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Abstract

Mainstream leadership development often focuses only on leaders themselves and existing models that purport to help these individuals become better at leading. However, this sort of *leader development* (as opposed to leadership development) is questionable with regard to efficiency and effectiveness. We argue here that this may be due to a lack of acknowledgement of leaders' (and followers') implicit leadership theories (Eden and Leviatan, 1975) in the context of leader and leadership development. In an attempt to broaden the scope of leadership development, we present the results of using a drawing exercise as a learning tool. This exercise serves to assess leaders' (and followers') implicitly held images of leaders and allows for contextual information derived from the exercise to be included in development interventions. Results show that participants draw metaphors and symbols as well as real and generic people. Furthermore, most drawings are of male leaders, and only few drawings contain followers. Based on the results, we critically reflect upon implications for leadership learning and development and argue that implicit leadership theories can provide a valuable starting point for leadership development.

Keywords

Leadership development, metaphor, implicit leadership theory, visual methods

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Introduction

Leadership development and training is costly, with the investment estimated to be between \$10–50bn a year (Hannah and Avolio, 2010; Raelin, 2004: 131). Yet its effectiveness is unclear and transfer to the workplace remains a challenge (Burgoyne et al., 2004). Whilst many reasons for this problem exist, one key issue is that traditional leadership development has often focused on the leader as a person, the aim of the intervention being to change leaders' behaviour to fit a predefined dominant model of what a leader should be (Ford and Harding, 2007). However, this ignores the wider context of leadership in which leaders operate (cf. Day, 2001), including the role of followers in the leadership process. Consequently, there have been numerous calls for more critical approaches to teaching leadership (Cunliffe, 2009; Hansen et al., 2007; Sinclair, 2007). Disregarding the wider context of leadership can result in teaching a 'one-best-way' of leading, rather than acknowledging that leaders have different starting points and operate in different contexts. Day (2001) calls these different approaches 'leader development' (focus on the leader) versus 'leadership development' (focus on the wider context of leadership). Ford et al., (2008) outline a typical *leader* development session in which the participants' role mainly seems to be to listen to leadership theory and a trainer pointing out how they do not (yet) match the perfect leader profile (see also Ford and Harding, 2007). We agree that this type of training fails to recognize the complexity of a leader's situation and does not acknowledge the role of the follower in the *leadership* process.

A similar argument can be drawn from a relational point of view. For example, Uhl-Bien (2006) argues for a relational perspective of leadership, that is, a shift in focus from the individual to the collective dynamic and the meaning constructed within the collective. We argue here that leaders need a more contextual approach to leader development, which involves starting with raising awareness, both of their own and their followers' view of leadership (Schyns et al., 2011). Including followers in leadership development programmes is important as Hosking (2002) highlights an 'obvious potential limitation is the absence of "the led" and leader-led relations as an ongoing context for training' (p. 7). Leadership development, based on implicit leadership theories (Eden and Leviatan, 1975), acknowledges that leaders need a more reflexive approach. It takes into account that leaders need to increase their contextual sensitivity and match the expectations of their followers in order to be granted 'leadership' (De Rue and Ashford, 2010). Therefore, leaders and potential leaders need to find out about these expectations and how they match/mismatch with their own images of leadership, in order to help them to become better leaders in their context. For example, leaders and followers may differ in the degree to which they regard leadership as 'male' (cf. think-manager-think-male phenomenon, e.g. Schein, 1973; 1975; 2001; Sczesny et al., 2004) or the extent to which they implicitly include followers in the leadership process (i.e. their implicit followership theories, Sy, 2010). The core idea is to connect leadership learning and development to the images of leaders and leadership which followers and leaders have in their minds. Thus our approach is in line with conceptualisations of leadership as social construction, reflected, for instance, in *Romance of Leadership* (e.g. Meindl et al., 1985).

In the following, we first introduce the concept of implicit leadership and followership theories in more detail, outlining prior research and its shortcomings. We then present the drawing exercise and integrate it into the critical approach to leadership development. Next, we report on a study using the drawing method to underline our argument and explain how this method can be used as a starting point for leadership development. We outline how we analysed the drawings and summarize the results. Finally, we discuss the implications of these results for leadership learning and development.

Implicit leadership theories and how to measure them

‘Implicit leadership theories’ describe everyday images of leaders (Schyns and Schilling, 2011). The term was introduced by Eden and Leviatan (1975; see also Eden and Leviatan, 2005) who found that participants use the same schemas to describe leaders about whom they have no information as they would use for actual leaders. Subsequently, much research has shown that performance cues influence how we view leaders (for an overview see Lord and Maher, 1993), indicating that we have images in our mind that we apply to people labelled ‘leaders’ (Kenney et al., 1996).

Traditional assessments of implicit leadership theories inquire about traits, characteristics and behaviours expected of leaders, typically using either an open question format (e.g. Offermann et al., 1994; Schyns and Schilling, 2011) or using predefined lists for participants to rate (e.g. Epitropaki and Martin, 2005). Dimensions of traits found in an American sample include sensitivity, tyranny, intelligence, devotion, charisma, strength, attractiveness, and masculinity (Offermann et al., 1994). Similarly, implicit followership theories focus on the traits, characteristics, and behaviours of followers, for example: industry, enthusiasm, good citizenship, conformity, insubordination, and incompetence (Sy, 2010). Leaders’ implicit followership theories are related to attitudes such as liking and relationship quality (Sy, 2010).

However, leadership research has moved away from the idea that (effective) leaders need particular traits or characteristics. Most leadership theories nowadays acknowledge the role of followers and the importance of interactions between leaders and followers in the leadership process (e.g. leader-member exchange, Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; transformational leadership, Bass, 1985). Consequently, alternative ways of assessing implicit leadership theories are called for that challenge the traditional focus on traits and characteristics.

Using drawings to assess implicit leadership theories allows learners to go beyond traits and characteristics when expressing their views about leaders and leadership, not least because using drawings, in the context of a leadership development intervention, is less familiar to participants. Many traditional leadership development programmes start with instructor-led discussions, clearly defining the role of a leader, and by implication, leadership (Ford et al., 2008). Opening a learning event with a potentially unexpected drawing exercise may encourage participants to engage in a personal and group exploration of the concept, which could facilitate cognitive learning (Kubota and Olstad, 1991). However, whilst the drawing exercise may be unexpected, it uses familiar teaching tools of flip chart and pens, and is therefore not too novel, which means participants are less likely to be sidetracked or diverted by the activity itself (Kubota and Olmsted, 1991).

Using a drawing exercise as a learning tool in the context of critical leadership development

As Ford et al. (2008: 29) point out, leadership is not achieved through a ‘straightforward mechanistic process whereby a person is persuaded of the need for leadership, goes on courses and through practice becomes a leader’. Mainstream leadership development, however, often focuses (only) on the leader him/herself. Day (2001) terms this ‘leader development’ as the focus is on the leader as a person rather than the wider social or relational context of leadership (‘leadership development’). Uhl-Bien (2006) differentiates between an entity perspective and a relational perspective. According to her:

an entity perspective [...] focuses on identifying attributes of individuals as they engage in interpersonal relationships, and a relational perspective [...] views leadership as a process of social construction through which certain understandings of leadership come about and are given privileged ontology. (p. 654)

In addition, looking at the 'dialectics of leadership', Collinson (2005: 1422) argues that the differentiation between leaders and followers can be artificial as there are 'simultaneous interdependencies and asymmetries between leaders and followers'. Therefore, both leader and follower views need to be taken into account when developing leaders.

We argue here that leader and leadership development should use the leaders' and followers' own reflections about leadership as a starting point, rather than models established by leadership researchers. With respect to new leaders, Ford et al. (2008: 84) argue that they 'must be willing to analyse himself – or herself – and to discuss the self-analysis with strangers and with colleagues'. We expand on this and argue that the exercise we have developed serves to analyse the self (in the sense of one's implicit leadership theories) and to facilitate a discussion with other leaders as well as followers. This also answers Hosking's (2002) concern about neglecting the led in the process of leader development.

In order to get learners thinking about their ideas of leaders and leadership, we conducted a drawing exercise (cf. Schyns et al., 2011). In this exercise, participants form groups and think about 'leaders', before being given paper and pens and being invited to draw a leader. Using this method as opposed to other assessments of implicit leadership theories has several advantages: (a) it encourages the use of symbols and cultural representations to access prototypes and metaphors, adding an emotional element to the cognitive approach (Bryans and Mavin, 2006; Kearney and Hyle, 2004); (b) it fosters a group process; (c) it is language independent; and (d) it allows for context information to be included as – in contrast to as other assessments – it is not restricted to a list of characteristics.

Using drawings in leadership development can be placed in the context of 'arts-based methods in managerial development' (Taylor and Ladkin, 2009). Taylor and Ladkin (2009) argue that those methods are more effective than more traditional development methods as they include an emotional dimension. They differentiate four processes of the contribution of arts to leadership development: (a) skills transfer, (b) projective technique, (c) illustration of essence, and (d) making. Our drawing exercise is both an example for projective technique, as it uses an art form to make implicit knowledge explicit, and an illustration of essence (which is, according to Taylor and Ladkin, 2009: 58, 'conceptually similar to projective technique'). The drawings are an example of illustration of essence as they encourage tacit knowledge to become explicit and the sharing of meaning.

Returning to the point of arts-based methods and emotions, Taylor and Statler (2009: 20) argue that 'materials can trigger emotions, and emotions can enhance learning'. They discuss the use of different types of material and how they influence the emergence of emotions, suggesting that less structured material triggers more emotions. We argue that on a scale from non-emotional to very emotional materials, drawing would be midpoint, which may be appropriate for many leadership development programmes. On the one hand, drawing may stimulate emotion and therefore access tacit knowledge. On the other hand, drawing does not use highly involving material that might distract from the actual task (see also Kubota and Olmsted, 1991). The drawings should be used as a starting point of reflection about the (possibly changing) context of leadership rather than a purpose in itself.

The drawing exercise can also be placed in the context of double-loop learning, a process that encourages deep thought about assumptions and beliefs. Double-loop learning or transformational learning (Mezirow, 1991) encourages the exploration of and changes in values, beliefs, assumptions, and biases, helps learners to reflect critically as opposed to reinforcing traditional views and think dialectically, with the goal of fostering independent thinking (Brooks, 2004; Merriam, 2004; Pohland and Bova, 2000). The potential outputs of transformational learning for leaders therefore include: a rise in levels of self-awareness and increased capacity to develop new knowledge, skills,

talents, and attitudes (Brooks, 2004; Hannah and Avolio, 2010) and an increase in flexibility and ability to deal with ambiguities (Brooks, 2004; Merriam, 2004).

The rational model of double-loop or transformational learning involves a process starting with a 'disorienting dilemma', in order to drive a critical assessment of assumptions, followed by 'rational discourse', where new meanings are discussed and evaluated (Merriam, 2004: 62). In the case of our exercise, the disorienting dilemma can take many forms, for example participants may realize that their own images of leaders are not 'the norm' but that others have implicit leadership theories that are often quite different; or conversely they may discover that they have stereotypical views. They are also likely to discover much about their implicit followership theories and again how these differ, or not, from those of other people. The idea of transformational learning is that in order to change, learners first need to recognize a need for change. By understanding the differences between their own and other implicit leadership and followership theories, participants should recognize that the leadership process is far more complex than they expected; being shaped by different views and expectations; and this may encourage them to question their own part in the process.

However, facilitating transformational learning is not easy as initial responses can be negative and volatile (Young, Mountford, and Skrla, 2006). For example, issues such as the gendered nature of leadership can lead to resistance in the sense that participants deny that there is a gender issue, or learners can claim that of course followers are important. Resistance can take the form of 'Distancing' (p. 267), 'Opposition' (p. 268) and 'Intense emotions' (p. 268) which has the potential to block learning for individuals and groups (Young et al., 2006). Articulating and criticizing underlying assumptions about self and others is an underdeveloped capacity for most adults and therefore one role of adult educators is to enable this to happen in a sensitive and unthreatening way (Merriam, 2004; Pohland and Bova, 2000).

Using the drawing exercise as a starting point could overcome some of the initial challenges of transformational learning for two reasons. First, drawing is seen as a different and often fun activity (reverting to childhood and its associations with play), which can disarm initial resistance. This may prevent some of the denials explained by Young et al. (2006). By providing a conducive, dialogic context that encourages communication and discourse (Brooks, 2004), a drawing exercise can help share pre-existing knowledge of learners in a non-threatening way. Because participants have less fixed views on the interpretation of drawings than they do of words, the exercise can increase learners' receptivity of listening, as they seek to understand the drawings of others. This may encourage learners to explore their starting point as opposed to defending it, which could in turn enhance the sharing of social, political, and cultural history (Pohland and Bova, 2000). Second, the drawings produced can serve as a mirror to start reflecting about views on leadership. That is, the drawing can be used as evidence of, for example, the gendered views on leadership, or the negation of followers, whilst at the same time, putting this into a context that explains that this view is not unusual.

Method

Background of the drawing exercise

The drawings we analyse here were collected as part of an exercise aimed to raise self- and social awareness about implicit leadership theories (Schyns et al., 2011). Our drawing exercise aims at both leader and leadership development (*sensu*, Day, 2001) in so far that it makes leaders (and followers) aware of their own and, at the same time, others' implicit leadership theories. We argue

elsewhere (Schyns et al., 2011) that followers' implicit leadership theories constitute the social background in which leaders operate, thus leaders are granted their identity by their followers (DeRue and Ashford, 2010). Therefore if leaders' and followers' implicit leadership theories do not match, leaders will not be granted influence. However, as these theories are implicit, people are not aware of the images they hold and, therefore, do not question them, and even less, question in how far their images of leaders differ from others.

Sample and procedure

Our sample consists of $N = 138$ drawings collected in the context of teaching and development of undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive students. Drawings were constructed in typical group sizes of between two and five people. Where possible, groups were kept homogeneously, for example with respect to culture or profession.

After thinking about characteristics of leaders on their own, groups are asked to 'draw a leader' (for full instructions see Schyns et al., 2011). The instructions are deliberately kept unspecific so that groups have room for interpretation. No further clarification is given at this stage.

Analysis

In order to analyse the drawings, we created an inventory of the main features in the drawings and content-analysed the drawings (Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Weber, 1990). We developed a coding system, based on Ayman-Nolley and Ayman's (2005) approach for coding children's implicit leadership theories. The codes derived and frequencies are portrayed in Table 1. Ayman-Nolley and Ayman coded their drawings using the following categories: gender, skin colour, presence of violence, presence of followers, gender of followers, and relative size of followers compared to the leader drawn. We used many of the same codes here, apart from skin colour as there were very few other than white Caucasian leaders drawn. We also did not code for gender of followers, again due to the small sample size of drawings including followers.

In contrast to Ayman-Nolley and Ayman who decided only to interpret representations of actual people, we decided to interpret all drawings, including those that did not contain a person at all. Thus, our first code was used to differentiate drawings of people from drawings of metaphors or objects (code 1). We coded the gender of the person drawn as male, female, both, or no gender indicated (code 2). The category 'both' was used, for example, where half a female and half a male body were drawn. We also noticed after a first viewing that some of our drawings contained the depiction of a head/brain only, so we added this code to our scheme (code 3). Drawings that included both people and metaphors or symbols were coded first as drawings of people but coded again as containing symbols (code 4). As a lot of our drawings contained symbols in addition to people and we were interested in how far participants used the drawing method to go beyond leader characteristics, we also coded whether or not additional symbols were drawn. Finally, we coded if the drawing contained followers or not (code 5) and, if so, their relative size compared to the leaders depicted (code 6). The drawings were analysed by two coders who were not part of the original research team, meaning they had not used the exercise themselves nor were they highly involved in the research process up to this stage. The decision was taken to use 'innocent' coders to ensure that the influence of prior knowledge and assumptions was minimized. Instead of relying on inter-rater reliability, we used conferenced

Table 1. Frequencies and percentages of the categories found in the drawings.

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage ^a
1	People versus metaphor		
	Real people	13	9.4
	Generic people	93	67.4
	Metaphor	30	21.7
2	Gender		
	No gender	40	29
	Male	76	55.1
	Female	8	5.8
3	Both	12	8.7
	Body		
	Head/brain	11	8
4	Not only head/brain	125	90.6
	Contains additional symbols		
	Yes	98	71
5	No	37	26.8
	Followers		
	Present	55	39.9
6	Absent	81	58.7
	Size followers		
	Smaller than leader	47	34.1
	Same size as leader	8	5.8
	Bigger than leader	0	0

^aPercentages refer to the percentage of all pictures rather than the percentage per sub-category.

results, that is, the coders met after initial individual coding and discussed results until agreement was reached.

Results of the contents analysis

Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages of the categories found in the drawings. While most groups drew a person, a surprising number of groups drew a metaphor (21.7%); often a lion ($N = 5$), despite the instructions 'draw a leader'.

In 29% of drawings no gender of the leader was identifiable. Of the remainder, 79.2% drew a male leader (55.1% of all groups).

Of the drawings 9.4% were of actual leaders; examples include John Terry,¹ Martin Luther King, Jesus, and Bill Gates, again predominantly male. With respect to the parts of the body that groups drew, 8% drew a head or brain only. Most of the drawings contained symbols in addition to people ($N = 98$, 71%).

In 58.7% ($N = 81$) of the drawings, no followers were present. When followers were drawn they were mainly depicted as smaller than the leaders in the drawing ($N = 47$, 34.1%). In the remaining 5.8% ($N = 8$) of cases, followers and leaders were drawn at the same size. In addition to those codes, it was noticeable that many drawings contained words to describe the leader. We have not interpreted the words here but focused on the drawings.

Discussion and implications for leadership learning and development

We analysed the drawings with respect to their overall content. This served to describe the drawings better but also to derive ideas for leadership development from this exercise.

Several aspects of the drawings emerged. First, some groups drew actual people as leaders (e.g. Martin Luther King, Hitler); others (the majority) drew generic people. Second, most drawings depicted male leaders and only a minority drew female leaders. Third, some drawings only showed a head or a brain as opposed to a full body. Finally, metaphors were used by some groups and many drawings contained symbols in addition to drawings of people. We will discuss all those aspects in the following, putting these results in the context of existing literature and use them to derive recommendations for leadership development.

Actual versus generic person

The majority of groups drew a generic person (e.g. a stickman); however, some groups drew a 'real' person (see Ayman-Nolley and Ayman, 2005, for a similar result in children's drawings). This reflects a differentiation between exemplar-based models and abstraction-based or prototype models (Hilton and Von Hippel, 1996). Abstraction-based or prototype model are more generic ideas about leaders in general while exemplar-based models use examples to describe the category as a whole. Therefore, it seems that leaders are mainly represented as generic persons; however, a substantial minority of individuals might compare their leaders against leader exemplars.

With respect to leader or leadership development, when exemplar leaders are drawn, explanatory symbols and words might be particularly useful to clarify which aspects of the drawn person are considered exemplary. This leaves less room for interpretation as other students involved in the session may view the depicted leader differently and might therefore interpret the 'wrong' aspect of this person as an example of the category leader. An example drawing can illustrate this point (see Figure 1). Here, a group of participants drew a 'real' person (Chhatrapati Shivaji) and illustrated with words why they thought this person was a good example of the category leader.

Here the exercise can help to go beyond extracting textbook knowledge from students. That is, when in traditional leadership development programmes the question of 'can anyone be a leader' is asked, it is often answered in a socially desirable or text book fashion. However, answering this question whilst analysing their own drawings may encourage participants to be more open about their actual beliefs and could therefore help overcome some of the resistance associated with transformational learning. This may mean going beyond standard answers such as 'anybody can be a leader' or 'leaders are born' to refining what is actually takes to be a leader for *them* or in *their* context.

Gender

Most of the groups drew a male leader and only very few drew a female leader or a leader presenting both genders (for an example of the latter see Figure 2). Research into the Think-Manager-Think-Male phenomenon (e.g. Schein, 1975, 2001) would lead us to expect to find more drawings of men than women in this context, though recent research suggests that the phenomenon is diminishing in so far as women are perceived as fitting leadership roles better than they used to (Bosak and Sczesny, 2011). Our drawings seem to indicate, however, that the Think-Manager-Think-Male phenomenon is still very prevalent. This result seems to support the notion that drawings



Figure 1. Drawing of a 'real' person as a prototypical leader.

may better access the implicit aspect of gendered leadership images than questionnaire-based assessments. In support, this result is similar to that of Nosek et al. (2006) when comparing explicit versus implicit assessments of stereotypes

As a starting point for leader and leadership development, images of male and female leaders can be used to draw attention to the gendered notion of leaders and to make this implicit aspect explicit. This may facilitate a discussion on gendered implicit leadership theories and, ultimately, help to overcome gendered stereotypes. In practice, it might stimulate a debate about male and female aspects of leadership and how male and female leaders can possess both typically male and female leader attributes. Here, transformational leadership could be used in the discussion: While this leadership style consists of different dimensions, the dimension of individual consideration is often considered typically female while inspirational motivation is more important for male leaders (e.g. Vinkenburg et al., 2011). This demonstrates that successful leadership styles can contain typically male and female aspects.

In traditional leadership development interventions the question of gender has the potential to stimulate socially desirable responses and can cause huge defensiveness in participants. Stites-Doe (2003) reports that even in an all female MBA class, her students denied that there are any gender differences regarding leadership or management. Our experiences in teaching MBA students are

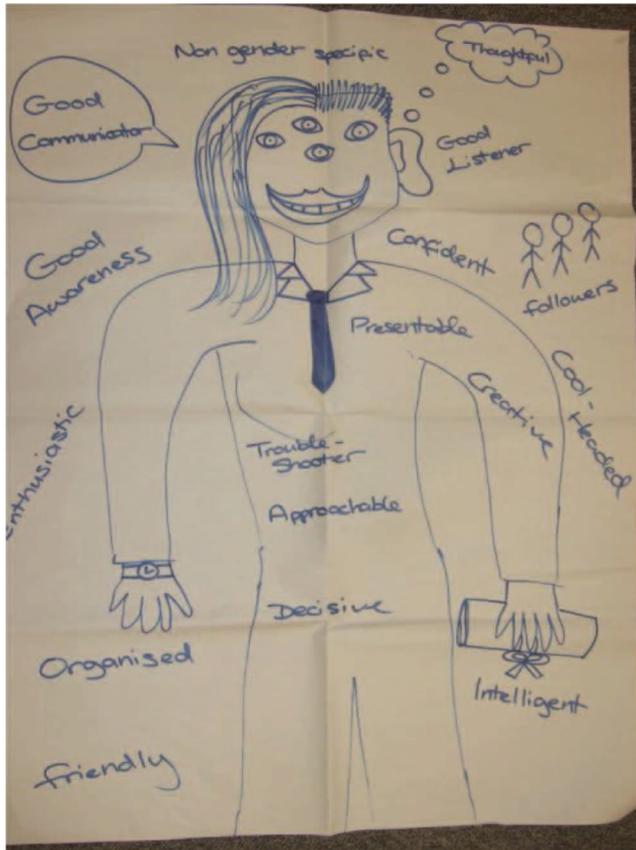


Figure 2. A sample drawing depicting both genders.

similar. For transformational learning to occur this defensiveness needs to be overcome and using the participants' own drawings to highlight their own implicit views may provide a good way of doing so.

Head/brain alone

We found that some groups drew a full body image of a leader and other groups only drew a head (for an example of the latter see Figure 3). While we do not want to over-interpret these differences, this finding can be situated in the recent discussion around embodied leadership (e.g. Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). It appears that some groups think of leadership as directed by the brain (or as Hansen et al., 2007: 552, put it 'intellectual/explicit knowing'), while others may see leadership as drawing on the whole body (similar to Hansen et al., 2007, notion of aesthetic knowing). Sinclair (2005: 402) argues that 'leadership [...] has been constructed as an activity of brains without bodies' and it seems this is indeed how some of our groups view leadership. It might be noted here that some pictures included enhanced features such as a large heart, large eyes, and other exaggerated features. Future research using larger sample sizes could focus specifically on this point and place the results into a discussion around the mind-body split (e.g. Merleau-Ponty, 1945).

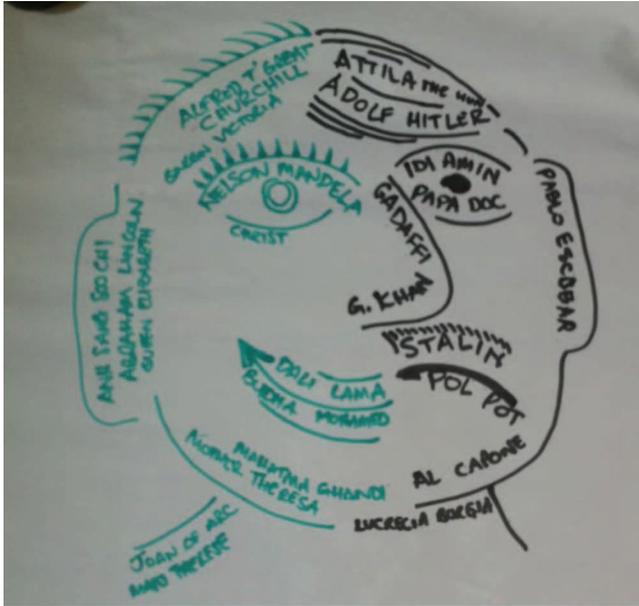


Figure 3. Drawing depicting a head only.

An interesting discussion for leader and leadership development would be whether groups consider the brain as sufficient for a leader or if they consider other aspects as (equally) important. An example of such aspects of leadership would be social skills (Riggio and Reichard, 2008) or emotions which might vary in terms of their effectiveness, depending on the context the leader operates in (Lindebaum, 2010). It is plausible to expect leaders and followers to differ with respect to the brain (in terms of intelligence) versus social skill as they also differ in what they consider an important outcome of leadership (performance which may be more related to brain versus positive attitudes which may be more holistic, cf. Schyns and Wolfram, 2008). A discussion around these aspects of leadership would be useful to expose participants to a multi-dimensional view in leadership development.

Metaphors and symbols

A substantial minority of groups drew metaphors instead of people. Again, this is a result we would not have expected when starting to work with the drawing exercise. However, given that many of our groups consisted of non-native speakers, this result might, a posteriori, not be surprising. Non-native speakers may struggle to find language specific enough to express their thoughts (Crilly et al., 2006; Jepson, 2009). Therefore, where language is not available to express nuances, metaphors can be very useful. This notion might be supported by the heavy use of symbols in the drawings, even when people were depicted. This indicates that using drawings as a starting point for leadership development might be particularly useful in intercultural groups. However, one has to keep in mind that metaphors may not interculturally translate and that they might, therefore, still need explanation using language. Nevertheless, if the rational approach to transformational learning is adopted, then rational discourse is an important early step, which will facilitate the sharing of meaning and may provide additional learning connected to culture.

Followers

In the majority of drawings followers were absent. While 40% of the drawings contain an image of one or several followers, only a small number of drawings showed followers equal in size or position to their leaders. Thus the generalized implicit followership theory from our drawings would appear to be 'think follower think unimportant'. This confirms the dominant logic of western representations of leadership, which puts leaders' characteristics and behaviours at the centre of most leadership theories (e.g. charismatic or transformational leadership). For leadership development the question that arises goes beyond the question of leader characteristics. Assumptions can be surfaced about the role that followers play and the relationship between leaders and followers in a specific context. Therefore, the drawing exercise tells us something about how leaders are viewed but also about how leader-follower relationships are viewed. This information can be used as a starting point for leader and leadership development. Questions that guide this process could be: If this is the way we view leaders, is this also the way we *want* to view leaders here? Importantly, questions about followers or their absence could be raised: Who is it that enables a leader to be successful? and ultimately: Who or what is leadership for? Similar questions relating to relationships could be posed: If this is the way we view leader-follower relationships, is this also the way we *want* to view leader-follower relationship here?

Conclusion

The question we aimed to shed light on in this article is: What can be learned for leadership development by critically examining the images leaders and followers hold about leadership? We argued that (a) leadership development practices need to include leader and follower implicit leadership theories, (b) leadership development practices need to become more contextually situated, and (c) the drawing exercise presented here is a good starting point for leadership development. Using the results of the drawing exercise we illustrated how, based on this method, leadership development can overcome some of the potential barriers to traditional learning methods. Ultimately, every group will be different in terms of what they consider leadership to be and the degree to which they agree/disagree about leadership (development). This makes our exercise uniquely useful to develop leadership and leaders on the basis of the people involved in each specific case of leader-follower interactions.

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Note

1. This drawing emerged after the scandal surrounding John Terry which led to him being stripped of the captaincy of the English football team. It is noticeable that events like that influence the drawing exercise from time to time.

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