Identity undoing and power relations in leadership development

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Abstract

Leadership development theory and practice is increasingly turning its gaze on identity as a primary focus for development efforts. Most of this literature focuses on how the identities of participants are strengthened, repaired, and evolved. This paper focuses on identity work practices that are underdeveloped in the literature: the deconstruction, unravelling, and letting go that can be experienced when working upon one's self. We group these experiences, amongst others, under the conceptual term 'identity undoing' and based on findings from an 18-month ethnographic study of a leadership development programme we offer five manifestations of how it can be experienced. Through foregrounding the undoing of identity, we are able to look more closely at how power relations shape the leadership development experience. In order to raise questions and propositions for leadership and its development we use a micro-sociological and interactionist approach to explore the interplay between identity and power.

Introduction

> *At some point during this journey of exploring identity there was a profound sense of loss and fear resulting in this. I felt like I had lost everything I had known before and no longer had any recognisable points of reference – and I desperately scrambled to find these. I think that I went to a place that the programme wanted me to go to – but I felt like I was in quite a dangerous place . . . At some points I felt like I was being rewired – although it was all through my own thinking – no one was telling me how to think. I placed a huge amount of trust in the facilitators to help me to see where I was going but I didn't always feel that I had that support around me . . . and to scaffold me through the places I needed to get to.* (Leadership development participant, Natasha)

Leadership development programmes (LDPs) have recently been described as an 'identity workspace' (Petriglieri, 2011) that is 'ultimately about facilitating an identity transition' to create new leadership options (Ibarra et al., 2010: 673). If identity is indeed a target of leadership development, then researchers need to bring more critical scrutiny to it as a construct than they have to date. This article represents one such attempt. The reflection above suggests that rather than leadership development being a site that soothes existential distress, repairs damaged identities, and protects individuals from disturbances (Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010), it may spark the opposite. In this article, we draw attention to how individuals can experience moments of being destabilised, unravelled, and deconstructed in leadership development, and we explore these experiences under the conceptual term 'identity undoing'.

In highlighting and exploring the dynamics of identity undoing, we set in motion a very different narrative of leadership development. Indeed, the term 'development' already contains a paradox that has been largely overlooked. On the one hand, it means 'growth; progress; change' and 'a progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced, mature, or complex form or stage' (Random House Dictionary, 2010). On the other hand, the etymology of the word 'develop' is from a 1650s word *desveloper* meaning 'unroll, unfold', where 'des-' means 'undo' and '-veloper' means 'wrap up'. Whilst some researchers talk of the loss, rupture, and struggle involved in identity work undertaken during leadership development (Carroll and Levy, 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010), on the whole the literature tends to focus on the 'wrapping up' definition of 'to develop', rather than its other definition, 'to undo'. The participant's quote above plays at the edges of undoing as it hints at the 'loss and fear', rewiring, and desperate scrambling that can go on in leadership development.

In order to better understand both the leadership development setting and identity undoing, we argue it is necessary to explore the role of power. While some writers have called attention to power in leadership development (Ford et al., 2008; Sinclair, 2009) most leadership development scholarship has tended to ignore its existence and influence. Yet power dynamics have been addressed in similar fields such as group relations (Gould, Stapley and Stein, 2004), management development (Gagnon, 2008), executive coaching (Fairhurst, 2007), critical management education (Clegg and Ross-Smith, 2003; Gabriel, 2009; Reynolds, 1999), and even leadership studies (Fairhurst, 2007; Sinclair, 2007; Zoller and Fairhurst, 2007). The participant's quote above places power centre stage: the 'dangerous place' of losing 'everything I had known before', which is explicitly attributed to 'my own thinking', and implicitly to the programme and facilitators. We wish to explore this intricate interplay between identity and power through a micro-sociological and interactionist perspective.[1]

The empirical material for this inquiry was drawn from a sustained observation of an 18-month LDP across its face-to-face and virtual interactions. The study followed a group of 30 emergent leaders as they undertook a leadership development experience encompassing five residential workshops and accompanying exercises in a virtual learning environment. Identity was an early and explicit theme in the programme and this research is centred on the participant response and reaction to the complexity of the identity work both demanded of them and sought on their own initiative.

This article is structured into six parts. First, we outline how a Foucauldian interpretation of power helps us better understand identity work in LDPs. Second, we propose 'identity undoing' as a novel contribution to this field. Third, we provide more detail about the leadership programme and our methodology. Fourth, we present and discuss five modes of identity undoing identified as a result of the field work, and follow this with a discussion of the role of facilitators in identity undoing. Lastly, we provide more detailed discussion about power and the consequences of identity undoing.

Power relations in leadership development

LDPs can be seen as a product of the contemporary 'enterprising self' movement (Rose, 1990; McNay, 2009; Du Gay, 1996; Scott, 2010). Since the late 1980s, some workers (especially those in managerial roles) have increasingly been invited to fulfil themselves through work (Miller and Rose, 2008). Their desire to produce, discover, and reinvent who they are through work partially explains why an industry of 'engineers of the human soul' has arisen to assist them (Rose, 1990: xxii). More recently, Scott (2010: 218) has identified 'reinventive institutions' (RI) to which 'people retreat for periods of intense self-reflection, education, enrichment and reform, but under their own volition, in pursuit of "self-improvement"'. Given the increasing focus on self-awareness and identity construction in leadership development

(Carroll and Levy, 2010; Ibarra et al., 2010; Petriglieri, 2011), is leadership development such an institution? We are interested in the power relations, or micro-physics of power, that become evident in interactions where individuals try to craft, discover, and/or reinvent the self. Therefore, in this section we (1) discuss technologies of power and of the self that seem most salient to leadership development; and (2) characterise pertinent assumptions regarding agency and regulation, passivity and activity, coercion and voluntarism.

Foucault (1988) described four technologies that individuals use to understand themselves: technologies of production, of sign systems, of power, and of the self. We are most interested in these last two. Technologies of power are techniques that 'determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination' and in doing so objectivize the subject (Foucault, 1988: 19). Technologies of the self are practices that permit individuals to act upon, transform, and alter their self in order to attain an improved state of perfection or happiness (Foucault, 1988). By exploring the interaction between these two technologies, we can better conceptualise how individuals develop self-understanding and act upon their selves (Foucault, 1993). These technologies are useful to better understand how LDPs use certain discourses of the self to manage individuals and turn them into objects that can be scrutinised, monitored, and assessed, by both themselves and others. Although, LDPs may also use technologies of the self in more agentic ways than the technologies of power imply (Foucault, 1988). We will later describe in more detail the discourses of self and identity work that were offered on the programme we researched: the immediate question is, how are these discourses internalised, adopted, and challenged by programme participants? Two technologies of power from Foucault's theory of disciplinary power are relevant here: hierarchical observation and normalising judgment.

Hierarchical observation refers to the presence (explicit or implied) of hierarchical figures (in this case facilitators) who invite and encourage individuals (in this case participants) to adopt

certain discourses of the self, and who monitor their enactment (Foucault, 1977). For this technology to 'carry the effects of power right to (individuals), to make it possible to know them, to alter them', they need to be made visible (Foucault, 1977: 172). The eyes of the observing hierarchy 'must see without being seen' (Foucault, 1977: 171), so that participants internalise the surveillance and begin to monitor their own and others conduct in line with the encouraged discourses. This type of power infuses the network of relationships and therefore operates discreetly, pervasively, and relationally.

Normalising judgment refers to the establishment of rules and norms to be followed, respected, and preferred, as they represent the 'optimum towards which one must move' (Foucault, 1977: 183). Individuals are measured and compared based on their conformity to these norms. It is therefore an individualising and differentiating, homogenising and normalising process. LDPs offer and promote a preferred rhetoric or set of norms about what leadership is, who a leader is, and the self-work that leaders need to engage in (see Ford et al, 2008).

The effects of these two technologies of power, observing hierarchy and normalising judgment, can be seen in certain technologies of the self. Foucault explored the care of the self by retracing Stoic practices such as spiritual retreat, disclosure of the self, remembering the self, and examination of the self; and Christian practices such as confession and renunciation of the self (Foucault, 1988: Foucault, 1993). We focus here on the examination and the confession as two of the most relevant technologies of the self for leadership development.

The examination is a technology that enables individuals to become more visible to their self and to others, in order for them to be differentiated, judged, rewarded, and punished (Foucault, 1977). Although the self-examination has altered over time, it essentially involves disclosing through verbalization (in writing or speech) one's thoughts, conscience, and

reflections, especially about the self (Foucault, 1988). The examination situates individuals in a 'network of writing' that defines, captures, and assesses their ability and progress (Foucault, 1977: 189). In leadership development, participants are invariably required to produce written or spoken reflections, assignments, or evaluation documents about themselves, thereby using and internalising discourses. These examination documents, which are often confessionary in nature, make participants visible to themselves, facilitators, and peers who in turn monitor their enactment of the discourse(s).

The confession is a technology of the self that invites individuals to know the truth about themselves by disclosing their thoughts, intentions, and 'smallest movements of consciousnessness' to others (Foucault, 1988: 47). By producing self-knowledge, individuals come to see themselves in a certain way and may tie themselves to this self-understanding. Foucault reminds us of the power relations that characterise the confession, and how the truth that is produced is 'thoroughly imbued in relations of power' (Foucault, 1990: 60). That is, listeners to the confession do far more than listen, they are the 'authority who requires the confession, prescribes and appreciates it, and intervenes in order to judge, punish, forgive, console, and reconcile' (Foucault, 1990: 61-2). The act of formulating and expressing the confession also modifies the confessor: 'it exonerates, redeems, and purifies him; it unburdens him of his wrongs, liberates him, and promises him salvation' (Foucault, 1990: 62). LDPs often require participants to engage in several confessional technologies, such as peer-reflection exercises, story-telling exercises, fish-bowl activities, written reflection assignments, and small group discussions of a personal and confessional nature. The facilitators, who often require, receive, and respond to the confessions, are (in Foucault's words) the interlocutors or masters of the confession; although, other participants may also take up this role.

As mentioned previously, Foucauldian analysis also requires consideration of how individuals are both objects and subjects in their identity work. Whilst on the surface such identity work may seem to be individualistic journeys to discover leadership, the range of possible identities available may be confined by the institution's rhetoric and the interactions between different actors (Ford et al., 2008; Gagnon, 2008). A more extreme argument is that institutions may create 'gingerbread people' or 'McSelves': generic identity moulds each 'elects to fit itself into' (Scott, 2010: 219). We side with a post-structural notion of performativity whereby one's sense of self is not solely an individual choice, but neither is it 'imposed or inscribed upon the individual' (Butler, 1988: 526). Individuals are 'agentically performative' but their repertoire of possible selves is constrained by discursive and interactional factors (Scott, 2010: 222). Rose (1997: 1123), refers to this as the 'assembled' self whereby our relation to ourselves is profoundly shaped by experts of subjectivity who rule in and rule out certain ways of self-understanding and relating. This is a crucial distinction that our article offers: while some writers suggest that participants' identities are colonised and cloned (Gagnon, 2008), and even more extol individuals' discovery of themselves (Ibarra et al., 2010; Petriglieri and Petriglieri, 2010), such research tends to maintain an oppositional relationship between the self as an agent or the self as a regulated object. In line with others who call for identity research that explores movement between doing and being done to (Beech, 2011; Newton, 1998), we'd like to establish a midway point between these two.

Foucault reminds us that in power relations individuals have a certain degree of agency, choice, and voluntarism (Foucault, 1994). Returning to the reinventive institution (RI) concept, people join RIs in order to 'rewrite their identities' (Scott, 2010: 219). They are not 'coerced into receiving treatment [rather] they see themselves as consumers of a service who make an informed decision to undergo resocialization' (Scott, 2010: 219). They are the 'worried well' (Szasz, 1972, as cited in Scott, 2010: 218) who need help with their search for

authentic living and existential anxiety. The tension created by being both active and passive in one's identity work is evident in the claim that rather than experiencing a 'mortifying *loss* of self through institutionalization', RI clients 'willingly *discard* their old selves in the hope of finding something better' (Scott, 2010: 219, author's emphasis).

In summary, LDPs can be characterised by a subtle form of power as individuals submit themselves to the rules and logics of a disciplinary regime while simultaneously participating in its production by internalising its discourses and engaging in mutual surveillance. Individuals are agentic in their performance of different identities; however, the range of identities available (and how to enact them) is limited (Goffman, 1961, 1972). Examination and confessional technologies invite the participant to experiment with and internalise the new knowledge imparted by the institution, whilst also providing others with a way of monitoring their progress.

Introducing identity undoing

The majority of functionalist literature on identity and leadership development describes the various tools leaders should add to their identities, or itemises the stages they progress along in their identity development (Brungardt, 1997: Conger, 1992; Fulmer and Goldsmith, 2001; Lord and Hall, 2005; Riggio, 2008; Van Velsor and Drath, 2004; Van Velsor et al., 2004). Other writing concerns identity stabilisation or repair (Petriglieri, 2011). While this is valuable research, such a focus means that the other definition of development, to unroll or undo, has not been adequately explored. Some research however plays on the edges of undoing, for example by examining loss and letting go (Bolden and Kirk, 2005; Day et al., 2009; Van Velsor and Drath, 2004), disembedding (Ibarra et al., 2010), and regulation, anxiety, and insecurity in leadership development (Cunliffe, 2009; Ford and Lawler, 2008;

Gagnon, 2008; Sinclair, 2009). For a fuller conceptualisation of what goes on in leadership development, such voices need to be amplified.

What do we mean by this word undoing? The word 'undoing' has several different meanings: to open up, untie, and release; but also to reverse, annul, and do away with; and at the more extreme end, to destroy or ruin (Random House Dictionary, 2010). In our empirical material it was the absence of the words that dominate identity research such as *construction, acquire, build, maintain,* and *protect,* and the contrasting presence of arguable opposites such as *deconstruct, loss, letting go, shaken up*, and *experiment* that captured our attention. The kaleidoscopic nature of this word *undoing* enables us to explore a range of movements and practices. Overall, our research questions are: how are identities undone on LDPs, what are the power relations involved in this process, and what are the implications for leadership development?

Methodology

The guiding epistemological paradigm for this research is social constructionism, an increasingly used lens for considering leadership development and identity (Carroll and Levy, 2010; Carroll et al., 2010; Cunliffe, 2009; Ford and Harding, 2007; Gagnon, 2008; Sinclair, 2009). We situate ourselves within an interpretative tradition that acknowledges the constructed, discursive, and relational nature of fieldwork and research, and is sensitive to the operations and dynamics of power (Cunliffe, 2008; Sandberg, 2001; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Thomas and Linstead, 2002).

Our research design centres on an ethnographic study of an 18-month LDP. Ethnographic fieldwork has a 'built in propensity' for constructionist research (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007: 1267) as ethnographies are more able to explore the 'incoherence, variation, and fragmentation' of lived realities (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003: 378). The decision to use a

single research site is limiting; however, identity and constructionist researchers have set a clear precedent for this, arguing that it enables the researcher to provide intensive and detailed explorations of identity processes whilst paying attention to a specific context (Carroll and Levy, 2010; Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003; Thomas and Linstead, 2002; Watson, 2008).

Ethnography traditionally refers to observing face-to-face or physical environments (Agar, 1996; Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994). In contrast, we traverse both physical and virtual communities. Following Ruhleder (2000: 4) our research setting is a 'hybrid environment', where 'the physical and virtual overlap and intersect'. For the duration of the programme, we both observed physical workshops and monitored participants' interactions on the online learning website that participants shared. Our research therefore involved 'becoming immersed in virtual culture and observing interactive websites and virtual communities' (Browne, 2003: 249). It entailed a long-term commitment to watching, listening, and participating (to some extent) in order to understand aspects of social life in the online setting (Hine, 2008). Incorporating virtual ethnographic work rather than relying solely on face-to-face observations has the potential to provide new understanding about identity work processes (Arsand, 2008; Campbell et al., 2009; Hodkinson and Lincoln, 2008).

In total, observations of 15 days of face-to-face interactions – some of them audio or video recorded and transcribed – between 30 participants and six facilitators resulted in over 250 pages of field notes. We also had access to over 400 pages of participants' reflective assignments and over 6600 posts made to the online forum by the participants and facilitators during the 18 months. Participants were required to regularly contribute to the small group forums and assignments. They were also allocated into smaller learning groups each with an assigned facilitator, and the majority of online conversations were located within these 'clusters'. Online environments are temporally complex, because in contrast to face-to-face conversation, participants' engagement oscillates and fragments. Consequently, working with

the online data was constituted by an ever-increasing bricolage of talk that continuously 'sprouted' in multiple directions.

Evidence of the five forms of undoing we identify were found in all groups and phases in the programme. Although having one's identity undone can feel immensely tumultuous and potentially terminal in the moment, participants also moved in and out of undoing in a more fluid and temporary fashion. Temporality was most evident at the end of the programme, when participants were asked to make sense – in both conversational and written formats – of their development. There was little undoing in these texts, rather the reverse. Participants appeared to put the pieces of their work together and to construct a leadership identity rather than unravel it, and they tended to end the programme by telling a coherent story of their experiences. We have no way of telling whether identity construction or undoing narratives travelled more strongly beyond the programme but we suspect that both undoing and construction are temporary processes that intertwine throughout identity work. It may be that development particularly catalyses undoing, and that finishing the programme with construction processes brings identity work back to a more normative rhythm; but this inquiry does not allow us to be certain of that. What we are fairly confident of is that these five types of undoing are not sequential or linear in a development experience.

The research context: Provider, programme, and participants

Our research site was an emerging leader programme run by a university affiliated leadership research and development centre in Australasia. Unusually for a leadership development institution the centre consciously uses social constructionism (i.e. Cunliffe, 2008, Grint, 2005) to inform the conceptualisation of leadership and its development. It draws explicitly on theories such as leadership-as-practice (Carroll et al., 2008), adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002), sense-making (Weick, 1995; 1996), discourse, and identity

(Cunliffe, 2009, Sinclair, 2007). The emerging leader programme encourages participants to develop their own leadership identity and to question and debate what they believe about leadership, thus both broadening and disrupting their ideas. The programme intentionally tries to 'undo' popular grandiose understandings of leadership as heroic and leader-centric.

Identity work was explicitly included on the programme from the beginning. Based on the work of George Herbert Mead (1934), participants were invited to see themselves as a 'parliament of selves' – a host of different and potentially contradictory identities that could (in the language of the facilitators) be 'animated' and 'foregrounded'. Participants were invited to experiment with their identity options. Thus the programme explicitly tried to 'undo' the idea that identities are fixed, singular, static, and essential. Techniques such as 'killer questioning', active listening, interrogating assumptions, storytelling, reflective writing, boundary work, constructive conflict, and working with 'leadership cracks and edges' potentially catalysed identity undoing.

Given the interdependence of facilitation, research, and development in this inquiry, we need to acknowledge our own identities beyond those of co-authors. The first author undertook this research as part of her completed doctoral thesis, and explicitly occupied an observer-as-participant role (Gold, 1958). The second author was a primary facilitator on this programme dealing with the tension between research and facilitation, and negotiating the participants' struggles regarding voice, power, and authority.

Data analysis

The idea of identity undoing arose as an unexpected phenomenon during the first few months of the fieldwork. We consciously employed an abductive approach to research, i.e. an intentional orientation toward constructing 'mysteries' from data (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2007). Our primary units of analysis were verbal interactions between two or more people:

either written online interactions (recorded on the website), or face-to-face spoken interactions (recorded in field notes). Choosing among methods available to analyse interactions (see Fairhurst, 2004), we followed Crevani and colleagues (2010: 82) and investigated the 'relational realities' of the actors by analysing their language as well as the performative effects of an interaction. That is, in order to explore what interactions 'do' as they are performed, their emotional, relational, and power effects, and their shifts and development in a given time (Crevani et al., 2010), we focused on the actors' different linguistic moves and responses.

Given that we concentrated on certain interactions, our analysis was primarily micro in its level of focus. We aimed however to extrapolate beyond text and talk and to show broader socially defined meanings and patterns (Crevani et al., 2010). This reflects our sensitivity to the language used by the participants; however, we also assume that language has a structuring influence on how participants understand, construct, and relate to, themselves, others, and their world (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000b). In other words, we concentrate on a text-based analysis of talk-in-interaction, while being aware of the broader, big 'D' Discourses or systems of thought that shape individuals' linguistic resources (Fairhurst, 2007). We therefore paid attention to linguistic features such as verbs (indicating the movements involved in undoing), pronouns (showing agency and power), and metaphors (providing richness and nuances). Such language may be influenced by those large 'D' Discourses of identity work, leadership, and undoing that the programme encourages.

Undoing-in-interaction

We now turn to interactions that exemplify five different manifestations of identity undoing. Some of the discourses of undoing were set in motion by the conceptual material and technologies used by LDP facilitators. *Shaking up* was a discourse, practice, and attitude that

the programme tried to cultivate through using critical-constructionist content and techniques. *Cutting apart* originated more from the participants, but reflects their experience of enacting a core practice introduced by the programme: being critical with each other and having one's assumptions tested and questioned. The discourses of *letting go* and *being playful* were strongly associated with a postmodern view of identity work that was offered to participants, partly as a response to their questions about the impact of development on their existing and desired leadership selves. *Floundering* was a discourse primarily introduced by the participants as they tried to cope with the effects of other undoing discourses (e.g. shaking up) and other programme concepts (e.g. adaptive leadership), which required them to work with others through uncertainty to create something new. These discourses of identity undoing were therefore called into existence by the theoretical underpinnings and practices of the programme and facilitators, and given life and meaning by the interactions we studied. Below we elaborate on the enactment of these discourses.

i.   *Shaking up*

Shaking up represents the experience of having one's identity unsettled, disrupted, and agitated. The interaction below comes almost a third of the way into the programme from the private on-line discourse of a four-member learning 'cluster' with a dedicated facilitator.

Online interaction
Natasha: I feel like I'm not getting a whole heap back from our cluster to work with. Perhaps I need to be doing something different?? But I don't feel like we are really pushing the boundaries as a group and exploring the real cracks and edges that exist [...] I want to be challenged more [...] I want to pull open the discussions we are having and find them leading down another path [...] Thoughts?
Derek: [...] Natasha- I think we need to get in touch with Rob [facilitator] . . . we need to

have a discussion with him within the next week to discuss some things and get his input. [...]

Facilitator Rob: *Natasha some questions for you?* Do you feel like you are often the motivator, the one asking the tough questions, the one who gets stuff kicking off? Have you actually become this team's surrogate facilitator and camp mum? Are you less busy? more committed than others? Why is it you that's filling this space? What does this mean for the others? Is there still space for them?

For the team: How do we work with these dynamics, how do we 'choose' to come in and out of roles and bring others into spaces? [...] If your team was a boat who would be the sails, the captain, the rudder, the lookout? What would you be? How would you describe others? If I wanted the freedom to be able to choose my role on the boat and have this change and adapt regularly - how could I help make this happen?

*Derek some thoughts for you...*Derek you always seem like the busy man. Rushing here, rushing there. I will give a little bit here, a little bit there, spreading yourself thin? feeling stretched? Wonder why you can't do more, impact more, motivate more? [...] **What is the impact of all this on your leadership relationships?** [...]

Lastly, I think development takes time eh! For me it's like one of those Christmas snowmen in a glass dome that you shake up. We are doing some shaking and sometimes we can feel like all the bits are just overwhelmingly in our face and muddled up everywhere...it takes time for things to settle and sometimes it's a beautiful thing – the settling and the chaos!

Derek: [...] I make the effort to make positive leadership relationships and I do not believe that my 'busy' life has had a negative impact on this at all. In fact I think it has made it better for me. I always make time for these professional relationships and discussions when I can. Are you suggesting Rob that this course is not right for me? Or are you challenging me in a different way?

Natasha: […] I am so pleased that you have asked these questions of me because I think part

> of the frustration I am feeling is that I feel like I need to kick-start everything - and I don't want to be in this position - in fact I really really don't like it. [...]

This interaction can be compared to the shaking of a 'snow[man] in a glass dome'. It begins with Natasha inviting her cluster to shake her up ('I want to be challenged more'), and to open up some 'real cracks and edges' to provide her with different pathways to 'work with'. However, her cluster members do not engage with her questions but rather suggest they need to get in touch with their facilitator, Rob, indicating either their trust in the facilitator's expertise, or their lack of trust in their own relational expertise. This leads Rob to pose a series of identity questions (Has Natasha 'actually become this team's surrogate facilitator and camp mum?' Why is Derek 'spreading yourself thin?'). These questions exemplify a 'killer questions' technique the facilitators have modelled and encouraged the participants to enact.

Natasha welcomes Rob's shaking up attempts, while Derek seems defensive: 'Are you suggesting Rob that this course is not right for me?' He may feel confronted, vulnerable, and disturbed when his identity is shaken up, especially as he did not directly invite it, signalling that self-reinvention can be felt as both 'liberating' and 'tyrannical' (Scott, 2010: 220). This interaction also contains Rob's metaphor of development being similar to shaking up 'one of those Christmas snowmen in a glass dome'. This can feel 'overwhelmingly in our face' and 'muddled up', but it can sometimes be 'a beautiful thing'. What's interesting about the snow dome analogy is that in real glass domes the snowman remains stolid throughout, unaffected by the swirls. This may indicate a latent uncertainty that some facilitators may hold about whether LDPs can change anything permanently.[2] Being shaken up appears to be desired by some (i.e. Natasha) and achievable primarily when someone else does it to you. However, the

participants seem to be unwilling to play this role and instead the facilitator is both given it and takes it up.

ii.   *Cutting apart*

Being cut apart is a discourse of violence and even destruction. Here identities seem under threat, and pain and fragmentation are feared consequences. The following interaction occurred in a sense-making session designed where participants shared and explored their different experiences and interpretations of an initial workshop designed to bust leadership 'myths', offer new provocations, and explore participants' histories of and attitudes to leading. Clusters had initially grouped in circles to talk and then fanned out facing the front of the room for a plenary discussion led by two facilitators.

Face-to-face interaction observed at residential workshop
In her cluster, Sally, says, 'I feel like they're blowing everything to smithereens. It's shaken up everything I know, like I've been put in a tumble dryer.'
The clusters join back together as one large group and they are asked to share some of their reflections.
Sally: 'I'm used to quantifying things, and I'm finding it really hard that I can't quantify what I've learnt this weekend. I feel like you've dissolved all my foundations, I can't cling to anything, things have been cut apart'
Cassandra (facilitator): 'I didn't have a knife, though.'
Sally: 'You've told us to let go.'
Cassandra: 'But I'm telling you to hold on.'

Sally begins with a statement of being unable to quantify or assess her learning from the workshop. A mixed series of metaphors – 'foundations dissolved', 'can't cling to anything', 'cut apart' – show her confusion and frustration. She directs attribution towards the facilitators ('you've'), which Cassandra denies ('I didn't have a knife'). The use of 'knife' deserves attention because other things cut (such as scalpels and scissors) and Cassandra appears to detect an accusation of destruction or quasi-violence. The ending of this interaction is ambiguous, but one interpretation is that Sally stays fixed on what is gone, ('you've told us to let go') whereas Cassandra wants to draw attention to what the participants can protect and maintain of their identity ('but I'm telling you to hold on'). Given that this interaction is from the first residential workshop, the experience of being cut apart could be a consequence of undergoing a social constructionist approach to leadership and its development.

It seems to us that in this interaction, identity undoing (in particular the discourse of cutting apart) is embedded in relational dynamics that involve power, voice, and agency. It feels like something is being undone in Sally, making the technologies of power feel dominating. Cassandra seems divided between denying that ('I didn't have a knife though') and helping her survive it ('but I'm telling you to hold on'). While at times 'cutting apart' is something we may do to ourselves, in the above interaction this kind of undoing involves, at least momentarily, the participant being turned into an object (as opposed to a subject).

iii.   Letting go

The discourse of 'letting go' is about discarding parts of one's identity, and was actively offered and encouraged by the facilitators. The following face-to-face interaction signals the participants' tentative adoption and enactment of it, albeit with some trepidation. It took place at the fourth residential, nearly a year into the programme, where the participants were asked in smaller groups to share a story about a leadership challenge. The listening

participants were then asked to draw and describe a picture for the speaker that captured 'the point where you see/ hear/ feel the vitality/ aspiration/ purpose/ connection/ passion' of the story.

Face-to-face interaction observed at residential workshop (audio-recorded)
Participant Robyn: I've got to let go of that engineer identity to be able to kind of work with teams a little bit. [...] My role is changing in the fact that I've got more of a team underneath me and I'm working in a project that's more complex and it's more at the start of the project, it's not in the building phase. So I've really got to stop that doing a little bit and I've got to help the guys under me do and grow. [...] I tend to see the gaps in things and tend to grab hold of them rather than actually sharing them with the group and that's why the group works. I don't know. In my thing upstairs they sort of had that I need to stop doing and to start being a leader. This leadership stuff's scary. I mean I've done this kind of engineering stuff and I've been successful and that's fine, but I don't know how to be and who I am in leadership and who I am without that kind of, being that technical person. So it's all about letting that go I think and also I've got to listen to my own voice a bit more. Because I think I've kind of been... and to be honest.... I don't know. **Participant A:** You need, you need to be something else. **Participant Robyn:** Yep. **Participant A:** But you kind of need to chuck that and leave it [the engineer identity]. If you're going now, well no, I'm not the engineer, you guys are and you almost need to play ignorance and kind of go, well you're the engineers, you tell me. **Participant Robyn:** Yeah, yeah, no, you're right.

Robyn's story here revolves around letting go a well ensconced engineer identity in order to move from individual to 'team', from 'building' to start-up, from doing things herself to

growing others, and from dealing with gaps to inviting others to face such challenges. This is, perhaps, a typical story of transitioning from a technical to a leadership type role. The letting go however is more than role related and involves redefining success and gaining confidence in new practices ('listen to my own voice a bit more'). Robyn's discomfort is conveyed by her pauses and incoherence ('Because I think I've kind of been . . . and to be honest . . . I don't know'), as she acknowledges the scariness of the task ('I don't know how to be and who I am in leadership … without … being that technical person'). This is a prime example of the participants' willingness to discard aspects of themselves – a process incited by the institution's rhetoric that is internalized by the participant as they desire such a transition (Scott, 2010).

The activity above shows how a discourse of identity undoing introduced by the programme is translated into a confessional activity whereby participants adopt the role of the observing hierarchy by appreciating, intervening, judging, and affirming the self-understanding of the speaker (Foucault, 1990). The participants take a conscious lead by confirming the need for identity work ('you need, you need to be something else'), then affirming the letting go ('you kind of need to chuck that and leave it'), and indicating how to do so ('you almost need to play ignorance'); which gets a confused response ('yeah, yeah, no'). Letting go is another inherently relational form of identity undoing where someone else potentially helps to support the letting go and recalibrate the way ahead. It carries connotations of unlearning and negative capability (Simpson, French, and Harvey, 2002), but understanding it as identity undoing emphasises the powered nature of this process. However, when what is being undone redraws lines of expertise, success, and confidence, significant things are at stake.

 iv.   *Floundering*

This discourse refers to the faltering, helpless stagnation, and frustrated thrashing about that some participants seemed to experience when trying to make sense of their individual and

collective identities. The same cluster is represented in the 'shaking up' interaction referred to earlier: floundering is a discourse of undoing introduced by the participants partly because they were experiencing other forms of undoing. Their online discussion below took place about half-way through the programme. Their task was to create a question that would both focus their learning and leadership development over the next phase of the programme and also create energy and connection between them. They had been constructing their question for at least a month, and two facilitators had tried to help the group gain some momentum. Natasha's post is addressed primarily to Rob their facilitator.

Online interaction
Participant Natasha: I think that we have a real sense of ownership of this work and our task. But I think we are really really really really stuck. And this saps energy. I see that we have unlocked bits and pieces and we have talked around and through and about this. But I can also see that we are all exhausted from the process which feels like it has just gone on and on and on. I may only be speaking for myself here - but I don't think that I am...I think we get excited because we think we may have finally stumbled across the thing that you guys [the facilitators] want us to 'get' or understand and that this in turn is going to help our leadership development. That is not to say that we are not willing to do the work, find our own path and take responsibility for our own learning - but maybe that we don't really know what we are looking for so are waiting for this affirmation. I think that we keep getting stuck and not knowing how to get ourselves out of it.[...] I just feel like I get it but I don't really get it. And that I can see the theory but can't grasp it and that while I am really trying to take ownership of my own learning here I feel like I am floundering and waiting to be told that I am on the right track and for someone to help me to make the next steps - which you [the facilitator] have been doing for us often - but I still find myself really stuck. [...]
Participant Derek: I have to agree Natasha that this process has dragged on and we are stuck

and we have little excited spells but then lose interest quickly when we realise that didn't solve our problem [...] I still don't see where we need to head with this line of thinking or what we can actually do...[...] would love some ideas is basically what I'm asking for.

This interaction between Derek and Natasha represents a collective floundering where members of that collective 'get really really really really stuck' together, with the result that the process or task they are undertaking has 'gone on and on and on'. Their work together seems primarily conversational ('we have talked around and through and about this'), translational ('I can see the theory but can't grasp it'), and relational ('we have unlocked bits and pieces'). Derek's posting is essentially a plea to be rescued by the facilitators ('would love some ideas is basically what I'm asking for'), which Natasha reveals they 'have been doing for us often'. We see the normalising judgment the participant Natasha has internalised as she evaluates her own progress (or lack thereof) relative to others. We see the self-disciplining that some participants engage in when they feel they're not performing the idealised identity work 'that you guys want us to "get"', and the consequent struggle and turmoil this engenders. In such instances, the facilitators are the observing hierarchy who know, see, guide, and save.

One reading of this discourse is that this group feels forced to pursue an insight that the facilitators know but refuse to reveal ('the thing that you guys want us to "get"'). Therefore, 'we don't really know what we are looking for' could be a cry of learners frustrated they are not acquiring the necessary material, or the fatigue of leaders having to keep moving through uncertainty and ambiguity. If it is the former then the group runs the risk of cementing a place of powerlessness ('I still don't see . . . what we can actually do'), where they're 'waiting to be told' what to do, how to think, and possibly who to be. If it is the latter then the group are learning core lessons about collective or shared leadership and holding 'ownership', 'energy',

and 'responsibility' between them amidst complexity. This floundering discourse points to the redefinition and reframing work that needs to be performed in addition to undoing, otherwise undoing will not necessarily be productive. Floundering could be more productively reframed as negative capability as this concept prizes not knowing and patiently waiting as core leadership practices that can open up new pathways, ideas, and options (Simpson, French, and Harvey, 2002).

v.   Being playful

Being playful refers to undoing a fixed identity by moving between various identities. It is a discourse of identity undoing introduced and promoted by the facilitation team: while it enchanted some participants, others had difficulty enacting it as. The interaction below comes from a different cluster, almost a year into the 18-month programme, at a time when many clusters were working with their facilitators to explore their shaping of each other's identities and to facilitate movement and growth in their work together.

Series of online interactions
Facilitator Rachael to Raymond: Ok so that's a strong statement about what you are and what you aren't but if you are going to be an adaptable leader who can change to be able to respond to situations which require you to be different then you being as you describe yourself above isn't going to work all the time is it? This is a story you are telling yourself. So here is an experiment for you, what other identity could you bring to this cluster stuff for the next 15 days Raymond? Something that challenges the story you have about yourself and might mean that you can impact the cluster work in an entirely different way?
Participant Raymond: Hi Rachael, thanks for your valuable comments. It is certainly one of my identities to try and be 'the problem resolver' and in my mind I love ticking off tasks. To challenge this identity, over the next couple of weeks I will experiment with asking more and

more questions of everything and trying not to finalise and find all the answers.
Below are a selection of Raymond's comments made in the days following the above interaction:
Raymond: You are so true about the fact that we are all so worried about people's perception of us and how they might judge us. I certainly am at times. I also agree with your statement saying that you don't perceive people as harshly as you think they do you (if that makes sense).
Raymond: Proactively changing one's identity in order to relate to others, to get what you want, is storytelling. Changing one's identity proactively is storytelling and can be used very manipulatively.

Initially the facilitator Rachael addresses a strong identity claim by Raymond to be the continual 'problem resolver' who brings a 'finalise and find all the answers' imperative to his voice and role. Rachael calls this 'a story you are telling yourself' that he can challenge, and attempt to author a new one. She invites him to embark on an 'experiment' to adopt a different identity in the cluster, and presents him with a preferable identity: the 'adaptable leader who can change'. Raymond seems to like this experiment and resolves to try out an inquirer identity. One of the authors tracked this experiment but saw few instances of the new identity and plenty of the old 'problem resolver'. The next posting is an example ('you are so true . . . I also agree'). This causes Raymond, in his final posting, to think about the relationship of identity, story, play, and manipulation.

Playing with identity is a complex form of identity undoing because it matches postmodern notions of the fluidity and malleability of identity, and the desirability of developing multiple stories as a flexible repertoire of identity options. This is Rachael's perspective and that of most of the facilitators. Raymond shows the seduction as well as the difficulties of seizing

identity work in this way in terms of both the fixedness of an existing identity that he slips back to even when trying not to, and the ethics and authenticity of holding multiple identities. Facilitators' requests for participants to alter their identities would raise ethical concerns for some commentators. We have termed identity play a form of undoing (even though it carries connotations of identity construction as well), not just because it represents a challenge to, and shift from, existing and/or fixed identities, but because it is designed to undo the dominant impact and voice participants continually enact. The interaction above reflects not only the lightness ('experiment') of play and its importance ('can be used very manipulatively'), but also the difficulties of playing with identity even when the desire to play is held strongly and relationally.

Overall, the modes of undoing seem to be associated with different emotional tones – from energising and delightful to debilitating and destructive. Participants worked with identity undoing in unpredictable and diverse ways: resisting, deflecting, reshaping, inviting, embracing, imposing, yearning, and lamenting. Because 'relations of power are not something bad in themselves from which one must free one's self' (Foucault as cited in Fornet-Betancourt et al., 1987: 129), these discourses and power relations are not necessarily inherently oppressive or debilitating. Rather, some participants feel pleasure in embarking upon the new discourses, and hope they can open new pathways. What we have tried to capture is how identity undoing is created and endured in relationships with other people. We therefore now focus on the role of facilitators in identity undoing.

Facilitators and identity undoing

Facilitators were present – either directly or referenced – in most of these interactions. These were the hierarchical figures that invited, sanctioned, disrupted, supported and challenged identity work including undoing (Foucault, 1977). While we have highlighted their

involvement, their agency in identity undoing remains shadowy. Consequently, we widen the scope of the empirical material to include interviews with five of the facilitators undertaken six months after completion of the programme. The interviews were conducted by the first author as part of a separate study about branding, organisational identity, and leadership development; however, the facilitators (of whom the second author was one) were asked their views on facilitation, this particular programme, and development work.

The five facilitators brought different perspectives to their accounts of facilitation. However, all of them discussed their facilitation, particularly on this programme, in an identity discourse highly resonant with this inquiry. As Leah said, 'you sort of live an identity struggle when you work with that group', which for a number of them 'sets [in motion] a train of doubt and angst and struggle'. That identity struggle manifests around the question of expertise and ways of working with expertise that remain congruent with constructionist, critical pedagogies and sensitive to the purpose of fostering leadership in young emergent leaders.

One facilitator was wary about the 'sort of authority around thinking that might not be good for them' where participants' 'ways of knowing themselves and the world are hit on in a direct attack' (Leah). Attack here seems to refer to 'highly disruptive' modes of learning and provocative conceptual material on leadership rather than anything personally or relationally confrontational (for example the 'cut apart' interaction is one example of this attack). Because constructionist approaches tend to challenge common forms of normative leadership thinking, this would seem a likely concern.

For Leah, expertise is an unresolved tension where participants need to feel 'creators of your own destiny and instead have got this, this figure who is … older and academic and in charge of, you know, some aspects of the programme kind of telling them what to think'. Leah catches herself navigating such tensions by at times being too directive ('sometimes I do understand I hold on too tight, say too much, am too loud, am too central in the process'), and

at times smoothing or resolving what might need to be encountered as messy and difficult ('you can sound really wise you know, when you sort of say "go gently or respond experimentally" to something that sucked you in in the past'). Her dilemma suggests the discomfort of recognising that individuals are both objects and subjects in their identity work, and therefore acknowledging the power that facilitators, due to their perceived or claimed expertise and authority, may mobilize in shaping others' selves. There seems little thought that facilitators too can be subjects and objects in identity processes, and that understanding one's impact as a facilitator could be assisted by seeing oneself as an object.

The feeling of facilitation as walking a boundary between intervention and the participant's agency is picked up by another facilitator: between holding strongly to the programme's design, delivery, and development trajectory; and creating space for participants to lead, shape, and 'author' their own experience given that 'what I hoped for them [was] that they would have a programme that they could feel the strength of whilst still having lots of places for them to take it for themselves' (Cassandra). Such a slim line can be read perhaps most strongly in the floundering interaction where the participants desired a facilitator to give 'affirmation', while the facilitators seemed reluctant to dispel the floundering by intervening. For Rachael 'not taking things away from them so much' was the key to navigating the line but, as we saw in some interactions, participants found the line equally difficult to navigate, let alone recognise and read.

Because the programme was co-facilitated by a team, the facilitators were aware of needing to play different roles, and of holding different identities in relation to each other to create a broader facilitation repertoire. For Rob this involved undoing the other facilitators:

> I wanted to be someone who could challenge, I guess who could promote the group [the participants] to be able to challenge what they're being told [by the

facilitators]. That they don't kind of just swallow whatever happens, whatever these people are saying, and they should ask, and question, and take on a role where they could do this. So I felt like I led the way in helping them to set that culture, I guess, for them.

Rob's intent to model challenge, questioning, and conflict, would apparently legitimise and promote the importance of facilitators being involved in each other's undoing. The interactions however suggested that more was required, and that the dynamics of facilitators undoing of each other might be different from participants' undoing of each other and of facilitators.

The power and authority implicit in the facilitators' expertise thus appeared always consciously and sometimes visibly held – whether in confidence or in ambivalence – to open up choices for participants that cannot be held in the surety of being 'right'. As a consequence, all these facilitators understand power and expertise as both relational, contextual, and in the words of one 'mediated in between us, the context and our participants'. To facilitators, this makes development a co-constructed space between them and participants. However, the data show that the realities of that co-constructed space are difficult to establish. In the interactions above, asymmetry is evident, with the bulk of the guidance, direction, and challenge coming from facilitators, and support and confirmation from participants and facilitators, but doubt and uncertainty openly displayed mostly by participants alone. While one can imagine different power balances influencing the conversations, it seems that identity undoing surfaces some of the hard-to-shift power relations of development and leadership. Furthermore, the undoing dynamics represented in this inquiry – shaking up, cutting apart, letting go, floundering, and play – constitute realities that relational, adaptive, and collective forms of leadership need to negotiate. The difficulties that participants have in co-constructing

learning and development spaces may reflect the difficulties of co-constructing less leader-centric spaces. Thus the identity work in development could mirror the identity work in leadership.

Due to the constructionist orientation of the programme, these facilitators did not use 360 degree feedback, psychometric tests, or psychoanalytic-based coaching technologies but instead used conversational, reflexive, and collective formats that invited participants to negotiate strategically and relationally. In the final analysis, experts are part of the relational and interaction dynamics that support the development and leadership at the heart of programmes. These undoing excerpts suggest that identity undoing involves micro-instances where power could be made visible and engaged with to facilitate leadership development. This inquiry could take us further in knowing how to.

Discussion

One of the contributions of this paper is to foreground the significance to leadership development of power, which is still under-conceptualised in practice and scholarship. We suspect that power is embedded in identity construction just as much as in identity undoing: but the new visibility we have brought to the latter enables us to add a more nuanced observation and interrogation of its dynamics. We note from our data that power is evident in the relationship between participants as well as between participants and their facilitators, and has the capacity to shape and influence moments, choices, interactions, and insights fleetingly but profoundly. Creating the awareness, language, and confidence to work actively with or against power in the moment would appear core development work.

We suspect that while some practitioners' may initially react to the idea of identity undoing by denying or dismissing it, this reaction also speaks to a creeping concern or discomfort

some may feel but do not yet have the language, opportunity, or willingness to voice. Some facilitators may recognise participants' expectations or desires to be 'undone', while others see undoing as a necessary process for dismantling some of their clients' problematic leadership biases and assumptions. Some may even wish for a 'how to' guide to identity undoing, which one practitioner asked us for following a conference presentation. This last request is one we could never support because of the ethical questions our data raise about the possible destructiveness and debilitation of undoing, silence, and compliance elicited from some participants.

While we agree that the undoing of some leaders' dominating and constraining biases, prejudices, and identities is necessary to create more democratic, equitable, and emancipatory leadership, the Foucauldian power relations evident in our data raise some real concerns. If participants do indeed internalise the programme's norms and discourses, and enact these through mutual surveillance, the compliance and conformity that may result from this seems ironic given the purpose of developing leadership. Furthermore, given that leadership programmes encourage certain discourses while others are ruled out, the danger is that participants may reproduce these norms and produce 'McSelves' that should be challenged or resisted. Some participants may not feel they have the ability, voice, language, or power to resist the preferred identities or ways of doing identity work, even if they wanted to, due to the disciplining effects of normalising judgment, mutual surveillance, and confessionary activities.

We suggest that building resistance in the participant's voice and behavior needs to be a vital dynamic in leadership development. Despite the popularity of resistance in organisation studies (Courpasson, Dany and Clegg, 2012; Fleming and Spicer, 2007; Mumby, 2005), it is an even less developed concept in leadership development literature and practice than power. We would be concerned if Scott's (2010) argument holds that the mutual surveillance and

internalisation of the self-improvement discourses make resistance seem largely unnecessary to the participants. If what these leaders are learning and practicing – especially in social constructionist programmes with an apparent emancipatory intent – is conformity, this raises important questions about the purpose and value of leadership development. It may be that resistance itself is a form of leadership positioning and practice that should be seen as an emancipatory resource. We agree with other resistance scholars (e.g. Jian, 2007) who suggest that studying in-situ interactions of resistance is a particularly fruitful method for better understanding resistance.

We also propose that identity undoing is part of the everyday experience of leadership, both in terms of being undone and attempting to undo others. In much leadership theory, such as transformational, spiritual, servant, and authentic leadership, the assumption appears to be that followers are most often subject to a leader's undoing of them. The positive psychology roots of authentic leadership theory in particular mean that personal development is inevitably framed as positive and beneficial, but the debilitating, constraining, and anxiety-inducing effects of being subject to the leader's agency are rarely acknowledged (Huzzard and Spoelstra, 2011). We argue that while some of this development may feel exciting and energising any effort to develop, grow, or transform one's subordinates will always invoke power relations as well as identity undoing, and that leadership may therefore be experienced as unsettling or oppressive (see Ford and Harding 2011 for a compelling critique of the destructive potential of authentic leadership theory). Furthermore, the challenge of trying to enact co-constructed, collaborative, or distributed leadership will surely engender attempts to 'undo' other people's assumptions and aspects of their identity, in ways that the current literature does not adequately acknowledge. Therefore, if processes of identity undoing are inherent to the practice of leadership, then leadership development theory and practice need to attend to it better.

Conclusion

We would like to conclude by addressing some of the implications our research carries for the practice of leadership development. There is no doubt that many participants in this programme were taken unawares by the depth and intensity of the identity questions they encountered, while other participants welcomed and relished such identity work. Nevertheless in order to better support participants, the identity focus of leadership development needs to be visible from the outset so that this kind of leadership development presents itself better. If this were done, participants might feel more able to question, confront, and reshape identity work more vocally.

Additionally, we see a need to differentiate between self-development and identity work in both conceptual understanding and development practice. As participants undertook and evaluated their development, they readily adopted the discourse of self-development: but we query whether self-development can effectively translate the impact of 'self' changes that accompany the changes to leadership mindset, relationships, and strategies. Creating a stronger bridge between changes to the self and a different leadership repertoire might help participants engage with the power and purpose of undertaking identity undoing work. Such a bridge may help developers and scholars to explore why it is difficult to translate learning from leadership development to other contexts.

In terms of facilitation, our undoing interactions suggest the need to experiment with more techniques that redistribute power and authority within the programme. Traditional leadership staples such as 360 degree feedback and executive coaching need to be understood as cementing an asymmetry of expertise and power, but our inquiry shows that conversation

and inquiry formats are not necessarily strong enough to disrupt such a dynamic. Given that shifting from leader-centric to more shared leadership approaches may invoke aspects of identity undoing, participants need capacity building that supports them to be more active and confident in redistributing asymmetrical power effects.

Our data on undoing interactions show both the absence and presence of facilitators as critical in the sensemaking, learning, and relationships that support leadership development. The fragility, vulnerability, and tentativeness of the participants challenges widespread conceptions of how leaders act (i.e. in control and in command). This might appear to represent a curious paradox between the leadership that is being aspired to and the nature of the development undertaken to achieve it. We wonder how aware facilitators are of their entanglement in the identity processes that their interventions set in motion. We wonder, too, whether they have enough conceptual and practical knowledge and support to enable them to be assured in the identity undoing that will arise as individual and collective change in the name of leadership is pursued.

Funding

Notes

[1] We recognise that psychodynamic research into group relations, management development, and leadership development has offered valuable insights into interactional and intrapsychic dynamics (Bradford, Gibb and Benne, 1964; Figler and Hanlon, 2007; Gould, Stapley and Stein, 2004; Petriglieri and Stein, 2012; Rice, 1965). There are aspects of identity undoing

that could certainly be analysed from a psychodynamic perspective; however, we are interested in the micro-physics of power and technologies of self and that shape identity undoing in this context.

2 We'd like to thank our colleague Prof Kerr Inkson for drawing our attention to this interpretation of the metaphor.

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