

Discourse and Intersectionality Over Time in Leadership Composition

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Abstract

Using British Airways (BA) PLC as the case study, I undertake a critical discourse analysis of the lack of diversity in top management teams. Organization leadership is important for several reasons including its role in organization performance and success. As operating environments become progressively complex, understanding who the leaders are, and how that leadership composition comes about, is critical. Despite globalization and increased access to diverse ways of thinking, ultimate authority resides in the top management teams whose configuration remains homogenous. I explore how the discourse of leadership precludes greater diversity in the composition of the highest levels of management. Results highlight three key factors that affect the discourse of leadership. They are history, the organization intersectionality experience, and influence from the external operating environment.

June 13th, 2023

Dedication

To Karl, Kyle and Kaeli-Ann, you are my inspiration, and have my admiration and unconditional love for always.

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“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

Hebrews 11:1, (King James Version)

The PhD journey is a marathon, NOT a sprint. Sage words shared in the early days of my doctoral classes. A long journey made possible first through Faith, then by the unwavering support of more people than I can count. All glory, praise and honour belong first to God, my Lord and Saviour. In bringing me to this journey, I leaned heavily on his promises to see me through.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Class	<i>Class</i> used in this dissertation means <i>social class</i> . A description for people or groups that hold the same socio-economic status.
Colonialism	<i>Colonialism</i> is alleged to be a form of domination (Horvath, 1972). It is further described as a practice "...that involves the subjugation of one people to another and the political and economic control of a dependent territory..." (Ypi, 2013).
Gender	I recognize Rose (2010) in viewing <i>gender</i> (what it means "to be defined as a man or woman") as having been developed through the lens of history. Importantly, gender is seen as having been socially constructed.
Globalization	" <i>Globalization</i> is the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of people and countries, which is generally understood to include two interrelated elements: the opening of borders to the flow of goods, services, finance, people and ideas across international borders; and the changes in institutional and policy regimes at the international and national levels that facilitate or promote these flows" (WHO, 2019).
History	<i>History</i> is an account/knowledge of the past (Rose, 2010). The account is provided by various authors commissioned or privileged to provide a perspective or interpretation of events in an organization's past. According to Spector (2016, p. 4) it is "the output of a historian's work...a narrative set in the past and offering opportunity for critical perspective on the present".
Intersectionality	<i>Intersectionality</i> is used here to highlight marginalization of identities located within organization such that new avenues of marginalization are created (Crenshaw, 1989. 1991).
Intersectionality experience	<i>Intersectionality experience</i> used here means, ways in which employees are marginalized at the intersection of the identities they bear, and how this intersection has further marginalized them by ensuring their exclusion from advancing to TMT leadership.
Junctures	A process of analyzing organizations in which the focus lies not in the period of occurrence of events but rather in the <i>juncture</i> , (Mills, 2010). The idea behind a research 'juncture' allows the research focus to transcend chronological ordering and be studied where substantive events occur. In the context of this dissertation junctures exist where an event occurs that is considered impactful to the airline and how it operates.

Leadership	The task of defining leadership has been a matter of debate and research for decades and many definitions put forward. In my work, I concur with the idea that leadership is best defined in the context in which it is being used. In this dissertation, <i>Leadership</i> is a discourse (Spector, 2016).
Marginalization	<i>Marginalization</i> is the treatment of a person or group as less than or unimportant. Where they are prevented from accessing benefits ordinarily available. Marginalization is said to occur where “there are unequal power relationships between social groups” (Baah, Teitelman, and Riegel, 2019).
(the) Past	The <i>past</i> is a reference to specific event(s) which took place in previous year(s) and, becomes known as history. “The sheer bulk of the <i>past</i> precludes total history... “We can only judge the ‘accuracy’ of historians’ accounts vis-à-vis other historians’ interpretations” (Jenkins, 2003, 1991, p.14)
Patriarchy	<i>Patriarchy</i> is described as “a gradual institutionalization of sex based political relations created...and reinforced by closely linked institutions ...to achieve consensus on the lesser value of women and their roles”. <i>Patriarchy</i> includes the notion of a “...structuring of society” that ultimately “...responds only to the needs and interests of a few powerful men”. It manifests in several ways such as social, economic, political, spiritual and mental power/domination. (Facio, 2013, p. 2).
Privilege	<i>Privilege</i> is the award of advantages or benefits to a person or group simply because of who they are or what they represent. These are not rights and are unlikely to be available to persons outside the status group. (Source: Wikipedia.org on Social privilege)
Race	<i>Race</i> is a social construct, a “floating signifier” (Hall, 2021, p. 2). It is defined in the Britannica dictionary as categorizing people according to distinct behavioral or physical characteristics. As with plants or animals, the notion of race facilitates affiliations or location of, in this case, humans.
Racism	The concept of race is problematic as it became a mechanism of differentiation; one through which adjectives leading to superlative or condescending language creates a hierarchical scale by which the “society allocates status and privilege” (Delgado and Stefanic, 2017, p. 21). This process leads to <i>racism</i> . Audre Lorde (1992) defines <i>racism</i> as “the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance”.

**Top
Management
Team**

The *TMT* typically comprises the persons granted ultimate authority to manage and lead the organization, what became known as the “upper echelons of organizations”; “the dominant coalition”... or “the powerful actors in the organization”, (Hambrick and Mason, 1984, p.193). These are often members of the C-Suite (e. g. CEO, COO, CIO, CFO, CDO). In the dissertation I include members of the Board of Directors which is where ultimate authority and power lies to ‘spearhead’ (Katzenbach, 1997, p. 4) and ensure the effective running of the organization.

Chapter 1. Introduction

One can't simply expect to recover from or fix something. They must first uncover the thing that is inherent, and which created the situation in the first place, and fix that.

Trevor Noah, host of The Daily Show podcast, *Beyond the Scenes* (July 2020)

1.1 Reflexivity

My PhD plan was to engage in leadership studies. My perception of an obvious absence of diversity on many top management teams (TMT) presented an opportunity for my focus. Later an interest in intersectionality, especially how intersectionality emerged in organization history, that developed during my doctoral studies helped me further define my focus. The result is that I have used the opportunity presented by my dissertation to combine leadership with intersectionality, in examining the discourse of leadership that would result in a dearth of diversity in TMT leadership.

The idea for my dissertation derived in part from my personal background and professional experience, which exposed me to TMT leadership at different times and in different contexts. My interest in the topic was further piqued by research (Hambrick, Cho and Chen, 1996; Hunt, Layton and, Prince, 2015; Noland, Moran & Kotschwar, 2016; International Labor Organization, 2018; Ponomareva, Uman, Odolica and Wennberg, 2022) highlighting the benefits of diversity in leadership. This stood in stark contrast to the reality of the dearth of diversity in TMTs pointed out in other research (Harvard Law School Forum, 2021). I saw this absence of diversity in TMTs as problematic.

I believe that for sustainable change to take place, organizations first need to understand how patterns of marginalization, exclusion of women and racio-ethnic minorities from participation in TMT leadership might have developed over an organization's history. I further believe that leadership is discursive (Spector, 2016, p. 4), and that how leadership is known in the organization is a "communicative process" (Tourish, 2014, p. 86), which results in a co-construction of the notion of leader. Understanding the discourse that created the notion of leader in the organization becomes necessary to addressing the lack of diversity in leadership.

I wear the identity of a black, professional, woman. This identity locates me at the intersection of the identity categories (race, class, gender), and intersections that I examine in writing this dissertation. I remained cognizant throughout of my location in the research context and continuously challenged my insights to mitigate any incidence of bias as I proceeded.

1.2 Top Management Team Composition

The composition of top management leadership teams has over time demonstrated a notable lack of diversity (Deloitte, 2021, p. 5; Harvard Law School Forum, 2021). This is even more significant considering that just over one third of the "diverse seats" were filled by members sitting on "multiple Fortune 500 boards" (p.6). Where multiple board seats are held by the same person the movement toward increased diversity at the board level is diminished as raw numbers of diverse people across boards have not increased in total, thereby mitigating the benefits to be had by board diversity comprised by a limited number who may be stretched thin.

Findings from the report indicate that despite a measure of progress made by some demographic groups, most *new* board positions in Fortune 500 and Fortune 100 companies, as recently as 2020 continue to be "filled by white men" (p. 7).

The continued lack of diversity in TMTs is problematic yet prevails, despite globalization, an increasingly diverse workforce (United Nations, 2017; Hopkins and Hopkins, 1998), and calls by stakeholders and shareholders for gender, racial and ethnic diversity in USA boardrooms, (Deloitte, 2021). This lack prevails despite suggestions in other research, (Nielson, 2009, p. 278) that “homogeneity limits organizational capacity to deal with an increasingly heterogeneous environment”.

The persistence of homogeneity in leadership (Singh and Point, 2004) appears unchanging. It is against this backdrop that organizations are challenged to leverage diversity as a competitive feature (Thomas and Ely, 1996). I believe that understanding how leadership comes to exclude diversity is a necessary first step to addressing the lack of diversity in leadership composition.

1.2.1 Research Question

In this dissertation, I conduct a critical analysis of the discourse of organizational leadership to understand its composition to the exclusion of diversity. Using British Airways (BA) PLC as my case study, I contribute to the discourse of leadership by asking, “How does the composition of organizational leadership discourse exclude diversity?” In exploring this question, I consider the following sub-questions:

- a. How does the intersectional experience within the organization contribute to the discourse?
- b. How does this discourse reproduce the lack of diversity in TMT leadership?

1.3 Significance of topic

This topic is significant given increases in globalization, social unrest, and government regulation.

With increased globalization, the process of increased interdependence and interconnectedness across cultures and economies (National Geographic, n.d.), nations and by default, organizations began to experience changes in the composition of the workforce. This meant that organizations were experiencing demographic and cultural changes within their operations as well as externally with new business partners and consumer networks and demands. As a result, in the West this contributed to “the development of diversity and inclusion policies” (Pullen, Rhodes, McEwen and Liu, 2019, p. 2553) and an increase in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs (Ferdman, 2020, p. 244).

In 2020, heightened racial tensions and social unrest, triggered by the murder of George Floyd, a black man, by a white police officer in Minneapolis, led to demands for change. In response, many corporations committed millions of dollars for DEI programs (Baum, 2021, p. 2).

Additionally, governments’ attention to the lack of diversity in leadership at the level of Board of Directors highlight this as a pressing, contemporary issue for urgent action. Governments from different nations implemented various mandates to address the lack of diversity in leadership. These ranged from requiring that corporations recruit diverse (female and racio-ethnic minority) members, to requiring that corporate boards report on diversity in membership. Examples are the February 2022 Government of Canada, update for disclosure guidelines, ([Government of Canada Disclosure Guidelines](#)), and the European Union Fact Sheet (Jourova, 2016), the United Kingdom progress reports (Parker Committee Review Report, 2017, 2020, 2022). In the United States, variations of legislation designed to encourage diversity on boards were proposed by state lawmakers (Steven, Sturtevant and Jeong, 2021). Despite the attention being paid to diversity at the board level, it remains a relevant and enduring discussion as social movements persist, and government oversight is maintained. Furthermore, globalization

continues at a rapid rate with little expectation of abatement (Abella, 1984; Calás & Smircich, 1991).

Although these initiatives are noteworthy, Yukl (1989) and Stogdill (1974), suggest that there is no clear definition or agreement for identification of who is a leader, or the processes of leadership. Therefore, I believe that with the right skillset and preparation, leadership might be open to anyone meeting organization-specific requirements. Thus, the marked lack of diversity in leadership teams demands attention.

Spector (2016) in his work suggests that leadership is a discourse. In his study of what he terms the “idea” (p. 1) of leadership, Spector argues that how one thinks about leadership is important as it has implications for choices including, when voting, recruiting, and promoting people. Citing Grint (2000) “not so much a reflection of material reality but a construction of it, a particular way of representing the world through language and practice.”, Spector (2016) professes an objective to “...understand the ways in which our construction of leadership has evolved over the years.”(p. 1). In my dissertation, I consider how is it that the discourse on leadership takes place to the exclusion of diversity?

1.3.1 Importance of leadership

Leadership is described (Hogan and Kaiser, 2005, p.169) as a “real and vastly consequential phenomenon” and is one of the most important topics and most studied phenomenon in the human sciences (Spector, 2016; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Smircich & Morgan (1982) suggest that leadership offers meaning and context within the organization and guides expectations for organization members through what these leaders say and do. This process provides organizational context and meaning for member action. Leaders play a role in organizational change (Oreg and Berson, 2019), in shaping culture (Schein, 2010) and business

values (Ciulla, 2020). Acknowledging the ubiquitous nature of organization leadership highlights implications of the lack of diversity that exists amongst TMTs in particular in the context of increasing globalization.

By 2019, the world experienced record international migration with people relocating from their birth country to other jurisdictions in large numbers. The International Migration Report (United Nations, 2017) indicates that “258 million people moved internationally and pointed to a notable increase in migration numbers. This exceeds reports of 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000”. As the workforce becomes even more diverse, I believe that many of the benefits of diversity identified by research (Stevens, Plaut & Sanchez-Burks, 2008, Parker 2020) are likely to become more pronounced. As the workforce and society adjust, global connections expand, and new markets develop with increased access to information and technology, firms are hard pressed to become more responsive to changing demands, in order to remain relevant and successful.

Changes in the makeup of the workforce are occurring within the context of barriers and inequalities in organizational advancement. Rowe (1990, p.154) speaks to barriers to equality: “glass walls which keep women and minorities barred from certain occupations within society”, or White males (as well as Blacks and women) from making it to the top in Asian companies. Acker (2006, p. 443) defines inequality as “systematic disparities between participants in power and control” over key organizational indicators. Contending that identities of class, gender and race are usually present as part of the basis for inequalities (p. 444), she explains that class is intrinsic to employment and that the CEO, as part of the TMT of a large corporation, is typically located at the top of national (and sometimes global) society. Class, she argues, also surrounds the inequalities found with gender and race. She later adds that “hierarchies are usually gendered

and racialized especially at the top” (p. 445) with White men holding the highest positions, particularly in the United States and European countries. Acker (2006) calls attention to the reality of the homogeneous nature of leadership teams. That these observations continue to apply to most organizations confirms the need to examine how the discourse of leadership takes place to the exclusion of diversity as proposed in my dissertation.

In other work, Amis, Mair, and Munir (2020) considered how inequalities are reproduced and theorized the practices that helped to create a system of institutionalized inequality. They further examined how organizational structure developed routines that advantaged certain members of the organization such that the system of inequalities was reinforced. Their research outlined what they termed organizational myths. Myths, which they offer, include the organization’s desire for efficiency, existence of meritocracy and the positiveness of globalization.

Amis et al (2020) suggest that as myths and practices accumulate, they become entrenched mechanisms of inequality, including organization practices of promotion. These practices in turn, constrain opportunities for upward mobility and associated role allocations, with the “effect of defining people with identities shaped by social categories” (Amis, 2020, p. 2).

My contention is that organizations need first to understand how the phenomenon of leader developed within their history, if they are to develop meaningful action capable of addressing the lack of diversity in leadership in the future. This argument follows Gioia, Corley and Fabri’s suggestion that “accounting for organizational history is essential to any change process”. (2002, p. 622).

Considering, extant theories help us to understand various aspects of leadership, these theories do not however fully address the lack of diversity in TMTs.

1.4 Theoretical framework

The dissertation is guided by Critical Race Theory (CRT) and poststructural feminism. The decision to use CRT was important as it is geared toward change in “relationship among race, racism and power” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 3). Poststructural feminism, which focuses on the idea of gendered identity as a social construct, was especially helpful as I undertake a critical discourse analysis and explore the intersectional experience of organizations. Knowledge of who a woman is, what she is designed to do or be, surfaces. We come to understand some of the barriers to leadership created for gender identities that stem from how the idea of ‘woman’ is constructed (de Beauvoir, 1989).

Graham, Brown-Jefft, Aronson and Stephens, (2011) indicate that CRT concerns itself with issues of racial subordination, prejudice and inequity and recognizes the “complex relationships and intersections that reside within race, class, gender and sexuality differences” (p. 82). CRT uses the framework of critical legal studies and engages it more specifically to address issues of power, racism, and race relations to develop new approaches to address emerging forms of racism and structural issues embedded in laws that served to lock in marginalization and oppression of blacks and by extension, other excluded identities for example from opportunities for advancement. Others (Mutua, 2006, p. 345; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017, p. 5), indicate that CRT embraces feminist thought specifically as it “builds upon feminist insights into the relationship between power and the construction of social roles” as well as patterns of domination (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

Recently CRT, most notably its use in education, has come under attack in the United States (Lopez, Johnson, Molnar, Patterson, Ward, & Kumashiro, 2021; Harrison, Hurd, & Brinegar, 2021). The concern lies around a politicisation of CRT in a resurgence of actions affecting race, racism, and the increasing cultural diversity in the country. Actions allegedly to (i) increase partisan voting related to elections at several levels, and (ii) manipulate how race is allowed to be portrayed in schools, introducing this portrayal even earlier in education by imposing new curriculum from as early as Kindergarten. (Lopez, Johnson, Molnar, Patterson, Ward, & Kumashiro, 2021). My dissertation does not engage in the current debate over the use of CRT but recognizes its relevance to my work. Specifically, how the discourse of leadership occurs with a lack of diversity in the composition of leadership, and more particularly how it continues to be reproduced.

Davies and Gannon (2005) argue that feminist poststructural theory “troubles the binary categories male and female, making visible the constitutive force of linguistic practices...”. (p. 312). Thus, poststructural analysis considers how “the discursive nature, and regulatory practices...” of texts in use by various subjects, and in everyday life is used to develop individuals into gendered subjects. She further suggests that feminist poststructural theory emphasizes the functioning of power “through text and talk... to construct and maintain power relations”. Such relations ensure that “the dominant actor is normalized as natural in any context, [in] contrast with the subordinated actor who is marked as lacking.” Power then manifests as ideological hegemony and is shown to not just “...shape us as particular kinds of being but, also to make those ways of being desirable such that one takes them up as their own”. Use of poststructural feminism enables the theorist to recognize the influence of “old ways of knowing,

and to recognize their constitutive ability” even while harnessing the possibility of “moving beyond what is already known and understood” (p. 313).

The feminist, poststructuralist approach supported my exploration of ways in which the ‘other’ is portrayed and marginalized. It further enabled insight into how leadership might be tied to a specific identity, and how this process of exclusion might have been developed and become embedded in the organization. The lack of diversity observed in leadership points to an imbalance of power in race, class, and gender relations in organizations.

1.5 British Airways PLC – The Case Study

I use the case study of British Airways (BA) as the location of my critical discourse analysis. The choice of BA was practical and based primarily on the availability of material from rich archives and, my familiarity with the BA ‘story’ due to my prior research on the airline (Hendricks, Deal, Helms Mills and Mills, 2020; Hendricks and Mills, 2018). Further, BA is a globally operated, diverse organization, with a long history. In my dissertation I examine BA from inception, 1919 through to 1987, the year it was privatized.

The use of BA is not intended to suggest any wrongdoing on the part of the airline. Rather, it recognizes the ideal conditions presented by the organization that enables a study such as this to take place.

The airline’s discourse was explored primarily through three main sources, including,

- The British Airway’s archives contained in a collection of materials by researchers, Dr. Jean Helms Mills and Dr. Albert Mills.
- Past leader autobiographies (Smallpiece, 1981; Thomas, 1964), and
- Written accounts and histories (Higham, 2020; Jarvis, 2014; Penrose, 1980).

Together these sources of data provided insight into the airline's past that gave me access to an organizational discourse (text, graphics, pictures, and emblems) of leadership as mobilized in TMTs.

The archival material was comprised by minutes from Annual General Meetings, Newsletters, Magazines, and other communications developed by the organization for internal and/or external consumption. The autobiographies afforded me the opportunity to 'hear' directly from leader-participants in the organization and to understand how they made sense of the discourse of leadership. The archives and written accounts are limited to one set of voices, those privileged to speak in these forums. I employ the notion of junctures (Mills, 2010) to facilitate analysis of the data in context. Mills (2010, p. 509) defines junctures as "a methodological device for studying change over time". This provides flexibility in examining the discourse in context rather than being held to chronological specificity.

1.6 Contribution

The contribution of my research is three-fold.

1. I foster an understanding of how organizational discourse contributes to a paucity of diversity in organization leadership.
2. I address a gap related to intersectionality in the discourse of leadership.
3. I provide an example of the practical application of an analysis of organization intersectionality experience as it occurs in the past. Specifically, I demonstrate how the concept of intersectionality can be used as a heuristic device to explore organization phenomena in a way that bridges organization history to an understanding of a contemporary organization problem.

Ultimately, I highlight the implications of organizational discourse and intersectionality, in an organization's history to understand the lack of diversity in organization leadership.

1.7 Organization of the Dissertation

The remainder of the dissertation is described below.

Chapter 2 presents a review of literature on leadership with a focus on diversity, and literature on intersectionality. I focus on diversity as I clarify the gap to be addressed through this work.

Chapter 3 explains the research design, theoretical framework, and methodology. I explain how I pair critical discourse analysis with intersectionality, the latter used primarily as a heuristic to uncover the identities at work in the airline. I introduce details about the project site, and discuss the processes of data collection and management, and how the data were analyzed and used.

Chapter 4 begins with details about the airline and its appropriateness for use in this study. I also introduce the backdrop against which the first two junctures of the case study, British Airways, unfolds. Furthermore, I present the critical discourse analysis and intersectionality analysis focused on Junctures I and II. Details about the airline during these junctures offer insight on the internal and external operating environments and provide context to how leadership took place.

Chapter 5 is focused on Junctures III and IV. The chapter begins again with a backdrop to the airline during the third and fourth junctures. It then offers details about the airline during these junctures, providing insight on the internal and external operating environments, and ultimately help to illuminate how leadership took place.

In chapter 6, I conclude the dissertation first by summarizing my findings. Next I respond to the research question, and confirm the contributions of my work. I note limitations encountered during my research, and comment on the potential of future work that arises as a result of this study.

Chapter 2. Leadership

2.1 Introduction

The study of leadership is multidisciplinary, and its theorization covers a gamut of areas, yet much remains to be done to theorize leadership and intersectionality. With my dissertation, I seek to theorize in this area by exploring discourse and intersectionality in leadership composition. The objective of this chapter is to present, (i) a general overview of leadership theory, (ii) an introduction to the concept of intersectionality and how it will be used in my research; and (iii) and highlight a gap perceived in the leadership literature. This gap focusses on the preclusion of diversity at the highest levels of organization leadership and underscores the direction of the dissertation.

Thus, the chapter proceeds with a summary of the debate around the definition of leadership. Next, it considers how the theorization of leadership has evolved, and its enduring importance. Literature on leadership with diversity is then explored, and brief consideration of the relevance of culture to leadership is given. Thus, the chapter illuminates the phenomena of diversity and leadership, creating a platform for later focus on the scarcity of diversity in top management teams (TMTs).

Next, I introduce the concept of intersectionality, how it developed and its relevance to furthering my research. I bridge the notion of leadership with intersectionality and highlight the expected benefit of combining the use of intersectionality with the discourse on leadership.

The chapter ends by reiterating the gap identified in the leadership literature. My work highlights that diversity in leadership composition has not progressed at the pace of changing organization demographics (Harvard Law Forum, 2021). This gap is where the dissertation is designed to provide a perspective and new insight as I explore how the discourse on leadership contributes to the lack of diversity on leadership teams. Furthermore, I look at what influence the organization intersectionality experience may have on how leadership is perceived.

2.2 Defining Leadership

The concept of leadership has developed over time with varying theoretical foci and perspectives. That leadership is important for varied reasons is made clear in the literature (Yukl, 1989; Northouse, 2018; Bass and Bass, 2009). Its influence is active in community, government, and business and, is common nationally and globally. Its ubiquitous nature is universally reflected in all areas of human work and life (Bass and Bass, 2009), and it has been substantially studied. Ford, Harding and Learmouth (2008), aver that in the 1990s an average of ten articles per day were published on leadership.

Leadership has been studied for decades and its evolution reflects over a century of academic research, yet its general definition, what it means remains a point of debate (Grint, 2010, p. 1). Current research (Spector, 2016; Grint, 2011) suggests that the roots of contemporary leadership studies are traceable to the 1840's with Thomas Carlyle's, Great Man Theory. Some classical leadership studies go back as far as 321 BC (Grint, 2011) while others

go even further that “written principles of leadership began with the emergence of civilization”, (Bass and Bass, 2009, p. 23). Leadership has thus been defined in various ways by different researchers (Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 2015, p. 4). And Yukl, (1989, p. 252), suggests that researchers often opt to define leadership in terms of the specific aspect of the phenomenon they are studying.

The enduring interest in leadership studies is testament to the importance of this phenomenon and the place it holds in organizations and in society generally. What leadership is, continues to be subject to debate as defining it has proven elusive. Therefore, leadership is often seen to vary depending on the context in which it is being discussed. In his work, Spector (2016) conveys the idea that leadership is discursive, and as such, reflects a conversation that unfolds in context, over time. In contemporary times, leadership is a phenomenon that researchers continue to argue what it is and how it should be defined.

The phenomenon of leadership is “interdisciplinary” (Yukl, 1989, p. 251), “universal” (Gutterman, 2017, p. 1; Bass and Bass, 2009), complex and, challenging (Marathe, Balasubramanian and Singhal, 2017; Spector, 2016; Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003; Yukl, 1989). Leadership has also variously been characterized as a “process rather than function of an individual” (Van Wart, 2013, p. 553), a “complex process with multiple dimensions”, (Northouse, 2018, p. 1), and it has been described as a “complex phenomenon involving leaders, followers and the situation” (Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy, 2015, p. 4).

Cawthon, (1996), explores the idea that leaders are born not made, suggesting that leaders are ‘gifts from God’, born with innate traits necessary to lead. Despite the significant attention leadership studies have received, resolution over how it is best defined remains elusive (Grint, Jones, Holt and Storey, 2016; Rost, 1991).

Defining leadership was of interest as I wrote this dissertation, especially as its definition might offer insight to the paucity of diversity in TMT leadership. Specifically, the idea that, with a concrete definition of leadership certain employee identity categories might not meet some extant criterion which would then exclude them from highest levels of leadership. Contemplating that no such conclusive definition exists to explain the lack of diversity, then the notable lack of diversity in TMTs must derive from other organizational factors. Understanding how leadership is conceived over time in an organization is important to identifying these factors. I consider that the concept of leadership is reproduced in ways that are discriminatory and, which generate organizational inequalities specific as to who can progress to the highest levels of organization authority. In one example taken from the case study, we read of the nature of progression in one company *“My good friends in Monsanto are endeavouring to shape their top executive echelon into a pattern whereby -subject always to state of health- a man who is chosen for president (Which is the equivalent of British managing Director) must be under 55 so that he can be promoted at sixty with the idea of his spending five further active years as Chairman of the Board. Chairmen as such are expected to relinquish that office at 65 but go on maybe as Chairman as one of the Board committees, for another three years.”* Sir Miles Thomas (1964, p. 376). In this we see how composition of top management teams are somewhat pre-established and likely to reproduce existing practices of appointments over time.

Spector (2016, p. 1) writes that how we perceive leadership impacts “who we vote for, hire and promote, and to whom we grant authority.” In this dissertation as I explore the composition of leadership to the exclusion of diversity, it is imperative to understand how leadership and who can be leader is perceived in the organization. What is the discourse taking

place, which creates leadership construct(s) in a space rife with diversity yet ultimately precludes participation by this same diversity?

How leadership has been studied and theorized, over time, has been prescriptive, describing different ways of defining leadership. Ostensibly these definitions would be sufficient to enable and guide the selection of leaders in various spaces. For example, Rost (1991) in his work, developed an evolution of definitions for leadership. These showed where leadership was defined in keeping with the focus and context of what was being studied. Similarly, Grint, Smolovic and Holt (2016) acknowledge the conundrum of differences in leadership definition, confirming its elusive nature and failure to achieve consensus. They go further to assess four points of dispute “person, result, position and process” (p. 26). To this they add a fifth dimension introduced by (Kempster, Jackson and Conroy, 2011) “purpose”. Grint et al, (2016) suggest that no one area is more important than the other, but each provides an approach to defining leadership in specific situations or organizations. They emphasize that how leadership is defined is important as it has “vital implications for how organizations work or do not work.” (p. 26). In their work, Grint et al, (2016) recognize that a leader could reflect something from each of the five forms, furthermore the differences between each contribute to why there is little consensus on the definition of leadership. I contend that absent a specific definition of leadership, how does the composition of leadership continue to the exclusion of diversity?

In other work, Northouse (2018), offers four components as central to the phenomenon of leadership however defined. These include leadership (a) as a process; (b) holding influence as implicit; (c) to occur in groups; and (d) entails common goals.

I theorize that past and current organizational processes and discourse function to influence internal groups in decisions about leadership choices. This suggests a free-flowing

framework, in which the privilege to participate in leadership does not appear outwardly reserved for any group. Thus, I argue that leadership is not a prescriptive exercise, rather one that is relevant to an organization's own constructs.

Consideration of group in the leadership framework evokes power and moves us beyond looking solely at individual attributes provided in a candidate. It recognizes a role for group attitudes and behaviour exercised in part through organization culture. In, accepting that there exist common organizational goals, the listed components of leadership do not help to explain the scarcity of diversity in TMTs. Thus, I acknowledge Spector's (2016) notion of the importance of organizational and leadership discourse in the concept of leadership. I lean on his approach to understanding the construction of leadership, specifically, how it evolved over time "paying particular attention to the social, economic, political, intellectual and other historical forces that have shaped the discussion", (p. 1) as I explore the dearth of diversity in leadership.

It became evident, during my research, that defining who is, or who can become leader in the organization had to be viewed in context. For example, in Smallpiece's (1981, p. 36) autobiography he presented Sir Miles Thomas' view on leadership "*Miles Thomas I was glad to find, was a great believer in having his office 'on the works', where he could see what went on, and be seen. This was, as he saw it, an essential part of leadership in industrial management*". In other context, on occasion of a Pilot revolt in 1956, the pilots' comments on Sir Miles as a leader reflected different expectations based on the context. "*At the end of 1956 while SMT was away overseas, I had an embarrassing and unscheduled visit from two 'barons' of the pilot establishment. "They came into my office in the late afternoon on their own initiative, to tell me that the senior pilots in general had lost confidence in Miles Thomas as head of BOAC. They no*

longer had faith in his judgement about future aircraft nor in his attitude towards the organization of our flight operations management.” (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 65/66)

Thus, recognizing the organization location and circumstances of its operating environment was necessary, and included establishing a broad understanding of how leadership was revealed in the organization by emic and etic sources of discourse. Therefore, in my dissertation I choose not to define leadership, allowing the discourse to reveal the contours of leadership in the project site.

2.3 Evolution of Leadership

The evolution of leadership studies has been the focus of several studies (Stodghill, 1975; King, 1990; Bass and Bass, 2009; Grint, 2011). An overview of the evolution of leadership studies is included for a couple reasons. First, it adjures to the underlying dissertation, which recognizes the situation of leadership in the literature and how it has been studied. Secondly, it highlights a gap related to intersectionality in the discourse of leadership. Researchers (Grint, 2011; Rost, 1991; King, 1990) in tracing the evolution of leadership theory organize their studies in different ways.

It is notable that although organized differently, there are points of agreement regarding the focus of research on leadership. For example, in works by King (1990) and Grint (2011), the authors agree that Carlyle’s Great Man theory is a starting point for the evolution of modern leadership theories. The authors both trace the progress of leadership through scientific management, trait theories and into transactional leadership theory. The evolution pattern presented by both works is consistent through to the introduction of culture theories and includes the transformational leadership period where King’s (1990) work on the evolution of leadership theory concludes in the late 1980s.

Grint's (2011) research continues into the 2000s and includes recognition of the probable impact of the changing environmental context for continued theorization. For example, the changing environment context during the period saw increasing political uncertainty. Other leadership theories not explicitly mentioned were also included in specific eras identified or in political context shown respectively by King (1990) and Grint (2011). Examples of these theories include authentic, autocratic, democratic (*laissez-faire*), and servant-leader.

In other research, Bass and Bass (2009, p. 42) suggest that leadership concepts and definitions are an "ever evolving and expanding point of study". Chin and Trimble (2014, p. 29) argue for leadership theories to be diverse to reflect "culturally competent leadership". It is in their work that the idea of diversity in leadership first catches my attention. From their study, Chin and Trimble (2014) suggest a reframing of current theories of leadership to recognize diversity leadership. Although much attention has been given to defining leadership and how it evolved, my review found little research looking at how leadership develops such that diversity is limited. Studies (Ely and Thomas, 2001, Roberson, 2006, Lau Chin, 2010) in more recent years offer perspectives about diversity in leadership, and Liu (2020) in her work, provides a feminist, anti-racist critical work that attempts to re-imagine "how leadership may be exercised beyond domination and oppression." (p. 8). Liu (2020) argues that "...leadership is socially constructed,..." and "...the social construction of leadership is informed by power." (p. 8).

I agree with the notion of the social construction of leadership and examine organization discourse to surface how the idea of leader is constructed in one organization where systems of power including colonialism, capitalism, racism, and patriarchy are evident. I also go further by exploring the implications for influence of the organization's intersectionality experience on the composition of leadership. In this, I acknowledge Pullen, Rhodes, McEwen and Liu (2019), in

seeking an “alternate way of understanding” while challenging “the white male norm” (p. 2555) of leadership.

2.4 Importance of Leadership

Leadership, and leadership studies are important (Yukl, 1989; Hogan and Kaiser, 2005), although why it is important might be expressed differently. For example, “Leadership is a highly sought after and highly valued commodity.” (Northouse, 2018, p. 1). Bass and Bass (2009, p. 28) talk about the need for and importance of leadership, “required because of opposing forces of interdependence and diversity in political, economic and social life”. In other work, Boss and Golembiewski, (1995) indicate that of the many factors affecting organizational change efforts, the single most important factor is the commitment and support of organizational leadership in the role of the chief executive officer (CEO).

Understanding the importance of leaders to organizations is necessary due to the influence that they wield, affecting every aspect of organization life. For example, leadership is linked with firm overall performance (Hambrick and Mason, 1984). While Spector (2016), asserts that our answers to questions such as who should be hired as leader or what should we expect of leadership is shaped largely by “our understanding of the concept of leadership”.

My focus is on the discourse of leadership. It acknowledges my theorization of its importance in constructing the idea of leadership in organization, such that its composition takes place to the exclusion of diversity. My contribution seeks to add a new perspective in how we understand the concept of leadership and its composition.

2.5 Diversity, Culture, and Intersectionality

Examining the lack of diversity in leadership teams is relevant and timely. Research (United Nations Report on Migration, 2019) shows significant increases in globalization (Shangquang, 2000) with a clear indication for increases to continue.

The trend of globalization has been accelerated with technology, transportation, increasing shared knowledge and access to trade through digital commerce. This trend has implications for existing organization culture. The issue of organization culture is relevant as it is arguably within this context that leadership takes place. Endrissat and Arx, (2013, p. 279) suggest that there exists a recursive relationship between the phenomenon of leadership and context within which it occurs. Therefore, organization culture is included as a brief but important consideration as I reflect on how organization discourse contributes to the composition of leadership. Accordingly, leadership and culture are summarized here.

Implications of increasing globalization for business suggest that as more people relocate across borders, societies and workforces will become more diverse. Subsequently, businesses are enabled to do more in new markets. As organizations and communities adjust to their changing demographic makeup, insight in understanding the needs of new or changing markets becomes important to ensure business competitiveness. At the same time, sustainable organization success will demand that business pay attention to what it means to support and include new members to the workforce and community.

Research (Kalleberg, 2009; Lewis, Dwyer, Hodkinson and Waite, 2015) points to precarity work as being characterized by its temporary nature, unpredictability, poor compensation, and typically insufficiency to sustain a household. Other research (Arnold and Bongiovi, 2013) points to an overwhelming number of women, racialized and immigrant

workers who comprise the category of precarity workers. The highlighted research suggests that avenues to promotion are not necessarily available to incoming employees who wear the identities (gender, race, class) that are explored in my dissertation.

Spector (2016) suggests that leaders are required to help organizations be successful by ensuring that coherent, stable systems exist, and that the organization is flexible in responding to the changing operating environments. Schein, (2004) indicates that leadership defines culture and that the ultimate challenge to leadership is that it can perceive the time to change. Sürücü and Yeşilada (2017,) intimate that the leader at the top of the hierarchy is vital as they have the power to affect every member of the organization and, Ogbanna and Harris (2000) remind us that leadership has been linked to performance. Each insight independently affirms that leaders are pivotal to preparing the organization for change. Together, they offer sufficient argument as to the role of leaders in organizational outcomes, including leadership composition.

Cultural diversity is in one definition, “the representation, in one social system of people with distinctly different group affiliations of cultural significance” (Cox, 1993, p. 3). Its [cultural diversity] presence in the organizational context brings both positive and negative effects (Amaram, 2007; Coote Martin, 2014). As organization culture develops over time, changes in the cultural makeup of the organization may impact how the role and embodiment of leader is perceived. Conversely, in organizations where ‘who can be leader’ is deeply embedded in ideology or enacted through existing power structures, the organizational response to change is less likely to adjust ideas about ‘who can be leader’. I theorize that organizational discourse and intersectional experience help to construct organization beliefs about leaders. The power of this discourse, I contend, is sufficient to contribute to our understanding of the composition of leadership.

Schein (2004, p. 1) suggests that “leadership and culture are two sides of the same coin.” He states that “leadership defines culture and in turn culture defines leadership”. A cycle that continues until assumptions upon which “leader” are based are no longer valid (p. 2). Furthermore, he opines “culture determines who gets promoted and gets support of followers.” (p. 11). Organizational culture bears some relevance to the dissertation and is considered briefly later.

2.5.1 Diversity

Many organizations began to develop an interest in the concept of diversity beginning in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Prasad and Mills, 2006; Konrad, 2003). Impetus for its rise to attention by practitioners and scholars lay in the recognition of its potential to affect businesses performance (Konrad, 2003; Roberson, 2006).

Diversity within organizations presents the notion that differences exist amongst and between organizational individuals. These differences surface in different ways. Literature explored (Roberson, 2006; Ely and Thomas, 2001) shows that diversity has been described as reflecting areas of both observable and non-observable characteristics. Prasad and Mills, (1997) indicate that when it is used in workplaces, diversity has multiple meanings. Cox (1994) explicitly recognizes that diversity covers an array of identities not just gender and race/ethnicity. And Gottardello, (2019, p. 204) offers, “diversity refers to features that make one thing different from another”. How it has been studied includes acceptance of it as a new work order. Schaffer (2019, p. 57) states that “Workplace diversity is the new norm in business” ... “leaders are recognizing the necessity of adopting a global mindset in their approach to business.”

Diversity management - coined in the 1990s (Roberson, Ryan and Ragins, 2017) became “an important business imperative” (Roberson, 2006). A response to increasing globalization, it

implied new employees recruited from the now globalized labor force, needed special ways of being managed (Prasad and Mills, 1997). What ‘diversity management’ looks like varies between organizations and, understanding diversity is important if organizational culture is to change (Gottardello, 2019). Prasad and Mills (1997) contend that the main idea behind managing diversity is cultural, resulting in programs geared to altering member’s beliefs, values, and ideologies. This is relevant as it recognizes the influence of organization culture on the discourse on leadership.

Konrad, (2003) suggests that scholarship must be clear in its examination of diversity such that the inherent role of power relations does not become lost. In alignment with this, employing intersectionality as a heuristic helps to excavate and highlight the diversity within the organization. Specifically, it provides the means to better understand how identities are created, and power at work in how they are experienced within the organization. Ahmed and Swan, (2006, p. 99), argue that because histories of injustice and inequality continue to affect ‘work’ in contemporary times, “... colonialism, racism and gender hierarchies continue to shape... social spaces”, exploring these histories is important. They also suggest that the term diversity has been used perhaps as a gentler more inclusive way to discuss difference as it does not indicate a particular social category (p. 98). However, this creates a lack of clarity as to *who* is included. Using the term diversity, creates a situation where organizations might discuss diversity work without addressing the real issues of difference arising from the demographic cohort to which an individual belongs. The result can be generality in treatment understanding that prevents the organization from ever truly addressing constituent (identity category) realities. For example, examining the experience of women who are black. Is the wearing of both identities affecting

opportunities for these individuals at the intersection? Employing intersectionality in the dissertation will enable a measure of clarity in understanding the realities of identity categories.

Lau Chin, (2010) also suggests that diversity is largely absent in leadership studies. She contends that “theories of leadership have neglected diversity issues” (p. 150) and questions the relevance of leadership studies for the 21st century if this omission continues.

That there exists diversity in organizations which is yet to be reflected in the upper echelons of the organization highlights the core problem addressed by my dissertation. Eagly and Chin (2010) say it well, “Despite the growing diversity amongst leaders, the still present underrepresentation of women and of racial and ethnic minorities in leadership roles demands an explanation.” (p. 216). Eagly and Chin (2010) ask, “Why would people engage in discrimination that makes it difficult for individuals from certain groups to serve in positions of leadership?” (p. 217).

I explore how discourse on leadership in organizations might contribute to a paucity of diversity in leadership and provide new insight into the lack of diversity in the composition of leadership.

2.5.2 Organization Culture

Perspectives on organizational culture emerged in the early 1980’s (Denison, 1996; Smircich, 1983). Research (Sun, 2008; Ogbanna, 1992) suggests that there are numerous definitions for organization culture. Inherent to the idea of what is considered culture within the organization is the notion that organization values, ways of being and beliefs are achieved over time (*learned*) during the organization’s history. These ideas are important to the story I tell, as they speak to the notion of time and a shared (co-created) reality (Brown, 1995, 1998). It is from

this co-created reality that discourse emerges to construct a shared understanding of the composition of leadership.

This idea is reinforced in other research, Schein (1988) suggests that culture is “the property of groups based on acquired learning over their history” (p. 8) and may be understood to occur at several levels. The visible things that can be seen include artefacts, values in use, group espoused ideals and, at the unseen/unspoken level are the underlying assumptions on which everything takes place (p. 9). I contend that both levels are part of the discourse that contribute to understanding in the organization.

Suruccu and Yesilada (2017, p. 31) refer to culture as a social glue holding the organization together and, as a system of “values, beliefs and traditions formed during the history of the organization”. Smith and Vecchio, (1997) offer culture as critical to organizations as it has implications for organizational success under changing conditions. Both perspectives support the notion that culture is important to an understanding of the composition of leadership. My brief consideration of culture takes place in the context of how it is aligned with leadership.

Research on organizational culture has explored the relationship of culture and leadership in several ways. For example, Schein (2004) discusses the leadership role in building organizational culture. Wilkins, and Bristow (1987) suggest leadership as the key to culture change, suggesting that TMT support is important for the institutionalization of desired changes, advising executives to “learn to change by honoring the past.” (p. 227), using it as a bridge from the old to newer values.

Chong, Shang, and Zhu, (2018,) conclude that developing a positive organizational culture is important because of potential influence on changing leadership behaviors, employee commitment, success and performance. Lau Chin (2010) refers to the idea that leadership and

culture are two sides of the same coin. She further suggests that “leaders must create cultures when they form groups/organizations and, once these organizational cultures exist it is these that must determine the criteria for leadership and who will become leader.” (p. 153), I argue that organizational discourses are developed in context of the organizational culture and are important to an understanding of the composition of leadership.

While I do not dwell on culture, I acknowledge the interrelatedness of leadership composition and culture. Following Brown’s (1998) definition of culture, I hold that the notions of a ‘*pattern of beliefs, values and learned ways of coping with experience that have developed during the course of an organization’s history*’, a ‘development with tendency toward *manifestation in material arrangements and member behaviours*’ are important. [italics added]. In acknowledgement, I argue that there is inherent to the developed leadership team, the potential for reproducing new teams that are devoid of real and inclusive diversity.

2.6 Intersectionality

Researchers (Carastathis, 2014; McCall, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006;), offer intersectionality as a concept coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in the late 1980’s. Crenshaw’s (1989) legal treatise originated from what she saw as a problem developing from “... the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis.” It is noteworthy for my dissertation that intersectionality is an underlying tenet of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Researchers, Delgado & Stefancic (2016, p. 177) in invoking intersectionality in their work on CRT, define it as the “Belief that individuals and classes often have shared or overlapping interests or traits.” Their work also highlights the idea of anti-essentialism which suggests that no person has one single, unitary identity. The notion of

overlapping traits is important to my dissertation as it recognizes that identities encountered in this research are not isolated entities but often wear several ways of being identified. Ways which come to bear on how they are seen in the organization, and how they experience their positions and work.

Research, (Carastathis, 2014) suggests that the general contours of intersectionality are not new, having a “long legacy in Black feminism” (p. 305), while Hill Collins, (2015) avers that despite some consensus, what intersectionality work is remains unclear.

Over the last 30 years the case to mainstream intersectionality (Dhamoon, 2011) has been presented, and the concept has travelled even as it has been adopted by researchers, practitioners, activists, and policy advocates across disciplines (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016). In her work, Hill Collins (2015, p. 5) offers intersectionality as a knowledge project with three concerns including to illuminate power relations, generating insight on new phenomenon and a critical practice intent on informing social justice projects.

It is my belief, that intersectionality, even as the subject of debate “emerging in a number of discursive spaces” (Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall, 2013), offers utility as an analytical tool. Specifically, a tool that “examines how power relations are intertwined and mutually constructing.” These authors charge that “race, class, gender, and other identity categories used for analysis ... gain meaning from power relations that surround racism, sexism ... and class exploitation” (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 7). More recently, Rodriquez, (2019, p. 429) suggests that intersectionality is an instrumental tool in studying the “reciprocities of gender and other categories of difference...how these are created, reproduced, and perpetuated”. Work by Cook and Glass (2013) which suggests underrepresentation of racial/ethnic minorities in

positions of authority, highlights the importance of understanding the identity categories in organizations as part of examining the dearth of diversity in the composition of leadership.

In my dissertation intersectionality is used primarily for its heuristic value. This facilitated flexibility (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 4) in how I mobilized it in the form of the representativeness heuristic. Thus, I was able to define, and visualize a prototype of each identity category making them available for later analysis. In this way, the concept of identity, where one fits or belongs within the organization would be used consistently. My work contends that power relations around identity categories leads to an embedded practice, where a cultural hegemony could develop and reproduce. For my dissertation, I am inclined to the notion of intersectionality as social theory (Hill Collins, 2019), and as such I use it to help explain the problem of leadership composition that precludes diversity.

The concept of intersectionality is introduced at this point to provide context for how it is used later. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

2.6.1 Intersectionality Experience

The term intersectionality experience is used here to highlight, ways in which individuals in an organization are marginalized by their identity categories, and more so, how these layers of marginalization overlap resulting in further marginalization at their intersection(s) leading to new avenues of marginalization. An example drawn from the case study highlights this in the recruitment of pilots. Specifically, in the terms of agreement for the new national, Imperial Airways Airline (IAL) lay a requirement that “*all airline Pilotswere to be members of the RAF, the Reserve, or the new Auxiliary Air Forces when it came into being*” (Penrose, 1980, p. 37). Although research shows that women, (black and white) as well as men from various racial backgrounds at times flew as pilots and served in other capacities (Answering the Call, n.d.), it is

notable that in all the discourse I examined, Airline Pilots hired at the airline were White and male. This presented an early indication of the presence of an intersectionality experience.

The intersectionality experience would be the denial of participation in the organization as a pilot due to an overlapping identification as a woman (however raced), or as an ethnically identified male. In my dissertation, I focus on the intersectionality experience which arises in the exclusion of diversity, reflected in gender, race and/or class, identities from participating in leadership. Thus, I argue that intersectionality along with organizational discourse on leadership impact the composition of leadership.

2.6.2 Leadership and Intersectionality

My research included looking for studies conducted on leadership with intersectionality. Specifically, work that addressed leadership with acknowledgement of participants with multiple overlapping identities. In the process I discovered work which suggested that there was little research on diversity in leadership that considered more than “one or two diversity attributes” (Richardson and Loubier, 2008). I found research, centred on intersectionality in leadership of educational institutions (Moorosi, Fuller and Reilly, 2018), sport (Melton and Bryant, 2017), which provided examples of intersectionality analysis in context for individual leaders but did not lend insight to diversity in leadership composition. In other research, Pullen, Rhodes, McEwen and Liu (2019) concede that intersectionality has been considered in leadership, however “the initial political and radical conception has seldom been carried through.” (p. 2555). The focus of my work while operationalizing intersectionality through attention to identity categories, simultaneously recognizes hegemonic structures of organization discourse, government oversight, and societal values that impact who is considered for leadership.

The search for intersectionality and leadership although surfacing several articles, none addressed the composition of leadership. The research provided support for my decision to combine intersectionality with discourse in leadership composition. This included Richardson and Loubier (2008) who offered that there were compelling reasons to use intersectionality theory in the study of leadership. Pointing to the complex nature of leadership and the ability of intersectionality theory to help first “to reveal the multiple identities and personas of social actors and the connections between these”, and secondly the importance of ensuring that analysis of complex social situations “should facilitate the understanding of substantively distinct experiences” despite the connections (p. 143).

2.7 Addressing the gap in Leadership Research

The phenomenon of leadership has a long history subject to volumes of research. Spector (2016, p. 33), tells us that very little research is done on what leaders do beyond broad sweeping categories including things like “plan, align, anticipate, motivate, monitor and reward”. He indicates that research addresses “the question of who is a leader and the traits they bring to the job”. Pullen, Rhodes, McEwen and Liu (2019) state that intersectionality is an influential concept used across disciplines, and in leadership studies “has become an established concept to explore difference and diversity” (p. 2554).

There is a gap in leadership literature (Chin, Desmoreaux & Sawyer, 2016; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Chin, 2010) related to diversity and intersectionality in leadership, and ways to examine it (Ospina & Foldy, 2009). Hearn and Louvrier (2015) suggest that although diversity is now more commonly “in use in organizational, management and analytical discourses” (p. 1), the concept of intersectionality with leadership “has been far less developed”.

Lau Chin (2013), studied the “interaction of the social identities of leaders to better understand how the social identities (race, gender, ethnicity and minority status) of leaders might affect their leadership.” (p. 1). Her work acknowledges the reality of the increasing diversity of organization globally and references an alleged “bias in leadership theorizing which reflect structures and cultures of North American organizations run by White Anglo, heterosexual men” (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2004). Lau Chin (2013) reiterates the importance of “recognizing the intersectionality of gender, ethnicity, and leader identities with lived experience” as an avenue for new questions in examining leadership (p. 9).

In other research, Gotsis and Grimani (2016), state that a framework for theorizing diversity and inclusion in leadership in organizations has not yet been significantly explored. Their research focuses on “the potential impact of distinct leadership styles on the formation of inclusive behaviour, processes and outcomes.” (p. 242). While their work concludes that diversity has become a core dimension for leadership development (p. 258), it doesn’t provide insight to the dearth of diversity *in* the composition of TMT leadership.

I contend that if ‘who can be leader’ is open to research that describes leadership in general terms, and relies on determinants such as traits, behaviors etc., then recruits could be employed or be advanced to leadership for myriad reasons, regardless of whether they fall outside the boundaries of the “somatic norm” (Puwar, 2001, p. 3). For example, job-related skills, training, and experience (merit) should naturally make non-conforming (othered) identities eligible for wide-ranging benefits including promotion and opportunities such as TMT leadership. In keeping with this I consider that there may be other forces which contribute to who is deemed as leader, and thereby how leadership composition takes place.

For example, governments in several countries in the west, including Canada, USA, UK and EU member states, have deployed legislation regarding increasing diversity on boards of directors. Despite legislation and special programs where they exist, the poor representation of diverse groups in TMTs is evident. I argue here that organizational past, embedded in everyday organization discourse, may play a part in this reality. Discourse so pervasive that it reproduces continually through an unconscious cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) despite organization and government directives and plans for change.

Amis, Mair and Munir (2020) encourage consideration of ways in which power is held in organizations. By whom, and how this might contribute to the reproduction of organizational inequality (p. 24). In my research, I focus on the inequality resident in who is allowed to participate in leadership. My examination seeks to fill a perceived gap in leadership studies by focusing on leadership composition. Specifically, I seek to understand the discourse that speaks to ‘who can be part of the leadership team’, and the role that intersectionality might have on this determination.

2.8 Summary

The foundation for the dissertation and what gives rise to my desire to theorize in leadership is, the prevailing lack of diversity in leadership team composition in particular at the TMT level. My review of the leadership literature recognizes that defining leadership is still being debated. I considered the evolution of leadership studies which started with the “Great Man Theory” and established an early expectation of who could be leader. The continued importance of leadership in organizations suggested that examining the composition of leadership was relevant, and while the relationship of culture and leadership is not elaborated upon research highlighted the reciprocal relationship between leadership and culture. In this

chapter I determined that culture is recognized in both observable and non-observable ways, while diversity is evident with multiple meanings, covering an array of identities. This made the use of analysis that could illuminate discourse, and excavate identity, while highlighting power at work in organization personnel structures useful.

Research results provided little insight into how leadership composition comes about, but rather focused on its importance in organizations. In considering leadership composition, the notion of an array of identities called for a closer look at identity categories and systems of power that might dictate leadership composition.

Intersectionality experience in the organization was considered a potential influence on, and therefore a possible source for insight and theorizing on leadership composition. Benefits of using intersectionality in research included its focus on systems of power relations and its ability to surface identity categories when used as a heuristic. That there was a gap in leadership literature specifically in its theorization with intersectionality indicated an opportunity for contribution, and the decision to include the use of intersectionality analysis in the dissertation was decided.

In chapter 3, I outline my plan of work to address the gap identified related to the lack of diversity in leadership. I believe that organizations must be committed to understanding the embedded nature of the intersectional experience within (its) rules (policies, procedures, and practices) of operating. Without this commitment, plans implemented to contend with the globalization inspired changes to workforce demographics, can only scratch the surface of ensuring diversity at all organization levels, becoming merely an exercise in performativity (Butler, 1996/2020; 1990/2011). This belief encouraged my research approach to theorizing how

3.2 Research Paradigm

I embrace the idea that “all theories of organization have a basis in “a theory of society”, Burrell and Morgan (1979, p.1). I propose that the composition of leadership in many organizations results from organization discourse, which in turn, is influenced by organization intersectionality experience. This composition takes place over time, and I have developed this notion by using the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Poststructural Feminism.

My methodological approach includes *assumptions*, surrounding (i) my beliefs (ontology) about the phenomenon being studied; (ii) how one gets to know and communicate (epistemology) information about the phenomenon; and (iii) how human nature relates with the surrounding environment. I acknowledge the values (axiology) behind my work that provide a centering for what I believe to be important. In addition, I approach my research as an exercise in critical management studies. Thus, I acknowledge my position, as I consider power at work in the problematic of the lack of diversity in leadership. In doing this, I examine the organization values that might lead to this manifestation of discrimination (Akella, 2008), and argue the role of discourse on leadership and intersectionality experience that underlie it.

A firm believer that ‘everybody has a story’, I have always been moved toward active listening. Hearing what is ‘allowed’ to be said, and who is ‘allowed’ to speak. I am also interested in hearing discourse not ordinarily available, new perspectives. In my work, this is encountered through the discourse of organization actors. Furthermore, I believe that ‘Silencing’ (Trouillot, 1995; Milliken and Morrison, 2003; Kinouani, 2020), in whatever form it takes, is too often an exercise of power, a means of domination that ensures the whole story cannot be

available, it becomes important to seek to hear from a cross-section of voices situated around the phenomenon being researched.

Together, all voices contribute to the discourse on leadership. My research begins in the nascent organization (British Airways) and explores its evolution with the use of archival data, written histories and selected past leader autobiographies. This helps further my understanding of how organization practices observed through discourse developed, were reproduced, and contributed to the lack of diversity in leadership.

3.2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical frameworks employed are critical race theory (CRT) and poststructural feminism. Yosso and Solarzano (2005) indicate that CRT draws from literature based in “critical theory”, law, history, and other disciplines (p. 119). Using CRT is intended to recognize the power imbalance and, ensure a focus on understanding how it came about and, how it might have contributed to the scarcity of diversity in leadership. The use of poststructural feminism complements CRT and is important as it makes space for including women in the discourse on leadership and re-confirms the call for attention to the need to hear from different voices in the collection and analysis of discourse. Finally, using CRT is important as it highlights the importance of the intersectionality experience at work as I theorize leadership composition. The dissertation uses intersectionality as a heuristic device to surface how and where this power imbalance occurs.

3.2.1.1 Critical Race Theory

Delgado and Stefancic (2017), posit the critical race theory movement as “that assembly of people who are engaged with the study and exploration of the relationship between race, racism and power, with an objective to changing the relationship.” (p. 3). These authors submit

that CRT emerged in the 1970's, beginning with various works by Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman in response to the feeling that gains made by the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's were losing ground.

Mutua (2006) suggests that the title (CRT) was coined by legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw in the late 1980s and offers perspectives and “critique on traditional civil rights theory” along with insights from critical legal studies (p. 333). Developing from within legal studies, there was a critical view regarding the application of the law, specifically anti-discrimination law, which demanded a perpetrator perspective (individual) rather than addressing the structures and systems (societal level) which seemed to ensure that societal status quo, the views of the dominant class, remained unchanged. (Freeman, 1977). CRT analysis arose in part in response to the notion of color blindness and developed in part to change the relationship between law and racial (White) power (Mutua, 2006, p. 334).

In other research, Graham, Brown-Jefft, Aronson and Stephens (2011), indicate that CRT concerns itself with issues of racial subordination, prejudice and inequity and recognizes the “complex relationships and intersections that reside within race, class, gender and sexuality differences” (p. 82). CRT uses the framework of critical legal studies and engages it more specifically to address issues of power, racism, and race relations to develop new approaches to address emerging forms of racism and, structural issues embedded in laws that served to lock in marginalization and oppression of blacks.

Delgado and Stefancic, (2017) indicate that CRT embraces feminist thought specifically as it “built on feminism’s insights onto the relationship between power and the construction of social roles” as well as “the patterns and habits of patriarchy and other forms of domination.” (p. 5). The foregoing are all ideas relevant to the dissertation.

CRT research incorporates, and has been used to explore, underlying themes of definition of race, revisionist history, classical liberalism, and structural determinism. Its underlying assumptions help us to understand why a dearth of diversity in management teams, especially at the TMT level might exist, be problematic and, likely be reproduced.

First, CRT scholars lean toward revisionist history and argue that history is written by those with privilege. The revisionist approach challenges the accepted view of history (Delgado and Stefaniec, 2017, p. 183). For Delgado and Stefaniec (2017), what is known as history in an organization would be based on the viewpoint of those with access and the right to collate histories and inform the archives. This creates room for an intersectionality experience which marginalizes non-dominant groups. It is therefore possible that the ‘history’ told is void of perspectives which might change how the ‘history’ is comprised. In other words, it might be considered non-inclusive.

Secondly, the idea of color blindness which arises in classical liberalism is seen as insufficient to speak to the ordinary micro-aggressions encountered daily. The appearance that everyone is free to pursue their lives ignores the fact that the playing field itself is not equal, thereby creating barriers at the outset to categories of people. Finally, the notion of structural determinism in society, is developed by an established ‘majority’, and means that the rules by which the society is guided are so set that there could be little room for consideration of cases that don’t present in expected “normal” ways. (Delgado and Stefaniec, 2017)

Seen in this light, where situations like the composition of teams at the highest levels of leadership arise, available guidelines do not provide for deviation. In this context the lack of diversity in leadership becomes problematic.

I take the position that, to better understand the implications of this lack of diversity in leadership and opportunities to change it, we must first examine how it came to be. It becomes important therefore to retrace the organization's past and *follow it forward* to an understanding of the composition of leadership. From this platform of understanding, organizations would be better able to address structural processes and practices that serve to perpetuate organizational inequities.

CRT is also useful as it encourages the exploration of narratives and counter stories to established organization histories enabling insight from other perspectives. Interestingly, Ladson-Billings (2019, p. 10) describes CRT as being similarly 'framed along the lines of a Gramscian description' of cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). This description is important as I also explore the reproduction of this lack of diversity in TMTs. According to Gramsci, power is wielded through ideology into which the subjects subscribe, becoming complicit in their own domination. This ultimately leads to a perpetuation of the status quo.

At the core of this thesis, I examine identity and how the notion of leader is constructed in the organization. I seek to understand how employees get identified as leaders and advance to positions that provide them with authority and power. Within organizations we see significant demographic diversity inclusive of gender, racio/ethnicity etc (Bolo, Muchemi and Ogutu, 2011) amongst rank-and-file employees, a situation expected to take on significant proportions with increased globalization. This diversity wanes as we view levels higher up in the organization. It is noteworthy that most leadership research in the last fifty years was conducted in the United States, Canada, and Western Europe, (Yukl, 2010), and in other research, suggestions are that demographic diversity, is only recently, in the last several decades, increasingly reflected at the

top of the organization's hierarchy. Specifically, on gender (Triana, Richard, and Su, 2019), and cultural or race diversity an "issue... silently avoided" (Umans, 2009).

3.2.1.2 Poststructural Feminist Theory

Davies and Gannon (2005, p. 312) refer to feminist poststructuralist theory as the "third feminism". Citing Kristeva (1981), they suggest that this third feminism "follows on from liberal and radical feminism without replacing them".

Poststructural feminism is particularly useful, as it facilitates recognizing how the discourse examined is used to "constitute" the 'other'. The discourse examined during this research is largely produced by traditionally privileged writers. For example, the autobiographies are produced by White, males privileged to position of leadership. Additionally, the archives used in my dissertation, reflect selections of discourse from newsletters, magazines and other proprietary material shown through text, graphics, pictures etc contained in the airline's histories, and chosen by white men with delegated authority to organize the archives. These arbiters, gatekeepers of the [his-tories] that get told result in the marginalization of voices from other identity categories at work in the airline. Employees, whose stories of the past may offer different perspectives.

Davies et al (2005) encourages researchers who use feminist poststructuralist theory, to consider how their research can promote gender. Importantly, how does (my) research help to move how gender is known to new ways and spaces in which it can be known, "...in the folding and unfolding of history...". A "...movement towards, or openness to, new possibilities both of seeing and being." (p. 314). I believe my research responds to this idea by arguing that organization discourse is in part responsible for the lack of diversity (including gender) in the composition of TMT leadership.

Finally, Morgan (2006) acknowledges hooks' comments on the "irony of the effective silencing of black women's experience" in postmodernist discourse at a time when "'difference and otherness' were receiving elevated status". Further, in referring to hooks, Morgan (2006, p.191) highlights hooks' point that "meaningful 'politics of difference' should incorporate the voices of those most displaced, marginalised and exploited". As I explore the organization's discourse, it becomes evident that this discourse occurs largely to the exclusion of voices of the racio-ethnic minority. Additionally, Morgan (2006, p.6) offers the concept of 'patriarchy' as "a system of interrelated social structures through which men exploit women". In this, the notion of a system of patriarchy being party to the lack of diversity in leadership is raised and considered to be a hegemonic process contributing to leadership that takes place to the exclusion of diversity.

Given the attention being paid to diversity on boards of directors, including the issuing of government mandates in several global locations, it is notable that the scarcity of diversity on boards persists. In my dissertation, I theorize that discourse on leadership in organizations which takes place in the context of power systems including patriarchy, colonialism, and racism, is in part accountable for the prevailing lack of diversity on TMTs. I believe too that organizations' limited understanding of their past, how opportunities for advancement and promotion were structured, and implications for how various groups were included (or not) also influence what boards look like in the contemporary establishment. In the dissertation I consider how rote implementation of long-standing practices might habitually replicate barriers to advancement of non-dominant employees leading to an intersectionality experience of advancement to leadership. Further, one expected outcome of this work is a richer appreciation of the influences affecting how the composition of organization leadership might come about.

3.2.2 Methodological Framework

In this thesis I use a critical, Alvesson & Wilmott, (2003) qualitative, (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) approach to research. The approach lends to our understanding of the composition of leadership as an organizational process (Alvesson & Wilmott, 2003, p. 92): a process derived from embedded structural and cultural patterns in the organization which highlight power at work.

The qualitative character of the work emphasizes the objective to understand how organization members come to know how they are located within the organization. It takes the work beyond the positivist realm and suggests that humans as sentient beings have a mutually contributing effect on/from their environment. Thus, in their exercise of free will, choices made impact how the phenomenon (i.e., leadership) takes place. By invoking a qualitative approach, my focus was on understanding how organization discourse constructed knowledge about who could be leader in the organization. My research assumes the methodological framework summarized below.

Methodological Framework

Category	Assumptions
Ontology	Critical, qualitative;
Epistemology	Poststructuralist, Constructivist;
Human Relations	Life falls somewhere on the spectrum between individual choice and environmental dictum;
Axiology	Values which insist on the importance of hearing from other voices in the (co) construction of reality;

Methodology	Research strategy is based on Case study using archival material, past leaders' autobiographies and written histories;
Method(s)	Critical Discourse Analysis, Intersectionality as heuristic;

Situated in a critical constructivist paradigm, I “view the social world as the outcome of the interpretations of actors through a series of interactions” (Bryman, Bell, Mills and Yue, 2011, p. 60). I see the world as socially constructed and, I believe this constitutes our reality (Crotty, 1989). With respect to the phenomenon of leadership, I believe that what one comes to know about who a leader is, is socially constructed, reified by continued reinforcement within the context of the internal and external environments from which it evolves.

The phenomenon of leadership is influenced by organizational culture (King, 1990). The internal discourses that take place across the organization subtly shaping organizational values. These are in turn impacted by external forces including dictum from government as well as societal attitudes. This research contends that the ideological values and behaviours inherent in the organization discourse around leadership contribute to systems of discrimination and privilege that create the organization's intersectionality experience impacting, among other things, leadership composition.

3.2.2.1 Ontology

Underlying my approach is a strong belief that: experiences of marginalization within an organization ought not to be viewed as aberrations or discrete occurrences. Rather, these experiences must be understood as exercises of power embedded in the organization's fabric through discourse and practice. These experiences are so entrenched that organizational processes, such as that of leadership composition, are constructed in organization discourse

becoming almost predictable. I theorize that the practices of marginalization of organization members manifest and reproduce within the organization discourse and context. Practices that are perpetuated, may have begun in the nascent organization, evolving over time impinging on the composition of future leader(ship). Finally, I believe that there is no one truth, nor does the truth of what took place in the past reside in any one person or group.

3.2.2.2 The episteme

I learn about how an organization comes to know who ‘could be leader’ through my examination of discourses from selected sources. How I understand the production of knowledge, is in keeping with qualitative styles described as craft by Prasad (2015/2005). This includes methods used to examine the intersectionality experience in British Airways, the selected case study, and to analyze discourses pulled from text developed internally and externally.

I used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to surface and examine discursive notions of extant leadership in context, and organization identities (race, gender, class) to capture and acknowledge where several voices contribute to the discourse. In conducting the CDA, (1) I utilize internally developed data including materials from British Airways’ archives, collected by Professors Jean Helms Mills and Albert Mills; (2) I include written autobiographies of two former leaders of the airline, and (3) I also explore externally produced material such as written accounts and histories of the airline produced by the wider, external environment. Together, these offer a substantial collection of organization discourse, providing rich data for my research.

Discourse excavated about how successive leadership appointments took place, and the culture from which they emerged was useful to provide understanding of how leaders were ordinarily selected. This discourse illuminated appointments to leadership that I encountered in

the research, and which may have been reproduced. In doing so providing additional insight to the lack of diversity in leader composition. For example, Smallpiece (1981, p. 74) emphasized the importance of selecting a leader *“I learnt much from it. I have always carried with me an awareness of the top man’s ultimate responsibility for safety. In the nature of things human errors will be made from time to time. Meanwhile we were looking among our pilots for a chief of flight operations. Civil airline pilots are not the easiest group of people in which to find qualities that add up to human leadership. Nature of their work tends to breed individualists. “I chaired the selection board and saw them on Tuesday, 26 June. I decided in my own mind that Capt J N Weir was the best man for the job and was glad to find that the others agreed. I wanted someone, in this first phase of bringing pilots into management, who was experienced and expert but who would not exert his authority too much. Weir seemed to fit that bill well.”* (p. 75).

Also, Sir Miles Thomas who on leaving his role at Wolsely Motors, was invited by the Minister of Civil Aviation, Lord Nathan at that time, to take on the post of Deputy Chairman at BOAC. *“With the firm prospect in fifteen months time’ of becoming Chairman.”* (Thomas, 1964, p. 256). An example of a government appointment.

Understanding how leadership appointments took place was particularly helpful where previous documentation of leadership held implications for future composition of leadership. In this idea I reference Foucault (1972), who spoke of history and its connection to the past as a *“memorization of monuments of the past, transformed into documents”* (p. 7). These documents he charges *“lend speech”* to the traces of the past that we uncover. In his work, Foucault (1972) refers to discontinuities in how the historian presents the past, opening opportunities for new analyses of the past by future historians.

In my dissertation, which relies in part on archival documents, I try to connect discontinuities across the written and unwritten histories of one organization, British Airways. I make use of the discourse developed over time to illuminate how ideas about leader(ship) are developed.

3.2.2.3 Human Nature

In the dissertation I consider that the individual's identity, is 'seen' in the context of the operating environment, and I believe that the individual's exercise of free will, is impacted by levels of power afforded their identity within the environment. Thus, I proceed on the assumption that human nature lies somewhere between the extremes of freewill and environment. (Burrell and Morgan, 1979)

3.2.2.4 Axiology

My dissertation is developed with an awareness of values to which I hold myself accountable (Prasad, 2015/2005). I seek through my research to expose new voices, and vulnerabilities/gaps, in organization life that might function to perpetuate discriminatory practices and social injustice. I am focused particularly on understanding how, at the TMT level, organization leadership takes place such that there is a lack of diversity.

I believe that exploring the past (Booth and Rowlinson, 2006) is an important precursor to understanding the present. Thus, I set out to understand how the knowledge of leader comes about and how it deploys to influence composition of leadership at the top of organizations.

3.3 Research Approach

In my dissertation I engage through critical, qualitative methodology, focussing on critiquing assumptions on which taken for granted ideas about society are based. Most

specifically, the notions about who might be leaders. An important objective is to create space for a new perspective on how the notion of leader comes about.

The dissertation is developed as an empirical analysis using archival material from a single case study (Bryman, Bell, Mills and Yue, 2011), which is examined over time. It combines (i) Critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Foucault, 1970; 1972), and (ii) Intersectionality used as a heuristic (Collins, 2019). In the dissertation power relationships in the production of knowledge and, the cultural values, which help create meaning within the organization are revealed and used to enable new insights for understanding the reproduction of inequities related to leadership composition in organizations.

Foucauldian CDA, which is focused on power, control, knowledge, and resistance (Prasad, 2005) provides a framework to examine organization texts and exhume the often-subtle discourses that illuminate organizational systems. These discourses, I theorize, dominate within the organization creating a Gramscian cultural hegemony (Buttigieg, 2005) as the overriding criteria for who gets to be leader.

Using the heuristic value of intersectionality enables the research to surface identity categories, which help us understand the ways in which certain identities in the organization are included and portrayed. This enabled me to see how the ways in which these identities were included (or excluded) in the discourse of leadership helped to create a nexus of meaning (Hendricks, Deal, Mills and, Helms Mills, 2020) that influenced their location in the organization.

The methods outlined above are used to show how language is used to produce knowledge that created realities enabling the development of systems of subjective power relations related to leadership. I highlight how over time, the notion of who could be leader

becomes embedded and reproduced. Further, it educes an acute awareness of the role of discourse in understanding the extant problem, the lack of diversity in Top Management Team composition.

3.3.1 The Project Site – British Airways

The case of British Airways (BA) is used to enable this exploration of the discourse of leadership within a single case setting (Bryman et al., 2011, Yin, 1994). It is presented in more detail later within junctures used in my analysis. Choosing BA allowed me to benefit from earlier exploratory work on intersectionality and time (Hendricks & Mills, 2018; Hendricks, Deal, Helms Mills, and Mills, 2020). I consider the airline’s several incarnations over a selected 68-year period (1919 – 1987). This period spans the airline’s self-identified inception in 1919, to its privatization in February of 1987.

While the origin of BA is contested, it is recognized that the airline’s chosen official start date refers to “the first regular international passenger air service on August 25, 1919, by Aircraft Transport & Travel (AT&T) between London and Paris” (Lyth, 2000, p. 865). The name British Airways (Limited) is not seen until November 1935 when a new airline was, according to Lyth (2000), “formed to develop services in Europe” (p. 883). British Airways PLC, the case study for my dissertation, developed over the years through a series of airline mergers and is not named as such until 1974.

The ending date 1987 of the research is chosen for two reasons. First, this created a bounded period enabling my research to go back in time and anchor the historical experience of organizational leadership over time. This is particularly useful as it highlights who were leaders in each iteration of the airline as well as clarifying how some leaders were chosen. Secondly, the nature of the organization is changed at privatization in 1987. Until privatization

the airline operated with significant government control. Research shows that this control influenced the selection and appointment of leaders as well as what the leaders were able to do.

The case method is suggested to be a form of empirical inquiry that allows researchers to examine phenomenon within context (Yin, 1981, 1994; Schell, 1992; Noor, 2008; Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010). Use of the case method facilitates the objective of empirical research.

3.3.2 Case study

Case studies often involve research focusing on what is occurring in a single setting. In this case, a detailed exploration of one organization's specific experience (Bryman, Bell, Mills and Yue, 2011; Yin, 1994).

I employ case method because I believe it supports the epistemological direction of this research. Specifically, it a) fits the type of research question "how" that is to be answered by the research; b) relies on 'archives' (Eisenhardt, 1989) and written accounts for the experiences and discourses being studied thus are less susceptible to manipulation; c) allows the exploration of the data within a measure of operating context, and d) helps clarify the boundaries between the phenomenon (leaders) and the contextual factors that influence the process of identifying who can be a leader (Yin, 2003).

The study I conducted is explanatory in nature and was geared toward explaining causal links in real-life situations that are too subtle for methods such as a survey technique (Yin, 2003). This is ideal as I seek to give insight to the question of "How" the intersectionality experience might influence the discourse of leadership in organizations.

Using case study, also helped to generate theory (Gersick, 1988; Harris & Sutton, 1986). My dissertation contributes to theory as it enters the leadership conversation by theorizing discourse in the composition of leadership.

Following Rowley (2002, p. 19), I propose that intersections where employee identities have influence on how employees are regarded in organizational systems, may impact processes related to advancement and promotion. I theorize that an intersectionality experience occurs within organization systems where (i) identity creates a contextual experience for categories of employees; (ii) employees by virtue of their contextual experience are marginalized regarding prospects for advancement; and (iii) the composition of TMT leadership, becomes the pinnacle of the intersectional experience within the organization. This pinnacle represents a new avenue of marginalization.

Yin, (1981, p. 59; 1994, p. 13) summarizes the case method as a research strategy with the distinguishing characteristic that it facilitates the conduct of *an empirical inquiry that*:

- *investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when*
- *the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and multiple sources of evidence are used.*

Eisenhardt (1989) speaks to the value of the case method research approach in its application to “new topic areas” suggesting the possibility for novel, testable and empirically valid theory (p. 532) and, “suitability for new research areas for which existing theory seems inadequate” (p. 548-549). Rowley (2002, p. 16), suggests that the most challenging aspect will be to “lift the investigation from a ‘descriptive account’ of what happens, to a piece of research that can lay claim to being ... addition to knowledge.” Kieser (1994) posits that “it is important to know something of the historical development of a company in order to understand the contemporary institution” (p. 609). Finally, an additional strength of case study offered by Tellis (1997) is that case studies allow space for ‘voices’ of the powerless and voiceless to be heard.

Despite criticisms levelled at the case method (Miles, 1979) I believe that employing the case method is appropriate to support the principal work of CDA. This despite the time consuming (Schell, 1992), nature of data collection, sorting and analysis, and potential bias by the researcher. Case study has been useful in enabling this research as an empirical exercise, enabling me to be specific in identifying where the discourse being analyzed, such as that of past leaders, occurred and to understand it in context.

3.3.3 Archival Research

The dissertation employs archival data from the British Airways archives, including Minutes from Annual General Meetings, internally produced magazines, newsletters, and other documents. Additionally, other items such as pictures of uniforms, airline carry bags, photographs and memorabilia were examined, and considered for “later use” in the research, (Das, Jain, and Mishra, 2016, p. 138). Mills and Helms Mills, (2018, p. 34) suggest that the view of what an archive is differs depending on the research perspective and “approach to history and the past”. I am mindful of my intent for the dissertation (p. 33) and recognize the post modernists’ view of archives as “a wide-ranging exercise that includes elements used in the shaping of what can be learned about the entity being researched” (p. 35), and the perspective of amodernists whose interest is “gaining insight into how history is produced as knowledge” (p. 36). My selection of archival items facilitated an evaluation of various aspects of the airline articulated through its text.

I take advantage of select benefits (Das, Jain and Mishra, 2016) offered by archival research. For example, I appreciate that the volume of materials engaged with enabled insight that might have otherwise been impossible. Archival material collected also afforded the ability to conduct research over time. Recognizing the interval of time covered, I rely on the idea of

junctures (Mills, 2010), rather than chronology, to facilitate an understanding of the progression of various discourses. This approach is consistent with Foucault's notion of discontinuity which has a significant "role in historical disciplines" and...has become "...a basic element of historical analysis." (1972, p. 8)

The archives, align with written historical accounts (Penrose, 1980; Jarvis, 2014; Higham, 2020), and selected leader biographies (Thomas, 1964; Smallpiece, 1980), to ensure that there is a measure of data source triangulation (Denzin, 1984) to help with trustworthiness of the 'story'. Together, these provide access to different discourses over time creating a nexus of meaning (Hendricks, Deal, Helms Mills and Mills, 2020). For example, archives show natives in cartoons that are often mocking or showcase them as not to be taken seriously; in Thomas' (1964) autobiography he refers to how natives were treated in different locations by the English visiting or living in their countries; and the written accounts when they do include pictures of natives often show them as awestruck as they gather around and gaze at aircraft. Initially, the nexus of meaning discerned from the three sources is that natives were not important in the context of the airline's business.

3.4 Methods

Qualitative research has grown in use and, since the 2000's has been published more actively than ever before by 'top' US Journals (Bluhm, Harman, Lee & Mitchell, 2010). Polkinghorne (2005) highlights qualitative research use of "language data" (p. 137) and offers the idea that "Qualitative inquiry deals with human lived experience.", and provides for "description and clarity in experience as it is being lived and constituted in awareness" (p. 138).

Qualitative methodology is aligned with the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT) and poststructural feminism, which place emphasis on ‘voice’, and the importance of hearing from the ‘other’. In keeping with Polkinghorne (2005) I used elements of languaged data to create a series of interconnected text creating a data pool for analysis covering a meaningful timeline.

The methods used were chosen to facilitate an examination of the discourse of leadership, and to excavate identity categories. Specifically, using intersectionality analysis as a heuristic device enabled the consistent grouping of individuals associated with the airline. Using critical discourse analysis helped me isolate and focus on ‘text’ which illuminated and informed discourse on leadership taking place in the airline. As an example, Jarvis (2014, p. 10) features three advertisements. Together these introduce British Airways as better than its predecessor BOAC; and highlight that the airline is international covering nearly 200 cities in Europe and 88 countries all over the world. They emphasize great care taken of “you” its passengers. The text provided includes pictures of airplanes, one man and one woman.

In this scenario, the lone man is dressed in business attire, being attended to by the lone woman, a flight attendant who is dressed in a mini dress, and is slightly bent over the man, serving him. The intersectionality experience indicates the marginalization of (i) women by their sexualization, how the woman is dressed, and role of service in the picture, (ii) racialized persons by their absence from the scenario despite the boast that the airline is international with a global presence, and (iii) privileges White men by their attire and position of being cared for, served. The selection of these items contributes to the discourse of the airline as they suggest designated roles for people in specific identity categories in the organization.

The notions of identity categories, power in discourse and voice were important themes considered in the dissertation. Critical discourse analysis and intersectionality employed as a heuristic device are presented in more detail below.

3.4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis, which has a focus on power (van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2011; 2013b; Wodak & Meyer, 2009; Jager, 2011; Jager and Maier, 2009), lends itself ideally to the objectives of this research. The use of the word ‘discourse’ is not unusual (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2000, p. 1127) although what it means might be understood differently by researchers with differing contexts and objectives (Graham, 2011, Wodak, 2006). For example, Phillips and Hardy, (2002) position discourse analysis as both method and methodology offering an approach to exploring and examining texts reflecting a set of “assumptions concerning the constructive effects of language” (p. 5).

Individually, texts are not meaningful. It is “through their interconnection with other texts, that the different discourses on which they draw, and the nature of their production, dissemination and consumption, are made meaningful.”, (p. 4). Discourse analysis is concerned with “how meaning is produced...how language constructs phenomena” (p. 6) and goes beyond revealing it. Implications are that the world cannot be known separately from discourse. In my role as researcher, I consider what the organization discourse reveals regarding the phenomenon of leader. For example, in the Jarvis’ (2014) scenario described on the previous page, the discourse highlighted by the scenario shows where power is at work, by the marginalization of certain identities. Power ‘of’ discourse stems from what can be said. In the discourse, the marginalization which takes place influences how the organization comes to know ‘who could be

a leader' both by how identities have been presented or included, and in the subtle contradictions in what the advertisement proclaims and what it pictures.

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) offer that CDA sees discourse ... as a form of 'social practice'. Suggesting there exists a "dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it, they support the idea that, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned." They further offer "Discursive practices may ... have major ideological effects - that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between ... social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people" (p. 258).

Chalaby,(1996) suggests that discourse is based on text or can be text itself. In my dissertation, I use text akin to Grant, Keenoy and Oswik's (1998) description. Thus, in this work text refers to words (written and spoken), symbols, visual items such as pictures, graphics, other art works, artefacts, and other memorabilia within the organization's context. Furthermore, following Chalaby (1996) discourse is recognized as a "*class of texts*", (p. 688). Thus, for individual texts to have meaning they must be considered in context. An objective in using CDA is to show how the discourses examined, together create an understanding of who might be leader in the organization.

CDA, was also used to help illuminate power at work in constituting the phenomenon of leadership. It accomplishes this in a few ways. First, van Dijk (2001, p. 350) offers "...in the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society", and Wodak (2011), suggests CDA as helpful by its interest in the relationship between language and power. Finally, Van Leeuwen (1996) offers that CDA should

be concerned with both discourse as an instrument of power and control as well as discourse as the instrument **for** the social construction of reality.

My theoretical leaning in using CDA is toward a focus on critical studies. This leaning lends itself to the employment of a Foucauldian framework for critical discourse analysis. Foucault is considered an early proponent of CDA, although he declined to declare it a method (Graham, 2011; Caborn, 2007). Therefore, even as I employ a “Foucauldian CDA”, I clarify that in effect I leveraged select notions reflective of Foucault’s work. These included items such as themes of knowledge, power, historical specificity, and statement as function (Graham, 2005), all features of his work. This is not unusual. For example, Jager and Maier’s (2009) methodology of discourse analysis is based on theoretical insights of Foucault. It offers discourse analysis as a process “of the ongoing production of reality through discourse, conveyed by active subjects” (p. 37).

Also important is the idea of power relationship to discourse: “Discourses...serve particular ends namely the exercise of power” (Jager and Maier, 2009, p. 35). In the Foucauldian sense, power “refers to a whole series of particular mechanisms, definable and defined, that seem capable of inducing behaviors or discourses” (Foucault, 1996, p. 394). I argue these mechanisms impact organization decisions, overtly and involuntarily. This leads to a reproduction of practices that influence organizational outcomes, such as leadership composition.

According to Jager and Maier (2009), discourses are important as they “shape and enable (social) reality, ... without them there would be no (social) reality” (p. 36). They further highlight the relationship between discourses and power. Distinguishing between the ‘power of discourse’ and ‘power over discourse’.

In *Power of discourse*, they suggest that discourse determines what can be said. This builds ‘knowledge’ over time, eventually determining ‘how society interprets reality’. By this, individual and collective creation of reality is guided. Thus, “the subject is not an actor making the discourse...it is the discourse that makes the subject” (p. 37). This concept is important as the use of CDA is intended to help us understand how the organization discourse establishes who is leader.

In *power over discourse*, (p. 38) “discourse as supra-individual” is introduced. The idea conveys that although individuals or groups might wield influence in different degrees, no one entity has full control over discourse. This supports the value of including a cross-section of voices and sources in examining the discourse on leadership.

Finally, my interest in exploring leadership and intersectionality, required I considered the systems of power, their domination and exercise of ideology in the construction and reproduction of the phenomenon of leader. I paid attention to identifying the reasons offered by various historians which alluded to determinants of who could be leader in the organization and, engaged in a critique of underlying assumptions. For example, on the creation of Imperial Airways in 1924, Sir Eric Geddes was appointed Chairman of the Board, he “had wide transport experience...and had been Minister of Transport briefly”. (Lyth, 2000, p. 869). The assumption that having experience in transport was sufficient, despite having no knowledge about aviation. Also, it appeared that a person named by government would be sufficient as leader when, in 1939 Sir John Reith was appointed Chairman. Sir Reith was alleged (Higham, 2020, p. 3) to be a political appointment. In another example, the new BOAC board was chaired by Sir Giles Guthrie, in 1964. Guthrie was appointed as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer to fill the positions left open on the departure of Matthew Slattery and Basil Smallpiece because of

political interventions stemming from the Corbett inquiry (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 172). It became evident that who would lead was more aligned to Ministerial intervention, or political whim than any specific, transparent, or consistent criterion related to the nature of the organization.

Notably, the list of Chairmen of BOAC between 1939 and 1974 (Higham, 2020, Appendix C) and subsequent appointments up to where the dissertation ends in 1987 appeared to be all Men, White, and most were or became titled peers of the realm. This is noteworthy as we recognize the influence leaders had in identifying who might become part of leadership.

3.4.2 Intersectional Analysis

In my dissertation, I employ intersectionality as a heuristic device through which identity categories in the organization are surfaced. In establishing the categories as a basis for representativeness, I have chosen to focus on three identity groups, gender which focuses on male/female biological, physical difference; race noted by visible characteristics of skin color and other physical features such as hair, and class determined by location in British society as a member of the titled, privileged aristocracy, or elevated by reason of professional training or business success, or as a member of the working classes. These areas of foci were exercised through the representativeness heuristic and are then used to explore the intersectionality experience of the organization.

Through this work I uncover how and where stereotypes (identities) were produced and how they reflect experiences of marginalization over time in the organization. The approach aligns with Konrad (2003), who proposes the idea of the study of identity groups rather than the practice of trying to capture all areas of individual difference presented in the diverse workplace. Using this approach facilitated a view of how these identity groups were seen within the organization, it highlighted where and how these identities were subject to marginalization. It

also enabled insight into how the intersectionality experience was sustained and reproduced over time.

Intersectionality characterizes a phenomenon that Hill Collins & Bilge, (2016) suggest can be used as an analytic tool in several ways. The underlying concept relevant to this dissertation is the idea of the interlocking nature of “major axes of social division” (p. 4). These axes include identity categories such as that of race, gender, and class on which I focus. In keeping with Crenshaw (1989, 1991) I theorize that identities surfaced in the organization, are subject to organizational processes leading to oppression, and experience new avenues of marginalization where these layers of systemic inequity collide. In the context of my dissertation, the new avenue of marginalization (the intersectionality experience) takes place in advancement to leadership. I argue the lack of diversity in top management teams to be problematic. The increasing prevalence of diversity in organizations piqued my interest in how power wielded through discourse, impacted by intersectionality of identity categories (race, class, gender) in an organization might influence the composition of leadership.

Rodriquez (2019) admits that multiple variables, and connections not easily seen, can make using intersectionality difficult, and suggests, it offers the qualitative researcher flexibility in project design. Having flexibility meant that I could innovate and draw on new ways to include both allowed and typically excluded voices. Additionally, Rodriquez (2019, p. 432) highlights a few areas for research using intersectionality, including how intersectionality is operationalized. She encourages attention to *intersectional reflexivity*.

Researchers (Crenshaw, 1991; Rodriquez, 2019), suggest that intersectional reflexivity, has the objective of *constant self-examination* seeking to identify and *address ways in which research practices could lead to intersectional subordination and disempowerment*. The

challenge lay in *the relationship between the participant and researcher in light of the focus on systems of inequality and unequal power relations that sustain them*. Furthermore, I engage with Rodriquez (2019, p. 448), acknowledging my own intersecting identities, and engage in “self-reflexivity to understand them” so that I could discern any biases that I might have (p. 449). Rodriquez cites Mason (1996) in referring to researcher reflexivity and the importance of “constantly examining personal actions and role throughout the research process, scrutinizing them in the same way as the rest of the data” (p. 6).

In my dissertation, I attend to these suggestions and when surfacing examples of intersectionality, I am mindful of measures of power allowed to the identity categories I am viewing, and *power of* what is being allowed to be said. For example, Higham (2020, p. 267) shows a poster highlighting diversity of BOAC cabin staff in the 1960s. That the airline overtly recognized women, and of different races suggested that identities formerly marginalized were beginning to be acknowledged. In my research, I could focus on women being relegated to a certain role or as I have done, choose to highlight that both gender and race, diversity were gaining recognition.

I set out to challenge notions of how the composition of leadership is achieved by illuminating the discourse that creates knowledge of who can be leader. In doing so, I contend that there exists an intersectionality experience which aligns with and contributes to the discourse on leadership such that the composition of leadership takes place to the exclusion of diversity.

3.5 Data Management

Knowledge about the airline derives from several sources (archival data, written accounts, and autobiographies), and is arranged for analysis, in junctures (Mills, 2010). Drawing

on these various sources, I explore leadership composition in the evolution of the airline, its environment in which it developed, and the discourse used in its construction.

3.5.1 Sources of Data

Following the past (re-tracing an organization's history in tandem with known events of the past) is useful to understanding the contemporary organization (Mills and Helms Mills, 2018; Rowley, 2002; Keiser, 1994). To do this, I selected discourse from both internal and external sources to facilitate an appreciation for the cross-section of influences on the discourse and ultimately how the discourse created the notion of leader in the organization.

By widening the selection of sources, I expected to be provided with input from several voices that could help shed light on how the notion of "leader" was constructed. I considered how and from where the data I examined was sourced. In doing so, I found that the 'history' which informs my objective is limited to the subjectivities of the archival material chosen. These in turn, are limited by an archive developed by 'voices' privileged to speak. Thus, the notion of leader which results is unsurprisingly limited to the voices of a few, largely homogenous speakers.

This resonates with the concern raised by Liu (2021) regarding what she terms as the universality of subject behind classical models of leadership, that is the notion that the models can be applied to anyone. Liu (2021, p. 22) suggests that despite many "successive conceptualizations of leadership...with universalist claims to applicability, their proponents were overwhelmingly theorized from a narrowly masculinist, white, and North American-centric perspective." I was mindful that as the internal sources of information proved to be homogenous in nature, my work must then more closely examine influences from the operating environment and organization's context. The intersectionality experience in the organization was expected to

emerge in the process and, I paid close attention to how the intersectional experience is revealed in the construction of leadership.

Ultimately the sources of data used included discourse on leadership from two leader autobiographies, British Airways PLC archives, written accounts of the airline, and articles obtained from academic sources.

3.5.2 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the discourse on leadership. Analysis takes place through the case study of BA, as it evolved over time. Data used is discourse derived from internal and external sources at junctures in the airline's evolution.

3.5.3 Nexus of Meaning

As I examined the data, results of the CDA, and intersectionality study are organized to surface power at work in how individuals/groups are identified. I considered the ways in which identity categories are treated and how statements together created the notion of identity in category and in roles. For example, examination of the archives provided limited mention of women in the beginning and later as women began to be acknowledged, the discourse highlighted them in administrative or service roles, in supporting positions. Women were not allowed to be pilots in the airline initially and their portrayal did not typically align them with leadership. Results from the autobiographies similarly occur largely to the exclusion of women and in particular women who would have worked at the airline while the selected leaders were there. In a rare instance we do learn of a woman invited to join the board as a non-executive member (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 207).

In this way, pursuing the discourse in each juncture, an understanding of how the organization 'knows' who is leader began to take shape. The sources of data generated insight

which when examined together created a *nexus of meaning* - a consistent understanding of a phenomenon derived from multiple sources, that helped further my theorization about the composition of leadership. Particularly, a pattern of appointments to leadership and discourse uncovered related to organization leadership helped illuminate how leadership composition might take place such that diversity is excluded.

3.5.4 Data Collection

Critical Discourse Analysis does not offer directions as to how data should be collected (Wodak and Meier, 2009, p.27). The approach I have chosen is iterative, and responsive to discourses as they develop. Graham (2011p. 667) offers that “[the]...Foucauldian notion of discourse does not seek to reveal the true meaning of what is said/not said.” Rather, she indicates that using the Foucauldian framework “...means to look at statements for what they do.” In my work I hold that statements lend to our understanding of who could be a leader and are pivotal to what we learn about what it means to be a leader. It is in the statements that we see the construction of leader taking place.

Foucault (1970) discusses the statement as an elementary unit of the discourse and describes it as a ‘function’ (Foucault, 1972). He refers to “... the analysis of statements as a historical analysis that avoids all interpretation” and stipulates that “the analysis does not question things that are said as to what might be hidden, rather questioning its mode of existence and what it means for it to come into existence” (p.109). Graham (2005, p. 8), borrows from Foucault in “interpreting the statement as an articulation that functions with constitutive effects”. In this way we observe how the construction of leader might take place.

Later, Graham (2005) comments on interpreting statements “...as things said that privilege particular ways of seeing and codify certain practices.” (p. 10). In this work, I follow

this understanding as a basis for establishing that I conduct the CDA within the context of a Foucauldian framework. In collecting the ‘statements’ (data) I look to see what/how the discourse might lend meaning to the notion of leadership in the organization.

Consequently, selected statements surround the notion of leader, and are used to help illuminate how the meaning of leader was constructed. The selection of statements is sorted by, and within the juncture in which they take place, this enabled me to secure the temporal relevance and the context of how ‘who can be leader’ develops. Operationalizing the case study involved the collection of data from the identified sources. I leveraged a strength of the case method by employing data source triangulation (Bryman et al., 2011; Yin, 1994; Rowley, 2002; Tellis, 1997) to heighten the trustworthiness of the data.

In collecting the data, I read the autobiographies and captured text that either directly referred to, or alluded to persons in charge, authority figures (leaders). For example, Sir Miles Thomas in discussing part of his executive duties, firing staff, specifically Cecil Kimber says. *“He was the first high-level executive that I had ever to dismiss. I had plenty of experience in the same sort of thing later on.”* (Thomas, 1964, p.209). Simultaneously, I pulled sentences that referred to race, gender and class identities. For example, *“...the fact remained that the African was obviously by no means the simple mutt-headed fellow that he was popularly supposed to be...”* (Thomas, 1964, p.64) and, *“Class consciousness of England was at its zenith the latter part of the 19th Century”*. (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 2). Also, *“Because half our customers would be women, I persuaded Lady Tweedsmuir to join us as a part-time non-executive director.”* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 207). These gave me insight to how airline leaders over the period considered the focus areas of leadership along with the specified identity categories of gender, race, and class.

In my examination of the archives, I conducted a similar process with varying results. I found much of the statements of discourse were available through pictures. These include photographs, cartoons, and posters for example. Written statements in the archives were valuable to the research as they illuminated the limited mention of rank-and-file employees, women, and racialized staff. The focus of the archives concentrated on equipment, operations and the pilot core or Executive leadership. This finding was confirmed in other research by Mills (1995).

Written accounts/histories were reviewed and provided text consistent with findings in the other sources. This enabled ongoing support for how the discourse that surfaced contributed to the construction of who could be leader in the organization. Importantly, as this is a qualitative work, I refer to the constructs of trustworthiness and authenticity for evaluating the research (Bryman Bell, Mills, and Yue, 2011).

3.6 Data Analysis

The dissertation was operationalized as an empirical study in which I focused on how what we learn about leadership “...evolves over time...” (Langley, 1999, p. 692) through discourse. The nature of my research takes a stance of ‘open scholarship’.

Junctures, pivotal or significant events to the organization are used to highlight specific periods in the organization’s evolution. Using junctures allows the exploration of the airline in a manner that invites organization of the work by key events rather than requiring purely chronologically defined periods. In this way, the discourse examined in the construction of the notion of leader is illuminated within context. Within each juncture, a critical discourse analysis is conducted, and themes of intersectionality excavated.

In examining the discourse, I follow Foucault. While Foucault is clear that his aim is not to prescribe a method for historical analysis (Foucault, 1972), I attend to key ideas he employs in

his work. I acknowledge the unities of discourse and consider the notion of discontinuities in the ‘history’. I particularly engage with the ideas of power, and knowledge which lie at the heart of Foucauldian analysis. Foucault’s interest begins with determining how the ‘subject’ is objectified and becomes known.

Key themes explored in the discourse include (i) *systems of power* “a whole series of particular mechanisms, definable and defined, that seem capable of inducing behaviors or discourses” (Foucault, 1996, p. 394). These systems include capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy and racism; (ii) voice, recognizing the contributions of different identity categories to the discourse; and (iii) knowledge, “what is valid knowledge in context, how it arises and is passed on, how it functions to constitute subjects” and “how it influences the shaping of the organization” (Jager and Maier, 2016, p. 110).

In each juncture, I sifted through the data to understand the boundaries of leadership, including who was in leadership, how leaders were talked about, who was recognized as leader and for what reasons. Along with this, attention is given to identity categories of gender, race, and class. These were excavated as I looked for references to how these identities were referenced. Where they were located, what they were doing, and how they were portrayed?

In my intersectional work, I harnessed insight from both the additive and the constitutive approaches (Rodriquez, 2019). Specifically, I began by using the additive approach seeking to understand what it means, separately to be gendered, racialized, or classed in the airline in context. This helped me to recognize and effectively analyze intersectionality experiences arising from the constitutive (multiplicative approach) process. For example: how Asian (racio-ethnic), women (gender) are located. Thereby treating the experience as occurring with a ‘simultaneous intersection’ (p. 433).

To achieve this, I take a “subjectivity-centered” (Rodriquez, 2019, p. 439) approach developed along thematic lines related to gender, race, and class identities. They were recognized by juncture and, noted for how they are portrayed, and included (or not) in the airline’s texts. In the process I examine the structural and representational ways in which intersectionality took place (Crenshaw, 1991), and how it is shown in the organization (Rodriquez, 2019). For example, in considering race I focused on the characteristic of skin colour and in cases where print material could not adequately reflect colour, I considered physical features such as hair type of the individual or their adornment. In each juncture, my examination sought reference to or portrayal of characters with these subjective identities.

In the autobiographies, there was no mention of racialized employees. In the archives portrayal of racialized employees varied. For example, in the first two junctures there was no mention of racialized employees in the collected materials, although there were occasional cartoons portraying natives somewhat negatively. Specifically, as the butt of jokes, or as simple-minded individuals gazing at aircraft. By the third juncture acknowledgement is given to the presence of racialized employees. B.O.A.C. News Letter (No. 6, September 1946) featured on its front page the picture of a Sudanese security warden, wearing his new uniform, turban and sporting a B.O.A.C badge bearing his employee number. The caption associated with the picture reads “*Men of more than twenty races serve B.O.A.C. in various parts of the world.*” (p. 14). The location of the caption is interesting in its remoteness from the subject, and although pictured, the man is never named. It is noteworthy that the photographer was identified. The caption is also interesting as it omits recognition of women of different races also employed. This is particularly striking as on the same page (p. 14), under the Heading, “*About Ourselves...*”, there are two articles, each accompanied by a picture of a featured woman, Mrs.

Eve Walker of the Press Branch newly married, and Miss Joan Orchard, personal secretary to Regional Director, West Atlantic, who was leaving to be married. In other instances, stewardesses are pictured ready for flight. Some pictures show racialized stewardesses dressed in locally inspired uniforms that reflect their home country.

In the final juncture the British Airways News, an internally prepared newspaper, often acknowledges the presence of gender as well as race, showing them to have achieved positions on various levels on the organization hierarchy. For example, (British Airways News, January 1981), pictures Dorothy Barret, member of the Board, meeting employees from the British Airways Reservations Staff in Nairobi. Included in the picture, are the Chief Reservations Officer, John Kiwara, a Black man. Kenya Bill Hedley, Manager, a Black woman, Timothy Ngeru, junior staff of color, Administrative Manager, Mike Hall, a White man, and Timothy de Souza also white. This picture exemplifies the increased acknowledgement of the presence of gender and race, and their changing status. Externally produced documents were consistent with what I found in the autobiographies and archives. Specifically, women are initially excluded, then eventually pictured in subordinate service roles, or shown as classed by their travel arrangements. Racialized employees are largely absent in the text, although we do see rare pictures that recognize their presence, they remain largely unremarked upon.

Using several sources is consistent with my objectives of a) including multiple voices and, b) securing a level of authenticity of the data. It became evident relatively quickly that saturation had been reached as throughout the four junctures examined, reports from research and written accounts provided corresponding information to that already uncovered. It is important to underline here that even though there are other histories of the airline, the material used achieved fullness and provided sufficient details to facilitate a plausible accounting.

3.6.1 Use of Junctures

The notion of juncture (Mills, 2010) includes the organization's past marked by events occurring internally, and in the organization's wider operating environment. These events mark pivotal points in the airline's evolution which I considered to be more significant to the discourse than simply tracing the organization's chronological emergence. Four junctures are used in the timeline of this study. They are, **J1** - the Beginning (1919 – 1939); **J2** – World War II (1939 – 1945); **J3** – BOAC and commercialization (1946 – 1972); and **J4** –Privatization, (1973 – 1987).

Notably, government actions play largely in each juncture as the Airline received significant funding until it became a public company. It was thus subject to the political philosophy of the party in power despite efforts made by some BA leaders who struggled to maintain control over key actions. For example, "*It is government's privilege in dealing with nationalized industries that it can meddle with the conduct of a business without the cost of that interference ever being revealed or brought to account.*" Smallpiece (1980, p. 57/58).

Additionally, as a global entity, events on the world stage held implications for operations.

The global nature of the airline during the period meant that there was significant diversity available to, and already employed, if not acknowledged, in various capacities in the airline. It is in this stage of analysis that the intersectional heuristic helps significantly to illuminate organizational diversity. In application, the heuristic sought out people wearing an identity described by gender, race, or class. Next, I considered how persons within the identity were portrayed by speech, location or by other forms of acknowledgment. Those portrayals were examined as 'text', discourse relevant to our understanding of intersectionality at work in the organization.

In interrogating the data, the discourse on leadership which takes place is presented along with findings from the intersectional analysis. Together the findings from all work are used to discuss what was learned during the exploration of respective junctures.

3.6.2 Discourse on leadership from the Autobiographies

The autobiographies reflect personal stories of two past leaders of BOAC. There were 13 chairmen over the BOAC lifetime (Higham, 2020), and although there are other chairmen associated with different iterations of the airline (BEA, BSAA, British Airways Limited etc.) I selected two from BOAC as with operations lasting more than 30 years (1939 – 1974), it offered a significant period for research to take place. Choosing both leaders from that entity would ensure that results would be from a consistent location. It was also meaningful to select different leaders, one a chairman of the board of directors and the other a Managing Director operating during the BOAC period. This selection enabled ‘hearing’ from TMT leaders in the organization, and who with an overlapping tenure would have been exposed to the same events and context of the airline’s past.

The autobiographies selected were that of Sir Miles Thomas’ (1964) titled, *Out on a Wing: An Autobiography*; and Sir Basil Smallpiece (1981) titled *Of Comets and Queens: An Autobiography*. The autobiographies were examined for insight on how leaders were socialized through life as they unknowingly prepared to take on senior leadership in a variety of organizations later in life. I began my consideration at the beginning of the lives of these leaders and end with their departure from BOAC. The men (leaders) joined the airline at different times. Thomas joined the airline on April 1st, 1948 (Thomas, 1964, p.264). Smallpiece was recruited by Thomas in 1950. Their leadership, in different capacities, overlapped between 1950 and 1956.

The autobiographies lend understanding to how leader socialization might have contributed to their discourse of 'leadership'. Leader attitudes relating to the identity categories, were considered due to the reciprocal relationship between organization culture and the influence that leaders have in contributing to an understanding of how identities including leader were recognized.

In my examination of the autobiographies, I also considered early (elementary) development of both Thomas and Smallpiece. In addition, I noted areas where they were exposed to identity categories and how they related to these experiences. Taking note of their comments about leader(ship), I also paid close attention to the context in which such comments were made and how they were expressed. The personal experiences are compared and provide an added dimension to the results of the archival results.

3.6.3 Discourse on Leadership through Airline archives

Archival documents used include text made available in i) the minutes of the Imperial Airways Company Meeting Minutes (1924-1939); (ii) inhouse publications including the Imperial Airways Gazette; B.O.A.C Newsletter; B.O.A.C News Letter; BEA Magazine; B.O.A.C Review & News Letter and British Airways News; and (iii) the British Airways Heritage Collection, (an archive of documents, memorabilia and artefacts collected to preserve the records of companies that preceded British Airways, PLC). The predecessor companies highlighted by the collection are B.O.A.C., B.E.A., B.S.A.A., British Airways Ltd. and Imperial Airways (*Heritage collection: History and heritage: British Airways*). The British Airways Heritage Collection (BAHC) is publicly available on the BA Website. These represent organization documents prepared in some instances for internal purposes such as the AGM minutes, while

others reflect material prepared for consumption by external readers such as passengers and other stakeholders.

Findings were again organized by juncture to ensure that the context was preserved. At times junctures are cross referenced to illuminate how the notion of leader is constructed through and across discourses. The archives were also examined with a focus on illuminating intersectionality in the organization as it was experienced in each juncture. I lean in to observe how these discourses serve to guide audiences toward treatment of and regard for specific identities. Consideration is also given to who were the leaders during each juncture and, how, when and where they were located in the airline operating environment. Any references made about leadership, and the depiction of leaders throughout these texts were also noted.

3.6.4 Discourse on leadership in Written Accounts and External environment

The external environment was also used to provide context for each juncture examined. This area is informed by histories and research developed by people not employed by the airline. These histories were expected to provide an arm's length, rendering of what the respective authors observed. The primary references include (i) Penrose's (1980), *Wings across the World. An illustrated history of British Airways*, (ii) Jarvis' (2014), *British Airways, An illustrated history*, and (iii) Higham's (2020), *Speedbird: The Complete history of BOAC*. These books are complemented by other work including the edited work of Dienel and Lyth (1998), *Flying the Flag: European Commercial Air Transport since 1945*, and Merry (1947/2014), *Women Military Pilots of World War II*. Additionally, as the Royal Airforce (RAF) featured prominently in the operation of the airline, I have used resources from the Royal Airforce Museum, to help provide more insight to the nature of the airline's operating environment.

I deemed this aspect of the research to be important as the airline existed within a larger socio-political environment. Also important was the fact that the organization relied upon government subsidy at several points, and was largely subject to government influence for most of the period under review. Therefore, I believed that what obtained in the wider operating environment would have bearing on the organization's operations and on how the idea of leader in the organization was constructed.

Finally, articles produced by academic research are also included. Findings are organized by juncture and used to strengthen the triangulation of data. I also considered generally available information related to the political leadership and their mandates throughout each juncture. Reference to major events occurring during the past, such as the impact of the dissolution of the British Empire is also included. The 'statements' of discourse that create the narrative around leadership in the environment, and the intersectionality experience were considered. I noted how power systems were already at work in how people were identified, portrayed, included, or excluded in the wider environment.

3.7 Summary

My dissertation develops from the perspective that beyond existing literature on leadership, there are unexplored, yet powerful processes at work in organizations which help to determine the composition of leadership. In this work I build on the notion that discourse is active in the construction of who is part of leadership. I suggest that the discourse which takes place is informed by few voices which are in part determined by the intersectionality experience within the organization as well as prevailing societal values and attitudes. The perspective considers that the lack of diversity in leadership is a longstanding feature concomitant to

hegemonic systems including colonialism, capitalism, racism, and patriarchy. The sources of discourse are interwoven impacting and supporting findings in each other regardless of location.

Understanding the systems that created this lack of diversity is necessary to recognize nascent origins of contemporary problems. In doing so, recognition of where organizational actions may not be occurring autonomously but rather emerging from historical context is realized. The theoretical framework employed provided a sound foundation for examining the problem the dissertation pursues. The attendant assumptions which underlie the research paradigm used are recognizable in the methodological framework, and the choice of methods used support the objective of illuminating discourse that impacts the construction of leader.

Centering the research in one selected case enabled an empirical study offering me the means to create “an action plan for getting from the research question(s) to conclusions” (Rowley, 2002, p. 18) and engaged the past in the process. Finally, using case study with archival research offered a research strategy that facilitated the development of my dissertation with “empirical depth” (Das, Jain and Mishra, 2016, p. 139). It was conducive to my ability to effectively employ methods of critical discourse analysis, with intersectionality as a heuristic in addressing the research question. Altogether, the elements of my research approach provided insight as I organized the results of the research. I contend, organization discourse and intersectionality experience combine to help our understanding of the lack of diversity in leadership.

Chapter 4. British Airways – Junctures I and II

My research question, How does the composition of organizational leadership discourse exclude diversity?, naturally lends itself to how I identified, selected sources, and collected data.

In addition, my interest in organization intersectional experience influenced how wide a net I cast in the data collection process.

Critical influential events identified for exploring intersectionality and leadership in BA over the selected period fall into four clear junctures of events of the past. These are J1) Selecting leaders at the inception of the airline with the merger of the initial four airlines in 1924 and the subsequent period; J2) the Cadman Report and resulting merger of Imperial Airways and British Airways Ltd in 1939 into British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) to form a nationalized air corporation and, its near immediate commandeering in 1940 for quasi-military purposes (Lyth, 1998, p. 51); J3) post-war re-styling in 1945, and the re-shaping of civil aviation with the retention of BOAC as state owned but with the creation of two new corporations with mixed but majority private ownership (British European Airways-BEA and British South American Airways-BSAA) (p. 51); and J4) the merger of flag carrier airlines into BA in 1974 based on proposals in the new 1971 Civil Aviation Act. Effective integration began in 1979 with the arrival of Thatcher's government and the dictate to privatize being achieved in 1987.

Noteworthy over the period were fluctuations in national political leadership and attendant policy changes, airline ownership structure, and occurrences in the aviation industry, and the general operating environment. Recognizing political leadership at the national level is important to our understanding of some of the external influences that might have affected decisions made about the airline. For example, under the Labour Party, the attention given to workers' concerns was often at odds with a profitability agenda. Nationalism was clear in the first juncture: the prospectus issued for Imperial Airways transport Company Ltd (later Imperial Airways) indicated that all persons employed on British territory were to be British (Quinn-

Harkin, 1954, p. 201), this accounts in part for the exclusion of references to race in the discourse.

I begin this chapter by clarifying the appropriateness of the case study selected for my research, and I provide a backdrop against which the case study unfolds. All four junctures are developed to illuminate the systems of power, such as patriarchy, colonialism, racism and/or capitalism, that were at work in context, within which the discourse takes place. This chapter then focuses on the experience of first two junctures.

4.1 British Airways PLC (BA)

The dissertation is developed based on the case study of one global organization, British Airways PLC (BA). Opting to conduct research on BA was practical as the organization fit the objectives of the research well. First, these objectives required that I select an organization that had executive leadership which excluded diversity. Second, BA, global in nature, had operating units located in countries worldwide. The airline's global profile evident from early on, presented a good example of an entity likely to have a diverse workforce. This provided for a strong research environment offering a wide catchment area from which to examine intersectionality at work.

Third, using this airline meant the availability of examples and information on leaders, including first-hand accounts in the form of autobiographies of former leaders. Leadership in the airline includes influences from both private and public sector ownership with the concomitant implications for distinct ownership aims and objectives which might have been required by either group. Fourth, the airline was ideal as it offered an opportunity for longitudinal research. Specifically, the airline claims origins in August of 1919 (Jarvis, 2014; Mills, 2006) when we are

told, its earliest predecessor Air Transport and Travel Ltd., (AT&T) made the ‘...inaugural, first regular international passenger...’ flight between Hounslow, London, and Paris (Mills, 2006, p. 21; Quinn-Harkin, 1954, p. 198; Penrose, 1980, p. 19). Over time the airline evolved through a series of mergers and restructuring before it was privatized in 1987.

The contested nature (Mills, 2002) of the company’s inception made it challenging to establish a start date. Ultimately, I chose to begin in 1919 consistent with the recorded inaugural flight, from London to Paris by Air Transport Travel Ltd (AT&T). AT&T has been accepted as the airline’s earliest predecessor (Jarvis, 2014; Mills, 2006).

4.1.1 Backdrop to British Airways (1919-1945)

My dissertation began in 1919 and I introduce the operating environment within which civil aviation, and the airline developed. The year 1919 marks the immediate period post World War I (WWI) and provides a context from which the intersectional experience across nations evolves. This chapter provides insight to the Peace Conference that took place in 1919 and underscores the limited representation of women, and the scant regard afforded nations located in Asia and the Far East. It also highlights the opinions of the key negotiators regarding the inability of African nations for self-rule and thereby leadership.

The airline develops against the backdrop of a world emerging from WWI. McMillan (2003) suggests that “for six months in 1919, Paris was the capital of the world.” (p. xxv) This is pivotal to how we understand the airline to develop, its choice of leadership and its intersectionality experience. During the time in Paris, world leaders gathered to attend the Peace Conference which, ostensibly had as its agenda the creation of a new world order. Goals of the core countries leading negotiations varied, and the general objective was unclear in the wake of multiple demands for change, concessions, and the vestiges of control. Although, “the Big Four-

Britain, France, Italy and the United States-had planned a preliminary conference to hammer out terms to be offered,” (McMillan, 2003, p. xxviii), those gathering at the conference sought participation in the ‘creation’ of a new world order, “drawing new lines on the maps of Europe,” in the aftermath of its demise. Stokesbury (1982, p. 313) alleges that South African Jan Christian Smuts suggested the “mandate” system”. Under this system, the German territories would be transferred to the League of Nations¹...who would assign them to states which would administer and hold them in trust for the League...with a yearly accounting of their stewardship.”

Additionally, attention had to be given to “Asia, Africa and the Middle East” (McMillan, 2003, p. xxix). Ultimately, the negotiations would develop around the notion of self-determination. The hegemonic systems of capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, and racism were evident during this period and created a context within which organizations would develop largely unable to escape societal values and ideologies in place.

The years post WWI were active periods in which significant turmoil and change was experienced in the organization and the global environment. Significant occurrences during that period were pivotal to how the airline and its leadership developed. This includes the work of the Peace Conference in 1919 and the gradual dissolution of the British Empire as primary examples. The ‘parceling out’ of the world conveyed the idea that the African nations were incapable of self-determination. Asian countries and areas in the Middle East deemed not quite ready for self-governance, establishing the not too subtle idea that certain races were not meant to lead. A notion not entirely dispelled with the granting of independence to many former

¹ The League of Nations was an international organization created after World War I. Its role was to provide a Forum for resolving international disputes. Although the idea came from President Wilson, the USA was never a member. (The League of Nations, 1920, n.d.)

colonies. The global conversation about national leadership is relevant to this study for its early indication of where one should look for leadership ‘types’.

The dissolution of the British empire took place in keeping with the notion that Britain could no longer afford an empire, nor could its Royal Navy protect it. Complicit in their own release, were nations making it clear that they did not wish to be ruled. This last notion from Gopal (2019, p.2, 29) referencing Frederick Douglass’s, 1857 Speech in Rochester. This was a right provided for under the treaty of Versailles (1919) which encouraged the right to self-rule. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa received independence in 1926; India and Pakistan in 1947; much of the Caribbean and African colonies achieved independence in the 1960s; while in 1997, Britain handed Hong Kong back to China.

In other events of the past, 1928 saw women in Britain achieving full suffrage. The crash of the USA stock market in 1929 and its aftermath led to a worldwide economic downturn, and the Great Depression (1930-39). Over the research period, globally, countries became more open and new arrangements and partnerships were formed encouraging collaboration in several areas. These had implications for how the world connected and highlighted challenges and opportunities for the aviation industry including British Airways. These events underline the colonial mindset, women’s struggle with patriarchy, economic pressure on capitalism and a country forced to address its colonial position. Events which coloured the discourse and intersectional experience of the time.

4.2 Juncture I: (1919 – 1939) The beginning

This period in the airline history takes place post WWI when commercial aviation in Britain was in its early stages and beginning to take shape. The development of aviation took place in the context of the creation of the new world order at the Peace Conference in Paris. This

process, we read (McMillan, 2003), included negotiations led by the USA, Britain, France, and Italy, essentially determined what the world would look like (who could, would be, leading; nations with the right to self-rule; and the led, nations to be placed under existing or new colonial masters). During this time aviation was largely a privilege of those in society who had the, financial, 'means (classed individuals), and was a significantly male endeavour. Merry (2011) indicates there were also women who held private pilot licenses as early as prior to WWI. Commercial aviation began to take shape after WWI, although the few aviation companies in Britain were small operations.

In 1924 Britain was led by a conservative government temporarily replaced by the Labour party before taking back and holding office until 1929. At this point Labour regained power governing until 1935 when the conservatives returned to lead the government through the war years ending in 1945. Knowing the governing party was relevant to the project as the aviation industry, a costly one for the public purse, also became a significant employer in terms of numbers employed. With labour in power, focus was on creating and maintaining jobs and a keen eye to nationalism, while the conservatives emphasized less spending from the public coffers and generating revenues from operations, a capitalist endeavour. Demands from changing governments had meaningful impact on significant decisions made by the Airline's Board of Directors, and arguably influenced government appointments to the board. Decisions included numbers of staff hired, composition of that staff, from where to purchase aviation equipment and aircraft, and decisions about which routes were to be made available, and to whom.

The defining characteristics of this juncture are highlighted in the aftermath of the Great War. It was a time when Britain was in mourning (Ketenacker & Riotte, eds. 2011) and the immediate post war economy seen to be successful. In a major turnaround, "By mid 1920,

Britain had begun its long-term decline to the position of a nation with diminishing resources...” (p. 130). The cost of war contributed to the huge national debt ultimately impacting economic and social conditions. Amidst this scenario with growing labour unrest (Godden, 2017), the labour party developed. Focused on attention to interests of labour, the labour party essentially replaced the liberals to become the main opposition to the conservatives who favoured reduced social spending. It was during this period too that women began to gain rights when in 1928 they were granted suffrage. This juncture reflected my findings in the airline particularly on the significant exclusion of women in the discourse. Discourse in sources collected put focus on attention to finances, and recognized government interventions in the start-up of the airline. The presence of class in the discourse reinforced the notion of White men as leaders, while the heroic stance toward pilots and the near complete absence of race in the text began to give insight into how the lack of diversity in leadership might take place. In this juncture, leadership was about who and what mattered and thus had the right to speak.

4.2.1 Flying Imperial Airways (1919 – 1939)

The coming together for peace talks in 1919 was helpful to an understanding of the intersectionality experience that was evident in British Airways. At that meeting, the United States led by President Woodrow Wilson, was pivotal in the negotiations taking place. He was described as “a southerner, ... son of a Presbyterian Pastor, ... remained a southerner in many ways all his life—in his insistence on honor and his paternalistic attitudes toward women and blacks...” (McMillan, 2003, p. 4). His background and upbringing are important as he would likely bring his values to the negotiations. McMillan (2003) writes that Wilson brought the idea of ‘self-determination’ to Europe. Describing it as his “most controversial and opaque” offering, self-determination included the idea of the right to self rule. Conveyed in a document drafted by

Wilson ... which stated, “We say now that all these people have the right to live their own lives under governments which they themselves choose to set up. That is the American principle.” (p. 11).

Wilson’s beliefs and attitudes as a product of the USA south were reflected in what became known as the Mandates (Crozier, 1979). McMillan (2003) in her work describes the creation of mandates as “a form of trusteeship...under the League of Nations or under powers to be mandated by the league.” (p. 98). Relevant to my dissertation is the characterization of Wilson’s attitude toward the need for mandates in which he makes clear the need for African nations, to have oversight while he “did not approve of mandates for European peoples” (McMillan, 2003, p. 99, citing notes from the Scottish Record Office). In McMillan’s historical account, the notion of the strong protecting the weak was an idea being reawakened, and the importance of allocating territories for rule and leadership by developed nations remained necessary. Even those European nations that were struggling were expected to eventually be able to correct their economic and political positions.

At the same time, Jan Smuts, a South African Politician and part of the Imperial Delegation in 1919 and “a leading force behind the formation of the British Commonwealth, the League of Nations and the United Nations” was influential in the crafting of the Peace documents that “helped shape the emergence of the post-world war II world order” (Dubow, 2019). DuBow (2019) highlights Smuts’, whose notoriety included his role in framing the constitution of a united South Africa and his active support of Prime Minister Louis Botha in creating a segregated South Africa, participation as notable. This was due to his role as part of the British War Cabinet, in which he [Smuts] "drew up plans for an integrated Air Ministry, resulting in the creation of the Royal Air Force.” It is likely that values and attitudes of these

significant characters (Smuts and Wilson) would have some influence in how negotiations took place, and discourse that followed.

The idea that people originating from African nations were not capable of self-rule or leadership, while those of European descent were, is a proposition that I believed later replicated in the composition of leadership and the intersectionality experience in the airline. Acker (2006) suggests that inequalities within an organization often reflect the inequalities of the surrounding society. The conference which took place with limited female participation was also reflective of how women were later portrayed in general in the airline and is also reflected in the airline's later composition of leadership. Specifically, the near absence of women in the leadership team.

In the first juncture (1919-1939) under recommendation from the Hambling Report the existing, four struggling small airlines were merged to form the "chosen instrument". The newly created airline would be privileged regarding subsidies, and it was to be run as a commercial enterprise (Lyth, 2000, p. 869). In 1924 the merger of the airlines took place creating Imperial Airways, a private monopoly, even while it enjoyed the status of being Britain's first national flag carrier benefitting from ongoing subsidization from the government (Lyth, 1998, p. 50). The airline's efforts centered around connecting the Crown with key areas of its empire - notably, India, Australia, and South Africa - by building mail and passenger links to those areas. Imperial Airways Limited (IAL) operated from early on with government support and had operations in diverse (as to people and geography) locations. The first four air services, and their entrepreneurial ownership, had bearing on leadership appointments, which appeared to replicate over time.

IAL offered regular routes between the United Kingdom and throughout the British Commonwealth until the late 1930's shortly after the Cadman Report² was published, and just before World War II (WWII) began in 1939.

The Annual Company Minutes of 1924 indicate that the owners of the original four airlines which merged, were initial members of the board of the new airline, Imperial Airways Limited. The Managing Director of the former Daimler Hire Ltd. took the role of Managing Director of Imperial Airways. The Chairman of the Board, Rt. Hon Sir Eric Geddes was, at the time, Chairman of the Dunlop Rubber Company, and a former Minister of Transport. Two of the directorships went to government appointments, leaving one position to be held by the Managing Director of the Dunlop Rubber Company

At inception, the number of people employed at IAL was relatively small and comprised approximately 260 members including 16 pilots (Quinn-Harkin, 1954, p. 198). Employees were primarily a composition of staff retained from the four airlines which were merged. Indications from the initial prospectus was that all employees hired to work on British territory had to be British (Quinn-Harkin, 1954, p. 201). This set the stage for the development of employment patterns across the organization. Thus, when numbers increased, to approximately 3,500 employees by 1939, the near absence of reference to racialized workers was not surprising. Staff were dispersed across airline routes, and were employed not only in Europe, but also in Africa (West, Central and South), the Far East, Middle East, the U.S.A, and Bermuda (Quinn Harkin,

² The Cadman Report issued in 1938 was a turning point for the airline. Specifically, a committee led by Lord Cadman had been requested to investigate (i) charges of inefficiency in the Air Ministry and Imperial Airways; (ii) the present state of British Civil Aviation, particularly in Europe; (iii) Imperial Airways system for dealing with its staff; and other questions not specifically raised (Quinn-Harkin, 1954, p. 210).

1954, p. 198). With operations so far flung the absence of race from the discourse indicate an early example of power at work, and intersectionality experience in the organization.

Regardless of the airline's structure, government officials were able to actively influence leadership composition, and operations of the organization. The airline first as a government beneficiary and later as a military operation commanded by government appointed officials, was subject to government input in the selection of members for its Board of Directors, *leaders*.

On the financial front, the profitability of the company in the early years was challenging. Imperial Airways incurred significant losses during the first couple years (1925-26). As profits began to rise in 1927, increasing annually up to and including 1939, the airline began to expand its fleet. Beginning with 20 aircraft in 1920 the fleet was increased with sophisticated and customized units totaling just under 80 aircraft by 1938 (Quin-Harkin, 1954, p. 206). This highlighted the link between financial performance and fleet acquisition and mirrored the ongoing discussions surrounding equipment purchases.

The Cadman Report (1938), with its required changes for IAL operations and the resulting fallout in airline leadership, was an important turning point. Its findings led to the decision by the government to take control of both Imperial Airways and British Airways Ltd (BAL). BAL had been formed in 1936 from the merger of several smaller airlines. Like IAL, BAL was supported by the government, it was given routes where IAL had previously been unsuccessful (Lyth, 2000, p. 883). It is important that BAL not be confused with what we now know to be British Airways PLC, the latter being the contemporary organization that resulted from the numerous iterations of the organization over time. Imperial Airways Limited and British Airways Limited under a then conservative government, were combined on November 24, 1939, to strategically form a single "nationalized air corporation" called British Overseas

Airways Corporation (BOAC), (Lyth, 1998). Airline ownership structure, as referred to earlier, fluctuated over time. The implications of ownership structure on leadership in the airline trajectory is relevant as the demands from private ownership largely focused on commercial enterprise and profits. Emphasis in this juncture on profits arises in discourse repeatedly in the archives, autobiographies, and written accounts. This again highlights what was important in the organization, the need for capital to sustain operations, and the capitalist objectives of shareholders. These dominated and influenced the focus of organization discourse.

Specific to leadership, from inception, the agreement creating Imperial Airways Limited included a clause that provided the right of the President of the Air Council to nominate two government appointees to the board (Quinn-Harkin, 1954, p. 200). As a result, how leaders might have been selected regardless of ownership structure would necessarily be subject to the external, government influence. Discourse on leadership would then hold implications for appointing persons believed to be able to further the government agenda regarding the airline.

From as early as 1925 in the archives, when the first Imperial Airways Company (IAC) meetings began, company minutes, suggest that the top management team/leaders in the organization were all Caucasian and male. Specifically, in the limited presence of females, who when mentioned, were in a context evidently not part of leadership. And also, the men listed were largely titled, part of the aristocracy, and no mention in any of the Minutes perused suggested the presence of other ethnicities. This illuminated the potential influence of systems of patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism on who might be important and included in the organization. Aviation at this time was a privilege afforded to primarily wealthy usually classed White men or those with access to one or both attributes. Minutes show that meetings began the same way with an obligatory greeting addressing '*Ladies and Gentlemen*' however, only in a few

instances was the presence of at least one lady remarked upon. Ladies, when mentioned, were often as an acknowledgement to the presence of the wives of dignitaries or on occasion of board members. For example, Lady Maud Hoare, wife of the Secretary of State was mentioned to be a passenger along with her husband between London and Delhi, then on to Egypt. “The Lady, her husband and their staff were the first paying passengers on the ‘Middle Eastern Service’”. (IAC Meeting minutes, November 30, 1927). The discourse leads readers to view women as relevant in their role of wife.

The first Imperial Airways Company Meeting focused on the newly merged operation and its routes, wrapping up with comments on staff relations. Other subsequent Company Meeting Minutes, after greetings, followed this general pattern. This included general reporting on financial performance, air traffic operations, fleet purchase, performance, or maintenance, new or extended routes and route performance, a general outlook, and tributes to staff. Of note when staff was acknowledged, much recognition was afforded pilots, engineers, and on occasion, managers. Little is said about administrative staff, where most women employed were located. There was no comment about racial hires during these yearly reporting. Exclusion of race from the discourse and the portrayal of women would establish the idea that persons within these identity categories were not only not seen but could not then be recognised for the purpose of inclusion in organizational discourse on leadership.

Indications of the presence of ‘race’ in the operating environment can be inferred from Company Minutes, route reports. For example, IAC Minutes (1930b) reference the ‘commencement’ of the Indian Air route and the African service. These minutes indicate that “*support was received from the RAF and staff of the Air Ministry and the dominions and colonies in regard to ground operations.*” Despite the acknowledgement of operations in culturally

different regions with support for operations, there is again little reference to women and no reference to people of colour employed by the airline. In the Staff section of the IAC Minutes (November 14, 1938), reports indicate that staff are in several regions, “In all grades and in all parts of the world there is a hard-working and devoted staff-employed in the air, on the ground, in works and in offices.” (p. 12). This recognizes diversity in operating locations but again, does not indicate whether the diverse locations included a diverse staff composition or what that looked like.

The Imperial Airways Gazette (IAG) (July 1928, Vol. 1, No. 1), began with the official tagline “*Official Organ of Imperial Airways.*” And in IAG, (August 1928, Volume 1, No.2) the cover boasted “*A magazine devoted to the welfare and interests of all concerned with the work of Imperial Airways and Commercial Aviation generally*”. As this by-line suggests, readers would learn more about people involved with the airline. While there were several mentions of women, mostly passengers, research illuminated that incidents did not necessarily view women favorably. For example, under a section entitled ‘Innocents Abroad’, readers learn about “the elderly lady who asked the pilot if he was the guard”, and “the lady who in mid-air asked the steward if he would mind getting her attaché case from the back, as she wanted to get out her sandwiches. (“The back” being the freight compartment to which there is no communication from the cabin.)” (IAG, November 1928, Vol. 1, No. 5).

In still other examples, women were referred to in alignment with their male companions or regarding their purpose on the flight. For example, “*Miss Mary Pickford and Mr. Douglas Fairbanks accompanied by Mr. Jack Pickford recently flew from London to Paris on the Silver Wing " noon service from Croydon. Their hostess Lady Louis Mountbatten, accompanied them to the Airport.*” (IAG 1929, Vol. 2, No. 17). What this discourse does is mitigate recognition of

women illuminating the low value they held in the ordinary course of airline business, even while recognizing their value as paying passengers as seen in one advertisement seen below.

Specifically, IAG (May 1930, Vol. 2, No. 23) offers an advertisement appealing to potential passengers, possibly a particular appeal to female passengers, it bears the following wording “YOU may not be able to fly yourself to India like AMY JOHNSON, but YOU can follow her example and fly as a passenger in luxury and comfort in the regular weekly INDIA AIR MAIL which leaves London every Saturday and reaches India the following Friday. Send your letters this way too.”

In 1930 a point of rupture, a change occurred in how the minutes were ordinarily presented. Pictures were added to the minutes and began to show aspects of the airline outside of equipment, route maps and structures. This is interesting as discourse in the minutes typically presented accounting, information about routes, and other business information with the selective inclusion of participants, usually White men, when describing operations. The rupture occurs as the earlier selectivity, the silencing of gender and race identity categories, manifested in what I describe as the intersectionality experience, is interrupted. Whereas these identity categories had previously been absent, the addition of pictures now illuminated the diversity that existed in and around the airline and its business. It is in these pictures, which although still predominantly depicting White males and aircraft, we begin to see increasing diversity, with the inclusion of more women and on the rare occasion native racialized people. For example, in IAC minutes (September 1930, p. 8) the presence of race diversity is seen in the locals gathered around an aircraft on the India Mail run. Race is also introduced in pictures with racialized local people viewing aircraft and flying boats for example (IAG, January 1931, Vol. 3, No. xiii, and July 31, Vol. 3, No. 36).

Class is also highlighted by several photographs in IAG (August 1931, Vol. 3, No. 37) which show men and women (White) lounging and standing in the Victoria, Airways Terminus in London. In film produced (British Pathe, 1930) Prince Takamatsu and his wife tour Croydon Airport in 1930 showing race and class intersecting. Race is highlighted in IAG, (January 1932, Vol. 4, No. 41) where pictures show the Crown Prince of Ethiopia alighting from the aircraft for his tour of inspection at the airport of London (Croydon) in December 1931. Pictures of racialized people employed by the Airline also begin to appear. For example, one picture shows the Custodian of the Dodoma Rest House, a man of color, and in another we see what appears to be native peoples helping to re-fuel at Kosti in the city of Karachi. No mention was found of racialized employees, yet we see pictures that indicate their presence around the airline.

Diversity in the airline really emerges in special features. Some of these make mention of women and others comment on racialized persons, for example dignitaries. In other features there is acknowledgement that other countries with varying terrain and conditions were being travelled to, acknowledging the possibility of the airline interacting with other peoples. Another example is when in one feature, "AS OTHERS SEE US", Admiral Mark Kerr, a former Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, told the Women's Engineering Society in London ... "*There is nothing in the world-no steamship or railway line so safe as Imperial Airways, which has lost less than one life for every million miles of flight.*" (IAG, October 1935, p. 4). In the same issue, we see a photograph of native children surrounding a plane about to take off.

In yet another issue of the Imperial Airways Gazette an article entitled "TO BERMUDA BY AIR, A TRIBUTE BY AN AMERICAN AUTHORITY" refers to the role of stewardesses. "...*Stewardesses have to be trained nurses, among other requirements, and while they are as efficient in the air as stewards, I have observed that some passengers do not like to see a young*

woman with such an education acting as a waitress and doing "chores" expected of a Pullman porter. There is no question but that stewardesses have great advantages over stewards in looking after women passengers." (IAG, February 1938, p. 2). The change to discourse that makes visible categories that were once excluded while offering a more complete rendering of the airlines business, does not make the leap to inclusion of gender and race in a manner that might have these identity categories considered for the leadership team.

Ultimately, the focus of meetings highlighted what was important. For example, a motion was made for the increase in fees to be paid to board members who had been working at the same rate as set in 1924 despite "a significant increase in effort." (IAC Meeting minutes, November 10, 1936). Generally, the focus, for most company meetings was primarily matters related to financial performance, airline condition and routes, as well as management of equipment.

Attention to leadership in the minutes came at the end of each company meeting when the Chairman was thanked, and a vote of confidence given to the Board. This reporting format is consistent in minutes from 1925 – 1938. No company minutes were provided in 1939 the year in which IAL was merged with British Airways Limited to become the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC).

In the written accounts, Penrose (1980) provided a focus on illustrations related to the airline and its business. In the first juncture, most of these pictures were primarily of aircraft exterior photos and drawings to enable appropriate measures of scale. The Penrose Account focused on specific events of the past that surrounded the operations of the original entity, Imperial Airways. The airline intersectionality experience is seen in select illustrations. For example, pictures depicting employees were largely that of White men. Pilots or leaders in the

airline or nationally. These include a photo of a “...newly uniformed male steward...” (Penrose, 1980, p. 82), and a photo of “The captain and First Officer on the flight deck...” (p. 10).

There are few illustrations of racialized people. These include photos of darker skinned people, with features blurred, looking at aircraft, (p. 77) it is noted that they are not mentioned in the caption. Gender is also shown on (p. 99; p. 103) at the intersection with class with a little girl along with two well dressed men standing on the promenade deck in-flight, and well-dressed women passengers seated on a plane being attended to by the Steward. Virtually no mention of culturally different persons being employed by the airline is made. In another photo depicting native men, women, and children, the caption reads, “The locals flock in their hundreds to inspect and wonder at City of Arundel - the first Argosy to land at Khartoum on the England-Central Africa service in March 1931” (Penrose, 1980, p. 52) portrays racialized people as awed by aircraft, not part of the team that might work on it.

The intersectionality experience takes place in the Penrose (1980) history by the relative exclusion of racialized people, limited inclusion of women and, emphasis on class being shown in repeated illustrations. With this discourse it becomes evident that racialized people were not necessarily seen as active employees, and women were not seen in roles outside of service or as part of the lucrative passenger base. The nature of this discourse suggests that the composition of leadership would not include consideration of race and gender as this is not how they were seen in the airline.

Other discourse during the first juncture inclined toward discussion of leadership derived largely from the form of operation and the level and type of government involvement that should see the new merged airline into operations. For example, there were directives “All aircraft must be available for the Government in a national emergency.” (Penrose, 1980, p.38). Concerns

regarding who would be appointed in leadership roles such as “manager? chief pilot? chief engineer?” (p. 39) were prevalent. Six directors were appointed including members from the merged airline companies (Lyth, 1998, p. 50). The board was designed to accommodate inclusion of two government representatives (Penrose, 1980, p. 40). Leadership was thus determined with full government involvement despite being a private monopoly. Lyth (2000, p. 869) indicates that in 1924, the Apex of leadership, chairman of the board, Sir Eric Geddes who had some transport experience being a former railway executive, knew nothing about aviation. This suggests that leadership was not necessarily contingent then on skill or knowledge of the core operation, airline management. Established to develop progress for British Civil Aviation, the company drew criticism for its leaning toward profitability for its shareholders, (Lyth, 2000, p. 872). The discourse here provided insight into the hegemonic influence of government, politics, and an objective of profit on who became leader.

With the creation of Imperial Airways (IAL) the government retained the right to appoint two directors. Penrose (1980, p. 37) references Sir Sefton Brancker a pioneer in British Military aviation as highlighting a requirement related to staff, underlying the initial merger. Specifically, “the national airline agreement laid down that all airline pilots and 75% of the ground personnel, whether administrative staff or mechanics, must be members of the RAF, the Reserve, or the new Auxiliary Air Force when it came into being.” This imperative in the discourse is interesting as it meant that the pool of airline pilots available (from the RAF) would include a modicum of diversity in gender, race, and class, yet this diversity is not reflected in the documents nor discourses examined related to airline employment.

As the first British national carrier (Lyth, 1998, p. 50) the organization was actively building up routes into the far reaches of the empire such as India, South Africa, and Australia.

These actions received criticism in the Cadman report of 1938, for not building more connections in Europe. This position levelled criticism at the airline management for not paying closer attention to government policy and ‘failure to co-operate fully with the Air Ministry’ (Lyth, 2000, p. 885). These criticisms are relevant discourse reinforcing the power of government to speak into how leadership takes place. Specifically, it is in part due to the Cadman report that IAL was merged with British Airways LTD (Lyth, 1998, p. 51). The merged organization, BOAC, was nationalised to enable closer supervision aligned with the need for continuing government subsidy. BOAC began operating in 1940, and in keeping with government priorities was militarized under the control of the Air Ministry and the RAF. The selection of the BOAC leadership the early 1940s and WWII would necessarily include persons with military experience.

On gender, Penrose (1980, p. 43) introduces the notion of gender in flying in an account of Sir Sefton Brancker. Brancker, an Air Vice Marshall and British pioneer in civil and military aviation was noted as chair of the 8th, session (on 3rd of April 1925), of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). In that session amongst technical topics, such as “...*the unification of terms and symbols used in aeronautical technics; composition of aircraft crews etc*” he, importantly for this project, addressed the role of women in aviation. The decision was made, that “...*the exclusion of women from any employment in such crews of aircraft engaged on public transport*” should be enacted and furthermore, “*A woman transport pilot would have outraged the public.*”. For this edict to be issued in this forum underscored the role of patriarchy in excluding women from the profession. It illuminated the intersectional experience of pilots who were women, and simultaneously demonstrated the influence of societal values on decisions that impacted the organization.

In other research, Mills (2006b) indicates that by 1939, there were 500 women working at IAL in predominantly support roles. This represented approximately 9% of the airline's employees (p. 48). While there were a few women in supervisory roles by 1938, their authority extended oversight only to women.

The autobiographies had little to offer to airline discourse in this juncture, however, they contributed to my understanding of how incumbent leaders in the third juncture developed notions of race, gender, and class. Also, how they may have been exposed to accepted attributes and hall marks of candidates for leadership. The discourse excavated from the archives and written accounts in this juncture illuminates patriarchy, capitalist, and colonialist systems at work in the internal and external environments of the airline. These would combine to render race virtually invisible, gender silenced, and ensure that leadership occurred to the exclusion of diversity.

When considering discourse in the first juncture related to the phenomenon of leadership, the composition of the board of directors at Imperial Airways from inception, was predictable. Reviewing how that composition took place, there was little possibility of a different outcome in who became a member of the board or leader in the airline. Leaders were chosen from those who owned the existing flight operations and who were recognized in business. Moreover, government appointments pulled from existing members of the civil service or well-known men from industry. There could be no race represented in leadership in the context of how the empire was organized, nor would there be gender because of existing perspectives on the role of women in society, and on their constitution for flying.

4.3 Juncture II: (1939 – 1945) World War II

World War II (WWII) was the centering of this juncture. The airline and the world were focused on the war effort, and commercial aviation took a backseat to the needs of military power in fighting the war. Throughout the period, after the war, other significant changes to the British Empire also presented a challenge for aviation and the airline. For example, former colonies including India, once considered the jewel in the crown, chose independence from the Imperial state (1947). Many former dominions created their own airline services impacting the routes now available to BOAC. Independence also evidenced the ability of ‘othered peoples’ (raced and gendered), to lead. During the war we see race and gender increasingly involved in British aviation as Britain pulled human resources from the empire to help in the war effort.

A conservative government, led by Winston Churchill, prevailed. Churchill’s aggressive, tough stance made him a popular choice in wartime Britain for leadership (Stone, 2012, p. 33). This discourse underlies the idea of leadership needing to be strong, masculine, and tough. Leadership for a period of conflict.

British Overseas Airline Corporation (BOAC) conceived in 1939, was formed April 1, 1940, (Watson, 2013) by the merger of Imperial Airways (formed 1924) and the originally named British Airways Limited (formed in 1935). The airline on its creation was under control of the Secretary of State for Air and was commandeered almost immediately into military service becoming the transport service for the Royal Air Force (RAF).

During this time, BOAC was not intended to be used for commercial purposes as its focus was its militarization and “the RAF was to be given first call on the airlines resources, both human and aircraft.” (Watson, 2013, p. 142). The Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), established in 1940, had the significant responsibility to “ferry service aircraft from factories and repair units to

squadrons”. The unit bears special relevance to this project as it recruited one female member, Pauline Gower, in the year it was formed. Gower was eventually promoted to first officer, from which position she went on to build a women’s section of the ATA (Merry, 1947). Eventually, of the 1,318 ATA members, 166 (roughly 13%) were women (p. 22). This demonstrates the availability of a significant numbers of female pilots who might have been available to the airline and could have dispelled ideas about the capacity of women for employment to fly. Notably, opportunities that were afforded women to fly, were initially only as civilian pilots.

In this juncture, we are also exposed to the presence of racialized pilots and other aviation workers mostly from the Caribbean but arriving also from Africa and India to support the ‘motherland’s’ war effort. These points are significant to the study as they highlight diversity (gender, race) in the organization and in technical and leadership (Pilots) roles. Also noteworthy is that the leadership team, BOAC board of directors, increasingly included individuals with significant experience in military and business affairs. Specifically, in 1943 when Viscount Knollys took over as Chairman, “the board was increased, and military and business experience was increased” (Watson, 2013, p. 148). We also see the intersectional experience developing through the ATA which had an active women’s section, acknowledging the presence of women filling skilled roles and, as the colonies sent resources to support the war effort, we get confirmation of the presence of racialized people although both these identities receive little mention and are rarely discussed in relationship to leadership.

4.3.1 Flight with a Military focus (1939 – 1945)

When BOAC started operations in 1940, it was under the control of government in the establishments of the Air Ministry and the Royal Air Force (RAF). Penrose (1980, p. 119)

recorded a 1940 quote by Captain Cripps “...*August 31 should go down in British Civil Aviation history as the end of the pioneering era 1919-1939*”.

Under the new controlling interest, the former commercial aviation enterprise was significantly reduced as the new leadership turned their focus to the emerging conflict. There was no time to consider the commercial prospects of air travel. The new airline's capability in air transportation became important to the war effort and it was used during the war as a quasi-military operation. Commandeered into the war effort, BOAC had a principal role of maintaining overseas communications, and as England prepared for the war “...every kind of manufacturing and repair facility was diverted to war work, including that of BOAC.” (Penrose, 1980, p. 125). Throughout the war BOAC resources were used to air-freight cargo, equipment, and parts necessary to the effort. And in 1941, the airline also took over the Return Ferry Service (RFS) from the RAF.

BOAC was involved with the British ATA, through the person of Gerard d'Erlanger (Merry, 2014/1947, p. 22). Named as commander of the ATA, he was a former director at (BAL). He later joined the Board at BOAC serving between 1940 and 1946 when he left to join the BEA Board (Higham, 2020, p. 383). Gerard ‘Pops’ d'Erlanger was influential in the selection of Pauline Gower to the BOAC board in 1943. d'Erlanger who had been instrumental in setting up the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) and, was Commodore in charge of the ATA during its existence, was acquainted with Ms. Gower's role in setting up and, leadership of the Women's Auxiliary.

Higham's (2020), *Speedbird*, shows several illustrations of women in this juncture. They are, when found, mostly pictured as passengers on flights suggesting a level of wealth or, class. He writes, “*Cabin staff were traditionally men until 1943. Not until late 1945 were women fully*

accepted.” (p. 95). Higham’s account also recognizes the presence of class in royalty, as well as gender, and race in the reception line for the queen’s return (p. 201). In this juncture gender (women) are eventually seen in the very top levels of leadership. Women such as Pauline Gower coming from ‘*society*’, and who “*during her war time service after an active, independent career in aviation and involvement in creating the women’s ATA, was named to the BOAC Board of Directors.*” (Merry, 1947/2014, p. 150).

Between 1939 and the end of WWII in 1946, the number of “women employed by the airline rose to 2800” (Mills, 1995, p. 251). During this period, because the need for men on the front lines left a void which the ATA filled, women were able to move into roles ordinarily not available to them. For example, women had the chance to fly military aircraft and, “thousands of women flew every type of military aircraft including the most technologically advanced jets.”, and women were used to ferry planes and transport military personnel as well as to conduct more dangerous work with aircraft. (Merry, 1947/2014, p. 7). The few women who were later recognized in military aviation in the wartime were largely not seen as part of leadership. Pauline Gower, an exception, advocated for ATA women’s section to advance to higher classes of aircraft, and encouraged other ATA directors to support that women receive equal pay. Thus, females, by 1943 were receiving equal pay as their male counterparts “...a most unusual equivalency for that era...” (Merry, 1947/ 2014, p. 48).

Merry, (1947/2014, p. 21) credits Gower, for founding the women’s section of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), in 1939. By the time WWII came around, Gower, well known due to her social standing as the daughter of a member of parliament (Merry, 2014/1947, p. 21) already had years of flight experience under her belt. After being appointed first officer with the ATA, Gower went on to create a women’s section with an initial selection of 12 of her peers,

known as “society women”. Eventually reduced to 8 women, in 1940 the Women’s section began. These women went on to become second officers, restricted initially to fly light aircraft (p. 23).

In her account, Merry raises the presence of several women in aviation in different spheres of society, many of whom held pilot licenses. For example, she describes the role of Lady Loch, Head of the Women’s Legion Flying Section of Britain’s Air Ministry. Dorothy Spicer, a flight engineer, who partnered with Gower to form an Air Trips company which they operated successfully between 1931 and 1936, and Amy Johnson the first British trained female to hold the position of ground engineer, and the first to fly solo to Australia (*Ninety-Nines*).

Notably, Britain’s Civil Air Guard (CAG) employed female flight instructors, with Mrs. Maxine “Blossom” Miles attaining prominence as the first female commissioner in the CAG, a position Gower also eventually attained (Merry, 2014, p. 21). The presence of gender in formally organized aviation is confirmed from early on, and the intersection of gender and class is noted in opportunities in aviation before, and throughout the second World War. Gower along with Marina Raskova, Jacqueline Cochran and Nancy Love are recognized for bringing other women into military aviation in several countries (p. 17).

Women were initially not eligible to access the required training courses necessary to prepare pilots to operate in more advanced cockpits. These courses, available at the RAF’s Central Flying School were only open to men. Admission requirements, which were rigorous early in the war effort (500 logged solo hours were needed) (p. 36) were reduced significantly by 1943, when the acute shortage of pilots made way for women to participate. This discourse illuminates the presence of women in aviation, capable to captain a flight, yet the airline excludes them from leadership in its discourse.

Merry (1947/2014, p. 72) illuminates class as an issue. She highlights the existence of a dividing line between the social classes in the ATA. A division she quotes Gerard d'Erlanger, head of the ATA as having commented on "...[Pauline] Gower was "one of us", while [Amy] Johnson, a woman born into humbler circumstances "was not." It became evident that class was an elemental part of what it meant to be leader. Despite this, class as a divider is mitigated as these women pilots, volunteers, came from varied backgrounds (p. 37).

The question of the exclusion of race arises on review of records held by the Royal Air Force (RAF). The RAF was a pivotal part of the airlines' (BOAC and BEA) existence as pilots were largely recruited from those operations. Thus, I felt it important to include information from RAF archives which I believed pertinent to an understanding of the intersectionality experience in the airline. Research found in records from the RAF Museum archives tell the story of Black and Indian pilots originating from the Caribbean, India, and Africa. The records of the RAF Museum indicate the presence of thousands of black and Asian airmen and women that went to England to volunteer in the war effort (Answering the Call, n.d.). These volunteers served in all but one command. "*Black personnel served with all UK-based RAF commands except Transport Command whose personnel visited countries intolerant of integrated crews.*" (Across Commands, n.d.). RAF museum historians, through the archives, highlight the presence of this diversity in both WWI when the 'color bar' was removed and later again in WWII when the color bar was again removed with finality. (The Caribbean, Indian and African Pilots of WW2, n.d.).

According to these reports, exposure to Black people was limited so "*On arriving in Britain, the volunteers discovered that few British people had met a Black person before...*" (Answering the Call, n.d.). Despite opportunities presented for many regardless of colour, there

was still racism in place. For example, Billy Strachan, originally from Jamaica who had been promoted twice, ending his service as a first lieutenant, acknowledged the prevalent racism of those times. *‘When you arrived anywhere as the first black man, you were treated like a teddy bear, you were loved and feted. Two they coped with; it was when three or more arrived that things got sharp’*. Research indicates that the RAF took racism seriously, speaking out against it. (The Second World War, 1939 to 1945: Recruitment, n.d.). The following is an excerpt from an order of the Air Ministry.

Air Ministry Confidential Order - June 1944:

“All ranks should clearly understand that there is no colour bar in the Royal Air Force...any instant of discrimination on grounds of colour by white officers or airmen or any attitude of hostility towards personnel of non-European descent should be immediately and severely checked.”

Throughout the RAF records we also see the active rank promotion or/and citations for acts including courage, leadership and bravery demonstrated by these racialized volunteers. Records also indicate that at the end of WWII many went on to tertiary study including law, medicine, and economics. Some studied at highly regarded, historically White institutions including the London School of Economics. Eventually, many held positions of leadership in the United Kingdom or back in their home countries. The RAF files are relevant considering the limited reference to racialized people in the makeup of the airline especially in junctures 2 through 4, and their absence from leadership. This finding illuminates how the intersectionality experience took place in the discourse. That is, by the virtual exclusion of race in airline accounts.

The evidence of diversity in the RAF is noteworthy given the absence of diversity in accounts related to the airline's history. It rises in contrast to research that highlights the mandate for employment of persons from the RAF to Pilot and other roles. The organization intersectionality race/gender experience is easily recognizable mainly by its exclusionary nature noted during my examination of airline printed material, and in the written accounts.

Ethnicity also enters the conversation when we read that "the Women's Section of the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) had the distinction of being the most international of all women's aviation units." (p. 37). The ATA's membership, both women and men, represented 28 different nationalities. Merry (2014, p. 37) suggests the breadth, leadership, and dominance of the British Empire, along with the fact that countries such as Canada and Australia expressly forbid women from serving as pilots, contributed to the Women's section of ATA's recognition as most international. Despite its international nature, "the Women's Section of ATA was not racially diverse," (p. 41). Although black men and women pilots did exist in other countries, most notably the USA, this offered its own challenges to racial diversity in aviation, in keeping with the prevailing social attitudes under 'Jim Crow' in which local and state laws enforced racial segregation.

The British ATA was founded to support the RAF as a civilian organization, and its members recruited to be civilian pilots. Merry (2014) offers that "Under the management of BOAC there was no expectation among ATA's members that they ... would ever be part of the military." (p. 45). Pauline Gower and Margot Gore were awarded the Member of the Order of the British Empire (M.B.E) and recognized for their service at the ATA. Gower in her breakthrough appointment into the TMT leadership on the BOAC Board in May 1943, (p. 125), used her influence to draw attention to issues related to gender. For instance, successfully

challenged the Treasury ruling on female compensation, specifically, the rule stating that women should only earn 80% of what men made. ATA women pilots were raised in compensation to match that of their male counterparts. In written accounts, Penrose (1980, p. 135), pictures Pauline Gower along with the caption “Pauline Gower, pioneer British airwoman, shown in uniform during her service with the Air Transport Auxiliary.” This discourse confirmed capacity of women for leadership. It illuminated the prior silencing and exclusion of gender in the highest levels of leadership.

The transition from civilian to a military operation included several changes before civilian flights were curtailed. For example, it was “...during the war that the airline employed stewardesses on its airliners for the first time.” (Penrose, 1980, p. 125). Throughout the war, BOAC was militarized and used actively in the war effort. During the war, the airline did not operate as a commercial enterprise. As the war ended, plans were made for post-war use of the airline, which ultimately saw the airline being split into three transport companies.

4.4 Summary

The first two junctures were characterized by key events of the first juncture’s innovative ventures leading to new relationships partnering with government. In the second juncture, militarization, and participation in the war effort demanded new approaches and ways of operating under challenging circumstances. Patriarchy, racism, and capitalism were evident hegemonic systems at work in these junctures. As treaties were signed and the world parceled out to Western nations, colonialism was highlighted, while racism was notable in the virtual absence of people of colour in the discourse.

Kieser (1994), suggests that “...behavior and structures in present organizations reflect culture-specific historical developments.” (p. 609). He also suggests that looking at

contemporary problems with recognition of similar problems in the past one might identify the presence of ideological influences that might continue to affect current behaviors (p. 610). In my research, I follow Kieser, and argue that to better understand the lack of diversity in contemporary leadership composition one must consider the past from which it develops.

These two junctures highlight when and why changes in leadership were made. The discourses around the changes would have had an impact on the process of the composition of leadership. The evolution of the airline presents as an organization with a multiplicity of influences. The internal environment shows a strong leaning toward patriarchy, capitalism, and colonialism, although women and *othered* persons were evidently employed by the airline; they were rarely visible.

The importance of nationalism and military service were active undertones throughout the early transformation of the airline and are significant themes in the second juncture where merged commercial operations had to pivot into military use even as they changed. Researcher, Ogbanna (1992) challenges the notion of managing culture change at a deep level. He refers to skepticism about whether “deeper level values (taken for granted assumptions) are as susceptible to change as the more visible behavioral patterns” (p. 50). This raises the question “How do organizational leaders emerge from an established (as to values, attitudes and practices) organization setting devoid of diversity, such that its contemporary state might accommodate diversity in leadership?” In the next chapter I look at results from the third and fourth junctures.

Chapter 5. British Airways – Junctures III and IV

5.1 Backdrop to British Airways (1946-1987)

The immediate post-war period in the airline history saw a gradual return to commercial business at BOAC. This took place within the context of a divided Europe, where “British, American and French forces secured much of western Europe, initiating Western-style democratic governments in those countries.” (Mason, 2011, p. 146). During this period the ‘Cold War’ began, pitting the communist world against capitalist states. Britain, still recovering from the war and facing a “postwar financial crisis” stepped back thereby creating room for the United States to take a position of “leadership in the free-world” (p. 148).

The formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) under the Treaty of Rome gave rise to future economic, political, and social cohesion across European nations. Britain joined the EEC on January 1, 1973, offering the empire greater economic structure and allegiance for operations. Membership meant that Britain now had obligations within the EEC and would be exposed to societal values and attitudes toward gender and race prevailing in the community.

The operating environment highlights that the airline evolved during a period rife with potential implications for organization leadership which created space for consideration of the presence of women. Many of whom were competent and already recognized for ability in many fields including aviation. Additionally, the period saw gender and ethnicity taking on visible roles of leadership. A significant example, lay in the monarchy when Princess Elizabeth became Queen Regnant in 1952. In other examples, on the political stage with the secession of countries from their colonial hosts, leadership in newly independent territories included both race and gender. For example, Jawaharlal Nehru, who became the first prime minister of India in 1947

(Jawaharlal Nehru, n.d.), and Golda Meir who became Israel's 4th Prime Minister in 1969, (Golda Meir, n.d.). The era was a dynamic period where many events could be considered influential on how leaders were identified. The absence of diversity in the composition of leadership in light of this is problematic.

The third juncture heralded significant decolonization where countries in the British Empire demanded their independence. This was significant as several colonies which seceded sought to begin their own airlines. For instance, Ghana airways was started in 1958 after the country received independence in 1957. Although initially, partly (40%) owned by BOAC, by 1961, Ghana bought out the BOAC share and nationalised the airline. Relinquishing airline rights to independent countries had implications for British aviation routes as, these held related financial benefits that would no longer be available to BOAC. The third juncture takes us through the post-war consolidation of the airline and its final iteration paving the way for the creation of a new British Airways.

In the fourth and final juncture with the push toward privatization, there is a renewed effort and focus on financial stability and profitability. This included consideration of equipment selection, bringing staff together regardless of location, to open communication and encourage airline wide efforts to get ready for the divestment. Much of this is reflected in the British Airways internal newspaper.

5.2 Juncture III: (1946 – 1972) BOAC and Commercialization

In the immediate post war period, the airline was geared toward commercialization. It is in this juncture that the influence and contribution of former leaders, Sir Thomas Miles, and Sir Basil Smallpiece, at BOAC are positioned. What we learn about the development of past leaders

is found in their autobiographies. I spent significant time in the autobiographies because I believe that positioning, values, and attitudes of incumbent leadership is critical to an understanding of leadership composition. In the leaders' manuscripts there is much discourse that provides insight as to how incumbent leaders determine 'who' should be in positions of leadership, and what characteristics were important for leaders to possess.

Both leaders were challenged by mandates to turn the airline profitability around, despite interference of the government which retained control of the airline. This is important as it speaks to the continued influence from government on composition of leadership amidst the struggle for the capitalist objective of profitability. This, despite often conflicting mandates arising from political agendas. This third juncture is defined by the breaking down of British rule simultaneously with the drive toward commercialization and improving Britain's economic position. With this the airline looked for leaders with commercial skills as much of the focus was on procuring aircraft to handle existing routes and expected expansion.

Operational and cultural values developed from the former airline which were steeped in government, and political influence were likely to have transferred with the airline's evolution. The "buy-British" policy of the 1950s also impacted overall profitability as American aircraft, which had proven to be more economical, productive, and reliable, remained outside the scope of what the airline was allowed to purchase.

Later, in addition to staff working in the United Kingdom primarily at the Croydon location, employees performing a variety of functions were still spread around the world, located in areas to which the airline travelled. In one article, the new Chinese stewardesses on cabin training are introduced (B.O.A.C News, Vol.1 No.4, 1959) confirming this point. In another article, Paul Tay, the B.O.A.C Public Relations Officer tasked with providing "news releases

across the Far East”, is also introduced. The article highlights expectations of expansion plans, “There are, for example, more Chinese living outside their home country than any nationality in the world. Hence the importance of employees like Paul Tay, the Chinese, Japanese, Indian and Pakistan stewardesses, and the staff engaged locally at stations along the routes.” (B.O.A.C News, Vol.1 No.4, 1959).

These junctures highlighted new challenges faced by the airline in the form of competition from newly independent nations. Countries which, although remaining part of the British commonwealth, on gaining independence sought to nationalise several industries under their newly independent status. This included the creation of national airlines. At the same time race becomes more evident in aviation and in leadership with self-government and appointments of locals to office in newly independent states. It is within this context that junctures 3 and 4 come to life.

5.2.1 Commercialization, stabilizing the flagship (1946 – 1972)

In 1944 as the war began to wane, the government through the incumbent minister of Civil Aviation (Viscount Swinton), decided to restructure the airline by dividing it and creating three new entities. Retaining BOAC as state-owned, two other units with mixed ownership were created. By this action British European Airways (BEA) and British South American Airways (BSAA) were born with a majority private ownership (Lyth, 1998, p. 51). Each airline had responsibility for operation and management of the air service under its individual control, (Penrose, 1980, p. 141). The airlines were to operate on a non-competitive basis with specific and separate routes of focus. The post-war environment within which the airlines operated was significantly regulated. This was due, in large part, for the need to enable countries to protect

their aviation sectors from a potential American aviation industry hegemony (Dienel and Lyth, 1999).

Power levied by the government of the day was important as ultimately it determined what could take place in the development of the airline. In one example, Lyth (1998, p. 51) writes that under the Swinton 1944 plan for the future of BOAC the idea was put forward that profits from the airline might be massaged to aid in subsidizing select social services. Additionally, airlines were to be made to fly British aircraft; all this to take place without subsidy.

Additionally, the mandate to “buy British” was impactful as the industry was moving toward sleeker, faster equipment which meant abandoning the British made aircraft in favour of American planes. This would be a move against the expectations under which the airline, national flag bearer, had been developed and from which it evolved over time. Choice of aircraft was an ongoing point of negotiation between management and government for the airline as postwar aviation saw increased competition.

... we had to assess the relative merits of the different aircraft that could be available in time. The choice of aircraft was not wide. Theoretically, the Britannia 430 was one. But even if its operating costs proved lower per seat-mile than the straight-jet, none of us on the aircraft requirements committee believed that a propeller-driven aircraft could compete with the faster jets in passenger appeal. And from bitter experience off delayed deliveries, we knew we could not rely on getting Bristol aircraft when we needed them. Time was of the essence. This left us with only the American industry to look at. (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 84)

American aircraft manufacturers led the way in research and design of more efficient equipment, and to buy British threatened the airline’s ability to compete effectively. After WWII,

the aviation industry began developing rules and guidelines to regulate how the industry would function (Deniel and Lyth, 1999, p. 3). The regulations would also influence what British Airways could do in its own development.

These regulations were challenged during the 1960's as competition amongst airlines increased with the addition of several independent airlines which did not operate within the IATA framework (Dienel and Lyth, 1999, p. 6). Passenger demographics also changed during this time reflecting a roughly equal combination of business and leisure travel (p. 7). The challenge this brought lay in fare competition. For carriers like BA operating within the IATA framework with a set fare structure, competing was difficult. The regulations did not begin to ease until the 1980s during a period of liberalization and a move toward less government in market operations (Lyth, 1999).

I found that discourse again focused on equipment and was also centered around profits. There was, however, more exposure to women, race, and ethnicity primarily through photographs and posters as the airline sought to increase their competitiveness. This exposure was not without its challenges. For example, during commercialization after 1946, female employees although appearing more often in company publications, were portrayed in support roles or in images that sexualized their presence in the airline (Mills, 1995, p. 250). This contrasts with men whose images as pilots, in other technical positions such as engineers, or in suits as businessmen were often on display. That women are largely excluded from visible airline discourse or when seen, portrayed in subjected positions highlights the intersectional, gender and race, experience. This exclusion is different at the intersection of class, where women (White) pictured as passengers were shown to be privileged with special treatment for example, a passenger being served breakfast in bed by a stewardess (Penrose, 1980, p. 173).

Intersectionality implications for leadership is made evident in different ways. At the intersection of race and gender, we see the privilege of White males and the power exercised in the appointment of this identity in various spaces. The intersectionality experience occurs with the exclusion of men of color, and women in general from much discourse. Women, when acknowledged, are marginalized for the purposes of leadership by how they are located in supporting and/or service roles, in their sexualization of the exotic and their common referral to as ‘girls’. For example, BOAC “Holiday Girl” a popular feature at the Staff Day in Heston (BOAC News, July 1960), and the introduction to “Shirley- the first Asian girl in Flight Ops!” (BOAC News, August 1960), and in the same issue, an article titled “The new girl”, introduces Mrs. Maria Bateson a native from Spain who joined the BOAC ground reception team. Notably these references include women of different races, ages, marital status, and provenance. Another intersectionality experience lies in the almost complete omission of women of color in any capacity outside of that related to flight services, e.g., administration. While the authors speak to some areas of gender and class intersectionality, race-gender- class intersectionality is evident by the significant exclusion of race in the discourse. This absence would naturally preclude their inclusion in any discourse on leadership.

In 1949 BOAC absorbed BSAA leaving BOAC and BEA as the British flag-carriers, and after 1955, neither airline received direct operating subsidies from the government despite remaining fully state-owned monopolies with protected scheduled routes (Lyth, 1998, p. 52). In 1969 with publication of the Edwards Report³ the airline faced serious challenges. That report

³ The Edwards Report - “British Air Travel in the 70’s,” resulted from an inquiry into the state of civil aviation in the United Kingdom. The Air Transport Licensing Board (ATLB) which had responsibility for the economic regulation of civil aviation in the United Kingdom were having challenges particularly with the number of unscheduled airlines entering the industry. Along with other challenges the need to have “...the whole civil aviation policy of the UK ...” reconsidered became evident. (Burkart, 1974, p.62). The Edwards committee held that responsibility. The eventual recommendations of the report resulted in

was pivotal to the changes in civil aviation across the United Kingdom. Specifically, recommendations of the Edwards Report led to the creation of a second force airline in the private sector along with revised oversight for the two existing airlines and their ultimate merger in 1974. In 1971, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) oversaw the creation of the new airline – British Caledonian Airways (BCal), at which time, arrangements were being made for the merger of BOAC and BEA into a new entity, BA under a new Board (Higham, 2020, p. 301).

5.2.2 Leaders Early Life, Socialization and Development

I expect that leaders have the capacity to influence the selection of new leaders to an organization. This is no less true for the airline, and I selected two leaders for more insight through discourse selected from their autobiographies. The leaders, chosen for their positions in BOAC, and their accessible autobiographies, were Sir Miles Thomas, a former Chairman of the Board and Sir Basil Smallpiece, a former Managing Director. Thomas served first as Deputy chairman starting in 1948 until he took the helm as Chairman in 1949 and continued serving until 1956. Smallpiece was recruited to the airline by Thomas in 1950 to be the financial comptroller and, served in that role until May 1, 1956, when he took on the role of Managing Director (MD). Smallpiece resigned in 1963 shortly after the issue of the Corbett report⁴ and, a Ministry White Paper which "...gave a wholly misleading impression of how BOAC's financial problems had arisen and of how the airline was being managed." (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 181). The context surrounding his resignation was an example of government control over leadership appointments.

the merger (BOAC, BEA, Cambrian and Northeast Airlines) under one Board in 1972. Each carrier flew its own colors and branding until the Board united the airlines, creating in 1974, British Airways under one brand. (Wikimedia Foundation, *British Airways* 2021)

⁴ The Corbett Report was a private inquiry into BOAC in light of financial losses in 1961-1962. The assessment was conducted by John Corbett, of Peat Marwick & Mitchell, Accountants.

Smallpiece, by then CEO, and Sir Matthew Slattery, Chairman of the Board were invited to resign. The reason given was that the Minister had decided to reconstruct the board of BOAC. A new leader, Sir Giles Gutherie was named to take over both roles, and was tasked to lead the airline back to financial success. The decision to replace both Smallpiece and Slattery was made prior to their resignation and highlighted how the notion of leadership seemed to be conflated with government and political agenda. In an editorial from *Flight* magazine which followed the Minister's statement to the public, Smallpiece notes, "The Minister has spent six months reading Corbett and writing the White Paper. Then without showing Sir Matthew and Sir Basil the White Paper, let alone the Corbett report, he devises their resignations, puts in a new man with no experience of airline management and tells him to produce another plan within 12 months. The BOAC leaders are cast aside on the basis of evidence which, since it is known to the Minister alone, they cannot answer. Some may feel that it is a most disagreeable political act." Smallpiece (1981, p. 181).

The autobiographies provided context and timelines for the development of each man's socialization, professional/practical development and thinking, prior to, and during their tenure at BOAC, and made clear that both men had personal ideas about leadership. The discourse indicates that both were involved in recruiting and terminating members of the leadership team thus confirming a role for current leadership in the development of leadership teams. Importantly the autobiographies provided insight into development and thinking of members of the composition of leadership at the organization's apex.

Autobiographical manuscripts by Thomas (1964) and Smallpiece (1981) indicate similar life starts. Loss of a primary male figure was evidently impactful and was remarked upon by both. In Thomas' case his father died early on leaving the task of raising him to his widowed

mother, alone at a time when women were not ordinarily expected to ‘head’ a household. Sir Miles saw her as strong and capable “...*In my mind’s eye I can still see her on a great black brute called Nigger, pair of brown-gloved purposeful hands that kept Nigger’s head very much under control.*” (Thomas, 1964, p. 20). This is the first reference to race in the book. A pejorative term, usually assigned to Black people, it is used here casually to describe a vexing situation with an animal to be mastered/controlled.

Smallpiece, although born in Brazil, had little in his autobiography to recognize the presence of racialized persons. Taken to England by his mother at age 1-year, Smallpiece only mentions race during the early years when on his return to Brazil in 1910 he noted that he “*had a large black nanny*” (p. 3).

Gender is introduced positively, and we see through the manuscripts that both men were close to their mothers as important influences on their lives (Thomas, 1964; Smallpiece, 1981). Later they noted admiration/respect for their wives and the roles they played both in supporting [their husband’s] career, as well as for their work/roles in the wider society.

Both authors appear to have become very aware of the importance of class during their elementary schooling. They recognized early on that people had positions in life/society. Thomas pointed out the benefits available for those who had a little more “*The notion that all men are equal is quickly dispelled at a public school.*” “*...end of term placings in form... evidence of the speed of development in the educational sphere.*” “*Selection into teams...demonstrated physical prowess.*” “*Then there was a system of ‘extras’ also a distinguishing mark. Parents who paid ‘extra’ could have their boys supplied...A boy who could not boast of any extras was automatically down-graded by the other fellows.*” (Thomas, 1964, p. 27). Smallpiece, separated from his parents who remained in Brazil while he was sent to England

to boarding school, expressed how “...*unhappy and lonely he was there...*, (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 3) “...*I had to work out my own bearings, as it were, and to a great extent develop my own rules of life.*”

In 1923, Smallpiece’s plans changed from university to articling with an accounting firm where he had to start from the bottom. (p. 7). The experience proved important, providing exposure to leaders in various spheres. “*Great thing about being a member of a small team..., even as an unqualified articulated clerk, I talked to heads of the businesses we worked in ... With this my training in accountancy began to be worthwhile.*” (p. 8). Smallpiece, developed ideas on leadership through opportunities presented in his work with managers and leaders in different industries and client organizations.

Thomas’ career path was different. Joining the army during WWI, he arrived in Africa for the first time as a Rolls Royce armored car driver. The experience exposed him very early to interaction with racialized people. Thomas portrayed them as human while acknowledging their obvious differences from his cultural background “...*we achieved a certain dignity when the ebony black Kikuyu natives waved with a flash of white teeth the surprisingly pink palms of their hands. They were friendly...*” (Thomas, 1964, p.51). “*Black natives wearing only rags that made no attempt to conceal their private parts padded softly along the trails, followed by pot-bellied children and women whose breasts drooped further than their navels and swung as they walked. The women obviously were the beasts of burden.*” (Thomas, 1964, p. 52) and “...*the fact remained that the African was obviously by no means the simple mutt-headed fellow that he was popularly supposed to be.*” Here Thomas’ comments suggest his recognition of the potential capacity of Black people to participate in more complex levels of work while simultaneously highlighting the very low value placed on women of colour.

“Isolated as we were from the great world outside, ... it was the inward character of people that counted.” “...when the human personality is stripped down to essentials and the veneer of early environment and educational benefits is tipped aside, the true man emerges. And from that day to this, equality of opportunity rather than accident of birth has been my creed.” (p. 52) *“In spite of all our vicissitudes I developed a respect and liking for Africans;”* (Thomas, 1964, p. 64) This commentary highlights the value which Thomas placed on inclusive opportunities within the organization, recognising the importance of character in individuals regardless of class or race.

“Much more shocking to me was the way in which the British soldiery treated Egyptians.”

“...British Officers, NCOs and other ranks alike used to adopt an overbearing and quite arrogantly rude attitude towards Egyptians...towards the people in whose territory we were encamped we all adopted an attitude of supercilious superiority.” (Thomas, 1964, p. 72)

“...I am not concerned here about the way we treated the Egyptian women, who for long had lied in near-purdah...” (Thomas, 1964, p. 73). Thomas’ comments on the normalization of racism amongst the British contingent is interesting, considering his earlier recognition of the value and humanity of non-whites. Of special note is what appears to be his casual acceptance of the poor treatment of Egyptian women. Curiously, Thomas, although generally accepting of people from other ‘races’, did not appear to recognize them in the world of aviation that he would later lead.

We see several similarities in the early lives of these leaders including experiences highlighting the prominence of the mother figure, as well as references at elementary and public school that spoke to class. Furthermore, intersectionality is evident in the privileging of boys in

the elementary school system. Meanwhile, White women by their inclusion in positive ways, are also privileged. This is at contrast with the almost total omission of racialized persons. Systems of power exercised through colonialism and patriarchy are evident in the intersectional experiences which marginalize people of color through their exclusion and subsequent invisibility, and marginalizes women by their limited mention, and location in the discourse.

Thomas remarks upon his interactions and exposure to people from different backgrounds and ethnicities while in Smallpiece's case his autobiography makes negligible mention of people of colour. Both men in their respective roles at BOAC travelled extensively and came in to contact with other races/ethnicities. Notably, in their manuscripts when writing about their tenure at BOAC, there remains virtually no reference to the many ethnicities and cultures they would have encountered during those travels. These results were consistent throughout the nearly 300 pages that I perused in each autobiography.

5.2.3 Leaders Career and B.O.A.C.

Sir Miles Thomas became Chairman in 1949 fifteen months after joining and stayed with the airline for 8 years. (Thomas, 1964, p. 256). His time with the organization was prefaced by leadership in other industries, including the Newspaper business and automobile manufacturing. The concepts of leadership he learned were applied while at the helm of BOAC. For example, as Managing Director, 1937 at Wolseley Motors Ltd. he commented on the importance of communication, "*The great thing is to establish a line of communication from the top management down through the departmental heads and to the men on the factory floor...*" (Thomas, 1964, p. 182). Thomas used this principle to overhaul the aesthetic at Wolseley and carried it into BOAC using it to achieve significant change when he embarked on downsizing the airline in the late 1940's. (p. 279). He was involved with decisions around the composition of

leadership, for example when he fired senior staff Cecil Kimber at Wolseley “...*he did not fit into the war-time pattern of the Nuffield Organisation.*” (p. 211) “*He was the first high-level executive that I had ever to dismiss. I had plenty of experience in the same sort of thing later on, ...*” (p. 210) referring to the drastic staff cuts made at BOAC later.

Examples of other recognition of leadership by Thomas (1964) occurred on his taking office at BOAC. His comments about executives left by the succeeding chairman illuminate again the role of incumbent leaders on composition of leadership, “*There were good solid executives of the Lord Reith days. They were men of dependability, with enough imagination to have a healthy and active forward look*”. (p. 274). *In point of fact, they are very serious minded gentlemen indeed. ...Crews were mostly recruited from RAF Bomber command or Transport Command. Fighter pilots usually did not make good airline captains. What you want in an airline is not impetuosity but dogged dependability.*” (p. 280). His views on what leadership entailed were clear in his commentary throughout. When asked what it was like to work in different industries (p. 350) his response is telling “*I have always taken the view that basically the same fundamentals apply in any business. Commercial life is made up of relationships between people more than with any particular things. Especially is this so near the apex of the pyramid.*” (p. 351).

After leaving the British Transport Commission, Smallpiece credits his decision to join the airline in 1950 to three things “*First, it was a relatively small, nationalized industry, employing only about 20,000 people compared with the half million or so in the Commission; this would make it possible to get to know and understand the people who actually did the work, and so give me a chance to make a contribution through personal contact. Second, a Conservative government had originally set up BOAC as a public corporation in 1939, so*

perhaps it might not be governed by the same kind of thinkers who ruled in the post war nationalized industries established by Labour. And, third, it would be very different under the dynamic personality of Miles Thomas.” (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 24/25). The latter two points highlight the value placed on leadership by Smallpiece and imply that what leadership was incorporated specific qualities.

Recruited as financial comptroller, Smallpiece made his focus airline profitability. *“The BOAC that I joined in 1950 was in process of being transformed from a war-time organization operating air transport services for Government into a profit-conscious corporation operating scheduled public services world-wide on accepted commercial principles.”*

“BOAC was originally set up by the Conservative Government in 1939 as the country’s chosen instrument to develop the whole of British civil aviation world-wide.” (p. 26). *“At outset Miles Thomas had made me a part of the top management group of BOAC, and it was top management that really interested me.”* (p. 31). During his tenure with the airline, Smallpiece developed and oversaw plans that moved the airline back to profitability. In the process, he had to navigate the political shifting and the changing mandates directed at the airline as government party leadership changed. *“Accountsdo not and never can show what the business would have accomplished...without government interference.”*

“It is government’s privilege in dealing with nationalised industries that it can meddle with the conduct of a business without the cost of that interference ever being revealed or brought to account.” (p. 58). These statements are in the context of the airline being barred from competing with independents to troop, *“...the carriage of military personnel and their families to overseas bases and back...”* (Humphreys, 1979, p. 46), and cargo services, which held implications for airline profitability directly. *“I had come to appreciate the value of an outside*

non-executive director". "...independent of political favour. Their great value was that they could stand between the management of the business and the pressures on it from outside...those pressures could be exerted by Ministers and their civil servants whenever it suited them."

Consequently, the government's failure to re-appoint an outside director who might be prepared to challenge them was an issue. The statements here illuminate leaders' recognition of potential strategic influence of varying leadership roles in the organization. It also highlights the importance of strong, as to professional development and connectedness, external leadership.

The airline's focus on profitability meant that significant attention had to be given to equipment and its maintenance. Having reviewed both autobiographies and the written accounts I uncovered the struggle around fleet acquisition that could help airline competitiveness in the industry. "*At end of the war BOAC was desperately short of suitable aircraft for developing long-haul services to all parts of the British empire and across the North Atlantic to the United States. The government naturally insisted that BOAC should buy British, to save dollars and to help our aircraft industry get back on to its peace-time feet.*" (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 26). The process of profitability was impacted by the need to develop the fleet to deliver on changing airline services. The government mandate to buy British meant that acquiring the most efficient aircraft would not be possible.

Smallpiece acknowledges the efforts of Thomas's leadership in developing a "*coherent aircraft policy*" (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 28/29), and in significantly reducing staff numbers without strike action, thus beginning the path back to profitability. "*Miles was without question one of the best bosses I have ever had to work under.*" The attributes Smallpiece accords Thomas' leadership include, "*He was by any standard a successful businessman...he had a highly developed commercial sense, and perhaps an over-developed personal sensitivity in the field of*

public relations.” “He recognised and respected expertise in fields that were not his. He did not tolerate ineffectiveness.” “Once satisfied that you were the ‘man’ to do the job, he let you get on with it and made you feel he had complete confidence in you-one of the best ways of getting someone to give you all he has got.” (p.30). This highlights characteristics that Smallpiece, if given the chance, might look for in leaders. For consideration for a position in leadership, both gendered and raced individuals would have needed to be exposed in a way that these attributes might become known. The effective silencing of gender and race which resulted from their exclusion in much of the discourse would preclude these categories of individuals from being seen.

Leadership responsibility for Smallpiece, an accountant by training, included a close look at finances, *“Apart from my long-held belief that a man is a better manager if he knows how to control his own costs, it was essential to get such a belief widely adopted in a far-flung organization like BOAC, with its routes reaching out all over the free world and many of its managers very far from head office supervision.”* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 34). He was also in accord with Sir Miles’ idea of location of management. *“Miles Thomas I was glad to find, was a great believer in having his office ‘on the works’, where he could see what went on... This was, as he saw it, an essential part of leadership in industrial management. It was very much my own philosophy,” “Top management was no longer so remote.”*

“One of Miles Thomas’s great contributions to the building up of BOAC was that he gave us a unified sense of purpose and made us into a team. He also gave BOAC back a healthy sense of commercial purpose and profit justification, which had been lost during the war years.”

(Smallpiece, 1981, p. 36).

Smallpiece also had thoughts on civil servants as options for leadership roles. *“In any case, the civil service is often the worst field from which to recruit people to be heads of industry. With too few exceptions, the civil servant has never managed anything in his life and has little or no idea of how to handle people, His job does not require that quality, and tends to stifle creativity. He comments, criticizes, and reports from his ivory tower in some Ministry building, far removed from the real world. And he is never held to account for the result of his recommendations, nor held responsible for making ends meet financially.”* (p.70). Comments made after the resignation of Sir Miles Thomas and the appointment of Gerald d’Erlanger a civil servant who *“it seemed, would be easy to work with.”* The changes in the head of the organization also saw the departure of many senior people. Smallpiece who had at this point (1956) taken on the role of Managing Director was faced with recruiting for several key positions including that of chief of Flight Operations, a role he planned to fill from amongst the pilots. *“Meanwhile we were looking among our pilots for a chief of flight operations. Civil airline pilots are not the easiest group of people in which to find qualities that add up to human leadership...Nature of their work tends to breed individualists.”* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 74)

Recruiting for leadership roles was given priority *“The creation of a new TMT to fill the gaps left by those who had retired, or were about to, was immensely important and urgent.”* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 78). Smallpiece oversaw the implementation of the new management structure which included a management board at BOAC. *“All the same, we really had a two-tier board at the apex of the corporation’s structure – the board of members appointed but the Minister, all of them (except myself) part-time and non-executive; and the equivalent of the board of management, all full-time executives. I was the only member of both and provided the essential link between the two.”* (p. 79). This is significant as it highlights the importance of

leaders in setting the understanding and composition of leadership in the organization. It is relevant to note the limited mention of women, and the lack of mention of racialized persons in Smallpiece's autobiography. What it does is to prevent the possibility that consideration might be given to recruiting raced or gendered people into leadership.

Smallpiece also acknowledged the role of history in the building of good leadership.

“Looking back at it all from a distance I am struck by the debt we in BOAC owed to George Woods Humphrey and his Imperial Airways team. They were responsible for recruiting so much good material through their trainee scheme of the 1930s.

Many business commentators often make the mistake of crediting or blaming the man of the moment. It hardly ever is so...” and *“Businesses are continuing enterprises. Current events are influenced greatly by what previous generations of management have done and planned in the preceding years and decades. An incoming chairman, or for that matter a chief executive brought in from outside, can in time influence the trend and the image of a business. But he is inevitably the beneficiary, for better or worse, of what has gone before.* This suggests that leadership carries over time in an organization. The early void of diversity in the composition of leadership predicting its ongoing absence.

The members of the new top management group I had constructed were changed as the years passed. But this top group was the team, derived wholly from within the corporation, that was in fact destined to carry BOAC into the period of its great expansion and profitability in the 1960s and early 1970s.” (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 82). Although management changed, new leadership came from within the organization which was developed under the old ‘hire British policy’. Who was considered British therefore still determined who was available for advancement.

The lack of diversity in leadership composition is evident. As I have observed in the history of the organization, diverse identity categories were rarely commented on in discourse on leaders, and not readily evident in various histories. Smallpiece had intense feelings concerning change and he believed change would impact management and leadership. *“Management has got to change, therefore, and adapt itself to the new circumstances in which, like it or not, it has to work. It will have to recognise that its main function is that of human leadership, and that it may have to devote much more time and thought to the practice of this art than to any of the professional techniques from which it formerly drew its authority.”* (p. 104)

“Managers at all levels have to accept that a main part, if not the main part, of their job is to lead and inspire those they are managing.” (p. 104)

This juncture offered challenges in labor unrest, heavy government intervention, commercial upset with the secession of former colonies, and equipment acquisition. Smallpiece reiterated the importance of communication with employees, like Miles Thomas, he also oversaw a reduction in employees in 1958 without conceding ground. This occurred just before significant changes made in the Ministry of Transport resulted in changes to the top position in the airline including the appointment of a new Chairman. Increasing challenges with the purchase of equipment and, as the Empire became a commonwealth, granting colonies independence, BOAC faced the loss of significant traffic. It was during the early 60's and the challenges wrought of civil aviation worldwide, that Chairman, Sir Matthew Slattery and Chief Executive Officer, Sir Basil Smallpiece were pressed to resign. Incoming Chairman Giles Guthrie *acknowledged that the organization he took over was well managed and the profitability experienced was to the credit of those who had been let go.* (Smallpiece, 1981, p.

183). This acknowledgement was important in face of the request for resignation demanded of both Slattery and Smallpiece.

Smallpiece's closing thoughts on separating from BOAC were pointed in his commentary on leadership. "*Politicians and civil servants who have never managed anything more complicated than their own offices seem unable to comprehend the part played by leadership in the management of industry.*" And "*The leadership function in top management is every bit as important as technical competence or financial ability. The making of profits and the development of modern technical processes and methods will not readily, come about without a base of good human relations throughout an organization. Personal leadership in industry is even more important nowadays than it was in times past, when ownership or managerial skill carried its own arbitrary authority.*" (p. 183).

My exploration of the discourse in the leader autobiographies illuminated the importance of leaders in the composition of leadership teams. Leaders, it is expected, will bring to their role their socialization and personal beliefs. Furthermore, they are likely to be influenced by existing practices and rules in the organization. Thus, in an organization where diversity is silenced, it is unlikely that consideration for leader composition is likely to change embedded practice. For example, on taking office at BOAC, Thomas acknowledged women's presence and importance commenting in several places on the importance of good secretarial support, and the demanding requirements to be a good stewardess. He opines "*A number of businessmen in high places like to have young men as personal assistants. I had found that an efficient female secretary who had poise, interest, experience, a good memory and, above all, patience was what I needed.*" (Thomas, 1964, p. 274). He again venerated women in comments about the role of air stewardess, "*To become a BOAC stewardess at the time meant passing through a very fine filter.*

First of all the applicants had to show a high standard of education, know something about nursing, have one language apart from English, be attractive in appearance, but above all be psychologically stable and physically fit.” (p. 284). Of the roughly 1500 applications to become a BOAC stewardess, approximately 15 made it to the training phase, in which amongst other criteria they were assessed for, “...her general stability of temperament, her willingness to do menial jobs like making up beds or bunks in the air, graciously serving food or drink, and for deftness in carrying out domestic duties.”

“Anybody who thinks that an airhostess or stewardess is a glamour girl ... has a completely wrong idea.” “Being a stewardess on BOAC is very hard work indeed. What I was always looking for was competence, not glamour.” (Thomas, 1964, p. 285). This highlights that women were recognized as valuable in the business, and in his final notes Thomas (1964) acknowledged the importance of womanhood in his own development. “For myself I am content. From humble beginnings, without the guidance of a father but thanks to the loving devotion of a mother who saw to it that I had a good education and, by sacrifices on her part, a good start in life, I have been able to build up some reasonable position in the current community.” (Thomas, 1964, p. 394). After transitioning to Monsanto Chemical CO., he noted the importance of women, wives of executives “Big businessmen in America lay great store on the wives of their executives. They regard husband and wife as a team, working in the theory that if the home life is not settled and stable, then concentration on business interests will ‘not optimise’, as they put it.” (Thomas, 1964, p. 346). He also recognized the presence of women in leadership in the person of Anne Godwin part of the leadership of the Trade Union movement (p. 298).

Sir Basil Smallpiece also recognizes women as important to organizational success, particularly in the role of woman as wife to the male business leader. He was supportive of his

own wife and recognized the benefits she brought to their union. *“I had taught her to drive a car which her own family often treated her with being beyond her powers, and this began to give her confidence to stand on her own. She kept her home beautifully, modestly in our younger days but on a larger scale after we moved into Esher’s Clare Hill in 1957.”* *“Throughout the war she worked for the Red Cross, on hospital wards; and when the threat of invasion was real, she learned to use a .303 service rifle at Bisley and proved a better shot than I was. Later, when I used to travel a lot as managing director of BOAC, she made a point of getting to know the wives of our overseas managers wherever possible a useful contribution to maintaining morale in a worldwide airline.”* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 22). Other than comments about his wife and initially his mother, Smallpiece had little to say about women and made almost no reference to women at BOAC. In an important exception, Smallpiece recruited a woman to the Board. *“Because half our customers would be women, I persuaded Lady Tweedsmuir to join us as a part-time non-executive director. She brought to our meetings not only a woman’s mind but also a wide knowledge of the United States and Canada, our principal passenger markets.”* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 207). The discourse here served to reinforce the idea of the role of women as spouse and or support to the male endeavour or business objective. It is inferred here that women acknowledged were all White.

Thomas (1964), also spoke openly of racialized persons. For example, in 1946 on an invitation from the Prime Minister of Rhodesia (p. 242) he commented: *“On this trip, I was particularly impressed by the care that the industrialists took of their native labour.”* *“I registered the impression that Southern Rhodesia was well administered, and the Africans were fairly treated.”* (p. 244). Later after his time at BOAC on purchasing land in Southern Rhodesia,

he also mentions people of colour. *“For the first couple of years things looked good. Labour was cheap and plentiful.”*

“My African political philosophy was simple. I knew that Africans could not give a full energetic day’s work unless they were adequately fed with protein. The corn mealie pap on which ‘the boys’ (a phrase that not only includes old men but girls and women as well) were fed gave them no stamina at all. And so I decided to go in for raising beef.” (Thomas, 1964, p. 349)

Here the lack of distinction between gender when referring to Black people illuminates how Blacks were seen and in particular the low regard afforded Black women.

“African farming is a lonely business...Old timers and newcomers alike all place great – if unadmitted – responsibility on the shoulders of their colored ‘boys’. The way some of these ‘boys’ are treated is disgusting. To hear white men rate and rant at bewildered Africans who cannot rightly understand what they are supposed to have done or been doing is wholly shameful to anyone who has not been inured to the class of people that calls every African ‘a black bastard’ as a matter of course.” (p. 350). Interestingly, there was no real reference to race during Thomas’ tenure at BOAC, nor did Smallpiece make real mention of racialized people throughout his manuscript. In discourse from the manuscripts racialized people seemed simply not to exist in the airline’s employ.

On class, Sir Miles Thomas makes the following commentary in his concluding remarks: *“Most of my life has been under a Conservative government, and I sometimes like to think that I am a living contradiction to the socialist political sneer that only those privileged by birth or wealth that is inherited can live a progressive life in our society”*

“Men are not equals. I have spent much time and effort relieving inequality.” (Thomas, 1964, p. 395), Despite prevailing attention to class by society, Thomas appeared to support the

idea of an equal opportunity to advancement and by extension leadership. The ability to bring his belief to bear during his time at the helm of BOAC would be challenging in large part due to the airline's past and state of operations during his tenure where certain categories of identities were in the best case not visible. In a case where he might be willing to recruit some diversity, where this diversity existed in the organization, the portrayal and concomitant expectations of the abilities of these identity categories would not be conducive to membership in leadership teams.

In other discourse on leadership, the notion of religion having importance was introduced by Smallpiece. Stemming from a personal life experience and his subsequent participation in a group known as the Christian Frontier Council, Smallpiece determined that Christianity had its place. *"I came to believe that one of the ways in which God works in the world is found in the relations of men to one another-in the meeting of man with man and the interplay between their minds and characters. Out of this belief, the Christian in public life will develop a disposition to treat other people as persons in his dealings with them. This I came to appreciate later, is fundamental to the role of leadership in industrial management."* (Smallpiece, 1981, p. 21)

These comments highlight ideas of leadership, its responsibilities, and who could be leader in the Sir Basil Smallpiece construct.

From the autobiographies, even with a leaning toward recognition for meritorious behaviour, the very absence of these intersectional identities from discourse on organization recruitment and leadership, makes the decision on who could be leader a predictable occurrence – the somatic norm, the not-so-subtle, bounded, character of whom Amis, Mair and Munir, (2020) speak.

5.2.4 After the War, in the archives and by all accounts

Post war published material found in the archives focused on activities at BOAC and gender and race appeared more noticeably in the discourse. For example, gender is recognized when acknowledgement is given to Sheila Darragh who was noted for being "...the one woman instructor among forty male instructors...at the Corporation's engineering school at White Waltham. It is believed she is the only woman aircraft engineer in Britain holding 'A' and 'B' licenses..." (BOAC Newsletter, March, 1947). In other examples, BOAC Newsletters (July 1947) afforded voice to women in a feature titled "People and Places in East Africa". The article was written by (Mrs.) Eve Brewster. Later, (August 1947, p. 3) the presence of both race and gender is acknowledged under the caption "Some BOAC types, Snaps of our local staff overseas" provided a picture of seven men from different locations. These staff were dressed in national garb and were sporting the BOAC emblem in some fashion e.g., on their turban, hats, or clothing. On the same page an article is presented advising that "from July 1st, both male and female sickness benefits would be increased." Male rates moved to £1.58 per week, single women rates moved to £1.10s, and married women £1.05s. This article was also helpful in illuminating that women were also at work on the airline.

B.O.A.C News (1959 – 1973) which was first published in January of 1959 was used heavily, by then Managing Director, Basil Smallpiece, for its ability to ensure that communication with staff was made a priority. The publication with a tagline of "*BOAC News about BOAC...for BOAC Staff*", was relevant to an understanding that the discourse related to who comprised the airline, and who or what was important. Contained in two pages of newsprint, the contents covered 'everything' BOAC. This included a regular message from the managing director, and advisories to staff about changes in routes, new travel agreements with other

airlines, carriers, equipment, passengers, staff happenings, compensation and wage issues, significant events and flights. Examples of its content were articles about transporting royalty, on both domestic and international flights. Included amongst the events covered are, the January (1959) issue, flying the Queen mother and, March (1959), the Shah of Persia. The publication also shared significant incidents involving the airline e.g., crashes and problems with aircraft movements, expansion plans, purchases of new aircraft and/or existing or new technology affecting operations. A special section, *HowGoZit* found in each issue, was dedicated to informing readers on the number of passengers' arrivals and departures of BOAC.

In still another publication, the BOAC Review (September, 1952), had as its cover page a photo from Tokyo, Japan. The picture showcased a woman with oriental features being carried in a covered Palanquin. In general, information about notable national and world events, especially those likely to impact the airline, were also published. These appeared to be used as a mechanism to create connection for employees and, boasted of achievements and milestones by the airline encouraging a sense of pride in the staff.

A look at the British European Airways (BEA) Magazine between 1947 and 1972, provided content that although similar in nature to that of its sister airline BOAC Newsletter, had more focus on staff and their activities. I have included material from BEA as it was helpful in providing insight into the intersectional experience and leadership of this organization whose employees eventually merged with BOAC. In the 16-page, BEA, magazine style, quarterly/monthly publication, we see more photographs. Many of which were of women, such as air stewardesses in different uniforms. As well, children were seen and commentary on 'goings-on' in the life of the airline employees at work. The cover story (May-June, 1960, p. 5) of BEA's newsletter presented Ellen Church, whose notoriety was that of being the world's first

air stewardess, having been hired by United Airlines (UA). The feature had a cover picture of Ellen with six other UA stewardesses and was captioned “FIRST OF THE MANY. Ellen Church ... pictured in 1930 with the world's seven first air stewardesses”.

In yet other examples of BEA Magazine promoting womanhood, one article featured “The only woman on the BEA board” (BEA Magazine, 1966, p. 9). It provided a profile of Alice Munro, C.B.E who was given “a part-time appointment to the BEA board for a renewable period of three years from 1, January 1966.” In another example entitled “We had to kill the stewardess”, the article talks about the attempt to ‘de-sex’ the stewardess. It encouraged the view that intelligence and hard work are important attributes to have to become a good stewardess, (November 1947). In another example from BEA Magazine, an article highlighted an invitation to enter an international contest, Miss Airways 1950, seeking the ‘Perfect Airline Girl’. The article notes “...that this isn’t a beauty competition. The accent will be on charm, personality, poise, and professional competence.”. A final example in another sphere of the airline’s operation were women pictured in the BEA Magazine (1959) showing: “Mary Taylor and Jill Metcalfe operational research assistants, caught timing baggage claim activities at West London Terminal, as part of the work of the Organisation and Methods Branch of BEA.”. This last photo was important as it acknowledged women at work in other areas besides flight service.

The low rate of inclusion of select identity categories, or their use by the airline pointed to the organization intersectional experience as a process that marginalized select identities and very likely influenced leadership composition. I found that the archives generally treated gender, race, and class in the following manner. In gender, pictures of women began to be seen regularly in several of the publications. Pictures included those of famous personalities, and women employed by the airline and involved in different parts of airline life such as organization clubs,

events, and the introduction of new processes as the airline sought to become more competitive. In several cases, women being trained to become air stewardesses were also depicted, many of these were from other countries, for example from Europe such as Germany and more often from former British colonies including India and countries in Western Africa.

Racio-ethnicity began to be recognized in photos with different ethnicities joining the airline's employ typically on bases located outside of Britain. These included pictures of diverse women joining the airline as stewardesses. For example, in *BOAC News* (April 1959) we see a diverse mix of Crew. The caption reads "...a small party at Lagos to congratulate two West African girls the first West African Stewardesses to fly on international routes." Some pictures also showed men from other nationalities working on aircraft or used to display participation by members of different countries on the airline's routes. Many were displayed in their native garments. In some pictures we see natives gathered looking at aircraft about to land or, at Pilots recently disembarked. On occasion natives were shown as staff in select areas of employment such as in catering. Publications also showed the airline's active involvement in communities which included a children's Christmas party arranged for the local children, (*BOAC News Letter*, February, 1946, p. 6). Cartoons were also used by the publications although their portrayals of natives were often less than pleasant.

The airline's role as the chosen flag bearer and official air transport for the royal family highlights its attention to class. This is supported in the archives and accounts which acknowledge royalty, both domestic and international using the airline's services. For example, the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh pictured disembarking after the Royal Canadian Tour (*BOAC News* Aug. 1959). Also, pictures of dignitaries such as Prime Minister Winston Churchill travelling by Comet (*BOAC News*, May 1959), and famous personalities including Lucille Ball

and Desi Arnaz, and Elizabeth Taylor with her husband and children (BOAC News, July, and September 1959 respectively). Who is featured travelling with the airline, underscored who was important. Finally, a review of Higham's (2020) list of the composition of the BOAC top management team, shows that a significant number of the members were Peers of the realm. Many started out bearing the title of "Sir" consistent with knighthood. Over the existence of BOAC, 1939 and 1974, all but two chairmen (Clive Pearson and Gerard d'Erlanger) were knighted. d'Erlanger and Pearson were themselves also eventually knighted. Most of these men brought military or business experience and an interest in aviation to the organization.

In publications, such as the BOAC News, I found other nationalities, including Chinese, Japanese, nationals from western Africa, Indian and other women in national garments as well as western dress often featured. For example, an article titled "It's Chinese – and the latest fashion, Another first for BOAC", was published, using more than a third of the news page. The article was accompanied by Chinese stewardesses wearing the latest design in uniform fashions featuring a Chinese side split skirt. (BOAC News, November 1959). In a more sobering example, in the BOAC Newsletter (February 1949, p. 13), an obituary entitled "Old Friend Goes" was published. This obituary recognized the passing of an Emir of Masu Kakaki, and Herald for Kano Airport, Nigeria. The article indicates that the gentleman was succeeded by his son in the role of trumpeting to herald the arrival of aircraft. This suggested a close working affiliation with natives.

Although the BOAC News practice of featuring men and machines continued, after World War II, the airlines business including new partnerships and innovations were also highlighted. I also found increasing depictions of gender, and race in airline publications. For example, BOAC News (January 9, 1959, Vol. 1, No. 1) includes a picture of receptionist Peggy

Milford with the Winston and Lady Churchill 50th Anniversary Rose book. And in BOAC News (November 11, 1960) pictures of women, BOAC Staff sorting the corporations mail at London airport. Penrose (1980) included photographs of posters showcasing diversity in his book. For example, race is evident with a picture of a native man looking into the sky as if to espy aircraft (p. 154). And gender with smiling stewardesses of different nationalities under a caption reading “All over the world B.O.A.C takes good care of you” (p. 182).

Racialized people are also seen in posters encouraging travel to various countries (p. 155 and p. 202) and culturally different locations, such as (USA, Europe, India, Africa, Far East, and Australia). Finding discourse as pictures in the archives ‘humanized’ the airline even while it highlighted how categories of employees were marginalized by their omission, limited inclusion, or exploitation where their use furthered airline objectives.

Higham’s (2020) account is distinguished, by the additional insight he gives to leadership. His account provides a summary on the leadership between 1939 and 1974. For example, he offers, “As the management of BOAC so adequately proved, running an airline is a highly professional business which should not be controlled by a transient company of Ministers and civil servants...” (p. 370). Higham later suggests that “the higher direction of BOAC itself must be divided into five periods, which almost coincide with Chairmanships”. Illuminating again the importance of leadership in what eventually happens in the organization. BOAC, he states, also had a “strong supporting layer of top Management...with interwoven longevity” (p. 371). These latter characteristics as presented by Higham (2020) are “a sound professional team capable of running a profitable airline without outside interference.” Underscoring perhaps that there was some upset at the propensity for active government intervention. Finally, his commentary on longevity in top management implies that tenure in leadership might be

important, if this perspective holds true then there are implications for diversity in contemporary leadership composition.

Moving between junctures, it becomes clear that the 'seat of power' was developed on a platform of colonial, patriarchal and capitalist systems intertwining to determine the selection of leader. In each juncture, power leaned heavily toward Government dictum. This was clear by who would hold chairmanship on the Board of Directors, as well as board members themselves. "The Air Corporation Act of 1949 limited the Minister to making appointments to the Board; the Board alone approved the Chief Executive Officer." (Higham, 2020, p. 167). The chairman was not without some influence in who got named to the board. In an example, Sir Miles Thomas recruited Basil Smallpiece as Comptroller in 1950, and included him as part of the TMT. Smallpiece although White, was not classed, and did not come from money.

Evidently, philosophies and regulations by the incumbent government directed the selection of leaders and impacted organizational priorities. In keeping with Acker (2006) it is not unexpected that the conditions prevailing in the surrounding society would be replicated in the organization's omission of diversity in leadership.

5.3 Juncture IV: (1972 – 1987) Privatization

The fourth juncture brought change with plans to be removed from government control. It is in this juncture that the conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher began the process of divesting national entities. With the divestment decision, 1981 saw new leadership in the person of Sir John King, a successful businessman, appointed to lead BA, preparing it for privatization. The focus during this juncture was on rebuilding the airline to achieve profitability for investment attractiveness in readiness for sale. The airline was successfully privatized on

February 11, 1987, where this project ends. Of note on completing his original mandate, the newly titled Lord King continued to lead British Airways until 1993.

Thus, the fourth and final juncture is defined by the imperative of divestment. The airline was inefficient (Ashworth & Forsyth, 2015), a weight on the public purse and was a natural choice in the wave of divestments. Thatcher selected Sir John King a businessman recognized for acumen and success in business as the kind of leader necessary to make the airline profitable and attractive for sale.

5.3.1 A new British Airways: Privatization (1972 – 1987)

This final juncture is also significant as it is the period in which British Airways as it is now known, was created, it examines the preparation for disposal by privatization in 1987. The 1970's experienced many changes in the top management teams of both BOAC and BEA as they navigated challenges of acquiring new fleet, unsettled pilots pushing for pay parity, and new mandates from the government looking for efficiencies, and ultimately improved profitability in readiness for sale.

Aircraft procurement, profitability and labour unrest marked the start of this juncture. In 1972 discussions began around the purchase of a Concorde with the possibility of enhancing travel service to a higher level. This became a prime objective of BOAC during the early 1970's until it was achieved on May 25th, with "full operations envisaged for 1975" (Penrose, 1980, p. 264). The significance of this is best expressed by then BOAC board member Keith Granville, who remarked that the order of the Concorde was "...the most significant single contract undertaken by BOAC since the purchase of the world's first jet transport 20 years earlier" (Penrose, 1980, p. 264). This juncture also saw BEA, and BOAC, again experiencing significant industrial action by several categories of employees.

In September 1972, BEA and BOAC were pooled under one top management team, The British Airways Group (p. 265). Commercial operations of the airlines were still separate, but the incoming TMT set about implementing studies to inform decisions about future “rationalization and integration of route structure and aircraft fleet.” On April 1, 1974, BEA and BOAC were merged under the name of British Airways. (Penrose, 1980, p. 268).

This juncture also heralded a changed Management structure at BA. Beginning in 1978, the airline alerted staff to the efficiencies the airline would commence, and which had implications for staffing (Penrose, 1980, p. 292). In May of 1979 the conservative party won at the polls placing the fate of the new airline again in the hands of the conservatives. Full integration of BA began in earnest under the watchful eye of the conservative party led by Thatcher. Among the primary objectives were to strengthen the airline and shore up its routes in preparation for its divestment. A decided push to revitalize the fleet began and, in 1987, BA was fully privatized. Freed from its debts by the government, it regained the original status of its nascent origins in 1919, as a private entity endowed with certain privileges.

5.3.2 Privatization, in the archives and by all accounts

The History and Heritage Collection of British Airways (HHCBA), and the British Airways News publication were important sources of discourse for examples of leadership and intersectionality in the airline between 1974 and 1987. On examination, text from the HHCBA revealed that leadership and intersectionality in this juncture reflected much of the experience portrayed in documents reviewed in the third juncture. Specifically, a predominant focus was again on aircraft equipment, and/or features of the equipment in use. In addition, there continued to be increased recognition of both race and gender in the organization, and the portrayals by cartoon were kinder. For example, British Airways News (June 1982, p. 5) shows a cartoon

picture captioned “You should find something in the news from your neck in the woods, wherever that may be.”. The cartoon shows 7 employees (two women and five men) each representing a different ethnicity. In another example, in 1974 when British Airways, PLC began operations, Jennifer Tanburn was an Executive member of the board (Flight International Magazine, 1975, p. 477), highlighting that women were now being recognised in airline documents, and in leadership.

Several pictures of aircraft showcasing cabin interiors or stewards at work highlighted class and service standards. In an example, class was acknowledged by a picture showing the ‘Super Club Business Cabin (HHCBA, 1970, photograph #25). Text also made reference to members of the royal family who travelled at specific times on the airline, an example is (HHCBA, November 1977) “HM the Queen flew from Barbados to Heathrow on the Concorde at the end of her tour...”. In British Airways News, (January, 1981, No. 359) text offers class and gender together when Sir Ross Stainton is pictured on the front page on the occasion of his retirement from the role of Chairman. He is pictured with then Chief Executive, Roy Watts. Recognition is also given in the picture to the presence of, Sir Ross’ driver, Clem Whitlock (also retiring), highlighting inclusion of different classes. Finally, gender, is also reflected by the presence of Lady Stainton and personal assistant, Elizabeth Hawtin.

Gender as well as race, were much better represented through pictures. Women were now regular passengers in greater numbers, evident by photographs. These are presented positively. Again several photos of air stewardesses flying for both BEA and BOAC offer a suggestion of professionalism in service and smartness of uniform, and the notions of quality/classed services, were often conveyed. Indications of the presence of race was also more commonly seen in photographs, and these had racialized persons working alongside White

employees. For example, (British Airways News, July 24, 1981), in a feature article on the Royal Wedding Window display in honour of the pending wedding between Prince Charles and Lady Diana. The photograph pictures Len Gumbleton Sales Manager of the BA Strand Sales shop, alongside BA staff members Herma John, a Black woman, and Mary Lees a White woman. In another article located in British Airways News (May 29, 1981, page 3) General Manager of the Southern Division (a White man) is seen attending, (being social and having a drink), at an afterwork reception with the reservations staff in Kenya. Reservations staff pictured are all Black, and all men.

Text from the (HHCBA, January of 1971) relating to leadership appointments were notable references to leadership in this fourth juncture. Significant mandates by government were noted relating to transitions for the airline. This was important in highlighting that leadership was connected to government and operated almost as an extension to the ministers in control of the air ministry. For example, text (HHCBA May 1979) indicates that a conservative government had been elected and that they declared that British Airways would no longer receive state support. In (HHCBA July 1979) text delivers the announcement to privatize, “*Government announced its intention to proceed with privatization.*” This put attention to profit firmly back in focus.

In other discourses, text continued to convey notions about what or who mattered. The voices that were allowed to be heard or speak on airline business were also beginning to change. In an example, The Viewpoint, a regular feature of British Airways News, offered a perspective from Marion Porter, customs relations manager. The article underscored the importance of customer service, “How satisfied passengers are the key...” (British Airways News, December

1981, page 3). Ms. Porter's title and authority to speak in this forum about airline business, demonstrates a movement of gender toward leadership roles.

In stark contrast, is a headline article in (British Airways News, November 20, 1981, page 3) titled, "A Tribute to those magnificent men". The article tells a story about the pioneer days of the British aircraft industry, a topic at the time on exhibit by the Museum of London. This article is consistent with how men have been lionised throughout the organization's culture and discourse. It is also significant because there is no mention of the women present during that era, and no mention of racialized persons. Ironically, the article's author is female, Anne Ainsley. Thus, when these other voices are heard, they do not necessarily further the progress of their identity category. I observe that in keeping with the notion of a Gramscian hegemony, the voices of the 'other' at times reproduced the marginalization of the identity groups they represented. Judith Bennett (in Morgan, ed., 2006, reading 2) offers that patriarchy alone is insufficient for the oppression of women to take place, she suggests that women were part of the oppression of undermining their own.

The idea that things were changing is seen in another article, (British Airways News, 1982, issue 437, Front page) which emphasizes that "The face of British Airways is changing...". The article tells the story of former poster girl Roz Hanby, who returned to meet the "...11 men and 21 girls..." volunteers slated to replace her in advertisements around the world. The Advertising Manager International. Derek Dear is quoted, "When Roz left, we decided not to identify the airline with one person but several." This quote highlights changes in the airline's attention to diversity. Importantly in this example it was a move to change how the airline was seen externally. The article does not present information related to other aspects of the composition of this volunteer group but is consistent in its marginalization of females by its

reference. Specifically, males are mentioned first and referred to as men. On the other hand, the female volunteers were diminished in their reference as ‘girls’. The article ends by informing readers that Roz was about to be married. This discourse is important to how the airline generally viewed females. They are girls, unmarried and, once married potentially will leave the airline, in either case, unlikely to be seen as part of leadership.

In another Feature “People in the News” (British Airways News (December 14, 1984, p.5) “Nixon Ooko” is pictured “...not a name typically associated with British Airways...”. The article tells the story of Nixon, a black man who has progressed in the airline. In publications later in 1984 two other articles showcase respectively i) accounting staff from across the Caribbean and Latin America who had been flown to London for a 2-day seminar to “...increase understanding between them and their UK counterparts...”. And ii) “Laughter in the Sun” which describes a funday for staff and their families in Kenya. Over 20 people were in attendance including a few staff from neighboring locations Uganda and Tanzania. These articles show the emerging recognition of racial diversity in employment in the airline.

On a cautionary note, while I take the time to consider the presence of several voices, in the production of articles and selection of photographs included in the publications, I am also mindful that these voices generally represented those privileged to speak. The would-be ambassadors of gender (woman) are sparsely represented, and racialized persons (ethnic minorities), who might be inclined to share their version of the ‘history’ of the airline, are absent from the discourse. This is an important indication of the intersectionality experience at work.

The written accounts, much like the archives, again focused largely on the generalities of the airline operating environment (operationalization and type of business, management/leadership appointments, routes, fleet/equipment, finances, and operating

transitions). On the other hand, research pieces such as (Mills, 1995, 1998, 2002; Balmer, Stuart and Greyser, 2009; Grugulis and Wilkinson, 2002) sought to examine more closely the ‘lived’ workings and human side of the airline. These helped to reinforce the process of the intersectionality experience and added to the discourse on leadership.

The recounting of the airline environment is shared from the perspective of writers, historians who may have been similarly informed by the airline’s past, and who have presented the airline’s history using specific events of their choosing. This recounting I have found to be readily recognizable in much of the discourse surfaced in the autobiographies and the archives. For example, Penrose (1980), Higham (2020, and Smallpiece (1980) are aligned on government interference in the airline. All accounts speak to the way the sitting Minister of Aviation, Julian Amery made known to the airline leadership their [airline leadership’s] role in decisions to purchase aircraft. Penrose (1980, p. 228) cited Amery’s letter to Sir Giles “The choice of aircraft is a matter for the corporation’s judgement. If national interest requires some departure from the strict commercial interests of the Corporation this should be done only with the express agreement or request of the Minister.” Higham’s (2020, p. 246) account concurs with this and adds to the Minister’s words citing, “How losses if any resulting from such a political decision should be presented in the accounts will depend on circumstances in each case.” The backdrop to these comments, lay in the resignations of the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, (Smallpiece, 1980, pp. 180-183), and illuminates the impact of Government agenda on leadership.

Accounts indicate that the new airline (BA) experienced financial challenges from early on and began the decade of the 1980s steeped in debt (Colling, 1995, p. 25; Lyth, 1998, p. 75). Sir John King, retained as Chairman, made his focus and intentions clear in (British Airways

News, December 23, 1983, Front Page). The article informed employees about measures being implemented to achieve the financial turnaround needed for divestment. Under King, and reminiscent of a directed message to employees in the 1977-78 Annual report (Penrose, 1980, p. 292), between 1980 and 1984 the airline was subject to massive job cuts across the board. This included cuts to senior management and ultimately dropping approximately 37% of the airline workforce (Colling, 1995). In the end close to 20,000 members of staff including management, were removed through redundancy, resignations, and early retirement. The period between 1982 and 1990 was unsettled with job action taking place with at least one bargaining group every year. Colling (1995, pp. 24) indicates that “job cuts were through voluntary severance and redeployment ... with generous terms” suggesting an inclusive approach to addressing problems with labour. Additionally, under King’s management efforts were again made to engage with the unions with openness. This management style attempted to change the existing staff perception of a “rather high-handed and authoritarian” culture (p. 24).

The years, 1984 and 1985 showed record profits, securing the airlines’ financial attractiveness to investors and ultimately its privatization in 1987. The revolutionary cuts and changes implemented during the turn-around period of the 1980’s meant that attitudes once prevalent in management were purged along with personnel (Lyth, 1998). Balmer, Stuart and Greyser (2009) suggest that during this decade the airline identity experienced change with a ‘throwing away of the past’ (p. 12) and a deliberate use of a variety of communication channels to create a new visual identity (p. 13). These changes focused on people under the “putting people first (PPF)” campaign.

Launched in 1983 the PPF campaign was designed to shift attention in the organization toward a customer focus (Grugulis and Wilkinson, 2002, p. 183). In the process it also achieved

a focus on employees and changing attitudes. By creating name tags (removing anonymity), cross-functional groups and eliminating uniforms at training sessions, leadership was able to impact the organization culture and behavior away from the heavily militaristic environment that existed before. This change is seen in discourse of pictures and articles in the British Airways News publication which increasingly included articles highlighting race and or gender, acknowledging their presence amongst employees. CEO, Colin Marshall is quoted as saying “We...have to ‘design’ our people and their service attitude just as we design an aircraft seat...” (Grugulis and Wilkinson, 2002, p. 184). As a leader Marshall was highly visible and participated in training alongside employees at all levels, as well as making himself available to staff and customers alike (Grugulis and Wilkinson, 2002, p. 184). It is clear throughout their work that operations in earlier periods influenced decisions about changes taking place. Thus, the role of an organization’s history in understanding the composition of leadership remains relevant in this project.

Discourse around the leadership team presents the notion that its composition criteria would involve individuals who are seasoned in the art of business, and many of whom would also bear the hallmark of individuals well versed in the nuances of aviation operations or who have had military training. Higham’s (2020) account provides text that highlight a significant number of classed directors in composition of the BOAC airline TMT during the period (Higham, 2020, Appendices C and D). These records also include the presence of the sole woman, Pauline Gower (Fahie) said to have been on the board during the juncture, serving between 1943 and 1946. Once more, the organization intersectional experience is highlighted by the exclusion of race and very limited inclusion of women.

Mills (1998) points to how the organization profiled pilots as "...certain types of men...". This likely contributed to the marginalization of women who might have otherwise readily joined the ranks. In fact, BA did not recruit women as pilots until 1987 (Mills, 1998), the year it was privatized. This despite the trend in the aviation industry worldwide toward the hiring of female pilots. An example is Rosella Bjornson who was Canada's first commercial female airline pilot. She was hired as a co-pilot by Transair airline in 1973 (Rosella Bjornson, n.d.). Ironically, Margaret Thatcher, a woman, and leader of the conservative government at the apex of British government, was evidence of just how far gender had come. This only underscored how far behind the society BA was in promoting gender.

Furthermore, Mills (1995, p. 255) indicates that there was little change in how Blacks were portrayed in airline publications up to at least 1991 post privatization. The unspoken demand for class also shifted with King's appointment. Born in 1918, in Essex, England, to a village postmaster and his wife, King's beginnings were humble. That he chaired the airline from 1981 to 1993 pre and post privatization, refuted the notion that class, defined by peerage, might be a prerequisite to be appointed to leadership. It is notable however, that King was called to be knighted in 1979 by then Prime Minister James Callaghan, head of the Labor Party, and was ultimately made a life peer four years later by Margaret Thatcher (Los Angeles times, 2005). I am left with the question as to whether one must have ascended to the privilege bestowed by classed circumstances to be included in the composition of leadership.

By the consistent exclusion of women and racialized persons, the notion of who could be leader would likely continue to exclude these identities as there would be little exposure to lend support to having them participate in boardroom leadership.

5.4 Summary

The third and fourth junctures were marked by the capitalist drive for profitability. First through the commercialisation of the post-war airline, still operating with heavy government oversight priorities and mandates, and finally with changes to government priorities resulting in its divestment in 1987.

The third juncture, post WWII required preparation to return to civil aviation, with a commercial leaning impacted by increasing competition. This included a reorganization with the splitting of the airline into three units with defined roles. The fourth and final juncture saw a settling down and firm resolve to divest the government of the airline by privatization.

My dissertation contributes to the discourse on Leadership by highlighting social, political, and economic circumstances that contribute to the composition of leadership that excludes diversity. It considers the influence of organization intersectionality experience on the discourse. In the process it contributes to an understanding of how leadership takes place and the gap that exists with respect to diversity in leadership especially at the “TMT” level. How it is that successive leadership teams encountered throughout the examination do not reflect the organizational diversity, underscores the core of the research question.

As a result of my research, it appears that organizational discourse and its intersectionality experience over time has some influence on the composition of leadership. This influence results in the omission of certain identity categories from participation in leadership. The marginalization observed suggests that these categories may not even be considered in discussions that take place regarding leadership, thus, resulting in a new avenue of marginalization – exclusion from leadership.

Visiting the past through these junctures was a necessary sojourn to explore if or how the organization changed over time to manifest a leadership team devoid of diversity. Chapter six concludes the project.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

6.1 Key Findings

In this chapter, I offer a summary of the key findings, response to the research question, limitations encountered in my research, and end with suggestions for future work.

Spector (2016) offers leadership as discourse, while Jenkins, (1991) offers history as discourse. Both point to the active nature of discourse and its role in how we come to know the world. In my dissertation, I sought to recognize the organization's history as presented from several perspectives and have conducted my research to make room for the past. Through my work, I found that past airline values and practices appeared to be reproduced over time in the organization. For example, traditional societal values related to the role of women were obvious in how women were positioned despite demonstrated skills to the contrary that should allow them to participate in several levels of airline operations. Similarly, attitudes toward race are evident in the near silencing of the presence of racio/ethnic bodies. Also reinforced, was the regard for wealth and individuals with the vestiges of class, consistent with a society built around the idea of privilege of birth. These themes continued to be relevant throughout my study.

My concern with time leans into the notion that there is need to adequately assess the past, to better understand the contemporary organization (Kieser, 1994), and to realistically prepare for the future (Bell, 1992/2018). I found that over time as the airline and its operating environs evolved, there was some relaxing of the original rigid attitudes in later junctures. I

noted where the use of visual discourse (photographs, cartoons, and posters) after the first juncture but most notably in the third and fourth junctures, enabled other ‘stories’ of the airline to emerge. These new ‘stories’ began to illuminate the diversity that existed in the organization. While this made evident the participation of women (gender) and people of color (race) in the airline, the marginalization of these categories of people was still clear in how they were located and referred to. The recognition and publication space given to royalty, celebrities and dignitaries travelling reconfirmed what mattered. Together these highlighted the continued influence of power systems, patriarchy, colonialism, racism, capitalism at work, leading ostensibly to the replication of intersectionality and ensuring an occurrence of intersectionality experience in advancement to leadership.

My research takes heed of the intersectionality experience that emerges as I delved into the sources of discourse examined, in context within each juncture. As a result of the work conducted, I found that the experience in each Juncture had similarities. Although the examination of each juncture by design did not follow a linear path of analysis, a rhythm developed in which patterns of leadership selection as well as the influence of intersectionality in several aspects of the organization became familiar. The sources of discourse supported and strengthened the findings exposed by each other serving to confirm the trustworthiness of the research, and the plausibility of the results.

British Airways (BA) presented as an organization with significant government influence and intervention. I found that this influence heavily impacted how leadership took place. Although the discourse on leadership may be different for organizations that operate with direct government involvement, this finding confirms that the discourse on leadership taking place in organizations is open to varying degrees of influence from external forces. Leadership over the

evolution of the airline often reflected the nature of the ownership structure, private entity, public asset, or military power, all with government influence. Leadership composition then necessarily embraced participants from these types of structures. Exclusion of women and people of color who also fit into these structures reflected intersectionality at work. Marginalized voices, those belonging to women, people of colour were inaccessible through the autobiographies examined. This is another finding of this project. Notably, the working professional class such as Basil Smallpiece is heard from early on by dint of his autobiographical notes.

Examination of gender exposed the conflicting treatment of women in an initial, almost complete exclusion from organization discourse to selective inclusion emphasizing their utility in service roles, or to be used in advertising for the purpose of creating a picture of appeal to attract passengers. It is only, later as commercialisation progresses and then in the drive toward privatization that women begin to be included more often in organization roles with authority. Notably, women recognized in the discourse are initially all white. Over time when the discourse introduces women of different origins and ethnicities, they largely are seen in air service, often showcased it seems for the sense of the exotic they bring from their points of origin. Although a few pictures show women in administrative functions, the pictures are significantly less in number than those showcasing stewardesses or airline 'girls' highlighting attractiveness, and almost none include women of colour. Men of various ethnicities initially are generally not mentioned except where we see them as naive or ignorant in the face of incoming aircraft. They are further marginalized when they are shown as the butt of comedy in cartoon drawings. We see increased recognition in the discourse during the third and fourth junctures, and in several cases during juncture 4, they are shown working in supervisory roles.

Thus, race/ethnicity is absent in the first juncture, and we see it introduced later after commercialization, particularly where it is used to highlight the nature of the diversity in the organization. This recognition did not include representation of a potential move to leadership. Class, shown by wealth or rank appeared throughout the junctures. Initially focused on White men it is gradually seen as the numbers of White women who were passengers increased. An exception is where the discourse referred to royalty or other well-known figures. There are also a few places in the discourse where women are recognised due to a special expertise they cannot be denied, for example, in the cases of Pauline Gower and Anne Goodwin. I found that the discourse examined, highlighted what/who was valued by the airline by what/who was included and how they were portrayed.

Thus, I also found in a not surprising occurrence of reciprocity, that the airline discourse on leadership influenced its intersectionality experience in the absence or marginalization of women and racialized persons. This marginalization meant that these identity categories were unlikely to be included in discussions regarding who could participate in leadership. On the other hand, the exclusive privilege achieved under systems of power at work afforded to White men, meant that they were the de facto leaders. Through the research it appeared that who one was, and who they knew mattered in the selection of Leadership at the top management level. In BA, this was highly correlated with political agenda.

The embeddedness of history, and societal values and attitudes which permeated the organizations operations appeared to be difficult to change. So even where women began to be seen in the external environment as respected leaders, including HRM, Queen Elizabeth II, the integration of women in the upper echelons of the organization did not automatically occur. Similarly, despite the evidence of masculinity and valor of racialized men and women during

military service, and their later participation on many world stages as leaders they continued to be excluded from organization leadership. It is here that the intersectionality experience is fulfilled. Specifically, the identities worn by women (gender) and people of colour (race) at the point of their intersection created another level of marginalization, that is in their exclusion from top management leadership.

I am left with the question, How can the phenomenon of leadership be re-constructed or developed, to overcome the inauspicious absence of diversity, where there is little history from which to build an inclusive understanding of leadership? I theorize that leadership which develops within an organization is premised on the discourse that is allowed to take place, and which ultimately becomes knowledge in the organization. This knowledge becomes institutionalized and in both subtle and overt ways preclude the possibility of diversity in leadership composition.

6.2 Response to the Research Question

One of the aims of this thesis has been to encourage the connection between theory and practice (hooks, 2010) by providing a perspective on how the composition of leadership teams may have been influenced and take place to the exclusion of diversity. In doing so, I have tried to address a gap in leadership literature regarding an under-explored relationship between intersectionality and leadership. I used critical discourse analysis and intersectionality analysis to help bridge the gap.

The research question explored was, How does the composition of organizational leadership discourse exclude diversity? In exploring this question, I considered the following sub-questions:

- a) How does the organization intersectional experience contribute to the discourse?
- b) How does this discourse reproduce the dearth of diversity in TMT leadership?

Through my research I begin to address the question. I offer that diversity considered in the (BA) case study is comprised by identity categories of class, gender, and race. Organizational leadership discourse precludes diversity in its composition as the identity categories examined, are largely omitted, or otherwise marginalised in sources of organization discourse. This silencing, resulting from inherent and societal power systems, ensures that these categories of employees would not only be excluded from discussions related to participation in leadership, but also remain largely invisible for purposes of consideration. As a result, we see the development of the composition of leadership that excludes diversity.

The theoretical framework used in this research was thoughtfully selected. CRT proposes that race is a construct, and poststructural feminism emphasizes the need to hear from different voices in organization discourse. Where this is not possible through the silencing which occurs then what results can never be an accurate reflection of the full potential of the organization. The intersectionality experience in an organization is influential to the discourse on leadership by its suppression of organization identity categories rendering them outside consideration for leadership. I found that this process reproduces over time and ultimately the discourse on leadership that takes place continues to replicate the composition of leadership that excludes diversity.

6.3 Contribution of the Dissertation

Through my dissertation I have demonstrated how the composition of leadership discourse that excludes diversity, might come about over time, and how it may be influenced by the organization intersectionality experience. Furthermore, I provide a practical example of intersectionality used as a heuristic device to examine organization phenomena in a way that bridges organization history to a contemporary organization problem.

6.4 Limitations

Limitations arose in writing my dissertation. For example, limited access to different voices, an important feature of both CRT and poststructural feminist theory, was recognized from early on to be a concern. It did not end the research process as it became a significant finding of the research. The research largely reflects the voices of those privileged to speak. In selecting statements of discourse, I am mindful that what was available may be colored by these perspectives, and importantly that parts of the story remain untold.

Another limitation arose in gaps found in my selection of the archival material used. Nonetheless, the discourse retrieved is reflective of what was generally to be encountered in the organization.

6.5 Comments on future research – continuing/extending the work

My dissertation recognizes the impact of the discourse on leadership and the influence of intersectionality on the composition of TMT leadership. The practice of othering (Said, 1978, Morrison, 2017) and silencing (Trouillot, 2015) as it takes place would lead to building an organization which is unlikely to achieve real inclusivity. Plans for diversity and inclusion become actions of performativity (Butler, 1990) or a superficial acknowledgement of boxes to be

checked, where the organization goes through steps for practicing what amounts to prescriptive measures for inclusivity. This does not enable achieving real, systemic change.

This work ultimately illuminates the impact on leadership composition, by organization discourse and experienced intersectionality at British Airways from 1919 up to 1987, the point of privatization. What the airline leadership looks like under private ownership is an opportunity for future work and is not presented here.

A natural next step is first to understand the contemporary organization's leadership composition. Then an examination of how the discourse on leadership takes place after privatization would be insightful to this understanding. Additionally, an exploration of what impact privatization might have on the organization's intersectionality experience would be useful to help in understanding whether/how the organization's past continues under a new organizational arrangement devoid of significant government intervention.

6.6 In the End

“Diversity is what happens when you have representation of various groups in one place. Representation is what happens when groups that haven't previously been included, are included. Intersectionality is what happens when we do everything through the lens of making sure that no one is left behind. More than surface-level inclusion, or merely making sure everyone is represented, intersectionality is the practice of interrogating the power dynamics and rationales of how we can be together.”

*Alicia Garza, The Purpose of Power: How We Come Together When We Fall Apart
(2021)*

The foundation for my dissertation and what gives rise to my desire to theorize in this area is the notion that, unless organizations are committed to reflecting on their past, and understanding fundamentally the embedded nature of the intersectional experience within, whatever structures (rules, policies, procedures, and practices) are implemented for creating inclusive organization, are not likely to be sustainable. Organizational strategies for contending with the impact of globalization and a changing demographic workforce will not be effective at addressing the changes without properly understanding how/why certain organization patterns exist.

Ferreira (2010) highlights the importance of the board of directors for decision-making in organizations. Pointing out that board composition is correlated to and varies in keeping with firm characteristics, Ferreira suggests that Board diversity "...seems to affect corporate performance..." (p. 238). As organizations seek to increase board diversity and governments become involved in the process, my dissertation in exploring the composition of leadership is in a current area of discourse.

Management and organization focus on planning, leading, guiding, and controlling organization resources toward achieving a common objective. An organization's human capital is a significant resource which, when strategically deployed, can make the difference in how successful an organization becomes. One off shoot of globalization, the notion of 'thinking globally but acting locally' has demanded novel thinking in organization in many areas. In the arena for managing human capital, how the organization recruits, develops, and deploys human resources to achieve objectives is no less important. Heightened by globalization, recognizing the changing employee demographic adds a measure of complexity in the development of human

resources. Moreso, in an increasingly competitive business arena this development must be executed in a way that leverages the skills and abilities of all employees.

Examining organization discourse that contributes to how this takes place is useful as it reveals how power is enacted in ways that enables the creation of organization intersectionality experience, which in turn has implications for the composition of leadership. It is my hope that my research adds a perspective to the discourse on leadership by its recognition of time, intersectionality experience, and organization discourse, in the composition of top management teams. The result of my work is intended to simultaneously add to theory while providing a practical approach to strengthening the inclusivity process in organizations.

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