



Leadership studies—A Scandinavian inspired way forward?



Martin Blom

Lund University School of Economics and Management, Box 7080, SE-220 07 Lund, Sweden

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 22 January 2016

Received in revised form 19 April 2016

Accepted 20 April 2016

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Leadership

Leadership studies

Scandinavian leadership research

ABSTRACT

This paper highlights three important problems characterizing much of current leadership studies: the hegemonic ambiguity problem, the idyllic problem, and the methodological problem(s). I suggest three broad routes forward – taking the *concept*, the *ideological aspects*, and the *epistemic challenges* more seriously – which in various ways address, and in best case mitigate, the three problems. Recognising that this is an on-going, global debate within leadership studies with many distinguished non-Scandinavian scholars taking part, I highlight some interesting, important, and rather recent Scandinavian/Nordic voices and new thinking that in various ways bring hope and suggest possible ways forward.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

In a recently published article in this journal Mats Alvesson and I pointed at what we see as important and fundamental problems with much of the current leadership research (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). In this paper I continue where we ended with some future oriented suggestions for leadership studies, partly guided by the promising work of other Scandinavian scholars. I thereby hope to contribute and add to the discussion on how leadership studies can be (re)vitalized and made more relevant.

The paper is structured as follows. I start by highlighting three significant problems or challenges with current (especially mainstream) leadership studies. I then outline three broad ways forward that in different aspects deal with the previously described problems/challenges. The paper ends with a short concluding section.

1. The hegemonic ambiguity and other problems with leadership studies

‘Something is rotten in the state of Denmark’ echoes Marcellus famous words to Horatio in Shakespeare’s play Hamlet. Could the same be said about the state of current leadership studies? Despite the impressive number of empirical studies during the last three decades some scholars seem all put positive about the progress in terms of useful insights (Andriessen & Drenth, 1984; Perrow, 1979; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 1989), and some even claim that ‘we know little if anything more about leadership’ (Barker, 1997). More recently, Grint (2010, p. 1) noted that ‘[a]s I read more material, I realized

that all my previous “truths” were built on very dubious foundations, so my understanding decreased as my knowledge increased’.

One important reason behind all the frustration and confusion is that the signifier ‘leadership’ tends to refer to a variety of various and often contradictory things as pointed out by Kets de Vries (1994):

‘When we plunge into the literature on leadership, we quickly become lost in a labyrinth: endless definitions, countless articles and never-ending polemics . . . it seems that more has been studied about less and less, to end up ironically with researchers studying everything about nothing’ (p. 73)

In addition, a clear definition of leadership is often lacking in many writings on the topic (Rost, 1991). If a definition is included, it is usually rather vague and all embracing (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). This makes of course the relationship between a leadership study and what it is supposed to relate to (empirically) rather uncertain and arbitrary. The many views that exist in parallel lead to ‘tribe-ism’ within the fragmented field. This of course makes it hard for a leadership scholar from one tradition to evaluate and comment on the scientific value of a study within another tradition—both claiming to study ‘leadership’. As a result, fragmentation (of the unproductive sort), ‘boxed-in research’ (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2014) and scholarly confusion prevail.¹

¹ Variation and competing (or complementing) views can often be motivated and fruitful in research, not least within social sciences. But when it comes to leadership studies this has most likely been taken too far without any deeper intellectual considerations.

E-mail address: martin.blom@fek.lu.se (M. Blom).

Another major problem with many leadership studies is the tendency of linking the signifier with the undisputedly good (Blom & Alvesson, 2015; Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2012; Spoelstra & ten Bos, 2011) and conflating leadership and ethics (Mumford & Fried, 2014). The idea of leadership as something per definition or inherently good is for example explicitly formulated by one of the world's most cited leadership writers, Burns (2003), as:

'I believe leadership is not only a descriptive term but a prescriptive one, embracing a moral, even a passionate, dimension. Consider our common usage. We don't call for good leadership—we expect, or at least hope, that it will be good. 'Bad' leadership implies no leadership. I contend that there is nothing neutral about leadership; it is valued as a moral necessity.' (p. 2)

Taken together, the all-inclusiveness and the bias towards goodness create what we refer to as the 'hegemonic ambiguity' of leadership (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). By this, we refer to the 'vagueness and uncertainty associated with multiple, incoherent meanings attributed to a phenomena' (p. 486). Its common association with goodness makes it hard to resist, creating a jump on the bandwagon effect. In addition, the more alternatives *within* leadership discourses, the more empty and meaningless the term becomes and the more confusion it creates. The crowding out effect of a popular signifier – such as leadership – at the expense of alternative vocabulary contributes to its hegemonic position in scientific (and overall societal) discourse.

Another problem, related to the goodness issue described above, is the idyllic assumptions that often characterize much contemporary leadership research. The subordination of followers is seen as natural and are often taken for granted:

'From insects to reptiles to mammals, leadership exists as surely as collective activity exists . . . it is fair to surmise that whenever there is social activity, a social structure develops, and one (perhaps the) defining characteristic of that structure is the emergence of a leader or leaders' (Judge et al., 2009, p. 855).

There are of course critical streams of research that have been questioning and challenging this natural and idyllic view on leadership, for example Banks (2008), Calas and Smircich (1991), Collinson (2005, 2011), Gemmill and Oakley (1992), Gordon (2011), Jermier, Knights and Nord (1994), Knights and Morgan (1992), and Zoller and Fairhurst (2007). Within the leadership literature, there has also been a strong critique against the mainstream omnipotent view of leaders (e.g. Gabriel, 1997; Knights & McCabe, 2015), unhealthy dependencies (Lipman-Blumen, 2005; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Sveningsson & Blom, 2011; Tourish, 2011), the 'romance' of leadership (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985; Pfeffer, 1977; Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007), and following that, the general ignorance or neglect of followership (Bligh, 2011; Hollander, 1992; Kelley, 1988; Riggio, Chaleff, & Lipman-Blumen, 2008) and complex relationships (Hosking, 2011; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2011). Also outside the leadership tradition (it is of course hard to draw a hard line here) there have been critical notions on the phenomenon, often in terms of its power effects (e.g. Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Hardy & Clegg, 1999; Jackall, 1988) or the naïve overestimation of its importance (e.g. Perrow, 1979; p. 98–112).

How leaders and followers come into being is not always a matter of harmonious claiming and granting of identities (cf. DeRue & Ashford, 2010). A leader – formal or not – is arguably the more privileged part in relation to his/her followers (at least in terms of influence over time). Common and potentially significant 'downsides' of followership, e.g. in terms of reduced autonomy and negative identity (Alvesson & Blom, 2015) are often ignored or glossed over by ideologically infused texts viewing the order of leaders-followers as obvious and natural.

The third problematic feature I would like to draw attention to is the notorious difficulty of studying the phenomena in question. This observation is of course all but new. Many scholars have brought forward the epistemic and methodological difficulties related to empirical leadership studies (e.g. Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Barker, 1997, 2001; Bryman, 2004; Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2010; Wood, 2005). To reduce a complex social phenomenon such as leadership into various forms of quantitative indexes or scales (see for example Collins, 2005; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Scandura & Graen, 1984) is problematic. Surveys that traditionally have dominated mainstream leadership research are less suitable for capturing relationships, interactions, meaning making, and other central dimensions that we usually associate with leadership. These dimensions are even hard to study based on qualitative methods such as interviews and observations (Alvesson, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Bryman, Stephens, & Campo, 1996; Conger, 1998). Nevertheless, the fundamental problems with actually studying leadership are seldom recognized and discussed in current journal publications. Instead, technical issues on data sample, data analysis procedures, and the degree of rigour are often extensively discussed.

As we have seen the problems and challenges associated with leadership studies are significant. The question is what we can do about it?

2. Some potential ways forward where Scandinavian leadership scholars might show the way and serve as inspiration

I suggest three important and – hopefully – constructive ways of responding to the five challenges outlined above. Notable is that all three areas to a large extent are inspired by Scandinavian (or more correctly Nordic since some scholars referred to are based in Finland) leadership research, some of it published in this very journal.

2.1. Taking the concept of leadership more seriously

In order to mitigate the intellectual confusion caused by the increasingly hegemonic position of leadership as a concept (Blom & Alvesson, 2015), we need to think carefully about what it should refer to; it needs to be reasonably distinct in order to not cover everything and thus nothing. The task in this paper is not to argue for – and impose – yet another definition of leadership on the reader, but to encourage the student of leadership to carefully delimit its meaning and its reach in a way that is useful for advancing our understanding of the phenomenon it is supposed to represent (as well as other similar/nearby phenomena, then hopefully *not* vaguely covered by the leadership label).

A good starting point is to actively consider and work with alternative signifiers. When for example trying to make sense of how formal superiors plan, provide instructions, allocate resources, control behaviour and/or output, hire and fire, the concept of 'managerial work' can provide a better point of departure than 'leadership'. Of course, it may be the case that we at a certain point of time realize that leadership actually captures what is going on in a better way than management or managerial work, but the point is that this should not be taken for granted a priori (to be compared with the much less risky notion that managers most likely conduct some form of 'managerial work'). If we instead – based on opportunism, habit and/or conceptual affection – depart from 'leadership' when studying and describing the activities outlined above and stick to that notion, we run the risk of contributing to the dilution of leadership as a useful and informative concept. It is for example common to conflate and include both the organic, emergent, and largely voluntary process of leadership/

followership and the authority linked to formal hierarchy in organizations (what is better referred to as management) under the banner of leadership (sometimes with the distinction of informal versus formal leadership). This adds to both the confusion and the naturalization of 'leadership' in organizations and society.

The usefulness of managerial work as a signifier has for example been highlighted and demonstrated by Scandinavian scholars such as Tengblad (2002, 2006, 2010a, 2012a, 2012b), sometimes explicitly in relation to leadership and leadership research (Tengblad, 2010b). Another signifier suggested and actively used by the same research group is 'co-workership' (medarbetarskap in Swedish) (Hallsten & Tengblad, 2006; Tengblad, Ackerman, Hallsten, & Velten, 2007) instead of 'followership' or 'shared leadership'. This concept provides other connotations and often less mystification. Exercise of power (of the more coercive Machiavellian kind), as an alternative to the exercise of leadership, is yet another example of a related signifier – also capturing asymmetrical influencing processes – but with different connotations.

In general when trying to make sense of how people gain direction, support, inspiration, motivation, and so forth, 'horizontal' modes of organizing (without a clear sense of asymmetry/vertical hierarchy) should also be considered. A relationship/process conceptualized as distributed- or shared leadership (Gronn, 2002; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Spillane and Diamond, 2007) is perhaps better described as teamwork, networking among peers (using a professional community outside the formal work group) or autonomy (instead of self-leadership, see e.g. Lovelace, Manz, & Alves, 2007). Not only are these labels perhaps more informative of what is actually going on (see for example Lundholm, 2011; Rennstam, 2007), they also help us to see the alternatives to routinely dividing people into leaders and followers without much thought:

'Why bother to study interactions and practices in terms of "leadership"? Clearly, there should be alternatives such as "organizing" or "team-work" that may be met by much less scepticism among scholars and practitioners alike.' (Crevani et al., 2010, p. 79)

The distinction between leadership and other modes of organizing is of course in a sense both difficult and highly arbitrary. Leadership may be involved, perhaps even central, in the creation and maintaining of 'non-leadership' modes of organizing, for example providing meaning (Smircich & Morgan, 1982) to a tough management decision (e.g. a budget cut or a radical reallocation of resources) or providing favourable conditions for increased autonomy or team/peer work.

It is important to emphasize that leadership/followership-vocabulary has its place and should of course be used. What I argue for is that it should be used with more care, thought, and scrutiny than is common today. And that is regardless if we as leadership researchers just play safe and appropriate an established conceptualization² (TFL, LMX, etc.) or if we instead prefer to let the people we study do the 'thinking' and based on their language games inductively define 'leadership' for us (Kelly, 2008, 2014).

Some variations when it comes views and definitions are inevitable and can often be intellectually productive. But given the current state of the field, a more *restrained view* (in terms of representation) and a more *restrained use* (giving space for

alternative vocabulary) will most likely make the signifier more useful and the confusion caused by the all-inclusiveness tendencies (part of problem number one described above) can be counteracted and mitigated.

2.2. Taking ideology more seriously

There is a strong element of ideology in studies of leadership, and as pointed out by Czarniawska-Joerges (1988, p. 8):

'[n]ot all ideologies are or can be used as science (or art or law), but all science is accumulated within specific ideological contexts and therefore can be used as ideology. New discoveries and new theories usually function as liberating devices in relation to old ideologies and legitimating devices for new ideologies'.

Ideology here is understood (inspired by Czarniawska-Joerges, 1988) as a system of ideas describing the reality, projecting a desired state of affairs, and indicating possible ways of reaching the desired state. An obvious ideological dimension concerns the traditional leader-centric idea of heroic leadership, still dominating much leadership research (Jackson & Parry, 2008; Koivunen, 2007), as opposed to more progressive post-heroic ideas on shared or distributed leadership. Here we have theories assuming and legitimating highly asymmetrical relationship (where *one* leader typically is expected to exercise social domination over many, more or less passive, followers) that are being challenged by new theories, which by gaining ground contribute to much more egalitarian understandings and ideals of working life, with less power distance and less hierarchical concentration of power and influence. The potential ideological effects of such a '(de)normalisation project' are of course significant.

The ideological nature of leadership research is seldom explicitly recognized and treated as deserved. There are however exceptions (e.g. Mumford and Fried's (2014) notion of 'ideological models'), and again, some important texts from Scandinavian scholars. Holmberg and Strannegård (2005) examine the ideological elements in (Swedish) leadership discourse in the so-called 'new economy' and highlight the prominent position of market rationality, individualism, pleasure, risk taking, and gambling. Alvesson and Kärreman (2015) scrutinize the 'ideological overtones' in texts on transformational leadership and uncover problematic ideological elements in terms of heroism and saint-like conceptions of leaders. Related to this are the issues of the goodness of leadership as well as the idyllic conditions surrounding it as described earlier. The de-contesting ideological effects (ibid) of this are problematic and need to be addressed. The 'right' forms of leadership combine 'power, morality, and far-reaching influence over followers doing excellent work and being very satisfied' (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2015; p. 7). This rather ideological view on leadership fuels (and is therefore often uncritically reproduced by) the profitable leadership development industry.³

In a recent study, Mumford and Fried (2014) criticise what they

² One illustrative example is Felfe and Schyns (2010) when they justify their view on leadership as follows (emphasis added): 'In the last decades, transformational leadership has emerged as one of the most important leadership concepts and there is still a growing interest in the functioning of this kind of leadership style. Therefore we consider transformational leadership an *obvious* starting point for this study.' (p. 394)

³ This is constituted by leadership consultants and other leadership developers—people interested in selling leadership as a 'solution' and claiming to improve leaders and their leadership through advise, training, and so forth. The actors within the leadership development industry can be more or less associated with academia. Sometimes business school professors (potentially as executive educators or as private consultants) also sell their knowledge and expertise to those prepared to pay for listening. An interest in practice and close relationship with society are fine, but by not being very careful when mixing scholarly work with the business of a quasi-academic leadership development industry, we run the risk of 'intellectual corruption' where over-simplifications and adaptations to the shifting demands from the paying audience start to guide our intellectual endeavour (see also Hasselbladh, 2013 for a similar concern regarding the role and development of Swedish business schools).

call values-based, ideological leadership models: authentic, servant, character-based, ethical, spiritual, and aesthetic leadership. Their bias towards moral behaviour rather than predictive power is seen as ‘ideological’ and problematic. It is true that the explicit confounding of leadership and morality is problematic, but so are other – less explicitly moral – leadership models, where the ‘prescriptive message’ is hidden in a more values-neutral scientific jargon (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000).

As pointed out before, some Scandinavian leadership scholars have in various ways addressed the problematic ideological bias in much leadership research (also less obvious ideological models than the ones scrutinised by Mumford & Fried, 2014). Alvesson and Kärreman (2015) suggest re-contesting and de-ideologizing as important remedies. Others, such as Hatch, Kostera and Kozminski (2005), and Alvesson and Spicer (2011) have in a similar vein used unorthodox metaphors in order to reveal other sides of leadership than those with strong ideological (and leadership development industry) backup.

It is of great importance to continue de-masking and explicitly recognizing how ideologies frame and in turn are supported by leadership studies and the leadership development industry. By doing so, we can mitigate two of the three problems outlined above: the hegemonic ambiguity problem (especially the goodness aspect), and the idyllic problem.

2.3. Taking the epistemic challenges more seriously

The last problem described above concerns the problems of actually studying leadership in a meaningful way. This is of course a multi-faceted, on-going global debate within leadership studies, but I would nevertheless again like to highlight a few important Scandinavian voices.

For example, in their well-cited paper, Crevani et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of moving away from studying leaders and instead studying leadership as socially constructed in contextual practices and interactions (see also Cunliffe, 2008; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Sjöstrand, Sandberg, & Tyrstrup, 2001). Moving away from an individualistic view towards a processual/practice perspective of ‘becoming’ (Chia, 1995; Ropo, Eriksson, & Hunt, 1997) certainly has its merits when it comes to making sense of leadership (emphasis added): ‘The label “practice” enables us to focus on *how* work is conducted and performed rather than on actors’ intentionality [the latter potentially *also* interesting, especially when compared with the former!].’ (Crevani et al., 2010, p. 82). However, a problematic point of view can be found in the following quote:

‘The strength and pervasiveness of leadership norms is also an argument for labelling the proposed research perspective as “leadership” [. . .] When there are such strong norms, norms that the research community takes active part in sustaining,

they constitute an important societal phenomenon with far-reaching consequences for mankind. If we do not study this in terms of “leadership”, our research will be void of all the aspects of power, domination, identity work, expectations, heroic individualism, normative assumptions, and so forth that come with the word. Articulating and emphasizing such aspects in terms of leadership is to take our role as social scientists seriously’ (p. 80–81).

A similar and slightly defeatist observation is made by Koivunen (2007) who writes that:

‘It seems that for the time being we will have to put up with this paradox, namely that leadership is elusive but omnipresent. The leadership discourses are many, and fluid. This paradox will persist. “Leadership” is like sculpting fog, but sometimes the fog does grow thinner and, briefly, we can catch a glimpse of the big picture as in a kaleidoscope, before it fades away’ (p. 302).

Related to the last sentence in the former quote by Crevani et al. (2010) I would say *on the contrary!* If we are to take our roles seriously we should *not* resign to the fact that leadership discourses are popular and therefore uncritically reproduce them also in academia. If we really want to emphasize and analyse aspects such as power, domination, identity work, etcetera, we should *not* cover them up in imprecise leadership language. If we want to say something revealing about power in organizations why not use the concept of power (see for example McCabe (2007); Gordon (2011); Hardy and Clegg (1999); Van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003))? One and the same phenomena can both for example be described and understood in terms of leadership or power (or a combination) with rather different connotations. Moreover, addressing the first problem described previously (the all-inclusiveness aspect) I think that as social scientists instead of submitting to the current leadership fashion we should become involved in – if not a ‘great refusal’ (Marcuse, 1969) – so at least micro resistance towards the dominant logic of viewing and talking about all sorts of organizational processes as leadership/followership.

Another epistemic challenge is the tendency of thinking that methodological refinement can help us ‘measure’ leadership and its effects; that is assuming that better methodological tools will help us overcome more fundamental epistemic issues. Various forms of quantitative indexes are popular (Collins, 2005; Liden & Maslyn, 1998; Lowe et al., 1996), usually based on surveys among subordinates. Increased rigour and moderately adjusted methodical techniques (see for example *Leadership Quarterly* special issue, 13, 4, 2003) are however not the answer:

‘One is tempted to say that the research on leadership has left us with the clear view that things are far more complicated and “contingent” than we initially believed, and that, in fact, they are so complicated and contingent that it may not be worth our

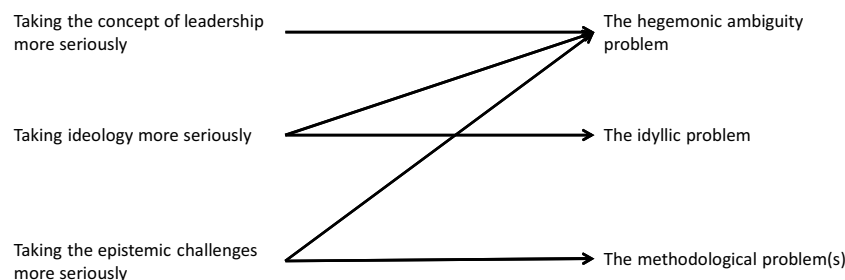


Fig. 1. The relationship between the three suggested ways forward and the three problems.

while to spin out more and more categories and qualifications – if we wish to learn about organizations' (Perrow, 1979).

This observation is as relevant now as it was four decades ago. More advanced and sophisticated statistical methods, procedures, and analysis are hardly the solution to make better sense of the elusive phenomenon of leadership. Instead we run the risk of continuing to measure irrelevant things in a more and more rigorous way. Some Scandinavian leadership scholars have recently highlighted the dangers with such a 'rationalistic fallacy' (Tengblad, 2012b), 'formulaic research' (Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013), and 'gap-spotting' type of research (Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011).

Instead of focusing on more rigorous research procedures, more efforts could probably be put on formulating interesting research questions. Less gap-spotting and bolder, broader research questions tend to counteract perfunctory acceptance of previous explicit and implicit assumptions associated with leadership. Another way of mitigating taken for granted assumptions in leadership research is to actively work with counter assumptions. One example could be to assume that effective substitutes for leadership (Kerr & Jermier, 1978; Schriesheim, 1997) actually are the norm – not the exception – in modern organizations and leadership is therefore something very rare or perhaps even non-existing. A third way to facilitate new insights on leadership is, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, to work with alternative vocabulary. For example, by framing interviews *not* in terms of leadership, new 'language games' (Kelly, 2008) might emerge. These new (or rediscovered old) ways of labelling influence, direction, support, power, and so forth, might actually help us to understand what previously was referred to as 'leadership' in more nuanced and insightful ways.

Fig. 1 sums up how each of the three suggestions above addresses one or several of the three problems outlined previously in the paper.

3. Concluding words

In this research note I have highlighted three important problems characterizing much of current leadership studies, partly addressed in a previous paper (Blom & Alvesson, 2015). I have extended that discussion by suggesting three broad routes forward – taking the *concept*, the *ideological aspects*, and the *epistemic challenges* more seriously – which in various ways address, and in best case mitigate, the three problems. This is of course not a mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive list of all problems that could be found within modern leadership studies but they nevertheless constitute a set of significant challenges.

With full respect for this being an on-going, global debate within leadership studies with many distinguished non-Scandinavian scholars taking part, I have highlighted some interesting, important, and rather recent Scandinavian/Nordic voices and new thinking that in various ways bring hope and suggest possible ways forward. This note therefore contributes to the international dialogue on the future of leadership studies from a current Scandinavian/Nordic perspective.

References

- Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: a reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28(1), 13–33.
- Alvesson, M., & Blom, M. (2015). Less followership, less leadership? An inquiry into the basic but seemingly forgotten downsides of leadership. *M@n@gement*, 18(3), 266–282.
- Alvesson, M., & Deetz, S. (2000). *Doing critical management research*. London: Sage.
- Alvesson, M., & Gabriel, Y. (2013). Beyond formulaic research: in praise of greater diversity in organizational research and publications. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 12(2), 245–263.
- Alvesson, M., & Kärreman, D. (2015). Intellectual failure and ideological success in organizational studies: the case of transformational leadership. *Journal of Management Inquiry* 1–14. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1056492615589974>.
- Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2014). Habitat and habitus: boxed-in versus box-breaking research. *Organization Studies*, 35(7), 967–987.
- Metaphors we lead by: understanding leadership in the real world. In M. Alvesson, & A. Spicer (Eds.). London: Routledge.
- Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003a). Managers doing leadership: the extra-ordinarization of the mundane. *Human Relations*, 56(12), 1435–1459.
- Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003b). The great disappearing act: difficulties in doing leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14(3), 359–381.
- Alvesson, M., & Sveningsson, S. (2003c). Good visions, bad micro-management and ugly ambiguity: contradictions of (non-)leadership in a knowledge-intensive organization. *Organization Studies*, 24(6), 961–988.
- Andriessen, E., & Drenth, P. (1984). Leadership: theories and models. In P. Drenth, H. Thierry, P. J. Willems, & C. J. de Wolff (Eds.), *Handbook of work and organizational psychology* (Vol. 1. pp. 381–420). Chichester: Wiley.
- Dissent and the failure of leadership. In S. Banks (Ed.), (2008). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Barker, R. (1997). How can we train leaders if we don't know what leadership is? *Human Relations*, 50(4), 343–362.
- Barker, R. (2001). The nature of leadership. *Human Relations*, 54(4), 469–494.
- Bligh, M. (2011). Followership and follower-centred approaches. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership studies* (pp. 425–436). London: Sage.
- Blom, M., & Alvesson, M. (2015). All-inclusive and all good: the hegemonic ambiguity of leadership. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 31(4), 480–492.
- Bryman, A. (2004). Qualitative research in leadership: a critical but appreciative review. *Leadership Quarterly*, 15(6), 729–769.
- Bryman, A., Stephens, M., & Campo, C. (1996). The importance of context: qualitative research and the study of leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 7(3), 353–370.
- Burns, J. (2003). *Transforming leadership*. New York: Grove.
- Calas, M. B., & Smircich, L. (1991). Voicing seduction to silence leadership. *Organization Studies*, 12(4), 567–602.
- Chia, R. (1995). From modern to postmodern organizational analysis. *Organization Studies*, 16(4), 579–604.
- Collins, J. (2005). Level 5 leadership: the triumph of humility and fierce resolve. *Harvard Business Review* 136–146.
- Collinson, D. (2005). Dialectics of leadership. *Human Relations*, 58(11), 1419–1442.
- Collinson, D. (2011). Critical leadership studies. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership studies* (pp. 181–194). London: Sage.
- Conger, J. A. (1998). Qualitative research as the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9(1), 107–122.
- Crevani, L., Lindgren, M., & Packendorff, J. (2010). Leadership, not leaders: on the study of leadership as practices and interactions. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 26(1), 77–86.
- Cunliffe, A. (2008). Orientations to social constructionism: relationally responsive social constructionism and its implications for knowledge and learning. *Management Learning*, 39(2), 123–139.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. (1988). *Ideological control in non-ideological organizations*. New York: Praeger.
- DeRue, S., & Ashford, S. (2010). Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership identity constructions in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(4), 627–647.
- Fairhurst, G., & Grant, D. (2010). The social construction of leadership: a sailing guide. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24(2), 171–210.
- Felke, J., & Schyns, B. (2010). Followers' personality and the perception of transformational leadership: further evidence for the similarity hypothesis. *British Journal of Management*, 21(2), 393–410.
- Gabriel, Y. (1997). Meeting God: when organizational members come face to face with the supreme leader. *Human Relations*, 50(4), 315–342.
- Gemmill, G., & Oakley, J. (1992). Leadership: an alienating social myth? *Human Relations*, 45(2), 113–129.
- Gordon, R. (2011). Leadership and power. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership studies* (pp. 195–202). London: Sage.
- Grint, K. (2010). *Leadership—a very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13(4), 423–451.
- Medarbetarskap i praktiken. In F. Hallsten, & S. Tengblad (Eds.). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Hardy, C., & Clegg, S. (1999). Some dare call it power. In S. Clegg, & C. Hardy (Eds.), *Studying organizations: theory and method* (pp. 368–387). London: Sage.
- Hasselbladh, H. (2013). Företagsekonomi och det förlorade uppdraget. In H. Hasselbladh, & M. Holmqvist (Eds.), *Företagsekonomi och samhället* (pp. 29–50). Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Hatch, M. J., Kostera, M., & Kozminski, A. K. (2005). *The three faces of leadership: manager, artist, priest*. London: Blackwell.
- Hollander, E. (1992). Leadership, followership, self, and others. *Leadership Quarterly*, 3(1), 43–54.

- Holmberg, I., & Strannegård, L. (2005). Leadership voices: the ideology of the new economy. *Leadership*, 1(3), 353–374.
- Hosking, D. (2011). Moving relationality: mediations on a relational approach to leadership. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership studies* (pp. 455–467). London: Sage.
- Jackall, R. (1988). *Moral mazes: the world of corporate managers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jackson, B., & Parry, K. (2008). *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying leadership*. London: Sage.
- Resistance and power in organisations. In J. M. Jermier, D. Knights, & W. R. Nord (Eds.). London: Routledge.
- Judge, T. A., Piccolo, R. F., & Kosalka, T. A. (2009). The bright and dark sides of leader traits: a review and theoretical extension of the leader trait paradigm. *Leadership Quarterly*, 20(6), 855–875.
- Kelley, R. (1988). In praise of followers. *Harvard Business Review*, 66(6), 141–148.
- Kelly, S. (2008). Leadership: a categorical mistake? *Human Relations*, 61(6), 763–782.
- Kelly, S. (2014). Towards a negative ontology of leadership. *Human Relations*, 67(8), 905–922.
- Kerr, S., & Jermier, J. (1978). Substitutes for leadership: their meaning and measurement. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 22, 375–403.
- Kets de Vries, M. (1994). The leadership mystique. *Academy of Management Executive*, 8(3), 73–92.
- Knights, D., & McCabe, D. (2015). 'Masters of the universe': demystifying leadership in the context of the 2008 global financial crisis. *British Journal of Management*, 26(2), 197–210.
- Knights, D., & Morgan, G. (1992). Leadership and corporate strategy: toward a critical analysis. *Leadership Quarterly*, 3(3), 171–190.
- Kociatkiewicz, J., & Kostera, M. (2012). The good manager: an archetypical quest for morally sustainable leadership. *Organization Studies*, 33(7), 861–878.
- Koivunen, N. (2007). The processual nature of leadership discourses. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 23, 285–305.
- Liden, R., & Maslyn, J. (1998). Multidimensionality of leader-member exchange: an empirical assessment through scale development. *Journal of Management*, 24(1), 43–72.
- Lipman-Blumen, J. (2005). *The allure of toxic leaders*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lovelace, K. J., Manz, C., & Alves, J. C. (2007). Work stress and leadership development: the role of self-leadership, shared leadership, physical fitness and flow in managing demands and increasing job control. *Human Resource Management Review*, 17(4), 374–387.
- Lowe, K. B., Kroeck, K. G., & Sivasubramanian, N. (1996). Effectiveness correlates of transformational and transactional leadership: a meta-analytic review of the MLQ literature. *Leadership Quarterly*, 7(3), 385–415.
- Lundholm, S. (2011). Meta-managing: a study on how superiors and subordinates manage their relationship in everyday work. *PhD thesis*. Lund: Lund Business Press.
- Marcuse, H. (1969). *An essay on liberation*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- McCabe, D. (2007). *Power at work: how employees reproduce the corporate machine*. London: Routledge.
- Meindl, J., Ehrlich, S. B., & Dukerich, J. M. (1985). The romance of leadership. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30(1), 78–102.
- Mumford, M., & Fried, Y. (2014). Give them what they want or give them what they need?: Ideology in the study of leadership. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 35, 622–634.
- Padilla, A., Hogan, R., & Kaiser, R. (2007). The toxic triangle: destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments. *Leadership Quarterly*, 18(3), 176–194.
- Shared leadership. In C. Pearce, & J. Conger (Eds.). Thousand Oakes: Sage.
- Perrow, C. (1979). *Complex organizations: a critical essay*, 2nd ed. Glenview: Scott, Foresman & Co..
- Pfeffer, J. (1977). The ambiguity of leadership. *Academy of Management Review*, 2(1), 104–112.
- Rennstam, J. (2007). Engineering work—on peer reviewing as a method of horizontal control. *PhD thesis*. Lund: Lund Business Press.
- The art of followership: how great followers create great leaders and organizations. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ropo, A., Eriksson, P., & Hunt, J. (1997). Reflections on conducting processual research on management and organizations. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 13(4), 331–335.
- Rost, J. C. (1991). *Leadership for the twenty-first century*. New York: Praeger.
- Sandberg, J., & Alvesson, M. (2011). Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1), 23–44.
- Scandura, T. A., & Graen, G. B. (1984). Moderating effects of initial leader-member exchange status on the effects of a leadership intervention. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(3), 428–436.
- Schriesheim, C. A. (1997). Substitutes-for-leadership theory: development and basic concepts. *Leadership Quarterly*, 8(2), 103–108.
- Invisible management: the social construction of leadership. In S.-E. Sjöstrand, J. Sandberg, & M. Tyrstrup (Eds.). London: Thomson Learning.
- Smircich, L., & Morgan, G. (1982). Leadership: the management of meaning. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, 18(3), 257–273.
- Spillane, J. B., & Diamond, J. (2007). *Distributed leadership in practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Spoelstra, S., & ten Bos, R. (2011). Leadership. In M. Painter-Morland, & R. Ten Bos (Eds.), *Business ethics and continental philosophy* (pp. 181–198). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sveningsson, S., & Blom, M. (2011). Leaders as buddies: leadership through making people feel good. In M. Alvesson, & A. Spicer (Eds.), *Metaphors we lead by—understanding leadership in the real world* (pp. 96–117). London: Routledge.
- Tengblad, S. (2002). Time and space in managerial work. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 18(4), 543–566.
- Tengblad, S. (2006). Is there a 'new managerial work'? A comparison with Henry Mintzberg's classic study 30 years later. *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(7), 1437–1461.
- Tengblad, S. (2010a). Vad gör en chef? In N. Brunsson (Ed.), *Företagsekonomins frågor* (pp. 146–153). Stockholm: SNS Förlag.
- Tengblad, S. (2010b). What can leadership research learn from the research about managerial work? *9th international studying leadership conference (2010 ISLC), leadership: missions, myths and mysteries*.
- The work of managers: towards a practice theory of management. In S. Tengblad (Ed.), (2012). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tengblad, S. (2012b). Overcoming the rationalistic fallacy in management research. In S. Tengblad (Ed.), *The work of managers: towards a practice theory of management* (pp. 29–50). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tengblad, S., Ackerman, C., Hallsten, F., & Velten, J. (2007). *Medarbetarskap: från ord till handling*. Malmö: Liber.
- Tourish, D. (2011). Leadership and cults. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership studies* (pp. 215–228). London: Sage.
- Uhl-Bien, M. (2006). Relational leadership theory: exploring the social processes of leadership and organizing. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17(6), 654–676.
- Uhl-Bien, M., & Marion, R. (2011). Complexity leadership theory. In A. Bryman, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The sage handbook of leadership studies* (pp. 468–482). London: Sage.
- Uhl-Bien, M., & Pillai, R. (2007). The romance of leadership and the social construction of followership. In B. Shamir, R. Pillai, M. Bligh, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *ollower-centered perspectives on leadership: a tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl* (pp. 187–210). Greenwich: Information Age Publishing.
- Leadership and power: identity processes in groups and organizations. In D. Van Knippenberg, & M. Hogg (Eds.). London: Sage.
- Wood, M. (2005). The fallacy of misplaced leadership. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(6), 1101–1121.
- Yukl, G. (1989). Managerial leadership: a review of theory and research. *Journal of Management*, 15(2), 251–289.
- Zoller, H. M., & Fairhurst, G. (2007). Resistance leadership: the overlooked potential in critical organization and leadership studies. *Human Relations*, 60(1), 1331–1360.