Social Constructionist Perspective of the Leadership in Serbia

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Over the past decades, psychological approaches to leadership backed by quantitative research have emerged. However, these approaches often show very narrow perspectives and address only a few factors. As a result, over the past few years new approaches to leadership with broader perspectives and qualitative research methodologies have been developed, but only a few scholars have as yet managed to conduct studies within this framework. The main goal of this paper is to find out more about the social and cultural context in which leaders make sense of their leadership, and how the mixture of old and new socio-cultural influences affects them. Discursive leadership, with its social and cultural focus, emerged as the appropriate model for this study. Our findings reveal the important role of communication in leadership, identify two major forces that influence Serbian managers' leadership and show their willingness to accept new values and standards in making sense of their leadership. The value of this study is its contribution to a new, broader and more meaningful way of the approach to leadership, as well as its influence on scholars, leadership experts and practitioners, primarily in non-Western and post-transitional environments. It also gives recommendations to scholars to conduct social constructionist leadership research, so that in the near future a true balance between social constructionist and psychological approaches can be achieved.

Keywords: *Discourse, Discursive Leadership, Social Constructionism, Communication, Power.*

Introduction

Over the past five decades we have witnessed a growth in the body of literature on psychological approaches to leadership and a number of other organizationally important variables and a growing body of quantitative research (Fairhurst, 2007, 2009; Hall, 2011; Tourish & Barge, 2010). However, these approaches often come with very narrow perspectives and views that usually address only a few quantitatively measurable factors and variables, such as the characteristics of leader's and followers (Fairhurst, 2007; Tourish & Barge, 2010). As a result of these restricted quantitative factors, in the past few years, a great deal of effort has been invested in the development of approaches to leadership with broader perspectives that incorporate mostly qualitative research methodologies. One interesting approach is that of Fairhurst (2007), called "discursive leadership", which was developed within the framework of social constructionist approaches to leadership (see Fairhurst, 2007, 2009; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). As with other social constructionist approaches, discursive leadership is a relational approach (Uhl-Bien, 2006) that uses "the linguistic turn in the social and the organizational sciences" as its starting point (Fairhurst, 2009, 1607). However, in spite of the satisfying development of the theory, few scholars have as yet dared to conduct studies within its framework.

This paper presents a qualitative analysis of the discourse of Serbian managers. Discursive leadership is used as the theoretical framework, mainly because of the freedom it gives in studying and researching leadership. The main goal of the study is to find out more about the social and cultural settings in which Serbian managers make sense of their leadership and the major influences that affect their environment. The fact that Serbia is a country in development, explains the ongoing chaos in its leadership arena. The cultural and historical setting has always been somewhat distinctive in Serbia and other Balkan countries. The constant wars and unrest have made cultural and social relations in Serbia very vulnerable and unstable. In this setting, politics have an excessive influence on the leadership process and business environment. Questions emerge as to whether political and business leadership can be truly separated in Serbia and whether Serbian managers have enough power. However, the progress made in the past few years cannot be ignored. This progress illuminates the willingness of most Serbian managers to adjust their values and accept new cultural standards coming from the developed countries to a certain extent and emphasizes the need to investigate how this mixture of old and new socio-cultural influences affects the sensemaking of leaders. That is where discursive leadership with its social and cultural lens (Fairhurst, 2009) comes into play as the appropriate model for this study.

The main goal of this paper, regarding its contribution to science, is not to make a revolution in the field, nor to make an extreme influence on the science all over the world, but to induce scientists all over the world, most importantly in non-western environments, to at least consider engaging in new approaches of leadership research, specifically social constructionism or any other qualitative, non-limiting leadership research.

Although this paper is based on the conditions in Serbia, the facts regarding this country, which we naturally selected

(since it is our home country), are important only to the extent to which they provide solid foundation for the course of the research and explaining the results. What should be truly emphasized is the approach to leadership and leadership research used in the study. Serbia is only intended to be an example country and we would love to see many similar studies in the future in other countries as well. Thus, we would like to draw our readers' attention to focus on the research style, theoretical and empirical approach, methodology, and not on the settings in which the study was conducted.

Social Constructionism and Leadership as a Co-constructed Meaning-making Phenomenon

Instead of seeing leadership as being comprised of quantitative and measurable behaviors and personal characteristics (Grint, 2001), constructionist scholars observe leadership as "co-constructed, a product of socio-historical and collective meaning-making" (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, 172). At the heart of social constructionism lies the need to understand how variables like leadership, communications, identity, power, situations, processes, etc. are constructed through social processes, and how they work. We need to understand the complex constructions of leadership processes, and that is what social constructionism allows us to do, in order to see how they function and to determine what has to be done to improve them. According to Grint & Jackson (2010), if we could understand how leadership worked with the help of social constructionism, then we could not only critique the status quo, but also construct alternatives that are better, more equitable and efficient and which we believe should dominate over those leadership schemas of today that we find unacceptable. Carroll and Levy (2010, 227) argue that besides understanding leadership and its development, social constructionism has the power "to inform, refreshen, and challenge practice".

Social constructionist approaches generally have two important and connected characteristics. They are not leader-centric which means that their focus is not on the leader's personal characteristics, as it is in psychological approaches to leadership. Instead, social constructionism also recognizes followers as meaning-makers of processes in organizations (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Some scholars even go as far as arguing that followers are what gives leadership intrinsic value (Shamir *et al.,* 2007). It is well known that leaders and followers often have different perceptions of the narrative constructs of organizational activities and what they should do about them (Tourish, 2008). Generally, the social constructionist approaches to leadership are not focused on identifying the attributes of the individual, whether they are leaders, followers or other leadership participants (Uhl Bien, 2006), as leadership psychology is. Their second characteristic is that their focus is on leadership as a co-constructed reality, especially "the processes and outcomes of interaction between and among social actors" (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, 175). Communicative practices such as talk, discourse, etc. which are "occasioned by the context are integral to the processes by which the social construction of leadership is brought about" (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, 175). Reality in social constructionism is constructed through the activities of individuals, or as Pearce (1995, 89) stated "reality is both revealed and concealed, created and destroyed by our activities". Human actions create reality and are created by this reality at the same time (Chen, 2008). Arguing on the basis of (Hacking, 1999; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010) say that in social constructionism, taken-for-granted realities are the products of interactions between and among social agents.

To conclude on social constructionism, we cite Dennis Tourish and his critical "what," "why," and "how" questions which social constructionist perspectives should deal with: "What is power? Why should we tolerate it? How do we make sense of it? Why should followers obey leaders? Who says that some messages have more legitimacy than others? How does the exchange of information and ideas between leaders and followers shape our social world, for good or ill?" (Tourish & Barge, 2010, 325) and we would add one more question, which is crucial to us: what happens in terms of communication between successful leaders and followers that differentiates them from the unsuccessful ones?

Discourse and Discursive Leadership

As the starting point in our interpretation of discursive leadership, we need to explain a distinction between two concepts which are the foundations of discursive leadership, those being small d discourse and Big D discourse. Generally, discourse can be defined as "ways of seeing, thinking and speaking" (Cunliffe & Linstead, 2009, 6), "the use of words to exchange thoughts and ideas", "verbal interchange of ideas", "formal and orderly and usually extended expression of thought on a subject", "connected speech or writing", "a linguistic unit (as a conversation or a story) larger than a sentence", or as "a mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, or experience that is rooted in language and its concrete contexts (as history or institutions)" ("discourse," 2012). Focault (1972) sees discourse as an institutionalized way of thinking. The primary goal of small d discourse is the research of talk and text in social practices, specifically the details of the language and interaction processes, and its important aspects are the cultural characteristics and differences in these processes, while Big D Discourse deals with "the formation and articulation of ideas in a historically situated time" (Fairhurst, 2007, 6-7). For Focault, Big D Discourse is a "system of thought and a way of talking about a subject that together supplies the necessary linguistic resources for communicating actors" (Fairhurst, 2007, ix). Following this distinction, we can observe leaders and managers and other leadership participants as objects or subjects. Small d discourse can be observed "as a linguistic resource for users skillfully crafting and adapting to insert themselves in relationships and contexts", while regarding Big D discourse "as producing or constituting its users effectively rendering them as objects" (Carroll & Levy, 2010, 213). Both small d and Big D discourse constitute organizational discourse.

We might say that discursive leadership is a less radical social constructionist approach. This is because it acknowledges the existence, significance and contribution of psychological approaches to leadership by stating that leadership scholarship needs to be somewhere between the social constructionist and psychological approaches, in the

form of a dialogue between the two. These two approaches need to join forces to take leadership to a higher level. Leadership is a very complex phenomenon and one approach to it is not enough to explore all of its features and complexities (Fairhurst, 2007). Although discursive and psychological approaches both have leadership as their area of interest, they do not compete with each other. Psychological leadership focuses on a narrow area, mainly the psychological characteristics of individuals, while discursive leadership tries to understand and see the whole picture of socially constructed leadership, or to put it more simply it has a much wider scope in its study of leadership. We argue that understanding leadership from multiple perspectives is a must nowadays for successful leadership scholars and also successful leaders. According to Tourish (2008), "society and business have suffered from poor leadership, bad leadership, narcissistic leadership, and above all, too powerful leadership" in the past and Fairhurst's (2007) discursive leadership offers an alternative approach to leadership, that is able to deal with this problem. This is mainly because discursive leadership tends to understand (Chen, 2008). For our research, its most important characteristic is that it sees culture and history as part of the construction of leadership. Discursive leadership has a lens that is social and cultural at its core. Also, it is centered on the communication that happens in leadership processes, which means that communication is not just seen as a simple resource for leadership (Fairhurst, 2007). In his research in Jamaica, using discursive leadership as a framework, Hall (2011) proved that there are important connections between leadership, culture and communications. This is very significant for us, because Serbian national culture, history and communicative practices have many unique characteristics in terms of business and leadership and as a developing country it has yet to find its place in the business and leadership arena. (Blunt & Jones, 1997) stated that national cultural discourses have a great influence on the way in which leaders create their "leadership" in developing countries. As both culture and leadership are constructed through discourses, we need to understand why some discourses dominate over others in constructing leadership processes in order to create processes that are more acceptable for humanity.

The Serbian Environment
National Culture

To date, the best known and most analyzed study of national culture is that of Hofstede (1980), who has defined four primary dimensions for the distinction of national cultures, and thus organizational cultures: individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity. The national culture of our country is characterized by high Power Distance – index 77 (on a scale of 1 to 100), high Collectivism – index 26 (on a scale of 1 – complete collectivism – to 100 – complete individualism), low Uncertainty Tolerance – index 90 (on a scale of 1 to 100) and, with regard to Masculinity, predominantly female values – index 22 (on a scale of 1 – fully "feminine" values, up to 100 – fully "masculine" values).

It is known that national culture affects the shaping of organizational culture through these dimensions.

Specifically, organizations that operate within a national culture characterized by high Power Distance tend towards centralization and formalization, an increased number of hierarchical levels and autocratic leadership styles. This implies a bureaucratic type of organizational culture based on respect for rules and procedures, as well as high dependence on the leaders of the organization. Something similar is true of other dimensions of national culture such as high collectivism and low tolerance of uncertainty. Specifically, national cultures with a significant dimension of collectivism are characterized by an organizational culture in which individuals are dependent on their leaders, of whom they expect protection and in return provide their full support and obedience. In an effort to provide more stability and predictability as a consequence of low tolerance for uncertainty, organizational behavior tends to formalize, defining roles and rules, so that the organizational culture takes on the characteristics of a bureaucratic culture i.e. a culture of roles, and the style of leadership has the dominant characteristic of authoritarianism. Most leaders in Serbia are focused primarily on the issue of command and control, while very few are focused on providing support and participation (Sapic *et al.,* 2009). Similar results occurred in one study of Serbian national culture, which confirmed the facts in the Hofstede study about high Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance, as well as low Individualism and Masculinity. What was unexpected was that these values were shown to be higher for managers than for other employees, with the exception of Masculinity (Mojic, 2003). This orientation comes, according to the author of the study, as a result of the unique position of Serbian managers in the process of transition. Another study indicated that 68,9 % of managers in Serbian companies use one of the two authoritative styles (benevolent and exploitative), and only 31,1 % exercise a consultative or participative leadership style (Janicijevic, 1998). As many as 78,1 % of managers perceive an authoritative style as being the most appropriate for Serbian companies. The high Power Distance in the Serbian national culture favors autocratic behavior over a democratic or participative leadership style (Sapic *et al.,* 2009). Leaders are expected to take responsibility and risk, and to decide independently (Rajic, 1995).

Transition in Serbia

The process of transition in former socialist countries, which were previously based on a planned economy and state ownership, has proved to be difficult and painful. Nevertheless, many countries in Central and Eastern Europe have become members of the European Union, and some have become candidates for membership. As it has turned out, transition has been implemented much faster and more efficiently in Central Europe (Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and the Baltic States) than in southern Europe, i.e. the Balkans (Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Macedonia, and especially Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia). When it comes to Serbia and transition it should be emphasized that, as a part of the former socialist Yugoslavia, Serbia was at the forefront in many aspects of social and economic development as compared to countries of the former Soviet bloc, particularly

in terms of its orientation towards a market economy (Hrustic, 2010). However, what befell Serbia during the breakup of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the last decade of the 20th century and later, contributed to a ten-year delay in starting the processes of transition and changes in terms of building a new economic and political system. Subjective causes have also contributed to this in the form of constant political infighting, delays in building and strengthening the institutions necessary for the transitional changes, disorientation in determining the economic and political priorities, lack of efficiency and determination, corruption and crime (Hrustic, 2010).

The transition from a socialist to a market economy in Serbia essentially began in 2001, the Serbian society has been undergoing significant changes in the last decade and in the economic sphere some improvement has been seen. However, the overall impression is that only the initial steps have been taken and the first step is always the hardest. Many transition processes have been initiated, not without opposition, but at least the willingness to change something has been expressed. Awareness of the need for a fundamental change of approach to economics and business is relatively slow in building and protectionism continues to dominate in these spheres. Control of the market has become regulated by law, a system of control and discipline in the spending of public money through subventions has been implemented and a reduction of customs duties on goods from EU countries has been carried out, with the ultimate goal of their complete abolishment. All this changes the perception of Serbian leaders, managers and employees about themselves and their role in the market (Milenkovic, 2010). Serbia, since it aspires to be a member of the EU and has above itself the European administration which oversees and assists in the processes of transition and changes, has cultural patterns and models that can and must be adapted through the process of integration, although it faces major opposition to changes in this sphere.

The processes of transition and modernization in organizations require that they contain elements of the new organizational (business) culture. The process of transition changes moral beliefs, which cannot remain at the medieval level. These processes bring with them new forms of behavior that were previously inconceivable in Serbia. In relation to countries where it was well-developed, we can say that the business culture in Serbia was neglected and very limited. Organizational culture represents the way employees and organizations see events in their surroundings and react to them. It is a relatively unknown concept in Serbia because people associate it with the presence of artistic and cultural events in their organizations (manifest culture), and it causes aversion in many. Organizational culture is directly dependent on the organizational environment. For a long time in Serbia, the social scene was ruled by the so-called anti-business culture but now, fortunately, business culture is becoming a way of life and a style of behavior. Business culture is a much-talked about topic (Grubic Nesic *et al.,* 2012) and the deeply rooted beliefs that business is something undesirable, dishonest and utterly unworthy are changing now. These beliefs are embedded in Serbian people because the Serbian socialist education system completely ignored the world of business and management. One of the key problems is the lack of strategic communication in interaction with key stakeholders (Pavlovic *et al.,* 2014). Further, in the past, people did not pay sufficient attention to leadership, and the importance of communication within it, but now that awareness is gradually building. As for the cultural context, the democracy or repressiveness of a particular culture affects interpersonal relationships. These relationships express the best forms of behavior, values and cultural systems that define the context in which business processes take place. For a culture of interpersonal relationships to function it is necessary to build trust (Gudic, 1998). Trust is based on universal principles: human dignity, freedom, participation, solidarity and subsidiarity, and is associated with the ethics of responsibility, the ethics of transition and the transition of ethics (Cavalle, 1997). It requires real leaders who can gather the best people and make the right decisions (Djordjevic, 2007; Grubic Nesic *et al.,* 2013).

Leadership in Serbia

In the last few years, we have seen an increasing tendency to critique leadership all over the world. By this, we refer to leadership practice as much as leadership teaching in schools, universities, etc. (Cunliffe, 2009; Cunliffe & Linstead, 2009; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Tourish, 2008). As our analysis will show, business leadership in Serbia is at a very low ebb, and we ask the question does it even exist or is leadership in Serbia the privilege only of political "leaders"? Many of the leaders/managers we interviewed think that business and political leadership in Serbia are not and cannot be separated in the current conditions. On the other hand, management and business schools are highly, maybe even overly represented, but the climate in them is generally not developed to a sufficient degree and their programs are not up to the task of motivating the development of future leaders. Leadership scholars or leadership programs in schools and universities are hardly worth mentioning as they barely exist. Only 2 books on leadership have been written in Serbia, covering only certain aspects of this extremely broad phenomenon and less than 40 journal articles with the word leadership in their title are to be found in the Serbian national citation index "SCIndeks" ("SCIndeks," 2012), most of them review articles of foreign approaches to leadership and maybe five of them actual research articles dealing with leadership in Serbia. Further, these articles are mostly poor in quality. Scholars in Serbia go as far as arguing that transformational leadership is the key and only possible instrument of successful management of organizational changes (Simic, 1998), while from social constructionist perspectives transformational and many other leadership approaches like trait, situationist, contingency, etc. are highly criticized, mostly because of their tendency to present leadership as being capable of practically anything. As a result of this thinking, future leaders may be led to believe that their possibilities far outreach the reality. They are also criticized for their characteristic of putting power and agency in the hands of a small number of individuals in high positions, as opposed to those of followers, whose role and importance is generally undervalued (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Tourish, 2008; Tourish & Barge, 2010). Transformational leadership also has the potential to

transform communications into an unacceptable one-way process which leads to domination by managers in high positions (Tourish & Pinnington, 2002). Under the influence of the transformational and similar approaches, there are all too many people in Serbia who are convinced that they can do everything, that they are of primary importance and are irreplaceable. Often, individuals who are recognized nationally as leaders of any kind are in some way linked or were linked in the past with criminal activities. We think that the main problem is that people, mainly scholars, are not bold enough, do not tend to ask the right questions and lack the courage to challenge the status quo – though they are strong on criticism, especially in Serbia. Tourish (2008) stated: "as Fairhurst's work (2007, 522) liberally attests, the area remains fraught with tension, ambiguity, uncertainty, and paradox: so much scholarly fire and fury, so little illumination". This is very disappointing, because scholars are those who should be at the forefront in the development of leadership (Konja, 2013).

Research Methodology

Sample and procedure: The research was conducted between March and May 2012 in the Serbian autonomous province of Vojvodina and in the capital of Serbia, Belgrade. As Serbian citizens, we used our acquaintances, friendships and connections in the business world to recruit managers for the research. Some of them were from the initial list of potential managers we personally knew, and these managers or other experts recommended the others as interviewees. We were very careful about the structure, expertise and relevance of the managers in the study, so not every recommendation was taken into consideration. A total of twenty managers were interviewed. 72 % of the contacted managers responded positively to our invitation to participate in the research, while the others claimed that they had no time or that it was against the policy of their companies.

There were also managers who did not respond at all to our correspondence. The intention was to cover a wide range of managers at different hierarchical levels, with the main focus on top management and a wide range of organizations. Among them were CEOs, project managers, HR managers and team leaders from small, medium and large manufacturing, service and public companies. Table 1 shows the breakdown of interviewed managers and their companies. To clarify, there were no distinctions made in this study between the terms "leader" and "manager".

Initially there was no intention of including Serbian political leaders in the study. However, the managers interviewed at the beginning of this research led us to realize that the political and business environment and leadership cannot be truly separated from one another in Serbia at the moment. Therefore, in order for this study to be more precise and meaningful and to find out more about their point of view and perspective, two political leaders in very high positions were included in the study as an addition to the basic research. One of them was a highly placed political representative in the regional government and the second in a similar position in the local government of a major city in Vojvodina. All participants were Serbian citizens, so the interviews were all conducted in the Serbian language. The shortest interview lasted 25 minutes, while the longest was nearly 4 hours long, with 3 hours of effective recorded material. Interviews were conducted "by ear" depending on their flow, the communicativeness of the managers and their available time. The formal segments of the interviews were recorded on a dictaphone. However, as each interview was conducted inside the organization in question, impressions about the companies and their employees, the general atmosphere and informal discussions and communication with the managers were all taken in consideration in the analysis.

Table 1

Breakdown of the interviewed managers

Nr.	Company size	Activity type	Company ownership	Management level	Position	Gender	Initial list or recommendation
1	small	service	domestic	low	Manager	male	initial list
2	large	manufacture and service	domestic	top	CEO	male	recommendation
3	very large	manufacture and service	major foreign	middle	Project and division manager	male	recommendation
4	very large	manufacture	major domestic	top	Factory manager	male	recommendation
5	medium	service	domestic	top	CEO	female	recommendation
6	medium	service	domestic	top	CEO	male	recommendation
7	large	service	Public (State owned)	top	Vice-president	male	initial list
8	small	service	domestic	top	CEO	male	initial list
9	medium	service	academic (owned by university)	top	CEO	male	initial list
10	large	service (investment)	major domestic	top	Personnel and general business manager	male	recommendation
11	medium	service	domestic	top	CEO	male	initial list
12	very large	bank	foreign	middle	Team leader	female	recommendation
13	very large	bank	foreign	middle	Team leader	female	initial list
14	very large	bank	foreign	middle	Team leader	female	recommendation
15	small	consulting	domestic	top	Partner	female	initial list
16	very large	bank	foreign	top	HR manager	male	recommendation
17	medium	service	domestic	top	CEO	male	initial list
18	small	service	domestic	top	CEO	male	recommendation
19	medium	service	domestic	top	CEO	male	recommendation
20	very large	manufacture	foreign	middle	Project manager	male	recommendation

Instrument: In-depth qualitative interviews were used in this study. A semi-structured questionnaire was designed for this purpose in the Serbian language. As a reference, we used a questionnaire provided to us by Maurice L. Hall from Villanova University, which he used in a study (Hall, 2011) similar to ours, which he conducted in Jamaica, a country in development like Serbia. However, the questionnaire in this study differs significantly due to the specifics of our region, the slightly different aims of the study and the language used in the interviews. It is formed from 29 semi-structured, somewhat detailed questions, which were designed in such a way as to allow a certain level of freedom in the interviews. The intention was to motivate the participants to express their opinions and positions on the topic. General information, the personal characteristics of managers, company information, and information concerning the specific topic researched, were all covered by these questions.

A second, shorter questionnaire was designed for the interviews with the two political leaders that participated in this study. Questions that were about a specific company were excluded from this questionnaire. We were mostly interested in finding out the stances of political leaders on leadership and business culture in general in Serbia, and their interpretation of the separation (or possibilities for separation) of the political and business environment and leadership. Data processing method: All interviews were recorded on a digital dictaphone. Notes on parts that we considered important were also taken during and after the interviews. Impressions about the atmosphere and informal talk and discourse were also noted. Later, the recordings were listened over a few times and all transformed into transcripts. Parts that were considered unusable were not included in the transcripts. The transformation resulted in nearly 100 pages of pure transcript, with an additional 30 pages of notes and 35 pages of information about the companies received from the managers. As the participants were all citizens of Serbia and the interviews were in the Serbian language, only the significant parts of the transcripts that are included in this paper were directly translated into the English language. The analyses in this paper are based on qualitative techniques of discourse analysis and all three authors of this paper analyzed all materials and documents from the research at least twice. A draft work with initial analyses was sent to those managers we considered appropriate and competent to carry out a final check and approval.

Research questions: During this study, we were driven by two main research questions. However, as the research went on, the research questions were revised, and a third research question was added:

• RQ1: What do the discourses of the managers who participated in the study reveal about the most important influences on the business environment in Serbia?

• RQ2: How do Serbian managers make sense of their leadership?

• RQ3: Does business leadership that is fully separated from political leadership exist in Serbia?

Findings and Discussion
The Influence of Foreign Business Cultures on Serbian Leadership

As we mentioned before, Serbia is a country impacted by many and various influences. In the past it has been a colony of a variety of empires. Today, companies from all over the world are present in Serbia. What we tried to find out in our interviews was, is the Serbian business environment a colony of some of the major nations that invest in this country? The interviewed managers were asked to explain the major influences. However, this will comprise only a small part of the analysis. The focus will be more on the managers' general discourse and their communication styles, which we tried to compare with general patterns of foreign business cultures. The interviews revealed a somewhat chaotic situation of cultural influences. One influential political leader made an interesting observation about the main influences:

"European Union in the system, Russia in people's heads."

The general assumption is that these two major forces are indeed the main influences, so the analysis will focus on them. However, the picture is not that black and white. Many domestic influences prevent the total modernization of the business culture in the direction of developed cultures. Primarily, resistance to change, people's habits and cultural hangovers from earlier times such as communism, socialism and the disintegration of Yugoslavia. These times have left many unresolved issues that are still major obstacles to strong leadership and the development of the business culture. One manager defined this problem very clearly:

"In my opinion, a major problem is that in this country people have not been working or doing anything for twenty years and some threads have been lost here, i.e. people have lost their way… As in everything, tradition is important here, people have lost their working habits, and much of their skills and competence are lost, starting from simple workers in plants, all the way to engineers and managers… they have not had the opportunity to educate themselves, they have had no work to do… so everything is at a very low ebb … old habits have persisted at all levels, no-one has given up that privilege and it is a major problem that puts the brakes on everything… people (employees) need to learn order, work, discipline and responsibility… Even if someone from outside tries to do something good here, we do not let him…"

Nevertheless, why is tradition so important and how does it influence business development in Serbia? Most Serbian people are very religious and they do not change their values and beliefs easily. New generations are needed to implement changes and new ways of doing things in business. As one of the political leaders in this research noted, a minimum of forty years need to pass, i.e. a complete generation turnover has to occur for things (values, beliefs etc.) to change completely. A strong resistance to change, resistance to improvements, to new technology, as well as towards new business praxis prevails among the people in Serbia. Oreg (2003, 680) identified six sources of resistance that are related to an individual's personality: "reluctance to lose control, cognitive rigidity, lack of psychological resilience, intolerance to the adjustment period involved in

change, preference for low levels of stimulation and novelty, and reluctance to give up old habits". In this research, the last two sources got most support as major influencing factors in our country.

Therefore, our analysis led us to resistance to change as the major force hindering development and modernization. An important question that emerges is what are the roles of leaders and leadership in overcoming this tremendous obstacle? Many scholars have already emphasized the importance of strong leadership in overcoming resistance to change (Levay, 2010). Therefore, we will try to focus on questions that are even more important for us at this moment. What are the current role models for our leaders in dealing with this issue? Which developed environments and nations are influencing us currently? Which developed environment is the closest to our people? Which environment provides business models that Serbian people can accept without major adjustments? And, most importantly, the influence of which environment can lead us towards successful implementation of change? Who leads us and who should lead us? The interviews revealed somewhat confusing answers to these questions. While many of the managers interviewed consider that some of the major business forces do indeed have a significant influence on Serbia, others think that due to our specifics they cannot influence us at all. A CEO of a medium-sized domestic company who was very realistic about this topic made a very valuable contribution:

"Many of the developed business forces are present in Serbia now. However, it is very difficult to present a general picture. I think that something that certainly exists, as a reflection of our mentality, is a heritage of the old system in a great number of companies, public organizations and public institutions in the form of authoritarian relationships and demotivated employees that are hostile towards their organizations and the general environment… Successful business and leadership models are mostly present in foreign organizations that operate here, affiliations of foreign organizations and in a small number of domestic, mostly small and modern companies… However, I think that in spite of our distinctive mentality, successful business models from abroad are mostly applicable, it just requires a little effort and good will. For example, you have US Steel Serbia that was falling apart, then the Americans came and implemented strong leadership and new ways of working, the employees accepted it easily and they are now happy to work in a fully structured environment…"

As we moved further with our investigation, we realized that most of the managers thought that the countries of the European Union had the most influence on the way business is done in Serbia. There is a simple explanation for why that is so. Firstly, EU is the largest investor overall. The EU as an institution invests much in state institutions and public organizations, which gives them great control over what happens in them. In addition, organizations from the EU are the largest investors in our private business sector, so it is natural that they have the strongest influence.

That is one side of the story. As mentioned before, one political leader stated that the EU does indeed have the greatest influence on the system, but that is not entirely what is in the individual's minds. The sensemaking of many individuals is closer to the Russian nation and their models.

That is not difficult to understand considering the reliance of Serbia on the Russian people and the connections between the two nations in the past. Even today, as Serbia grows closer and closer to the EU and the integration process is largely expected to continue in the future, the impression is that a large part of the Serbian nation would rather accept Russian influence. However, there are many who are against it. The discourses of most of the managers revealed that the present connections between the two nations are largely politically fuelled. Now, with the election of a new Serbian president who is more orientated towards Russia, this influence will certainly increase. Nevertheless, are the Serbian people indeed willing to accept any of these influences? As one leader clearly said:

"As a nation, we have our own unique characteristics, as every nation has. But the point is that we really like to put some of our flavor in everything. Yes, you can implement various successful business models, but every once in a while, we will spice them up with our own spices… For every nation, it is very important that it make its own contributions…"

Another manager simply said:

"We have a specific situation in Serbia, where we apply the rules and business models of foreign companies in our own way… In places where foreign companies let us and our people be managers, it has all gone to hell. Why, I do not really know. We would have to go back to the preceding period to find out the reasons for the lack of a basic culture when it comes to work."

Another specific variation is not among foreign influences, but between regions. Not every part of Serbia is equally developed. In our research, we had examples of major differences between regions. You can make an interesting observation even on the street. If you are in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, or in some of the biggest cities, you will get caught up in traffic jams between five and six p.m., while as you go into the smaller cities there is a significant chance of getting caught in a traffic jam between two and three p.m., the time people go home from work. It is the simplest indicator that people in the capital and some other cities have adopted European and American working hours and probably many other habits and business models, while others are still far behind.

As one CEO noted, the most important thing is to find a balance between the varieties. A balance should be found primarily among different foreign and domestic influences. Taking the best from every culture and business model and creating a mix of influences that we can accept and implement could be the best basis for competitiveness. A balance should also be made between the regions.

Serbian Business Culture

As for the business culture in Serbia, most leaders interviewed here agree that it is very basic and at a very low ebb for various reasons: the historical influences of former rulers in this region (rulers, invaders, occupiers and colonizers), the habits and mentality of the people in our region, the remains of the inherited socio-economic system, our recent past, contemporary global trends, etc. One of the leaders interviewed, speaking about the impact on corporate culture and leadership in Serbia today, said:

"... The remains of the old system are still present, one person controls all the decisions, and they are usually made during long business lunches... Leaders often collaborate with politicians..."

A so-called partocracy is present, meaning that politics and politicians, especially in public enterprises and state-owned companies, are often directly involved in economics and business in Serbia, which is surely a hangover from the previous socio-economic system – socialism or, as it was known in the former Yugoslavia, socialist self-management. This leader further said that in many companies in Serbia decisions are made by one person who controls everything and is asked about everything, regardless of the company's formal organizational structure, which again points to the remnants of the former system and a high Power Distance culture, as defined by Hofstede (1980).

Another interviewed leader, from a company that was previously state-owned and is now foreign-owned, pointed out that our recent past has crucially influenced both the culture and leadership in Serbia. The complete lack of market and business ethics in the turbulent times of crisis and war in this region in the last decade of the twentieth century has formed and influenced the business culture and leadership. After the democratic changes at the beginning of this century, many foreign companies appeared on the Serbian business map through investments and privatization and this leader points out the following:

"We used to have an advantage over some European countries, primarily the former Soviet communist bloc countries, which are now our role models... The recent past brought us to the point where there were no business ethics at all... Everything was present here: from neo-liberal capitalism to feudalism... Some companies had rules that were forgotten a long time ago elsewhere – I mean the primitive (original) accumulation of capital... A new business culture was brought here by global companies with core businesses, although there are others, mostly small ones, where the business culture is directly dictated by or reflects the owner and his culture... The concept of leadership is devalued..."

This leader sees today's business culture in Serbia as a mix of historical influences and the contemporary impact of globalization, which has resulted in a very low level of corporate culture, with the exception of large foreign-owned companies present in our market, and a devaluation of the concept of business leadership, particularly through the impact and influence of political leadership in the economy.

One leader of a local company, which is a partner of a large multinational company in Serbia, has a very interesting perspective on this topic:

"We live a communist life in capitalism, others are blamed for everything... commercial culture is not a Serbian characteristic, the attitude towards it is, let's put it this way, casual ... Many are trying to implement it but the results are modest. The knowledge needed to establish a corporate culture must be imported... Without business culture, there is no strategy... and leaders need to communicate it and employees have to accept it...

Considering leadership and leaders, he says:

"Leadership in Serbia exists and is mostly based on instinct... in terms of their genetic code... In Serbia today, we cannot educate leaders... Our education is primarily based on the U.S. model of leadership that even in Western Europe is not accepted in its original form... Leadership cannot be learned from books..."

As you can see, this leader believes that the business culture in Serbia today is at a very low level, that we have the wrong attitude towards it and that as a nation we still live, in our minds, under communism (socialism). As for leaders and leadership, they exist, but these are mostly leaders with genetic predispositions who are not educated and trained, and we have yet to find a way to create leaders in Serbia today. One leader from a large company of strategic importance, which was privatized a few years ago and is now foreign-owned indicates that the business culture before the outbreak of wars and crises in the region was respectable and then it all fell apart. Today, in certain companies the business culture is, in his opinion, at quite a high level, but generally it is nowhere near the desired standard. Regarding the changes new owners have brought, this leader says:

"The new owner has brought a change in applied business... a lot of their business models have been implemented, but adapted to our circumstances... There is no shame in learning from the best, but this new knowledge should be adjusted and adapted... for example, lean management."

Another leader, from an educational institution, claimed that in Serbia the business leadership concept is unknown and that not enough attention has been paid to it. About leadership and leaders, he points out:

"A leader does not have to be someone with the aura of a rock star, he must be a role model... He's not Superman, but sets standards in all aspects of his work ... In Serbia, it is not like that because of the negative selection system... a large number of inappropriate people are in key positions where they have come through kinship, friendship and political ties."

As can be concluded from the above, leadership is a depreciated and devalued concept in Serbia. Becoming a leader is not based on performance and competence, but on the basis of kinship and political party connections, through a system of negative selection, political conformity, etc. Corporate culture is generally at a low level, with some exceptions, mostly in foreign-owned companies operating in Serbia, and the problem of the whole nation is that the past system, socialism, is still dominant in the minds of the majority. Here we need to quote one leader from a foreign company doing business in Serbia, talking about the business culture in a way which is quite contrary to the opinion of the others. Speaking about corporate culture, this leader says:

"Corporate culture is at a very low ebb, foreign companies came to make a quick profit, not to make an impression on customers and employees... We who were born and raised here can create a more adequate business culture for our region than someone from abroad... I haven't noticed that they (managers who were brought in from abroad to lead our company in Serbia) have a higher level of business culture than me."

This is a very interesting response that indicates that not every country (or company from a certain country) is in a better situation than here by default, and things can never be regarded one-sidedly or in a black-and-white sense and then used to make generalized conclusions.

Political vs. Business Leadership

As mentioned before, politics have an excessive influence on the business environment in Serbia. Many of the managers interviewed are concerned as to whether business leadership truly exists or whether it is political leaders that make all the decisions and managers act only as their executors. Do managers have enough power? The main reasons for the lack of business leadership strength lie in the institutional framework, or in the deficiency of the institutional framework for business leadership. One of the interviewed managers shared with us his three-component theory for the lack of leadership:

"Firstly, I think that education and knowledge itself isn't appreciated enough by our (homegrown) managers and that our approach to leadership is way too authoritarian... Secondly, corruption, partocracy and nepotism exist everywhere, but in Serbia it is overly expressed as a part of everyday life and therefore the concept of leadership is not important enough and is not appreciated as it should be... Thirdly, moral values are not generally considered as being part of the leader's role and are even considered unwelcome in some situations..."

If we accept this theory, we can say that all three problems have their roots in the institutional framework. Dealing with the problem of education of managers, partocracy and corruption are the main tasks of the government and the implementation of moral values in business are the main tasks of society as a whole. Almost all managers explicitly or implicitly pointed to the problem of the excessive power of the political leadership and partocracy at the expense of business leadership. However, guided by the thought that every story has at least two sides and that it would not be right not to ask people from political life for their opinions, we decided to interview two high-ranking political leaders. What is interesting is that the analysis of their discourse revealed much the same results as the discourses of the business managers. Although their perspectives and views of the problem are slightly different to the perspectives of business leaders, the overall impression is the same. One of the political interpretations of the problems is:

"The problems of business and political leadership, or should we say the separation of these terms were solved a long time ago in developed countries. People in those countries are aware that the state has to be dominant in some situations. However, in other situations, the state consciously allows business to dominate because it is appropriate for further development... Here in Serbia that does not exist. Here there is politics, and that's it! Are there people who can take over and change that? Yes, there are... Nevertheless, my private theory is that they will only come to the fore in about 18 years from now, when a complete generation change occurs... But first ... we need to deal with the lack of an elementary working culture that we have as the legacy of the preceding period... Another problem is that today's leaders are recruiting young potential leaders to be their own "robots" and the same story [repeats] over and over again..."

Deep analysis of the two previous discourses gives the same results. The only difference is that the political interpretation is shallower, focusing only on the general problem, without going into details, while the managerial interpretation goes deeper and focuses more on the consequences of the general problem of excessively powerful political leadership.

The Role of Communication

As for business communication and its role in modern business, most leaders interviewed agree that it is of strategic importance and is one of the cornerstones of success in contemporary organizations throughout the world and also in Serbia. Without communication there would be no business, says one of the leaders. Also, most of these leaders agree that today in Serbia there is a lack of effective business communication and they see this as one of the key reasons for the lack of strong business leadership and business leaders. One of the leaders interviewed said it nicely in one short sentence:

"Effective communication is the foundation of leadership."

As we have already noted, a leader is a person who gathers people together around a goal and through effective communication motivates and encourages them to achieve this goal. One of the leaders interviewed said the following about communication:

"Effective communication is very important at all levels, both formal and informal communication ... The ideal communication is constant communication..."

Another leader interviewed has the same approach and emphasized the following:

"Communication is a very important part in the functioning of an organization... There is never enough communication and it is never effective enough; also, there is no ideal (optimal) communication..."

Many of the leaders we interviewed emphasized the importance of internal communication, i.e. regular meetings: meetings every Monday before business hours, daily, weekly and monthly meetings, etc. One of the leaders put forward a very interesting point, that the secret of successful and effective communication is the mix of formal, informal, and online communication while another leader, from an educational institution, stressed the importance of electronic communication in their organization. A few leaders insisted on some aspects of successful and effective communication such as brainstorming, where followers are encouraged not to hesitate to express their ideas and thoughts because, as emphasized by one of the leaders, there are no stupid ideas and stupid questions.

As for changes in the practice of business communication in organizations going through transition, there was one very indicative answer by a leader from a company that has moved from state ownership to private ownership by foreign investors, who in an interview highlighted the following:

"Communication is much better than before, meetings are held once or twice a month ... every employee can get answers from the CEO through the PR department or through the mailbox..."

Another leader, also from a privatized state-owned company now under foreign ownership, responded on this subject:

"Communication is primary in our business, but its effectiveness is at a very low level... it is the essence of business and it should be at a high level but it is not... there is much room for improvement... the problem is that there are many hierarchical levels, the chain of communication is long and a lot of information is lost along the way..."

As one can see, it is not possible to generalize the situation in a way that suggests that in privatized (mainly foreign) companies everything works perfectly, while in domestic companies it does not. These two examples clearly indicate that it is not enough just to bring in money – also needed are a business culture, knowledge, experience, and business models that can affect the company to change, transform etc. This is also linked to effective communication, and further with leadership and the leadership culture, which is the primary objective of this paper.

At the end of this analysis of communication and its role, we have selected a leader from a local privately-owned company who has a completely opposite view to all the other leaders we interviewed, so we will present his view in its entirety as a very good illustration of the current situation in Serbian business:

"All procedures are prescribed: imagine that you have a picture on the wall and it is in a picture frame... within the frame employees have all the power... if they need to move outside the frame, then they must ask their supervisor... anything within the frame means that they did not learn their procedures and are unnecessarily burdening their supervisor and wasting their time... those are people who are not willing to accept responsibility for their actions and they ask their supervisors about every little problem... They should only talk to their supervisor if they have got involved in some negotiations and they think it would be useful to discuss the matter with the CEO... that exceeds the frame of the image..."

This answer for us was shocking in the sense that it was about stifling communication – people were not encouraged but instead discouraged to communicate. The only positive thing this leader said was that employees send weekly reports, but there is no feedback from their supervisors and no two-way communication. This is the opposite of everything we have heard from other leaders, and we believe that this is the exception that proves the rule that effective communication is of prime importance and, one might even say, the key to success in business today.

Communication Leadership Strategies with Perspective

In our previous analysis, we felt the need to emphasize some of the major problems facing leadership and business development in Serbia. However, we also want to show that the picture is not quite as bleak as it may seem and that some progress towards better leadership in Serbia, especially in communication, has already been made. We have observed indicators of modern and successful leadership in some managers. These managers are in the minority, but it is a good start and hopefully other managers will follow their path. We selected two successful leaders, whose strategies will be analyzed here in brief and we propose these strategies as a form of model for leaders in Serbia in moving them towards successful leadership. The focus will be on

communications and corporate culture, as this is the weak point of many Serbian leaders.

Strategy of a male CEO in a medium-sized domestic service company: The company in which this CEO works is a large marketing and PR agency in Serbia with a very good reputation, part of a larger group that operates in the Balkans. Their major clients are mainly large foreign companies. Their activities include promotion, representation, introducing new products to the market, market analysis, merchandizing, etc. The leadership foundations of this CEO can be found in his statement:

"…Regarding the corporate culture that as a manager I and the whole company should embody… I am very careful about that and I am trying to invest as much in it as possible in the company, non-materially first and foremost. I am fully committed to the development of the corporate culture and to the effort of ensuring that all employees feel good in their workplace. I feel good when I know that everyone in this company feels good. This is something that we as a company and a family are recognized for in the region. When I say family, it is with good reason. We are all friends, like a big family, both in and outside the company. We have all sorts of events not related to work for bonding… This is very important to me, both as a manager and personally!"

Regarding his communication strategy, he says: "Communication is the main key in our organization... In addition, the availability of information to all employees is very important. The main task that I give myself every day is to properly communicate the vision, mission, strategies and other important information throughout the entire company. I often even share information that is not of primary importance to the employees and not necessary for them to do their jobs, because I think that they should know what is going on outside of their jobs in the company and with the company. They should not be kept in the dark in order for them to be motivated and feel confident about their jobs and the company… Communication is something you simply need to feel and it needs to be ongoing, in every possible way… There is no bad communication; every communication can have a purpose if you know how to use it properly…"

Since this manager has a very clear discourse, it is not hard to analyze his strategy. Three of the most important parts of his strategy were identified. Firstly, building a corporate culture that emphasizes friendly relations between employees and their wellbeing. Secondly, the importance of communication and information sharing at all levels. Thirdly, the personal involvement with and care of this manager for employees and the company, not just his "managerial" involvement.

However, an important question emerged after the interview with this manager: does he in fact put his strategies into practice or was he just big on words in the interview? Fortunately we knew some employees in this company, who confirmed and even added their own positive comments about this leader. The overall impression of the company and the climate in it that we had the opportunity to see and feel also fully confirmed the positive assessment. As Iedema (2007) emphasized, most constructionist leadership studies are one-dimensional, focusing only on the language. As recent research is moving towards multidimensionality, including the use of indicators like clothing and technology

in leadership research (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010), we also tried to go a little beyond language and incorporate a few other factors in forming our impressions and in the analyses in this study.

Strategy of a young female Team Leader in a large foreign international bank: The bank in which this team leader works is part of a very large international banking group that operates mostly in Europe but also in the USA and in Africa. Their headquarters are in one of the European Union countries. Their portfolio is comprised of commercial banking, investment banking, insurance, reinsurance, leasing, broker services, asset management, capital management, real estate, and so on. This leader works in the group's commercial bank in Serbia, in the debt collection division. She bases her leadership discourse on clear foundations:

"…I always try to create and develop a proper relationship on a friendly basis with my coworkers and subordinates. Not overly friendly, I emphasize this, because they could take advantage of the relationship if I was too friendly. Every human is very different in their own way, so high-quality communication that you know how to manage, use and tailor to the people that you communicate with and close relationships with coworkers are at the core in business, especially mine… indeed, I base my entire strategy on communication… however, everything needs to have its limits…"

In line with the direction of this study, one part in particular stood out from the previous discourse during the analysis: "I base my entire strategy on communication". Why is this so important? As mentioned earlier, communication is the foundation and most important ingredient of successful leadership and its importance is emphasized in social constructionist and discursive approaches to leadership (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). According to Fairhurst (2007), constructionist approaches are able to provide the necessary instruments to manage the endless variety and details of communication. According to (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010) language, from the social constructionist perspective, constitutes reality. Communication "is a medium by which the negotiation and construction of meaning takes place" (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010, 174). Following Fairhurst's (2007) work, Tourish (2008) states that "attention must be paid to the communicative processes that characterize leader-follower relations". Attention to these communication processes can reinforce the development of participative models of leadership (Tourish, 2008, 525) and emphasize the importance of followers in designing organizational systems and the necessity for limitation of the leader's power in organizations (Tourish & Robson, 2006).

Conclusion: Leadership in Serbia – The Verdict

In our previous analysis, we emphasized some of the major problems regarding leadership, business and business culture in Serbia. We have perhaps been overly critical, but it is for good reason. We had the need to point to some of the major problems facing leadership and business development. We hope that this paper will "wake up" some of those that could bring change for the better. We have also shown that the picture is not quite that bleak and that some

progress towards better leadership, especially communication, has already been made in Serbia. As many social constructionist scholars have emphasized, communication has a central role in leadership (Fairhurst, 2007; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Tourish & Barge, 2010; Tourish & Robson, 2006). Scholars in Serbia can play a critical role in ensuring that all managers in Serbia realize the important role of strong leadership and communication within that.

Serbia is a country subject to many different influences: historical, since it has been ruled by many different empires and modern, since companies from all over the world are today present in Serbia, the country is moving closer to the EU and the integration process is expected to go ahead in the next few years; despite that, our impression is that for religious and historical reasons a large part of the Serbian nation would rather accept Russian influence. Today's business culture in Serbia has come about from a combination of historical influences and the contemporary impact of globalization, resulting in low levels of corporate culture, with the exception of large foreign-owned companies present in our market, and a devaluation of the concept of business leadership particularly through the influence of political leadership in the economy. In addition, in many companies in Serbia decisions are made by one person who controls everything and who has to be asked about everything, regardless of the company's formal organizational structure, which again points to the remnants of the former system and a high Power Distance culture. Another characteristic variation in Serbia is not between different foreign influences but between regions, as not every part of Serbia is equally developed. Furthermore, there is a very strong resistance to change, towards improvements and to new technology, as well as towards new business praxis, because of the habits and cultural hangovers from earlier socio-political systems among the people of Serbia. Strong leadership, which is unfortunately lacking in Serbia, is extremely important in managing and breaking down employee resistance to change (Levay, 2010).

Another problem when considering business leadership in Serbia is the excessive power of the political leadership and the partocracy and its strong and decisive influence on business leadership. What is interesting is that the analysis of the discourses of political leaders revealed very much the same results as the discourses of business managers, although their perspectives on the problems were slightly different from those of business leaders. The best indicator of strong ties between these leaderships is that the political and business leaders interviewed in this study expressed similar overall views. The only difference was that the political interpretation was shallower, focusing only on the general problem, without going into details, while the managerial interpretation went deeper and focused more on the consequences of the general problem of excessively powerful political leadership.

Well, we can now give answers to our research questions. We will try to make the answers as simple as possible. However, as our analysis showed, nothing is that simple. First of all, the study revealed of what we were afraid of: the business environment in Serbia is by far not sufficiently developed and various influences have significant impact on it (history, culture, different foreign

influences, etc.). Managers making sense of their leadership in these conditions often get lost in their effort to fulfill various influences and political requirements. They do not have their unique and effective style; they are led by many wrong influences. Maybe the most important in current conditions is the verdict that leadership, in its true and pure form, not involving political elements, does not really exist; at least it is not widespread and that is a truly disappointing fact.

Change is inevitable: people (employees) need to learn order, work, discipline and responsibility. They need to improve their business culture, their communication skills and build a strong leadership style. New generations need to implement change and new ways of doing things in business, and as a nation we need to start today with the development of the next generation of leaders and followers in our country. The most important question we might ask is, the influence of which environment can lead us towards successful implementation of these changes? As one CEO noted, the most important thing is to find a balance between the varieties. A balance should be struck primarily between different foreign and domestic influences. Taking the best from every culture and business model and creating a blend of all these influences and implementing it could prove to be the best basis for competitiveness.

The true value of this study is in contributing to a new, broader and more meaningful way of thinking about leadership. We hope that this paper will "wake up" at least a few scholars, leadership experts and practitioners, primarily in non-Western environments. We have tried to follow in the footsteps of modern social constructionist scholars such as Fairhurst, Grant, Tourish, Barge, Hall, and many others and applied their theories in our study. We also recommend to other scholars that they apply themselves to social constructionist leadership research so that in the near future a true balance between social constructionist and psychological approaches can be achieved. Ultimately, that is what discursive leadership is all about (Fairhurst, 2007).

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