

**Evaluating the inclusion of leadership and organizational change  
as a sub-field within leadership studies**

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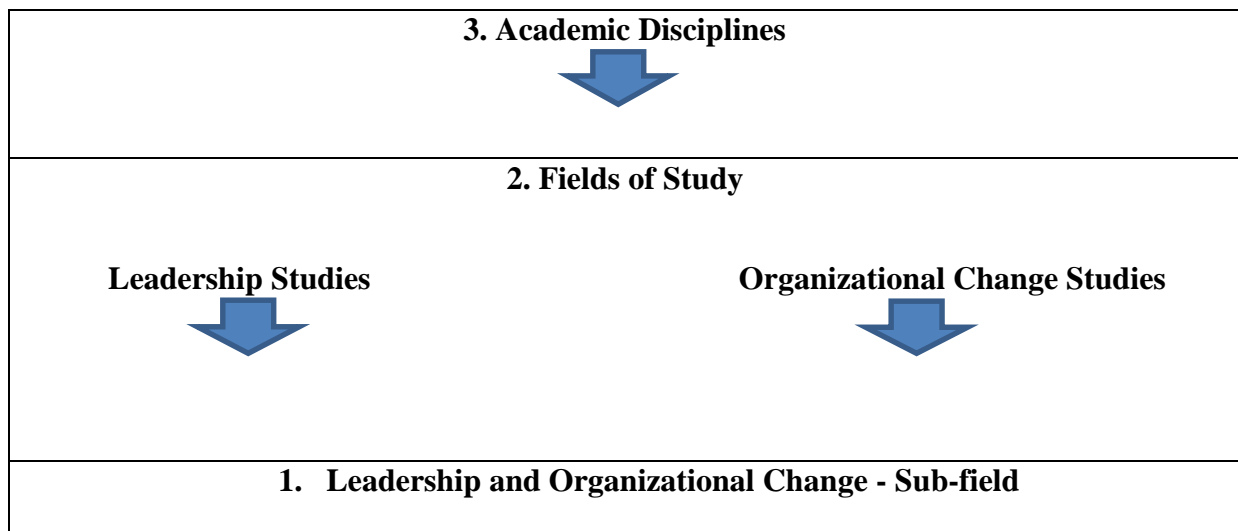
**Summary**

A bounded sub-field of leadership and organizational change informed by both leadership studies and organizational change studies is not evident within leadership studies. If we think in terms of a bridge between these two fields of study four metaphors may be applied 'effective bridge', 'no bridge', 'broken bridge' and 'multiple pathways bridge'. In drawing conclusions about conceptualizing leadership and organizational change, firstly working at the intersection between fields of study is potentially fruitful. Secondly, preferred bridge metaphors determine how leadership and organizational change is understood. Thirdly, leadership and organizational change's inclusion within leadership studies depends upon the metaphor.

**Word Count:** 6,894 (excluding appendices and end list of references)

## Introduction

A review of leadership and organizational change literature (Hughes, 2015a) raised a range of methodological and epistemological issues which impeded literature reviewing and which potentially impede the study of this highly applied sub-field. This conceptual paper proposes a new conceptual framework to study leadership and organizational change interrelationships, which emphasises the interface (or lack of interface) between the fields of leadership studies and organizational change studies. Any study of leadership and organizational change requires engagement at three very different levels (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1 - Levels of disciplines, fields and the sub-field**

The focus of this paper is at the level of the sub-field (1) of leadership and organizational change. However, understanding leadership and organizational change will be informed at the level of academic fields of study (2); leadership studies and organizational change studies and these fields will be informed by academic disciplines (3); such as psychology, sociology, economics and history. The academic disciplines and fields of study informing the sub-field are informed by many competing paradigms, philosophies and perspectives which result in competing and at times contradictory explanations of leadership and organizational change. In this way, theorising highly applied activities such as leading changes and transformations becomes more complex than its practical emphasis implies. The challenge becomes either to seek out the convergence of the sub-field or acknowledge the divergence of the sub-field. In this paper a conceptual framework (Miles and Huberman, 1994) is presented conceptualizing connections between the distinct academic communities which inform this sub-field.

A pragmatic means to establish if a sub-field of leadership and organizational change is evident within leadership studies is to review coverage of the sub-field in recently published edited academic leadership handbooks. Hodgkinson (2003:699) in his own academic handbook review critically reflected upon the proliferation of such handbooks. He cites classic examples from earlier decades highlighting an ideal type.

...brought together the world's leading authorities within a major field of study to map out the territory, reflect comprehensively on the main theoretical, methodological, and empirical developments that had occurred from the field's inception, drawing out, where necessary and appropriate, the implications for practice, and giving clear pointers to where the field might move next, say, over the coming two decades or so.

Hodgkinson's (2003) concern was that commercialization had resulted in the quantity of volumes within management and organization studies potentially devaluing the label 'handbook'. Hodgkinson (2003:699) however, still welcomed advances in management and organization studies.

This is not to decry genuine scholarly advancement; inevitably, with the passage of time, what commence as niche topics within particular disciplines and interdisciplinary fields will evolve into new fields and sub-fields of study in their own right, a highly welcome trend.

Accepting Hodgkinson's (2003) caveats about handbook proliferation, reviewing recently published leadership handbooks helps to gauge if a new sub-field of leadership and organizational change is evolving within the advance of leadership studies. The succinct answer is no. In reviewing four leadership handbooks the anticipated coverage of leadership and organizational change was absent. Firstly, Harvard Business School, central to organizational change debates (Kotter, 1996; Beer and Nohria, 2000) within their centennial leadership handbook (Nohria and Khurana, 2010) offered only brief insights into leadership and organizational change from Glynn and Dejordy (2010) and Lorsch (2010). Only one chapter focussed upon leading change, in this chapter, Ganz (2010) focussed upon leading change within social movements and politics, rather than with regards to organizational change. The second leadership handbook reviewed was *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership* (Bryman et al, 2011) which included chapters on Leader – Member Exchange and transformational leadership. However, leadership and organizational change did not merit a separate chapter. Parry's (2011) chapter on *Leadership and Organization Theory* was the closest, including a sub-section on leadership and organizational change in which he evaluated the state of knowledge in this area (discussed later in this paper). The third handbook *The Oxford Handbook of Leadership* (Rumsey, 2012) included a chapter; *From Transactional and Transformational to Authentic Leadership*, but there were no chapters focussed upon organizational change. Finally, within *The Oxford Handbook of Leadership and Organizations* (Day, 2014), there were chapters on *Charismatic and Transformational Leadership*, *Leader Member Exchange Theory (LMX)* and *Leading for Proactivity*, but no chapters on either organizational change or organizational transformation.

In reviewing four recently published leadership handbooks the anticipated inclusion of a sub-field of leadership and organizational change was absent from these authoritative overviews of the field of leadership studies. This omission is perplexing given that 'for many leadership theorists, leadership and change are almost synonymous' (Ladkin et al, 2010:127) and practitioner orientated literature (see Tichy and Devanna, 1986, Kotter, 1996, Kanter, 1999, Wagner et al, 2010) has emphasised the involvement of leaders in transformation and change for many decades. In his textbook treatment of leadership, Yukl (2012) argued for 'change orientation' as one of four broad categories within his framework of leader behaviours. There has been considerable interest independently in both the fields of leadership studies (Grint, 2005) and organizational change studies (Thomas and Hardy, 2011), but progress in understanding the intersection between leadership and organizational change appears to have been problematic.

## **Bridging and not bridging fields of study**

Metaphors of bridges between fields of study; ‘effective bridge’, ‘no bridge’, ‘broken bridge’ and ‘multiple pathways bridge’ conceptualize the intersection between leadership and organizational change in very different ways. In this section, ‘effective bridge’ which assumes that leadership and organizational change are effectively bridged and ‘no bridge’ which questions the requirement for a bridge between leadership and organizational change are introduced. The next section features ‘broken bridge’ informed by evaluating the sub-field of leadership and organizational change against the *International Journal of Management Reviews* key literature reviewing principles. This is followed by a discussion section which compares and contrasts the first three bridge metaphors with a fourth metaphor ‘multiple pathways bridge’ offering a new way to conceptualize the intersection between leadership and organizational change. Finally, conclusions are drawn with regards to working at the intersection between fields of study being potentially fruitful, bridge metaphor preferences determining how leadership and organizational change is understood and leadership and organizational change’s inclusion within leadership studies being dependent upon your preferred metaphor.

Human thought processes are largely metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), so thinking metaphorically about why an intersection between leadership and organizational change has been problematic is informative. Bridge metaphors have been successfully applied in management and organization studies (see for example, Storey, 1985; Shah and Corley, 2006). However, it is Miller and Fox’s (2004) account of building bridges which most closely resonates with the bridge metaphors discussed here.

Bridges link distinctive land formations, making it possible for people to traverse between them. While opening new opportunities for residents on each side, bridges do not blend the formations or otherwise make them indistinguishable... Our purpose is to show how two or more analytic formations may be linked and made mutually informative, while also respecting the distinctive contributions and integrity of each perspective. (Miller and Fox, 2004:35)

In this quotation, leadership scholars and organizational change scholars inhabiting their respective land formations may be imagined, their fields of study respected for their uniqueness, as well as, their favoured paradigms, philosophies and perspectives. The quotation acknowledges that traversing between two fields may be beneficial, but that the distinctive contribution and integrity of both leadership studies and of organizational change studies remains intact. The following discussion considers leadership and organizational change in terms of the metaphors of either an ‘effective bridge’ or ‘no bridge’.

**‘Effective bridge’ between leadership and organizational change** Leadership studies and organizational change studies as independent fields of study have generated large volumes of literature (Grint 2005; Thomas and Hardy, 2011). It is consequently, reasonable to assume that there will be a proportionately large volume of literature explaining and informing leadership and organizational change interrelationships. This reasoning suggests that a bridge exists between the fields of leadership studies and organizational change studies and that this bridge is effective. Whilst, management and organization studies is characterised by fads and fashions (see Gill and Whittle, 1992 and Collins, 2000), interest in leadership and organizational change transcends such whims. Leadership narratives within society featuring

stories about the role of great leaders making history and initiating change go back a long way (Haslam et al, 2011). The idea that leadership and organizational change is effectively bridged has been embraced by textbook authors (Yukl, 2012), practitioners (Tichy and Devanna, 1986, Kotter, 1996, Kanter, 1999, Wagner et al, 2010) and many leadership theorists (Ladkin et al, 2010).

The prevalence of an assumption that leadership and organizational change are effectively bridged should not be underestimated in many ways it is the current and dominant orthodoxy and provides a rationale for investment in leadership development programmes. However, what should not be overestimated is the assumption that empirical evidence underpins 'effective bridge'. Parry (2011) acknowledged that leadership and organizational change were inextricably intertwined, but that there was far more practitioner than empirical work with practitioner work case study-based, anecdotal and not rigorous in its conduct. Ford and Ford (2012) focused exclusively upon empirical evidence between 1990 and 2010 identifying weaknesses within the literature:

- An over emphasis upon individual leaders
- Subjective assessments of successful change
- Prevalence of single-point data collection research designs and
- A vocabulary which confused and added to the vagueness of leadership and organizational change understanding.

They conceded that based upon the evidence reviewed they could not determine the leader's influence upon organizational change '...what leader actions and interactions are responsible for it, or whether the influence is only on the subjective perceptions of people affected by the change or also impacts the objective outcomes of change' (Ford and Ford, 2012: 33).

Finally, Hughes (2015a) highlighted the two most cited leading change/transformational leadership publications (Kotter, 1995 and 1996) published between 1978 and 2014 were primarily practitioner orientated. In reviewing papers in specialized journals, *The Leadership Quarterly* papers focussed upon advancing transformational leadership primarily transforming followers, rather than transforming organizations (Haslam et al, 2011) with guiding and facilitating change absent from conceptualizations of transformational leadership (Yukl, 1999). *The Journal of Change Management* papers informatively majored upon the development, capabilities and competences of change leaders, assuming that an 'effective bridge' between leadership and organizational change existed.

**'No bridge' between leadership and organizational change** Another conceptualization of leadership and organizational change is without the structure of a bridge, linking communities of scholars and without an assumption that such a bridge is beneficial. The metaphor of 'no bridge' acknowledges scholars working within their own fields of study in this case understanding organizational change from a leadership perspective or understanding leadership from an organizational change perspective. The writings of Knights and Willmott (1997) on interdisciplinary management studies and Örtenblad's (2010) coverage of odd couples are applied to leadership studies here, but equally could be applied to organizational change studies.

The tribal and territorial nature of academic communities has been acknowledged (Becher, 1989; Hughes, 2013). In seeking to understand interrelationships between academic communities earlier attempts to achieve interdisciplinary management and organization

studies are informative. Knights and Willmott (1997) account of the nineties, a time when universities and funding councils encouraged interdisciplinary management studies, offers insights into potential interrelationships between fields of study. Despite espoused values of open-mindedness and being self-critical, cultures and career ladders endorse a defensive kind of disciplinary closure (Knights and Willmott, 1997). Leadership scholars may pay lip service to other fields, but in terms of career progression maintaining allegiance to leadership studies will always be the best strategy. The implied lack of cross fertilisation between fields of study is supportive of a 'no bridge' metaphor. However, where there was an imperative for interdisciplinary management studies, Knights and Willmott (1997) detected two responses. Firstly, selective borrowings of concepts or ideas with little attempt to fully integrate such borrowings. And secondly extending the sphere over which expertise is claimed. At the time of writing, leadership studies scholars (Nohria and Khurana, 2010; Bryman et al, 2011, Rumsey, 2012 and Day, 2014) were not extending their sphere to include leadership and organizational change, if gauged by coverage in academic handbooks. 'No bridge' may be a consequence of a lack of empirical work (Parry, 2011; Ford and Ford, 2012 and Hughes, 2015a), or pragmatically may reflect subject experts focussing upon their own field of leadership studies, rather than the messy and more risky intersection between two fields.

'No bridge' also raises issues about the loyalty of scholars socialised and schooled within a particular field, cooperating and cohabiting with members of a different field potentially being regarded as a defection.

By becoming a disciplinary specialist, we learn to interpret the world through the frames of reference provided by this specialism. In becoming 'disciplined' by the specialism, we routinely become identified with, and attached to, it's distinctive frame of reference. (Knights and Willmott, 1997:18)

This insight is pertinent to understanding an intersection between leadership and organizational change. A leadership studies specialist will have been disciplined into seeing leadership and organizational change from a leadership frame of reference. This disciplinary socialization may even be unconscious, rather than conscious. Knights and Willmott (1997) optimistically concluded that for 'defectors' challenging and extending the limits of boundaries becomes important for their identity. This discussion suggests even if a bridge existed, passage across the bridge would be heavily policed by members of each field, but still a few mavericks might make such a crossing.

Another way to conceptualize leadership and organizational change supportive of the 'no bridge' metaphor is through reference to Örtenblad's (2010) account of odd couples. Örtenblad (2010) was interested in management knowledge packaged in terms of labels consisting of more than one word. He cited examples of knowledge management, learning organization and organization learning, but leading change is equally typical of an odd couple. He was particularly interested in the labels, rather than the fields and disciplines focus here, however his differentiation of three approaches to these odd couples is enlightening. The three approaches Örtenblad (2010) identified were fragmentary, wholeness and interpretive. Interpretive is a hybrid of the first two, so not discussed here. The wholeness approach to odd couples is the closest to the thesis of this paper, focusing upon how the two components of a label create meaning which is more than the sum of the parts. Whereas, the fragmentary approach is closest to the 'no bridge' metaphor in emphasising separateness.

This approach to management labels consisting of more than one word could be labelled 'fragmentation'. The words, which the combined concepts consist of, are seen as disconnected parts. (Örtenblad, 2010: 445)

This fits with 'no bridge' conceptualizations of leadership and organizational change. The study of transformational leadership, the single most studied and debated idea within the field of leadership studies of the past 30 years (Diaz-Saenz, 2011) is illustrative of 'no bridge' as studies of transformational leadership are largely contained and developed within leadership studies.

### **Application of *International Journal of Management Review's* Key Principles**

In considering leadership and organizational change's inclusion as a sub-field within leadership studies, an evaluation of the status of leadership and organizational change as a sub-field is required. The *International Journal of Management Review's* (IJMR) key principles for literature reviewing (see Figure 2) offer an evaluation framework. At the end of this section the third bridge based metaphor 'broken bridge' is introduced.

- Is the choice of a field or sub-field in management and organization studies mature enough to warrant a literature review?
- Are details provided of how the boundaries to that field have been defined to include specific details of what is included and excluded, and why?
- Is there a synthesis and evaluation of the accumulated state of knowledge in that field, summarizing and highlighting current and emerging insight, while stressing strengths and weaknesses of prior work?
- Does the review include consideration of how research has developed in the field into sub-categories, concepts or themes that can provide a more holistic interpretation and (re)categorization of that field?
- Is there a complete analysis of the literature surveyed in terms of discussions of any contrasting methodologies used in the literature, the strength and weakness of particular approaches to studying the subject under review, the quality of the studies in the field, the general conclusions to be drawn from the literature (for example, the current agreements and disagreements contained within the field) providing a thorough discussion of where the literature is now.
- *Are there reasoned and authoritative conclusions as to where the literature is, or perhaps should be going, and what important questions, or gaps, still exist in the field?*
- *Is there a clear statement about what contribution the review makes to theory, practice and/or research?*

**Figure 2 - *International Journal of Management Review's* key principles for an appropriate traditional literature review**



The key principles in italics have not been addressed as these are more relevant to presenting a literature review, whereas here the emphasis is upon the evaluative process. This particular evaluative framework (Figure 2) was chosen for the following reasons because IJMR one of two journals produced by the *British Academy of Management* was the first reviews journal in the field of business and management. Its focus upon conceptual and review papers is highly applicable to the conceptual nature of this paper. The journal espouses a belief in developing collaborative or interdisciplinary work, again highly relevant to the paper's focus upon the intersection between the fields of leadership studies and organizational change studies. In this section leadership and organizational change is evaluated against four IJMR key principles relating to the sub-field; boundaries, maturity, being research informed and use of contrasting methodologies (see Hughes, 2015a for a more detailed discussion).

**The boundaries of leadership and organizational change as a sub-field** The boundaries of the two separate fields of leadership studies and organizational change studies are themselves problematic even before consideration of their intersection. In the halcyon days of the 1950s, it was anticipated that management and organization studies would develop into an integrated, coherent and relevant 'science of management', but instead multiple fields and sub-fields with differing goals, problems and research approaches developed (Whitley, 1984, 2000). Diversity and pluralism may be strengths, rather than weaknesses, however the absence of tightly delineated boundaries is acknowledged. A more pragmatic means to define knowledge boundaries would be to precisely define key terminology. However, despite leadership and organizational change terminology being in everyday use, definitions and meanings are contested. In the case of leadership, Grint (2005) warned that we have yet to establish what it is and Kelly (2014:915) was even more sceptical regarding leadership as an '...empty signifier par excellence...' Organizational change takes on many different guises 'transformation, development, metamorphosis, transmutation, evolution, regeneration, innovation, revolution and transition ...' (Stickland, 1998:14) and it has been described as a 'container concept' (De Caluwe and Vermaak, 2003) with meanings ranging from macro to micro, from small scale to large scale, from human resource orientated to operations management orientated (Frahm, 2007). It may well be, that the application of specific inclusive and exclusive boundaries is a natural science preoccupation, reaffirming belief in the goal of movement towards a unified science, yet less applicable to diverse social sciences. This divergence complicates reasonable questions about what to include and exclude when applying IJMR criteria.

**The maturity of leadership and organizational change as a sub-field** Great leaders making history and initiating change goes back a long way (Haslam et al, 2011). Grint (2008) although critical of such conceptualisations, highlighted the popularity of great men accounts of leadership of the 1800s and 1900s. However, a problematic mind-set of leadership as masculine, heroic, individualist and normative (see Rost, 1993) may still be at work in people's conceptualisations of leadership and organizational change. In this sense, leadership and change are very mature in their lineage, yet problematic with regards to the masculine and heroic archetypes evoked. Gouldner (1971) highlighted that social theories were more likely to be accepted or rejected because of their background assumptions. In this way, the acceptance or rejection of explanations of leadership and organizational change will be judged against the background assumptions embedded within them, such as great leaders make history and initiate change (Haslam et al, 2011). This relates closely to 'effective bridge' assumptions discussed earlier. Political-scientists make connections between historic reoccurring political and societal beliefs with leading, changing and transforming societies, institutions and organizations. Burns (1978) classic *Leadership*, contained his vision of morally transforming leadership, but it was depoliticised and excessively simplified, until it

became a functional and managerial differentiation between transformational and transactional leaders (see Carey, 1992 and Beyer, 1999). In this way the sub-field of leadership and organizational change is immature with only certain elements nurtured and developed, resulting in a dysfunctional celebration, reification and solidification of the centrality of individual leaders within organizations and their agency to make change happen. Considerable potential engagement with the majority of people comprising any organization remains very immature when the focus is upon the great individual leader.

**Research informed leadership and organizational change?** In reviewing the leadership and organizational change literature very real research design challenges of researching sub-field interrelationships become apparent.

<b>LEADERSHIP</b>	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN CHALLENGES</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE</b>
Definition/social construction	<b>1. Ambiguity</b>	Definition/social construction
Past, present and future	<b>2. Contextual Issues</b>	Past, present and future
Leading	<b>3. Dynamic</b>	Changing
Evaluation problematic	<b>4. Success/Failure</b>	Evaluation problematic
Challenges multiplied	<b>5. Interrelationships</b>	Challenges multiplied

**Figure 3 –Leadership and organizational change research design challenges**

The challenges of researching leadership and organizational change highlighted in Figure 3, offer one explanation for the paucity of empirical findings reported earlier. At least five research design challenges exist. Firstly, there are definitional issues as featured in the earlier discussion of boundaries. More specifically there are issues around differentiating managing change from leading change. Equally the socially constructed nature of leadership and of organization change adds to this ambiguity. Secondly, both leadership and organizational change are highly context dependent (see Pettigrew et al, 2001). Appreciation of context needs to recognise the context of the past which influences the present, the present context and the anticipated context in the future (Dawson, 2003). Thirdly, activities of leading and changing are dynamic, rather than static requiring longitudinal research designs covering years, rather than static snapshots. Organizational changes are sometimes depicted as ‘things’ amenable to being captured at a single moment in time, however leadership and organizational change need to be understood as dynamic and processual requiring longitudinal research designs (Van de Ven and Poole, 1995; Pettigrew et al, 2001; Dawson, 2014). Fourthly, effective evaluation of outcomes is often assumed, but multiple evaluations will exist with multiple outcomes. Grint (2005: 101) warned ‘the claim that leadership is critical to all organizational success (and failure) is almost as commonplace as the claim to have discovered the secret of its success’. Success is often taken for granted or masked within organizational histories written by leaders which celebrate how they successfully transformed their organizations (see Collins, 2000 and Huczynski, 2006 for further discussion). There may be a combination of outcomes both intended and unintended making it difficult to isolate which intervention resulted in a success or a failure (see Hughes, 2011 for further discussion about the problematic nature of evaluating organizational change).

Fifthly, the first four challenges are compounded when researching interrelationships characterising this sub-field.

**Leadership and organizational change – methodologies contrasted** Leadership and organizational change as a sub-field of leadership studies may be evaluated in terms of contrasting methodologies. *Philosophies of Organizational Change* (Smith and Graetz, 2011) explained competing philosophies within organizational change, which consciously avoided privileging a single paradigm or perspective based explanation, in favour of pluralism (Eisenhardt, 2000; Van de Ven and Poole, 2005; Demers, 2007). The following philosophies of organizational change were highlighted; rational, biological, institutional, resource, psychological, systems, cultural, critical, and dualities (Smith and Graetz, 2011). These social science orientated philosophies are equally applicable to leadership studies in general and leadership and organizational change in particular. Each philosophy offers a means of contrasting different methods and methodologies (one of the IJMR key principles). Figure 4, highlights Graetz and Smith's (2011) *Philosophies of Organizational Change* applied to leadership and organizational change as a means to contrasting different philosophies at work.

<b>Philosophy (Graetz and Smith, 2011)</b>	<b>Philosophy summarised</b>	<b><i>The Leadership Quarterly</i> paper</b>	<b>Leadership and organizational change explained in terms of...</b>
Rational	Planned and directed change with strategy and planning emphasised	Berson and Avolio (2004)	Leadership style and effectiveness of conveying organizational goals
Biological	Ecological, organic and evolutionary change, emphasis upon life cycles	Reichard et al (2011)	Adolescent personality, intelligence and transformational leadership
Institutional	Emphasis on industry influence gauged through standards and benchmarks	Currie et al (2009)	Examination of leadership in the context of institutional change
Resource	Emphasis upon resource access determining change	Zhu et al (2005)	The mediating role of HRM in transformational leadership
Psychological	Change embedded within the minds of those affected	Rubin et al (2009)	Outcomes of leader organizational change cynicism
Systems	Emphasis upon interconnected nature of organizations	Avolio et al (2014)	Leadership and advanced IT transforming organizations
Cultural	Emphasis upon entrenched values and beliefs	Menges et al (2011)	Transformational leadership climate as an organizational level construct
Critical	Emphasis upon power, genuine empowerment and emancipation	Boje and Rhodes (2006)	Ronald McDonald as a Transformational Leader

**Figure 4 - Explaining leadership and organizational change in terms of Graetz and Smith's (2011) philosophies based approach**

Illustrative examples in Figure 4 have been drawn exclusively from papers identified through reviewing *The Leadership Quarterly*. In particular these papers in a respected leadership journal engage with and offer insights into leadership with regards to either transformation or change. The framework is equally applicable to other publications, but focussing upon a single unified journal contrasts the diversity of explanations being offered. Importantly these explanations diverge rather than converge. *The Leadership Quarterly* contributors and readers will prefer particular papers which reflect particular philosophies, with each philosophy sufficient that an academic could undertake all of their research and scholarship within a single philosophy or a pairing of philosophies.

**‘Broken bridge’ between leadership and organizational change** ‘Effective bridge’ and ‘no bridge’ are polarized opposites, they assume either that there is a bridge between leadership studies and organizational change studies and that it is effective or that no bridge exists or that no bridge needs to exist. The third metaphor ‘broken bridge’ is more pessimistic highlighting problems relating to the direction of travel, the means and methods of travelling and impediments/obstacles to travelling. ‘No bridge’ implies space between fields without travel between fields, whereas ‘effective bridge’ assumes (possibly erroneously) effective travel between fields. ‘Broken bridge’ highlights the problematic nature of such travel.

Figure 4, highlighted how a respected organizational change framework could inform leadership studies, whilst enlightening this was not the norm. ‘Broken bridge’ acknowledges that even within broad boundaries of management and organization studies scholars in different fields of study will favour different methods, methodologies and utilise different terminology. In reviewing papers (Hughes, 2015a) in *The Leadership Quarterly* focussed upon transformation and change and papers in *The Journal of Change Management* focussed upon leadership, in the former there was a preference for positivist, quantitative, theory testing papers with a particular emphasis upon advancing transformational leadership. Whereas papers in *The Journal of Change Management* were far more eclectic in terms of methods and research designs, however a predisposition towards the development of change leaders was evident. The implication is not critical of the respective journal editorial policies, but highlights very different means of travelling across ‘broken bridge’. For example, Higgs and Rowland (2005) in their study of approaches to change and its leadership utilized a case study methodology involving seven organizations and 40 informants providing 70 change stories. Whereas, Bommer et al (2004) tested a hypothesis that cynicism about organizational change would negatively predict transformational leadership behaviour. Both papers have real strengths, but represent very different means of travelling across ‘broken bridge’. The complication arises when we attempt to relate these very different accounts to each other. The two studies both interested in leadership and organizational change yet methodologically, epistemologically and ontologically completely different.

‘Broken bridge’, highlights impediments/obstacles in traversing the bridge. These may relate to favoured terminology such as ‘change’ and ‘transformation’ being used both interchangeably and with very different emphases. Kotter’s (1996) *Leading Change*, explicitly refers to change in the title, yet in the body, Kotter largely refers to transformation. In *Transformational Leadership*, Bass and Riggio (2006) focused upon transforming follower’s attitudes and motivations with implications for their subsequent behaviours, yet transforming followers has been misinterpreted as transforming organizations (Haslam et al, 2011). As well as a lack of a precision being an obstacle, leadership studies scholars have increasingly highlighted the socially constructed nature of leadership (see Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). There are complications in relating socially constructed realities of leading to socially constructed realities of changing. In terms of favoured paradigms there are

synergies. Mabey (2013) in reviewing leadership development papers, found that the overwhelming majority of work adopted a functionalist perspective. And Smith and Graetz (2011) highlighted rational philosophy as the most common governing organizational change. Functionalist/rationalist explanations are likely to encounter the least obstacles, however even this synergy becomes an obstacle for scholars favouring other paradigms when challenging such orthodoxy.

## **Discussion – Towards a conceptual framework for studying leadership and organizational change**

In the previous section the status of the sub-field of leadership and organizational change was evaluated against IJMR key principles (see Figure 2), in this section the focus shifts to:

Is there a synthesis and evaluation of the accumulated state of knowledge in that field, summarizing and highlighting current and emerging insight, while stressing strengths and weaknesses of prior work?

The goal of synthesis and evaluation of an accumulated state of knowledge appears worthwhile. However, as previously suggested aspiring to understand leadership and organizational change as a sub-field against the criteria of consensus and convergence resulting in the synthesis of accumulated knowledge is simultaneously persuasive and problematic. Kuhn's (1962) famous mapping of scientific revolutions was concerned primarily with academic communities at the disciplinary level, rather than their specialisms/fields. Kuhn (1962) believed that paradigms provided scientists not only with a map, but also provided directions essential for map-making. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1962) was first published as volume two, number two of *The International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science*. Unified science aspirations of convergent natural sciences encouraged by Kuhn (1962) were mirrored in the early expectations about how a science of management would develop. Instead management and organization studies witnessed divergence of many fields and sub-fields developing and continuing to develop (Whitley, 1984, 2000; McKinley et al, 1999). The residue of convergence aspirations however remains. Deetz's (1996) influential differentiation of approaches to organization science is informative here.

In differentiating approaches to organizational science, Deetz (1996) contrasted the origin of concepts and problem statements in terms of 'elite/a priori' and 'local/emergent' as well as highlighting the contrasting dominant social discourses of 'consensus' and 'dissensus'. Deetz's concern was not with agreement versus disagreement, but presentations of unity versus presentations of difference. Deetz characterized consensus as unified science, triangulation and science as neutral, whereas dissensus was characterized by positional complementarity and science as political. In terms of the consensus pole 'random events and deviance are downplayed in significance when looking at norms and the normal, and attention is usually to processes reducing deviance, uncertainty, and dissonance' whereas, the dissensus pole '...draws attention to research programs which consider struggle, conflict, and tensions to be the natural state' (Deetz, 1996:197).

Elite and a priori approaches emphasise particular language systems and expertise of the research community, they are universalistic and favour grand narratives. 'Effective bridge' and 'no bridge' are typical of such approaches. Whereas, local and emergent approaches work with open language systems producing knowledge with less lofty claims, favouring

comparative communities and local narratives. ‘Broken bridge’ is closer to this approach than elite and a priori approaches, but another bridge metaphor is required which encompasses local/emergent approaches. ‘Effective bridge’ typifies a consensus based approach to leadership and organizational change and ‘no bridge’ emphasises the orthodoxy of dominant accounts within leadership studies. ‘Broken bridge’ is closer to dissensus in problematizing leadership and organizational change, but again another metaphor is required which foregrounds dissensus. Consequently, in Figure 5 a fourth metaphor of ‘multiple pathways bridge’, is introduced.

	<i>Boundaries of Sub-field</i>	<i>Maturity of Sub-field</i>	<i>Research Informed Sub-field</i>	<i>Sub-field Employing Contrasting Methods</i>	<i>Sub-field Knowledge Accumulation &amp; Synthesis</i>
<b>Effective Bridge</b>	Bounded	Successfully developing	Research breakthrough imminent	Functional, rational & orthodox	Convergence & consensus
<b>No Bridge</b>	One field bounded (other ignored)	Bias towards the one maturing field	Incomplete, but research breakthrough imminent	Methods bounded within one field	Incomplete, but convergence & consensus favoured
<b>Broken Bridge</b>	Permeable & ill-defined boundaries acknowledged	Unsuccessful development immature	Lack of anticipated research progress	Tensions between practitioner & academic methods	Illusive due to convergence & divergence
<b>Multiple Pathways Bridge</b>	Multiple crossing points in multiple directions	The convergence & consensus of narratives questioned	Tapestry of multiple competing insights	Pluralist, partial & fragmented	Divergence & dissensus celebrated

**Figure 5 – Conceptualizing leadership and organizational change as an ‘effective bridge’, ‘no bridge’, ‘broken bridge’ and ‘multiple pathways bridge’.**

In Figure 5, different conceptual metaphors for understanding leadership and organizational change interrelationships are offered. The four bridge based metaphors suggest different ways of understanding and evaluating this sub-field and by association different potential outcomes of evaluations. In the following discussion bridge based metaphors are related to leadership studies, but they could equally be applied to organizational change studies.

‘Effective bridge’ suggests that leadership and organizational change as a sub-field is successfully developing, whilst not specified the assumption is that a bounded sub-field exists. There is a belief that the functional/rational orthodoxy of favoured research methods will be fruitful and that a breakthrough study is imminent. In reviewing leadership and organizational change literature the goal of convergence synthesising accumulated knowledge is favoured. Unified science will be achieved through seeking out common patterns and themes in explanations (consensus), whilst simultaneously avoiding divergent explanations (dissensus) which differ/detract from this consensus.

‘No bridge’ refers to and works within the boundaries of a particular field of study such as leadership studies. The maturity of the sub-field benefits from the perceived longevity of leadership studies. Rational/functional orthodoxy results in methods and methodologies favoured within leadership studies being favoured for advancing leadership and organizational change. A break through study is assumed to be imminent. Again in reviewing leadership and organizational change literature the goal is convergence of accumulated knowledge. Synthesis will be achieved through seeking out common patterns and themes in explanations within the leadership studies literature (consensus) and avoiding explanations which differ/detract (dissensus) from a consensus view of leadership studies.

In contrast, ‘broken bridge’ and ‘multiple pathways bridge’ problematize understanding leadership and organizational change, in this way differing from the optimism of ‘effective bridge’ and ‘no bridge’. ‘Broken bridge’ acknowledges that boundaries around leadership studies in general are problematic and that bounding leadership and organizational change will be equally problematic. ‘Broken bridge’ emphasises the socially constructed nature of the longevity of leadership studies and highlights the immaturity of studying leadership and organizational change. The lack of empirical evidence (Parry, 2011; Ford and Ford, 2012 and Hughes, 2015a) informing leadership and organizational change is emphasised. The dissensus of contrasting accounts is highlighted, although not as a strength of the sub-field with divergent accounts of leadership and organizational change depicted as problematic.

‘Multiple pathways bridge’ problematizes leadership and organizational change, but regards the dissensus of local and emergent accounts of leadership and organizational change as informative. Instead of leadership studies and the sub-field of leadership and organizational change being tightly bounded, there are multiple alternative pathways between fields going in different directions and using very different routes. There are suspicions around the consensus and convergence aspirations of ‘effective bridge’ and ‘no bridge’. Maturity rather than being a strength limits new and alternative explanations with new (immature) explanations favoured as they diverge from the orthodoxy. Multiple and contrasting insights into leadership and organizational change are regarded as strengths, rather than weaknesses of this sub-field. Finally, leadership literature is reviewed in order to ensure divergence and dissensus, rather than seeking out convergence and consensus.

A rereading of the postscript to Kuhn’s (2012:179) classic 1962 work from the perspective of power/knowledge is informative here ‘a paradigm governs, in the first instance, not a subject matter, but rather a group of practitioners.’ Consensus is likely to be encouraged through IJMR key principles, which will be at the expense of potential dissensus contributions, in this way IJMR key principles govern a group of academic practitioners. A ‘hierarchy of sciences’ (Cole, 1983) assuming that natural sciences are the model of scientific progress which studies of leadership and organizational change should emulate remains (see Hassard et al, 2008; Hughes, 2013 for further discussion). As editors of IJMR, Jones and Gatrell (2014:260) acknowledged ‘in summary, the majority of MOS scholars operate within what Kuhn (1962) describes as ‘normal science’, in which the field moves forward by incremental steps rather than as a result of paradigm shifting breakthroughs’. Kuhn’s (1962) profound insights into natural science disciplines informed by his background as a physicist, fifty years ago may now obscure rather than illuminate the development of sub-fields such as leadership and organizational change.



## Conclusions

Interdisciplinary fields evolve into new fields and sub-fields (Hodgkinson, 2003) and this paper has highlighted the paradigmatic challenges such evolution raises with particular reference to the sub-field of leadership and organizational change. IJMR's key principles as well as offering a logical framework to evaluate literature, by association offered a means to evaluate the status of the sub-field. When the explicit emphasis is upon gauging the boundaries and maturity of a sub-field with the objective a research informed accumulation and synthesis of leadership and organizational change knowledge, the goal becomes convergence and consensus, mimicking the aspirations of unified natural sciences (Kuhn, 1962). The dilemma featured here is that convergence as characterised by natural sciences is inappropriate for management and organization studies which diverged rather than converged into many fields and sub-fields (Whitley, 1984, 2000; McKinley et al, 1999). As understanding leadership and organizational change requires understanding leadership, as well as, organizational change and their interrelationships, a conceptual framework was required, capable of embracing divergence and dissensus, as well as, convergence and consensus of both fields of study. Bridges linking distinctive land formations, make it possible for people to traverse between them and open up new opportunities (Miller and Fox, 2004) and this was a highly applicable metaphor for conceptualizing leadership and organizational change interrelationships. Four bridge based metaphors of 'effective bridge', 'no bridge', 'broken bridge' and 'multiple pathways bridge' were introduced and applied as conceptualizations of leadership and organizational change interrelationships. Three conclusions may now be succinctly stated before being elaborated upon.

- Working at the intersection between fields of study is potentially fruitful
- Bridge metaphor preferences determine how leadership and organizational change is understood
- Leadership and organizational change's inclusion within leadership studies depends upon the metaphor

**Thinking in terms of bridges between fields is potentially fruitful** The challenges arising out of reviewing literature at the intersection between leadership studies and organizational change studies (Hughes, 2015a) provided the genesis for this paper. The problem was reconciling and accommodating these two vibrant and independent fields of study and the diversity of paradigms, philosophies and perspectives characterising each field of study (see Figure 1). The omission of leadership and organizational change from academic edited handbooks was perplexing given the interest in leading change/change leadership, but this omission may be typical of the space between fields of study. Problematic intersections between fields of study should not be underestimated, the focus here has been the intersection between leadership studies and organizational change studies, but thinking conceptually in terms of metaphorical bridges has more generic applicability. For example, in the case of leadership studies intersections with ethics, organizational culture and gender. In the case of organizational change studies intersections with, governance, power and sustainability are likely to prove equally problematic. The metaphors of 'effective bridge', 'no bridge', 'broken bridge' and 'multiple pathways bridge' as well as informing understanding about the problematic nature of studying intersections between fields of study suggests that such studies although fraught with difficulties may prove to be particularly fruitful. 'Defectors' challenging and extending the limits of boundaries becomes important for their identity (Knights and Willmott, 1997). The argument developed here is that there may be a lack of research studies and papers featuring the intersections of sub-fields, but for the adventurous addressing such gaps may prove fruitful.

**Bridge metaphor preferences determine how leadership and organizational change is understood** The evaluation of the status of the sub-field of leadership and organizational change against IJMR key principles was not favourable, yet simultaneously informative in writing this paper. Literature reviewing initially appears to be impartial and objective, however words such as ‘boundary’, ‘maturity’, ‘synthesis’ and ‘accumulation’ in favouring grand narratives of natural sciences aspire to Kuhn’s (1962) unified natural sciences. The implication is that an appropriate conceptual framework must pluralistically accommodate such scholars, as well as, those favouring divergence and dissensus (Deetz, 1996). Bridge based metaphors, as well as, bridging the fields of leadership studies and organizational change studies, potentially bridge our paradigmatic differences. It is tempting to favour one particular bridge, however understanding leadership and organizational change through a combination of metaphors may prove to be more comprehensive. When they are used in combination strengths of bridge based metaphors become apparent. ‘Effective bridge’ highlights the orthodoxy of studying leadership and organizational change reflecting where there is a consensus and where studies converge. ‘No bridge’ respects the unique and independent contribution different fields of study make to understanding leadership and organizational change. ‘Broken bridge’ warns that orthodoxy potentially masks the problematic nature of a sub-field. ‘Multiple pathways bridge’ acknowledges the potential of local/emergent origins of concepts and problems statements and the existence of discourses of dissensus. The implication of all of this is to ‘mind the bridge’ when evaluating the literature. A literature review highlighting the divergence and dissensus of leadership and organizational change literature reflecting ‘broken bridge’ and ‘multiple pathways bridge’ may appear flawed when judged against the consensus and convergence evaluation criteria of ‘effective bridge’ and ‘no bridge.’

**Leadership and organizational change’s inclusion within leadership studies depends upon the metaphor** As human thought processes are largely metaphorical (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), a metaphor was required to conceptualize interrelationships between leadership and organizational change. A metaphor which would inform thinking about the inclusion of the sub-field within leadership studies. At this point the ideal would be to give a concise consensus conclusion on the paper’s central theme, but instead the thesis of the paper results in at least four different metaphor based final conclusions.

‘Effective bridge’ suggests that leadership and organizational change as a sub-field are included in the field of leadership studies. The field is converging around consensus and this convergence informs and benefits the sub-field, potential problems relate to divergence resulting in a field and sub-field characterised by dissensus. In reviewing literature, rational/functionalist literature informs the synthesis and accumulation of knowledge. ‘No bridge’ also suggests that leadership and organizational change as a sub-field are included in the field of leadership studies, informed primarily by leadership studies with consensus and convergence again favoured.

‘Broken bridge’ questions the inclusion of leadership and organizational change as a sub-field within the field of leadership studies and assumptions underpinning ‘effective bridge’ and ‘no bridge’. The sub-field’s lack of a clear boundary and maturity are perceived as deficiencies, with aspirations of a synthesis of accumulated knowledge doubted due to a lack of empirical evidence (Parry, 2011; Ford and Ford, 2012 and Hughes, 2015a). ‘Multiple pathways bridge’ is the upside of ‘broken bridge’ favouring the inclusion of leadership and organizational change as a sub-field within the field of leadership studies, although with very different terms of reference. Instead of seeking to reduce deviance, uncertainty and dissonance (Deetz, 1996) these characteristics are embraced. Research design challenges (see Figure 3) encourage

creative/innovative research designs. Contrasting methodologies (see Figure 4) offer new insights. Divergence and dissensus characterising this sub-field is an inevitable consequence of the diversity of paradigms, philosophies and perspectives (see Figure 1) which inform this sub-field. The synthesis of accumulated leadership and organizational knowledge may prove to be illusory with instead leadership and organizational change explained through multiple and even contradictory explanations.

### **Acknowledgement**

I found the constructive critique by the leadership and leadership development track reviewers of an earlier version of this paper both challenging and subsequently enlightening, so thank you.

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