a questionnaire-based method of collecting data. Thus, the data collected for nearly two-thirds of all investigations derive from a single method. In their review, Lowe and Gardner also report that around one-third of all articles employed a qualitative methodological approach.

Table 2
Studies of leadership based on qualitative and quantitative research

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized	Relationship between quantitative and qualitative research
Rosener (1990)	Women managers in USA	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Qualitative: qualitative interviews. Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire	The distinctiveness of women's leadership styles.	Women more likely than men to engage in transformational leadership and less likely to engage in transactional leadership. Also, more likely to encourage participation and tend to rely less on formal authority.	Quantitative research generated research questions that were followed up in the qualitative research.
Kirby et al. (1992)	School education in USA	Quantitative and Qualitative: cross-sectional design	Qualitative: qualitative interview. Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire (MLQ) administered to educators regarding their supervisors	Relationships between transformational and transactional leadership and outcome measures (satisfaction and effectiveness). Behaviors and characteristics of extraordinary leaders.	Quantitative research addressed traditional dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership. Qualitative research emphasized importance of leaders: being supportive, honest, knowledgeable, modeling of behavior expected, challenging followers to grow, communication, and everyday acts (e.g. organizing, scheduling).	Qualitative research uncovered aspects of leader behavior viewed as desirable by interviewees but not covered by MLQ. Also, charisma less important in qualitative research than in quantitative research.
Blase (1993), Blase and Roberts (1994)	School principals in USA	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Quantitative and qualitative: replies to closed and open questions in a self-administered questionnaire data respectively used	Leadership strategies of open and effective school principals, as identified by teachers. Impact of their leadership on teachers.	Effective principals establish the goals of teachers' work and the instrumental means for implementing goals.	Quantitative research provided baseline data on such issues as levels of principal effectiveness. Also, incidence of influence strategies quantified.
Coleman (2000)	Secondary school	Quantitative and Qualitative:	Quantitative and qualitative: replies to	Distinctiveness of female headteachers'	Tendency to identify with female rather than male	Qualitative data largely complement and expand

	headteachers in UK	Cross-sectional design	closed and open questions in a self-administered questionnaire data respectively used	leadership styles.	traits, although some identification with the latter. Tend to be people oriented and collaborative.	upon quantitative findings.
Egri and Herman (2000)	Leaders in nonprofit and for profit environmental organizations in US and Canada	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Qualitative: qualitative interview. Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire	Distinctive values of leaders of environmental organizations and of leaders of nonprofit organizations. Leadership styles of leaders in the two types of organizations.	Leaders of environmental organizations tend to practice both transformational and transactional leadership.	Qualitative data are mainly quantified through content analysis. These and the other quantitative data employed for different aspects of overall enquiry. In addition, qualitative data used to illustrate quantitative findings.
Shamir et al. (2000)	Israeli Defence Forces	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Qualitative: qualitative interview. Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire (MLQ) administered to educators regarding their supervisors	Impact of leader behaviors on different outcomes.	Importance of leader behaviors like role modelling, educating and giving a sense of collective identity. Differences between armor and infantry leaders.	Qualitative research complements quantitative research by showing wider range of leader behaviors than in quantitative research.
Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001)	Social change coalitions in US	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Qualitative: focus groups and responses to open questions in structured interview. Quantitative: structured interview.	Forms of leader behavior associated with successful coalition building.	Importance of leaders being persistent, having vision, and possessing necessary skills and knowledge.	Focus group used in generating survey questions. Answers to open questions complement quantitative research and gave insight into leadership processes in coalition formation.
Trevelyan (2001)	Academic research teams in UK	Quantitative: cross-sectional design. Qualitative: multiple case study (5)	Qualitative: ethnography (observation and semi-structured interviews). Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire	The impact of a leadership style that allows high levels of autonomy.	Scientists responded best to a leadership style that combined a high level of involvement in the team's work on the part of the leader with a low level of direction.	Some of the quantitative and qualitative data were mutually reinforcing. In addition, they entailed the investigation of different components.

Table 2 (*continued*)

Year of publication and author(s)	Sector	Research design	Research methods	Nature of key findings	Leadership style and leader behavior emphasized	Relationship between quantitative and qualitative research
Sagie et al. (2002)	Textile company in Israel	Quantitative: cross-sectional design. Qualitative: case study	Qualitative: qualitative interview. Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire	How far leaders' direction and their participativeness have implications for job satisfaction and organizational commitment.	Important for leaders to allow some direction (e.g. vision) while simultaneously being participative.	Qualitative data broadly support quantitative findings. Combines confirmation with a discovery approach.
Martin et al. (2003)	University heads of department and subject coordinators in Australia	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Quantitative and qualitative: qualitative interview used for collection of both quantitative and qualitative data	The ways in which the leadership of teaching is perceived by heads, subject coordinators of large courses, and by teachers.	Heads and subject coordinators frequently had different conceptions of leadership. For example, heads were more likely to emphasize instilling a bureaucratic structure; coordinators to emphasize negotiation. Teachers had yet another view. Relationship between teachers' experience of teaching and approaches to teaching.	Two sets of findings are employed to deal with substantially different research questions: one set to do with experiences of leadership (qualitative); other set to do with relationships between variables (quantitative).
Shamir and Lapidot (2003)	Israeli Defence Forces	Quantitative: longitudinal. Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Qualitative: qualitative and group interviews; responses to open questions in questionnaire. Quantitative: self-administered questionnaire	Cadets' levels of trust in team commanders and their variation over time. Significance of trust in system in which leadership embedded.	Forms of behavior associated with trust in leader.	Qualitative research complements quantitative research by showing trust in leader is a collective as well as individual phenomenon.
Voelck (2003)	University library managers in USA	Quantitative and Qualitative: Cross-sectional design	Quantitative and qualitative: qualitative interview used for collection of both quantitative and qualitative data	Gender differences in managerial style.	Male and female managers differ in self-descriptions of management traits. Male managers are more directive; female managers are more supportive.	Qualitative data are used broadly to support the quantitative findings and to expand on them.

However, this figure is contestable because it includes content analysis which is a technique that the authors report was used in half the qualitative studies. While content analysis is undoubtedly a technique that is applied to qualitative data, it is not in itself a qualitative technique. In many ways, its emphasis on quantification and on objective, reliable and replicable coding rules exemplifies quantitative research rather than qualitative research. When content analysis is removed from the list of methods subsumed under "qualitative methods", qualitative research still appears to be a minority activity among leadership researchers in spite of the fact that it is almost certainly being used more today than prior to the mid-1980s.

In this review, I consider a large number of articles that derive from qualitative research and that were published prior to 2004 in peer-reviewed journals. These are presented in Table 1 along with some details regarding such features as the research methods used and a skeletal outline of the chief findings. I then examine the ways in which qualitative research on leadership is and is not distinctive. This examination is undertaken in a critical but appreciative manner, in the sense that I do not intend to accuse qualitative researchers of failing to deal with certain issues that are not relevant to their craft. For example, Lee, Mitchell, and Sablynsky (1999) reviewed qualitative research in organizational and vocational psychology and criticized it for its low level of replicability. Since replicability is typically not a criterion of qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2003), it seems an inappropriate criticism. By seeking to avoid criticisms that might be deemed inconsistent with the goals and quality criteria of qualitative research and by focusing upon its contributions, this review is meant to be appreciative.

I then examine a relatively small number of studies that have used quantitative, as well as qualitative research. These are summarized in Table 2. I focus in particular on the different ways in which the two approaches are combined. I then ask whether the corpus of research that has been accumulated by qualitative researchers can be combined with that of quantitative researchers. In other words, do qualitative and quantitative researchers study sufficiently similar leadership phenomena for us to be able to bring them together to provide an overall view based on the two approaches? In the Discussion, several of these issues are brought together.

2. The contribution of qualitative research to the study of leadership

The main objective of this article is to provide an assessment of the contribution of qualitative research to the study of leadership. In order to achieve this aim, it was decided to concentrate on articles in refereed journals, since they are most frequently referred to and it is easiest to undertake searches for them, particularly nowadays with online searches. In addition, the fact that the published articles have undergone a process of peer review imposes a certain level of quality control on the finished product. Further, because the majority of the key contributions to quantitative research on leadership have been published in refereed articles, focusing on contributions to the study of leadership from qualitative researchers to peer-refereed journals allows a degree of symmetry with the output of quantitative researchers to be maintained.

Only articles that report data were included; thus, articles that provide discussions of qualitative research in relation to leadership were considered outside the purview of this review. Only articles that displayed a clear focus on leadership issues were included, so that in cases where leadership was peripheral, the article was not included. The Social Sciences Citation Index via the ISI Web of Science and ABI Inform were employed as the chief databases from which relevant articles were sourced. These were buttressed by articles known to the author that met the criterion of having been published in a refereed social science journal. All articles in *The Leadership Quarterly* were scrutinized for possible

inclusion. In addition, references in the bibliographies of the selected articles were examined for further possible candidates for inclusion in the sample. Articles based exclusively on qualitative research and those which combined quantitative and qualitative research are presented in separate tables below (Tables 1 and 2, respectively).

Searching for articles and deciding on their inclusion was not unproblematic. Two points particularly exercised the author. First, it is not always clear when an article can genuinely be regarded as based on research. Sometimes, the presentation of data is somewhat anecdotal in approach (e.g. Graham, 1991), but so long as there was evidence of the article being based on research it was included. If the "evidence" was entirely anecdotal rather than being based on the systematic collection of data, it was not included. Secondly, the author knew of some articles that did not materialize in the online searches and which might be regarded as to do with leadership. This was particularly the case with a small number of studies in the strategic management field (e.g. Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Greiner & Bhambri, 1989), which do not claim to be about leadership as such but which deal with issues that are frequently dealt with by leadership researchers, especially those investigators dealing with issues like leadership in relation to vision, cultural change and strategic direction (e.g. Neumann, 1995). Such articles are not included in the main tables (Tables 1 and 2) but are referred to as appropriate.

In examining the articles, the chief focus of interest was the following issues:

(1) the sector(s) and nations in which the research was conducted;
(2) the research method(s) involved;
(3) the research design—based on a distinction between cross-sectional design, longitudinal design, case study, and multiple case study (no studies using an experimental design were encountered);
(4) the key findings;
(5) the kinds of leader behavior emphasized; and
(6) in the case of articles based on multistrategy research (Bryman & Bell, 2003), whereby quantitative and qualitative research are combined, the nature of the relationship between quantitative and qualitative research.

The resulting two tables of qualitative research on leadership undoubtedly do not cover the full range of possible studies that might have been included. They do incorporate the majority of the most significant studies published in refereed journals, though the criteria for inclusion did result in the omission of a very small number of important contributions to the field, such as chapters in books (e.g. Trice & Beyer, 1986), articles in strategic management (as previously noted), and books (e.g. Conger, 1989, 1992). Also included in the table are further references that do not meet the criteria for inclusion but which are related to articles that did meet the criteria, for example, Roberts and Bradley's (1988) extension of Roberts's (1985) study.

3. Characteristics of qualitative research on leadership

3.1. The growth of qualitative research

A quick examination of the first column confirms that there has been a considerable surge in the number of qualitative studies of leadership. Just 10 studies were uncovered that had been published

before 1991 and indeed three of these were based on the same dataset (Bensimon, 1989; Birnbaum, 1990; Tierney, 1989). Since 1990, not a single year has been without a qualitative study of leadership. While hardly explosive, these point to a very real upward trend in the number of studies of leadership employing a qualitative approach.

It may be that leadership research is a methodologically conservative field that is slow to innovate, perhaps because it is oriented to practitioners who are likely to be (or are perceived as more likely to be) persuaded by apparent scientific rigor. The upward trend in qualitative research on leadership did not begin until 10 years after the influential issue of Administrative Science Quarterly in 1979 and several years after the founding of journals elsewhere in the social sciences that were dedicated to qualitative research. For example, the first volume of *Qualitative Sociology* was published in 1977 and Journal of Contemporary Ethnography in 1971 (then titled *Urban Life*). Texts concerned solely with qualitative research methods began to appear in the early 1970s (e.g. Lofland, 1971).

It may be that the early qualitative studies provided a glimmer of the potential that such research could offer the leadership researcher and, by being published in peer-reviewed journals, helped to bestow credibility on the approach and to instill confidence in researchers.

3.2. The national context

House and Aditya (1997, p. 409) have written that "about 98% of the empirical evidence at hand [is] rather distinctly American in character". Avolio et al. (2003, p. 279) have taken this to mean that "98% of leadership research still originates in North America" which is not quite what House and Aditya seem to be saying. However, it is clear that the vast majority of leadership studies do indeed originate in North America, which is also suggested by Lowe and Gardner's (2000) review of The Leadership Quarterly articles. These authors found that 81% of first authors resided in the USA, with a further 4% from Canada. While these figures relate to all articles in the journal, not just empirical ones, it is clear that House and Aditya's assertion and the embellishment of it by Avolio et al. has considerable substance.

In the present study, the emphasis was placed on the nation in which the research was conducted and from this assessment, it is clear that North American domination of leadership research is somewhat less when qualitative studies alone are the focus of attention. Sixty-one percent of all articles are based on US participants or materials. Thirteen (20%) of the 66 studies were conducted in the United Kingdom or based on UK materials and of these, 12 of the first authors were resident there. Altogether, 39% of articles are based in nations outside the USA or have a cross-cultural component. These findings suggest that qualitative research on leadership is less tightly connected to the United States than quantitative studies, although it is still the case that studies emanating from the United States in particular predominate.

3.3. Research designs used

The earliest examples of qualitative research on leadership tended to be based on a single case study. Twenty-six of the studies employed this research design. While this has continued to be a popular approach to designing research, it has gradually given way to multiple case study and cross-sectional research designs. It is easy to see why these two research designs have gradually held sway. The case study frequently has a public relations problem in that, in spite of well-known arguments to the contrary, it is frequently held to be a sample of one, thereby raising concerns about representativeness and

generalizability. Such concerns are especially likely to be prevalent in journals that have traditionally been associated with the epistemological assumptions of quantitative research.

Multiple case studies offer the prospect of producing results that are less likely to be deemed to be idiosyncratic. Further, the process of comparison enhances the researcher's capacity for drawing theoretical inferences (Eisenhardt, 1989). The cross-sectional design is also less likely to engender concerns about findings being idiosyncratic even though when it is used in relation to qualitative research, it rarely entails random sampling and therefore can still be accused of having limited (or at least unknown) representativeness. For qualitative researchers, it is theoretical issues and the purposes of the research question that guide the sampling procedure, rather than statistical criteria (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Such considerations may have been involved in the gradual ascendancy of multiple case study and cross-sectional designs.

Specifying whether an investigation is a case study or multiple case study is sometimes not straightforward because they are sometimes nested designs, i.e. cases within cases. A good example is Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003b), which takes six minicases of leadership in an international biotech company. Is this a case study or a multiple case study?

3.4. Research methods used

One noteworthy feature of Table 1 is that observation rarely figures as a prominent method of data collection. If used at all, it tends to be as an ancillary technique and it is rarely in the form of participant observation or ethnography, which have been among the main techniques in the qualitative researcher's data collection toolbox. Conger (1998) has bemoaned the lack of use of observation in qualitative research on leadership, though he is one of the few researchers to make significant use of it in his monographs (Conger, 1989, 1992). Conger (1998) expressed a concern about the lack of use of observation because qualitative research on leadership was associated with a tendency to rely on the interview as a source of data, with all the frailties that dependence on a single method implies in terms of validity and comprehensiveness.

Three factors are possibly associated with the lack of use of observation. First, it probably requires a greater investment of time than is frequently available to many researchers, since it necessitates prolonged periods away from one's main place of work. Second, for some researchers there may be an issue of what exactly it is that one is supposed to observe. Observing acts of leadership may not be an easy matter, especially since only a relatively small proportion of what formally designated leaders (such as managers) do entails the enactment of leadership as such (Mintzberg, 1973).

Third, observation may appear a costly approach to collecting data because it may involve a large expenditure of time for relatively little return in terms of data. Instead, qualitative interviewing (a term that is taken to include semi-structured, in-depth, unstructured, and biographical interviewing) is the main method of data collection, so that 56 of the 66 articles are based on this method for at least some of their data and a further two are based on group interviewing or focus groups, which are a form of qualitative interview. Twenty-five of the articles are based more or less entirely on qualitative interviewing, though this is inflated by the fact that several of them derive from the same research. Nonetheless, it is ironic that some qualitative researchers should berate quantitative researchers on leadership for their reliance on the self-administered questionnaire, when they themselves display a similar commitment to a data collection method. In most cases, the reliance on qualitative interviewing is not total in that it is frequently buttressed by other sources of data, such as documents and limited

observation. However, there is little doubt that the qualitative interview is implicated in a very large proportion of qualitative studies of leadership.

A further possible reason for the relative absence of observation-based studies (and of ones based on participant observation in particular) is that the researcher is more likely to encounter problems with access, since leaders may be unwilling to give up the amounts of time required and may be concerned about issues of confidentiality. Further, many prospective participant observers may have worried that their presence might contaminate the very things that they are observing.

Much more difficult to characterize is the approach to qualitative data analysis used by researchers. In common with much qualitative research in general, there is frequently a lack of detail about the process of qualitative data analysis (Bryman & Burgess, 1994). Discussions of the process of data analysis often are simply absent or are very general with references to the generation of themes or categories. Fourteen articles referred to grounded theory or to tools of grounded theory, such as constant comparison or theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For some writers, the application of grounded theory was central to their work (e.g. Parry, 1999). However, overall there were often low levels of detail concerning analysis, especially when compared to the methods used to generate data, and it was therefore not feasible to detect general patterns, other than the group of articles influenced by grounded theory and broad references to themes.

4. Ways in which qualitative research on leadership is distinctive

In what ways does qualitative research on leadership appear to be distinctive when contrasted with quantitative research on leadership? To a large extent, there is a risk with this question of caricaturing quantitative research; in fact, as readers of this journal know, quantitative research on leadership is diverse and has addressed a wide range of research questions. However, it has been characterized by a tendency towards an input–output model in which the researcher is oriented to the impacts of leadership or to the factors that influence how leaders behave or what kinds of people become leaders.

Moreover, developments like implicit leadership theory, which superficially depart from this characterization, are fundamentally concerned with issues relating to the input–output model, such as the problem of measurement artefacts that may contaminate studies based on the input–output model. Nonetheless, in spite of the risk of misrepresenting quantitative research on leadership in the process, the author's perception of the distinctiveness of qualitative research on leadership will be outlined in the rest of this section.

4.1. Leaders and the change process

Several of the studies are concerned with how leaders and their styles of leadership promote change and how leadership styles themselves change in response to particular circumstances. There is a recurring theme in these articles of the need for leaders who are leading a change process to: secure commitment to the change process, address multiple constituencies (external and internal), convey a sense of the need for change, and instill a vision of how change should be implemented and/or what the future state of the organization will look like. The emphasis on change is especially prominent in case studies of leadership which show how, over time and often in the face of considerable adversity, leaders make an impact on their organizations. The case study is usually inherently longitudinal unless it entails

a very brief sojourn. As such, the researcher is able to view over time the kinds of impacts that leaders make and how they respond to problems with which they are faced. Case studies are also particularly strong in terms of providing a detailed sense of the context that forms the backcloth to the ways that leaders implement the change process. The emphasis on context in qualitative studies is central to the following section.

4.2. Implications of context

Qualitative research on leadership tends to give greater attention to the ways in which leaders and styles of leadership have to be or tend to be responsive to particular circumstances. This tendency can operate on at least two levels. First, qualitative researchers are more likely to emphasize the significance of the sector within which leadership takes place (schools, banks, construction organizations, police, and the like) for styles of leadership and what is regarded as more or less effective.

For Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003a) this point takes on a particular resonance because the industry in which their case study firm was located is one where progressive notions of leadership were especially admired (e.g. emphasis on the visionary leader) due to the nature of the work in knowledge-intensive industries. However, the managers they studied also had to engage in forms of leadership less highly revered (e.g. micromanagement) which were inconsistent with their images of themselves as leaders of a dynamic and enlightened company.

By contrast, in the police services studied by Bryman, Stephens, and A Campo (1996), such instrumental leadership was respected because it was seen as crucial to the officers' sense of having the support of their superiors and of being able to have the resources for carrying out the tasks of operational policing.

Secondly, qualitative researchers tend to be more sensitive to the implications of particular circumstances for leaders and their styles of leadership. One is struck by the sheer variety of the leadership situations covered by what is in fact a small number of studies—leadership of a dying organization, leadership in crisis situations, informal leadership, the process of taking charge in public life, female entrepreneurs, well-known public figures as different as Anita Roddick and Bob Dole, and settings as diverse as jazz groups, rowing crews, a cooperative, the police, etc. In each case, the distinctiveness of the set of circumstances faced by the leader is brought to the fore.

Of course, quantitative research on leadership has also been undertaken in a wide variety of contexts. Studies based on Fiedler's (1967) well-known contingency theory of leadership have been carried out in a wide variety of contexts, such as various industrial and commercial settings, sports teams, the military, and so on. However, in spite of the approach being concerned with the role of situational factors in effective leadership, it is generic aspects of different contexts—the degree of task structure, leader–member relations and the leader's position power—that are the main considerations, not the nature of the spheres or sectors in which the investigations were conducted.

4.3. Senior leaders

In qualitative research, there is a tendency to focus on senior leaders, such as school principals, and their teams, whereas quantitative research tends to be concerned with leaders at a variety of levels. In order to access the leader behavior of senior leaders, researchers may interview and observe the leaders at work and/or interview others regarding their leader behavior. For example, Dana and Pitts (1993)

interviewed and observed the school principal who was the focus of their research, as well as teachers in order to glean an understanding of the principal's impact. Similarly, Dillon's (2001) study of a servant leader was based on data collected from both the leader herself and those whom she influenced. By contrast, Bensimon's (1989) study of higher education presidents was based primarily on interviews with the leaders themselves. Studies emphasizing strategic management (e.g. Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Greiner & Bhambri, 1989) display a similar focus.

4.4. Different forms of leader behavior

The kinds of leader behaviors and styles identified by qualitative researchers on leadership as conducive to good leadership or identified as such by study participants, are often more mundane than recent quantitative research on leadership with its emphasis on vision, charismatic leadership, and transformational leadership. Instead, qualitative researchers, while recognizing the importance of such leader behaviors, also make clear the significance of more mundane instrumental forms of behavior, such as ensuring the need for adequate resources for followers to get the job done.

This feature can be seen in Bryman et al. (1996), as mentioned in Section 4.2. The investigation of school principals in the United States by Blase and Roberts (1994), which is based on multi-strategy research, similarly found that teachers emphasize the importance to them of such instrumental leadership. Mumford and Van Doorn (2001) demonstration of the significance of pragmatic leadership for Benjamin Franklin's political life chimes with this emphasis on instrumental leadership.

Similarly, Egri and Herman (2000, p. 594) note that "the most frequently mentioned leadership behaviors were transactional ones". Transformational leadership behaviors were not irrelevant to the leaders concerned but the emphasis on transactional leadership in organizations in which transformational leadership might have been deemed to be especially significant (environmental organizations) is striking.

Qualitative research on leadership seems to identify as particularly important for effective leadership (a) good communication on the part of the leader and (b) the leader's integrity and how far he or she is trusted and how far he or she trusts others.

These aspects of leadership are by no means neglected by quantitative researchers; for example, the issues of integrity and trust have been prominent in the work of writers like Kouzes and Posner (1993). However, in the qualitative research covered for this article, such features assumed greater prominence than they are usually accorded in quantitative research. When asked questions about leadership in an open-ended way, as studies like Bryman et al. (1996) and Rantz (2002) show, the notions that the good or effective leader is one who is a good communicator and is someone who can be trusted frequently have greater prominence than in quantitative research on leadership. In Spaulding's (1997) investigation of school principals, poor communication had an adverse effect on teachers' morale and motivation.

Similarly, there is a recurring emphasis among followers on leading from the front and leading by example. This could be interpreted in terms of role modeling but it seems to be more to do with creating a sense of credibility and therefore closer to the idea of having integrity. This theme was particularly prominent in the study of UK police officers by Bryman et al. (1996) and in the study of ethics compliance officers by Treviño, Brown, and Pincus Hartman (2003).

There seems to be a frequent theme in qualitative research on leadership whereby leaders are depicted as people who draw upon their followers' ideas, beliefs, and values and recycle them back to them in the form of a distinctive leadership framework (e.g. Dyck, 1994; Neumann, 1995; Rusaw, 1996). This is not

an aspect of leadership that is typically recognized in quantitative research and does not seem to fit with the main categories or dimensions of leadership that are typically delineated.

Qualitative research on leadership has brought to the fore several aspects of leadership processes that might otherwise have been relatively unexplored. For example, while charismatic leadership has been a prominent focus of research since the mid-1980s and has been a focus for both quantitative and qualitative research, it is only the latter that has shed significant light on routinization of charisma and on the significance of the leadership couple in charisma (Beyer & Browning, 1999; Weed, 1993; see also, Trice & Beyer, 1986). This occurrence may be because quantitative research on leadership has tended to stress charismatic leaders themselves and the process by which they have an impact on several organizational outcomes, rather than charismatic leadership over time. This feature further reveals the tendency for quantitative research on leadership to be concerned primarily with an input–output model.

The processual element of case study research on leadership lends itself to attention to the routinization of charisma. This is an important issue: if we really are to believe that charismatic leadership is significant for modern organizations, how it is routinized is crucial to an appreciation of its implications. If charismatic leaders cannot readily be replaced or if the mechanisms for routinizing their charisma are poorly understood, charismatic leadership is likely to be an ephemeral phenomenon.

Qualitative research on leadership has been especially at the forefront of investigating new forms of leadership, such as e-leadership (Brown & Gioia, 2002), ethical leadership (Treviño et al., 2003), leadership in relation to TQM (Waldman et al., 1998), and environmental leadership (Dyck, 1994; Feyerherm, 1994; Flannery & May, 1994). It is not that quantitative research on leadership has been unconcerned about these forms of leadership but that qualitative researchers have been quick to turn their attention to these emergent forms. It may be that the open-ended and flexible character of qualitative research lends itself to the exploration of such novel settings.

Qualitative research on leadership has been particularly likely to emphasize the importance and significance of the leader as a manager of meaning who actively manipulates symbols in order to instil a vision, manage change, and achieve support for his or her direction. These are issues that are less amenable to quantitative research and are consistent with some of the reorientations to theoretical approaches to leadership in the 1970s and 1980s that signalled a change of direction towards "new leadership" ideas (e.g. Dubin, 1979; Pfeffer, 1981). This issue has a link with the tendency for qualitative researchers on leadership to emphasize the importance of good communication for leaders, as perceived by leaders and followers alike. Managing meaning and symbols are very much part of the communication process (e.g. Brooks, 1996).

Qualitative research on leadership rarely portrays the lofty and slightly nebulous notion of managing meaning and symbols as sufficient in their own right. There is often a recognition that, as the previous discussion of instrumental leadership implies, leaders also need to attend to more mundane and immediate concerns. Brooks (1996) refers to "the management of hard infrastructure" in addition to the management of symbols as a way of getting across the need for leaders to attend to different facets of the leadership role.

What may be the case is that in many organizations, the symbolic leadership is more likely to be the province of the very top leaders and instrumental leadership that of others. This implies that leadership is often shared with different leaders occupying different roles and tasks, as implied by recent discussions of "shared leadership" (see Pearce & Conger, 2003, Part III) for three qualitative studies utilizing this notion) and "the leadership couple" (Gronn, 1999). In fact, it is striking that in Brooks's (1996) account of the management of hard infrastructure, it is largely the CEO's management team that is associated

with this aspect of the leadership of change. What is important is for leaders at the very apex of a hierarchy to be managers of meaning, especially in relation to the change process, but also to ensure that the more unexciting aspects of instrumental leadership get done.

4.5. Less cumulative

There is a tendency for qualitative research on leadership to be less cumulative than quantitative research on leadership. While quantitative research builds on previous quantitative studies, often each qualitative investigation begins roughly afresh and makes relatively little reference to other qualitative research on leadership style and behavior (including quantitative studies). This lack of cumulativeness may be a consequence of the inductive, open-ended character of much qualitative research which avoids prior theorizing. This feature means that some researchers cannot build on existing research at the research design stage but have the opportunity to do so by relating their findings to that of other leadership researchers.

However, the findings from qualitative investigations can sometimes appear idiosyncratic and may not be as amenable to such integration with prior literature. Further, as several writers have noted (Kaghan, Strauss, Barley, Brannen, & Thomas, 1999; Lofland, 1971), qualitative researchers are sometimes reluctant to engage in theoretical reflection from their data because they do not want to stray too far from what their research subjects have told them.

Yet another factor that may inhibit cumulativeness is that qualitative research operates with or is influenced by a wide variety of frameworks that are partly theoretical, partly epistemological, partly ideological, and partly ontological. Examples include: critical management (e.g. Alvesson & Sveningson, 2003b), postmodernism (Alvesson, 2002), interpretivism (e.g. Scribner, Cockrell, Cockrell, & Valentine, 1999; Tierney, 1989), constructivism (e.g. Dana & Pitts, 1993), discourse and rhetorical analysis (e.g. Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997; Shamir, Arthur, & House, 1994), feminism (Rosenor, 1990), phenomenology (e.g. Knights & Willmott, 1992), structuralism (e.g. Knights & Willmott, 1992), hermeneutics (Rigano & Ritchie, 2003), psychoanalysis (Gabriel, 1997), semiotics (Tierney, 1987), and action research (Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

In addition, some qualitative studies can be regarded as having strong realist overtones that render them little different in tone and character from much quantitative research, except that they do not entail quantification or make very limited use of it (e.g. Bryman et al., 1996; Youngs & King, 2002). Related to this is the fact that some qualitative studies display deductive rather than (or as well as) the inductive reasoning that is frequently taken to be a hallmark of qualitative research. Thus, Upenieks's (2002) study of nurse leadership was strongly influenced by a prior theory of organizational behavior.

Because of this variety of analytic frameworks, it may be that researchers find it difficult to build upon each other's work to the same degree as quantitative researchers. Of course, quantitative research on leadership has also exhibited a wide variety of theoretical frameworks, but it is much more coherent in its epistemological and ideological commitments around a natural science model of the research process, which is informed by scientific realism, and by a focus upon improving leadership effectiveness. The general tenor and tone of articles based on quantitative research published in the current decade are not radically different those that appeared in the 1950s, the decade of the Ohio and Michigan studies (Bryman, 1996). They differ considerably in methodological sophistication and theoretical orientation, but their fundamental concerns have changed little.

An additional reason may be that there tends to be an emphasis on the distinctive context within which the research was conducted and which may have limited implications for other leaders. Thus, in the context of their case study of a science educator, Rigano and Ritchie (2003, p. 312) write: "we don't want to hold up Mr. Murphy as a model leader but rather to provide readers of an account of how he was dealing with change in his particular context". On the other hand, they do not see their findings as totally idiosyncratic, because they also write: "Yet a common theme we have encountered in the literature ... and our own research ... is that teachers become willing to embrace change when they are no longer happy to keep doing things the way they have always been done" (2003, p. 313).

Qualitative researchers concerned with leadership often see the idiographic nature of their craft as an important feature. In what is essentially a call for a greater emphasis on the contextual nature of leadership processes, Alvesson and Deetz (2000, p. 59) have proposed a move "towards an increased focus on local patterns". Such a shift towards a greater recognition of unique leadership configurations would be in tune with the contextual nature of leadership. On the other hand, it would seem to militate against any sense of a cumulative field of study. However, one of these authors has argued that quantitative research on leadership "fails to meet its own criteria of knowledge accumulation" (Alvesson, 1996, p. 457). For Alvesson, this deficiency is revealed in the failure of decades of research and vast expenditures of money to provide a widely agreed upon theory or framework for the study of leadership that received a great deal of empirical support and which offered helpful advice to practitioners.

At a methodological level, qualitative researchers usually refer to each other's work in order to draw attention to other qualitative research in the field, but reference to the specific findings is meagre and even if they are mentioned they simply form a backcloth rather than inform the presentation of the findings. Other qualitative research on leadership typically serves as a rationale rather than as a source of information in the sense that the presence of other qualitative investigations is often used to legitimize a qualitative study on leadership.

4.6. Relationship to the leadership literature

Some qualitative research on leadership takes existing theory and research as a springboard for the research questions or research approach (e.g. Hunt & Ropo; Den Hartog & Verburg); other research treats it as a counterpoint (e.g. Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a,b); still other research eschews existing theory and research and only refers to it at the end of an article, so as not to contaminate the research and the discussion of it. For many qualitative researchers on leadership, there is a delicate balance between needing the existing literature as a means of bestowing credibility on and providing a rationale for an investigation, on the one hand; and a commitment to getting at the perspective of those one studies through an open-ended research approach that contaminates the topic as little as possible, on the other.

This balance is a difficult dilemma that is made more problematic by journals' reasonable demands for the researcher to demonstrate the contribution and significance of an article. The Leadership Quarterly, for example, encourages authors to demonstrate "the underlying logic of the argument relevant to theory" and "the contribution to knowledge resulting from the research" ("Publication Policy and Information for Authors"). These are admirable criteria and ones with which most leadership researchers would agree, other than those of a decidedly anti-realist and/or postmodernist persuasion. However, for the qualitative researcher they do point to the need to straddle the requirement to be oriented to the literature for an article to be deemed a contribution to knowledge and the epistemological pressure for an open-ended research approach.

Some articles have a limited engagement with conventional theory and research (e.g. Rusaw, 1996); in others it represents an important backcloth against which the significance of the qualitative research on leadership can be highlighted (e.g. Bresnen, 1995; Bryman et al., 1988). Articles in the latter category typically aim to show what it is that is distinctive about qualitative research on leadership while simultaneously working within its general parameters. Articles demonstrating little engagement with conventional theory and research do so as a means of pursuing an open-ended research approach.

Sometimes, concepts and ideas from quantitative research on leadership (e.g. substitutes for leadership; attribution theory; transformational leadership) are imported but are given a decidedly different slant. While there may be a superficial affinity between quantitative and the qualitative studies of leadership in respect of such concepts and ideas, that is not necessarily the case. For example, there has been a recognition that research that has followed in the wake of Kerr and Jermier's (1978) influential concept of substitutes for leadership has become somewhat routinized around a core set of concepts and the use of a standard cross-sectional design with questionnaires (Jermier & Kerr, 1997; Podsakoff & MacKenzie, 1997).

In Gronn's (1999) article, this field of research was given a new twist. He disputes the idea that the correct unit of analysis for substitutes research is the individual leader. Gronn proposes the idea of the leadership couple, a leadership double act that can act as a substitute for individual leadership and demonstrates the potential of such an approach through a case study of the early years of an Australian school. In this example, while the concept of substitutes for leadership is not overturned, the use of a qualitative and longitudinal approach, as advocated by Jermier and Kerr (1997), coupled with the reorientation away from a focus on the individual leader gives this area a new angle.

4.7. Greater emphasis on language of leadership

In view of the emphasis on such issues as symbolism and the management of meaning, it is scarcely surprising that the language of leadership is a recurring emphasis, thus following on from a subterranean tradition in leadership research that can be seen in the work of writers like Pondy (1978) and Moore and Beck (1984). The following articles in Table 1 show this emphasis: Tierney (1987, 1989), Knights and Willmott (1992), Shamir et al. (1994), Den Hartog and Verburg (1997), and Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003a,b). For writers working with a focus on language, what leaders say and how they say it become major issues. Language is not viewed as a neutral device for conveying direction but a highly charged medium for influencing others. The mode of expression and its rhetorical flourishes become just as, if not more, important than the manifest content of the leader's expression.

4.8. Problematizing leadership

Qualitative research on leadership is much more likely to problematize the concept of leadership. Writers like Alvesson and Bresnen have questioned what it is that we as researchers and our research participants mean when we use the term. While qualitative researchers are not alone in questioning the utility and application of the concept, they have been particularly instrumental in probing its meaning and in conducting investigations that underline its problematic nature.

The purposes of this process of problemitization can vary slightly. In Alvesson's hands, it appears to be iconoclastic—a means of questioning the very grounds of leadership theory and research along with

its orthodoxies. For Bresnen, it is a component of coming to a fuller understanding of leadership. Both forms of problematizing leadership have their purposes, in that each invites leadership researchers to reflect on their basic assumptions.

5. Ways in which qualitative research on leadership is not distinctive

5.1. Informal leadership

While qualitative research on leadership shares with quantitative research a tendency to focus on formal leaders, there is a greater preparedness to explore informal leaders and their styles of leadership (e.g. Feyerherm, 1994). Alvesson and Deetz (2000, p. 58) observe that informal leadership may be especially relevant to professional organizations where individuals who are not in formal positions of leadership may influence others through the advice they offer and their reputation.

However, and somewhat disappointingly, there is still a tendency to emphasize the role and leadership practices of formally designated leaders. A greater emphasis on observation might be more likely to capture informal leadership, since the researcher is likely to have an especially good vantage point from which to view leadership as a process, as much as something that formally designated leaders do. Interestingly, one of the most instructive studies of informal leadership—Whyte's (1944) investigation of an Italian–American street corner gang in Boston—was based almost exclusively on participant observation.

Whyte's study showed how leaders emerged in what was formally a leaderless context and how leaders maintained their positions within the subculture. The neglect of informal leadership is surprising in the light of the growing interest in dispersed leadership in recent years (Bryman, 1996; Ray, Clegg, & Gordon, 2004).

5.2. Quantitative research without numbers

While qualitative research on leadership can be strikingly different from quantitative research in style and approach, it can also sometimes appear strikingly similar to it so that it might sometimes be described as quantitative research without numbers. This latter feature is particularly likely to be the case in studies using qualitative interviewing within the context of a cross-sectional design. With this kind of research, while the qualitative research is different from quantitative research in some respects, the differences are not great. Thus, an investigation like Spaulding's (1997) study of the adverse effects of various dimensions of ineffective leadership on teacher morale could be viewed as generating similar kinds of findings to quantitative research, although employing a very different approach to the research design and research process more generally.

Studies like this draw on a sample that is then interviewed in order to draw out the factors that are viewed as contributing to an outcome, which might be effectiveness or morale. This kind of investigation is similar to quantitative research in both the way in which the data are collected and the kinds of findings that are generated, but there is no quantification. Drawing attention to this feature of some qualitative research is significant because it invites a questioning of the assumption in some quarters that qualitative research always generates forms of knowledge that are distinctively different from those generated by quantitative research.

6. Combining quantitative and qualitative research on leadership

In addition to the studies summarized in Table 1, 12 articles based on investigations that explicitly combined quantitative and qualitative research were uncovered. These are outlined in Table 2. Several points are worth registering about the studies summarized, which are in addition to further evidence of qualitative research on leadership being carried out in a wide variety of different sectors and contexts. It is also worth observing that as with the studies in Table 1, research based in North America is not as prominent as in quantitative studies. In fact, six of the combined studies derive from North America. The others are from Israel (3), the UK (2), and Australia (1).

6.1. Research design and research methods

Unlike the studies in which qualitative research is conducted in relation to leadership on its own, these combined studies are typically of a particular kind of investigation, namely, one that employs a cross-sectional design and that entails the use of the qualitative interview for generating data. Eight of the 12 studies entailed qualitative interviewing for the generation of at least some of the qualitative data and all but two entailed the use of a cross-sectional design. Also striking is that in the case of four studies, the same research instrument was used for the collection of both the quantitative and the qualitative data and that in a further two studies, the same research instrument was employed for the collection of some of the quantitative and qualitative data.

6.2. Different forms of leader behavior

While some qualitative studies suggest that leaders' visions are seen as important by leaders and followers alike, these combined studies also confirm the emphasis in several of the qualitative studies on the more instrumental aspects of leader behavior and on having a people orientation that was evident in the articles described. This feature can be seen particularly in the studies by Coleman (2000), Egri and Herman (2000), Kirby, King, and Paradise (1992), Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001), and Trevelyan (2001). Moreover, the studies by Kirby et al. (1992) and Shamir and Lapidot (2003) reinforce the tendency for qualitative studies to reveal the importance of trust and integrity for leaders.

6.3. Ways of combining quantitative and qualitative research

There are a variety of ways in which quantitative and qualitative research can be combined (Bryman & Bell, 2003, chapter 22). The following are particularly revealed in the studies in Table 2:

- *Triangulation*. Some studies explicitly employ quantitative and qualitative research to see how far the ensuing data are mutually reinforcing: Kirby et al. (1992), Sagie, Zaidman, Amichai-Hamburger, Te'eni, and Schwartz (2002), Trevelyan (2001), Voelck (2003). The Kan and Parry's (2004) study of nurse leaders in New Zealand, which was published in *The Leadership Quarterly* but was published after 2003, shows how a conflict between quantitative and qualitative data can be used as a springboard for theoretical development within a grounded theory approach, rather than being a problem requiring reconciliation.

- *Preparation*. Qualitative research is sometimes conducted in order to prepare for quantitative research in terms of generating hypotheses or developing research instruments but for only one of the studies in Table 2—Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001)—was this a major feature, while for Rosenor (1990) the findings from a survey prompted follow-up qualitative interviewing.
- *Expansion and complementarity*. Quantitative and qualitative research are frequently combined so that one set of data is employed to expand upon the other set. This use of quantitative and qualitative research in tandem can be found in: Coleman (2000), Mizrahi and Rosenthal (2001), Shamir, Goldberg-Weill, Breinin, Zakay, and Popper (2000), Shamir and Lapidot (2003), Voelck (2003).
- *Different issues*. In four of the studies in Table 2, quantitative and qualitative data are collected in relation to different research questions or topics: Trevelyan (2001), Egri and Herman (2000), Martin, Trigwell, Prosser, and Ramsden (2003), Sagie et al. (2002) and Voelck (2003).
- *General patterns plus meaning*. The Blase studies (Blase, 1993; Blase & Roberts, 1994) show a form of combining quantitative and qualitative research whereby quantitative data are employed to provide general patterns, such as leaders' effectiveness levels, while the qualitative data provide insight into the meanings that leaders behaviors have for followers.

Thus, even though we are only dealing in this section with a small number of studies, it is clear that leadership researchers combine the use of quantitative and qualitative research for a variety of purposes. Also, any single study is likely to employ multi-strategy research for more than one purpose, for example, Mizrahi and Rosenthal's (2001) use of qualitative research to prepare for the collection of quantitative data and to help expand upon quantitative findings.

7. Can quantitative and qualitative leadership studies be combined?

The issue being considered in this section is different from that addressed in the previous one which was concerned with the questions surrounding the integration of quantitative and qualitative research in a single study. In the present section, the issue is whether published research from the quantitative and qualitative traditions can be brought together.

The answer is simple: some can and some cannot. Most difficult to integrate with the still dominant quantitative research paradigm are those qualitative investigations that problematize leadership (see Section 4.8). Quantitative research entails—and indeed requires—a simplification of social and organizational processes. It necessitates a commitment to the belief that leadership and the terms that relate to it when questionnaires are administered (influence, goal, leader, leadership, etc.) are widely understood in similar ways and that the abstract conceptualizations of leadership that emerge from administering the instruments (initiating structure, contingent reward behavior, individualized consideration, substitutes for leadership, etc.) have a trans-situational relevance that transcends space and time.

Studies that probe what people mean by leadership, that query how we know when leadership has taken place, that show that people are frequently confused about the nature of leadership, that suggest that leadership is often constituted through language are least capable of being amalgamated with quantitative research with its emphasis on measurement procedures that have to ride roughshod over such ambiguities and equivocations.

Research that results in rich, highly contextualized findings can be difficult to link with quantitative studies that seek to generate lawlike findings that transcend time and space. What is the quantitative

leadership researcher, who is likely to be North American and who is conducting a literature review prior to administering a questionnaire, supposed to take away from Gronn's (1999) historical study, which is based on documents, of the leader of an Australian school?

One possibility would be to treat the research, which was concerned to develop the notion of the "leadership couple", as connected with shared leadership and to develop into a questionnaire some of the insights from Gronn's work. Equally, Gronn's investigation provides important insights into substitutes for leadership, which might also be used to inform how the literature on this topic is understood and for the development of operational definitions of key dimensions into the concept of substitutes. Yet another possibility is that when quantitative researchers engage in interpretations of their findings, qualitative studies like this may provide insights into some of the processes that underlie the observed patterns of relationships among key variables.

Equally, qualitative researchers could smooth the process of combining published research with that of quantitative researchers. One of the most noticeable features of Table 1 is the very large number of studies that are to do with how leaders initiate change in organizations, a considerable proportion of which are to do with schools. By linking their findings to preceding investigations— for example, by drawing attention to similarities and divergences in findings among comparable studies and possible reasons for any divergences—qualitative researchers on leadership may make their findings more capable of being merged with quantitative research on similar or adjacent topics.

Several studies in Tables 1 and 2 have similar concerns to those of many quantitative researchers, namely, the kinds of leader behavior that are conducive to effective leadership (e.g. Bryman, Gllingwater, & McGuinness, 1996; Bryman et al., 1996). The empirical focus for such studies entails a consideration of such questions as: "what lessons can successful leaders teach us when we interview and observe them?"; "what do followers look for in their leaders and what do they take to be good or effective leadership?"; and "how do effective leaders implement change?".

If someone is conducting a literature review concerned with effective leadership and change, regardless of whether the review is a precursor to quantitative or qualitative research on leadership, qualitative studies that touch on research questions such as the three outlined in the previous sentence ought to be capable of being combined with parallel quantitative research. Consequently, it is primarily qualitative research which chips away at the foundations of quantitative research that is most likely to be difficult to integrate into an overview of what is known on a particular topic.

One final point that is worth addressing is the controversial matter of whether leaders matter. There has been some uncertainty, largely deriving from quantitative studies, about whether leaders really make a difference (e.g. Lieberson & O'Connor, 1972). The qualitative studies reviewed in this article would leave readers in little doubt that leaders do matter—to their organizations and to their followers. They do make a difference. Several of the studies recognize the significance of the organizational constraints that frequently confront leaders and limit the ability to engage in the kinds of behavior they would prefer (e.g. Bryman et al., 1996; Roberts & Bradley, 1988). However, they also frequently point to the capacity of many leaders to overcome obstacles and to elevate their followers to higher levels of commitment (e.g. Tierney, 1987).

Such findings are compelling but they also should be handled with care because it is all too easy when confronted with the nearness of often forceful leaders to exaggerate their importance by paying too little attention to the situational factors that leaders must meet head-on. Nonetheless, the message that comes across from qualitative studies is loud and clear: leaders do matter and they do make a difference.

8. Discussion

Qualitative researchers on leadership have made important contributions. It has proved valuable in certain areas: understanding leadership in relation to the change process; how leaders manipulate symbols and meaning to achieve organizational ends; uncovering or attaching greater significance to aspects of leadership that are relatively neglected by quantitative researchers; appreciating the relevance of context for leader behavior; giving us insights into the worlds of senior leaders, as well as leaders at lower echelons; and enhancing our understanding of the relevance of language for leadership.

As a result, qualitative research on leadership has greatly enhanced our appreciation of the significance of leaders as makers of meaning, an aspect of leadership that is difficult to gain access to through quantitative investigations. The importance of this facet of leadership to an appreciation of how leaders engage with change comes across in many of the studies, an aspect of leadership that has been difficult for quantitative researchers to gain access to.

Qualitative research has also been very quick to explore new areas of leadership, such as shared leadership, e-leadership, and environmental leadership, and to encourage questioning of what we mean by leadership and how the phenomenon should be investigated. In addition, not only have methods of data collection that have been under-utilized in the field been given greater prominence (such as the qualitative interview and participant observation) but also newer approaches to data analysis have come to the fore, such as grounded theory (Parry, 1999) and discourse analysis (Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a,b; Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997). Interestingly, however, one potential approach to the examination of leadership discourse—narrative analysis—did not appear significantly in any direct or obvious way in the studies examined in the course of this article, in spite of the suggestion in Heck and Hallinger's (1999) review of the field of educational leadership that it constitutes a fertile approach for qualitative researchers.

Interestingly, although qualitative researchers on leadership have frequently emphasized the leadership of senior leaders, a feature that distinguishes it from much quantitative research, some qualitative researchers have emphasized the significance of dispersed or shared leadership forms. Such an emphasis helps to mitigate the well-known tendency in much leadership research towards focusing upon the heroic leader. Studies of leadership in cooperatives and similar organizations (e.g. Jones, 2000; Vanderslice, 1988) and of the role of shared leadership (e.g. Bryman et al., 1996; Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001) have helped to offset the tendency towards a "great person" approach.

On the other hand, qualitative research has possibly not departed as much as some might have liked from the preoccupations and characteristics of quantitative research, in that it too is largely wedded to a focus on formal leaders and is also indifferent to informal leadership, although there are some important exceptions. There has been a tendency for some qualitative research on leadership to look like quantitative research on leadership but without numbers, a tendency that appears to have increased as the distinctive case study or multiple case study design has tended to give way to the cross-sectional design that characterizes much quantitative research. Indeed, this point relates to an accusation that is sometimes levelled at qualitative research on organizations, namely, that it does not differ significantly from quantitative research in terms of its fundamental epistemological and ontological assumptions (Alvesson, 1996). Those qualitative studies that examine the discourse of leadership, how leadership incidents are discursively constructed, and which provide richly textured accounts of leadership-in-

context probably come closer to the kinds of alternative paradigmatic stances on leadership that writers like Alvesson are concerned to promote.

9. Conclusion

Many of the pieces reviewed for this article excel in giving the reader a profound sense of the realities of leadership: the frustrations they face as leaders, the forms of leader behavior they engage in, and their feelings about their successes and failures. These realities are given an immediacy because they are frequently, if not invariably, presented in leaders' own words and sometimes in the words of their followers. The latter provide a sense of their admiration for leaders who are recognized as often having to confront a wall of resistance, if not antagonism. The many studies of educational leaders (and other public service leaders) express well the difficulties teachers and principals face in seeking to confront multiple constituencies amid tight budgetary constraints and the leadership strategies they employ to deal with barriers.

Sometimes, the stories are moving, such as Roberts's (1985) account of a leader overcoming huge obstacles to turn around a school district, but the follow-up account of how she lost much of her lustre when she moved to a different post provides a poignant and salutary lesson about the significance of context for leaders (Roberts & Bradley, 1988). Understanding how such leaders instigate change is a highly related issue in which qualitative studies excel. The research reviewed here reveals the significance and authenticity of widely appreciated nostrums about the importance of vision, while simultaneously requiring a qualification of those nostrums by revealing the importance to leaders and followers alike of apparently humdrum forms of leadership.

Similarly, the studies of leaders in business settings provide an equally revealing sense of the immediacy of commercial constraints. For example, in their research on UK construction projects, Bryman et al. (1988) noted how site managers' leadership styles frequently varied according to the stage of the project and whether and how far the work was behind schedule, as well as in terms of such issues as the weather and difficulties with the supply chain. The extensive quotations bring home the reality of their roles as leaders, as they struggle against the odds. Further, factors such as those just mentioned also reveal the significance of context: the particular cluster of factors mentioned (project stage, whether on schedule, the weather, and problems with subcontractors), while not unique to construction, certainly reveals its distinctiveness. These considerations expose once again the significance of context for understanding leadership and show how important qualitative research is for generating such an appreciation.

But the cost of presenting readers with the realities of leadership, with the impact of context, and with an understanding of leadership in relation to change is that it is difficult to provide a more generalized understanding of leadership. One way of approaching the issue would be to treat the findings of qualitative studies as providing opportunities for what Williams (2000) calls moderatum generalizations. This means establishing what class of objects the findings from a study can be generalized to. The findings from research on school teachers might be generalizable to other studies of teachers; if so, they might be generalizable to leaders in other educational settings; and they might even have a generality to other public service leaders confronting change. Williams argues that qualitative researchers frequently engage in such generalization anyway, but recognizing that it is a way of engaging in limited

generalization may encourage leadership researchers to approach their findings in a more cumulative way than is currently the case, as the analysis in Section 4.5 has suggested.

However, lest it be thought that the author is damning qualitative research on leadership with faint praise with these remarks, it also has to be recognized that leadership researchers would know next to nothing about leadership in relation to the change process, other than through popular business press accounts, were it not for qualitative studies. The research designs used by quantitative researchers, even the longitudinal ones, do not address the change process adequately. We would also know very little about the routinization of charisma if some qualitative researchers had not examined the process (e.g. Trice & Beyer, 1986; Weed, 1993). This is ironic because Max Weber, who is the starting point for most examinations of charisma, was far more concerned about its routinization than he was about charisma as such, because it chimed with his pessimistic views about disenchantment.

If nothing else—in other words, even for the most die-hard quantitative researcher who sees in qualitative studies of leadership nothing more than anecdotal, impressionistic analyses of limited external validity—qualitative research on leadership can always be regarded as providing a stream of research questions, some of which may be amenable to quantitative research. Such a view is not an attractive one because it places qualitative research in an epistemologically inferior position of requiring verification before it can be accepted as legitimate knowledge. However, it represents a more appealing position that being dismissed out of hand.

The future of qualitative research on leadership looks bright but at the time that this review was conducted, there was a sense that it was being pulled in slightly different directions. On the one hand, it is almost being coopted by quantitative research in the sense that some of it is looking increasingly similar to the myriad of studies associated with that approach; on the other hand, there are calls for it to be more distinctive and less attached to a scientific realist epistemology. The former runs the risk that qualitative research on leadership will become a handmaiden to the more established quantitative research approach by: suggesting research questions to be followed up by more "rigorous" methods; as a means of developing research instruments; and as a way of adding spice to dry statistical findings. The second direction runs the risk of ghettoization with qualitative research getting cut off from the mainstream of leadership research.

Neither outcome is desirable, but one of the main ways in which qualitative research on leadership can serve leadership research is to engage much more with quantitative research in terms of its findings and literature, so that it becomes fully integrated into the field, while simultaneously maintaining a distinctive approach to designing research and gathering data. Qualitative researchers have made their points cogently about the deficiencies of questionnaires and other components of the quantitative researchers armoury—it is now time to move on. Moving on means engaging much more with the findings of quantitative as well as qualitative leadership research, being clear about the distinctiveness of what it has to offer, and engaging with a wider variety of approaches to data collection than the semi-structured or unstructured interview.

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